

VOLUME 5

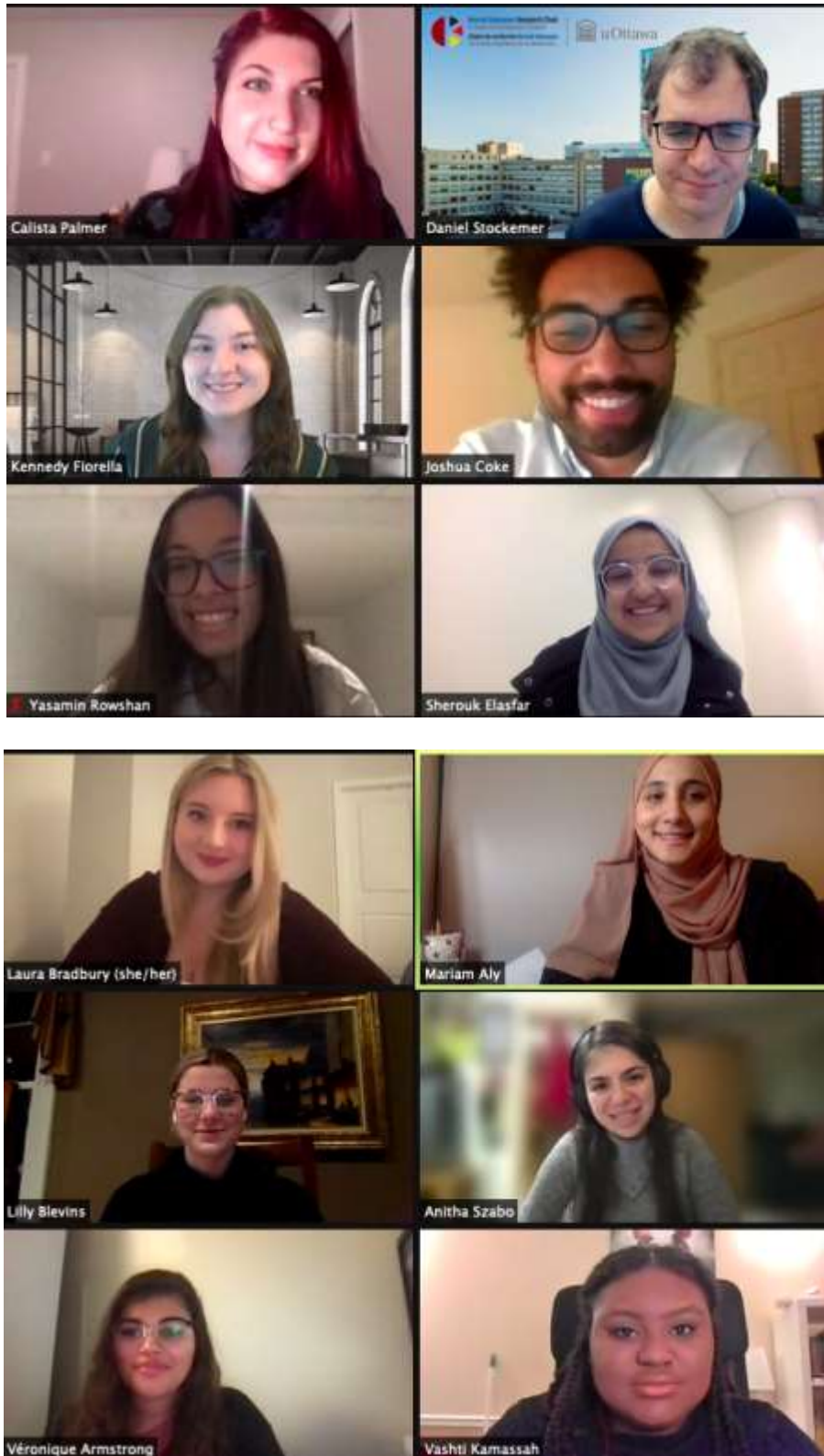
WINTER 2022

# UJPPS

*UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL OF POLITICS, POLICY AND SOCIETY*

**POLITICS OF INEQUALITY:  
WHO IS AFFECTED AND HOW?**

## 2021 Editorial Committee



## **Acknowledgements**

Firstly, we would like to pay respect to the Algonquin people, who are the traditional guardians of this land. We acknowledge their long-standing relationship with this territory, which remains unceded. We pay respect to all Indigenous peoples in this region, from all nations across Canada, who call Ottawa home. We acknowledge the traditional knowledge keepers, both young and old. And we honour their courageous leaders: past, present, and future.

This issue could not have been made possible without the University of Ottawa's support and continued running of this course, creating the opportunity to participate in a unique and engaging pedagogical activity. In the journal's second year of remote classwork, Dr. Daniel Stockemer has provided his expertise and guidance to facilitate the fifth issue. His passion for teaching and research, as well as his willingness to adapt the course, was key to the journal's continued success and our learning experience, on both the collective and individual levels.

Lastly, we want to thank all of the undergraduate students involved in the publishing process, contributors and editorial team members alike. The hard work, collaboration and commitment of our peers stands at the very heart of the UJPPS, and *Politics of Inequality: Who is affected and how?* is no exception.

## Introduction

Established in 2018, the *Undergraduate Journal of Politics, Policy, and Society* (UJPS) is an emerging interdisciplinary academic journal that publishes peer-reviewed work of undergraduate students in the social sciences and humanities. This undergraduate journal provides a medium for aspiring academics to explore and showcase current debates in their respective disciplines, while gaining practical experience within the realm of analytical thinking, researching and publishing. Open to emerging scholars around the world, the issue features authors from a variety of Universities such as University of Hyderabad, University College Cork, and Wilfrid Laurier University.

The theme for the 2022 issue is the “Politics of Inequality: Who is affected and How?” This year’s issue focused on research papers that explore the pervasiveness of inequality within various facets of life through multidisciplinary paradigms. Currently, 71 percent of the global population “live in countries where inequality has grown” and these inequalities “within countries are the inequalities people feel day to day, month to month, year to year” (United Nations, 2020). Due to the exacerbation of inequality fuelled by the COVID-19 pandemic, we aim to analyze the prominence of inequality and how it has and continues to invade global and domestic economic, environmental, political, and social organizational structures.

We began working on the 5th issue of the journal in September 2021 by sending out a call for papers around the world seeking academic research papers that explore topics pertinent to the politics of inequality. All submissions underwent a double-blind peer review and an editorial process to determine the relevance of the topic and its academic rigour. We selected submissions, which examine the link between inequality and imperialism; populist rhetoric; location, political socialisation; socio-economic segregation; the politicizing effect of urban design; and Canadian

policy and programming addressing sex and gender-based marginalization domestically and abroad.

The opening article to this issue is “Imperialism – The Highest Stage of Inequality?”, written by Ananya Kumar. The paper frames global inequality in the Global North-South paradigm by demonstrating, through a historical analysis of imperialism, the perpetuation of economic inequities rooted in the formation of dirigiste regimes in the 1950s in the Global South and their struggles for an equitable global order.

The second article, “The widening gap between the Uighur and the Han Chinese in the Xinjiang Region: A literature study on how policy changes, the new economic paradigm and the control over mass media affect social cohesion”, is co-authored by Tomas Bilevicius, Briek Lathouwers, Elsa Lotten M Vallgård, Sofia Xavier Villafañe Santos. This interdisciplinary work uses a sociological, communication and political science lens in order to examine the marginalization of the Uighur minority at the hands of the CCP in the region of Xinjiang. It aims to examine the region’s political structures to determine how mass media impedes on the social cohesion of this community. Furthermore, the authors use Weber’s theory of social stratification to explain this ongoing lack of social cohesion and growing inequality. In sum, the paper argues that ethnic boundaries separate minority and majority groups and the structural (including political and social) organization of the autonomous region of Xinjiang contributes to the polarization of the Uighurs in China.

The following article is “Populism, inequality, and Lëvizja VETËVENDOSJE in Kosovo”, written by Rafael Campos-Gottardo. This paper examines Lëvizja VETËVENDOSJE’s (LVV) support in Kosovo through a populist lens. Traditionally, scholars argue that support for LVV’s populist rhetoric is due to ethnic nationalist factors, but this paper proposes an additional

explanation, focusing on LVV's manipulation of Kosovan economic inequalities and the division of society. This paper analyses LVV and their leader Albin Kurti, and their attempts to reshape political rhetoric through populist discourses in Kosovo.

The fourth article featured is "The relationship between location and political socialization of young people through voluntary organizations: A case study of Youth Work Ireland", written by Danielle Gayson. This research paper explores the link between involvement in voluntary youth organisations and levels of political engagement as well as the influence of location on this relationship. A case study approach was adopted to provide detailed illustrations of first-hand experiences. Through this study, it became clear that voluntary youth organisations act as agents of socialisation which along with location influence the youth's political development.

The journal continues with, "Feminist Urban Design: Theories of Justice in Denver, CO" by Megan Morrell, the author discusses how urban design (equal and neutral space) has been politicized in the city of Denver, Colorado. The author examines literature on feminist urban design to argue that the city of Denver possesses an "intricate relationships between gender and space". Additionally, this article demonstrates parallels between the city of Denver and Vienna, Austria to demonstrate their similar frameworks. In sum, Feminist Urban Design: Theories of Justice in Denver, CO is an analysis of feminist urban planning which ultimately defines this concept and demonstrates how it applies to urban spaces in Denver.

In the sixth article, "Slaughtering Our Minds: Mental Health Concerns Amongst Slaughterhouse Employees", which aims to identify the correlation between working in slaughterhouses and mental health concerns. It works to identify who is responsible for upholding employee rights and what steps can be taken through improving workplace support services,

policies and legislation, and systemic change to advocate for the emotional and mental well-being of those working within slaughterhouses.

The penultimate article featured is “The politics of inequality: An analysis of the policies aimed at protecting transgender, non-binary, and intersex people in Canada”, written by Patrick Laurent Cochrane is an analysis of how the policies put in place by the Canadian government to protect transgender, non-binary and intersex people have had little impact on the discrimination and challenges that people from these groups face. The article examines the history behind human rights legislation enacted to protect transgender, non-binary, and intersex people from discrimination and provides key evidence on challenges and barriers faced by these groups as well as the consequences of these actions in the workforce and the health sector. The article aims to demonstrate that further state intervention is needed to achieve greater social inclusion.

The final article is “The Feminist International Assistance Program and Future Approaches to Feminist Foreign Policy” by Alysha Aziz. This research evaluates Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Program (FIAP) through a feminist international relations lens and explores the absence of an intersectional approach within the policy development process. The paper concludes with implications of a preoccupation with economic policy for achieving gender equality and steps Canada may consider towards the systemic emancipation of women.

## Table of Contents

2021 Editorial Committee	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Introduction	iii
Table of Contents	vii
<b>Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Inequality?</b> by Ananya Kumar	1
<b>The widening gap between the Uighur and the Han Chinese in the Xinjiang Region: A literature study on how policy changes, the new economic paradigm and the control over mass media affect social cohesion</b> by Tomas Bilevicius, Briek Lathouwers, Elsa Lotten M Vallgård, and Sofia Xavier Villafañe Santos	22
<b>Populism, Inequality, and <i>Lëvizja Vetëvendosje</i> in Kosovo: Shaping Society Through Populist Discourses</b> by Rafael Campos-Gottardo	56
<b>The relationship between location and political socialization of young people through voluntary organizations: A case study of Youth Work Ireland</b> by Danielle Gayson	90
<b>Feminist Urban Design: Theories of Justice in Denver, CO</b> by Megan Morrell	116
<b>Slaughtering Our Minds: Mental Health Concerns Amongst Slaughterhouse Employees</b> by Jude Kelley	136
<b>The Politics of Inequality: An analysis of the policies aimed at protecting transgender, non-binary, and intersex people in Canada</b> by Patrick Cochrane	151
<b>The Feminist International Assistance Program and Future Approaches to Feminist Foreign Policy</b> by Alysha Aziz	169

## **Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Inequality?**

Ananya Kumar, University of Hyderabad

### **Abstract**

This research examines the phenomenon of global inequality through the Global South-North Paradigm. The paper employs historical approach and analysis of the political economy as tools for this study. Drawing from the Marxist and Dependency theoretical framework, this research will first examine the historical process of this inequality with particular attention to imperialism. Next, it will examine the formation of dirigiste regimes in the 1950s in the Global South and their struggles for an equitable global order. It will then proceed to situate the contemporary condition of globalized society. It will argue, based on three case examples, that one can begin to see the reproduction of some of the characteristics of the economic system existing during the heydays of imperialism.

**Keywords:** Imperialism, Global South, Finance, Inequality, COVID-19, Structural Adjustment

## **Introduction**

If there is something on which scholars of social sciences may agree upon as generally progressive and economically prospering, it may be the ever-expanding integration of different societies and exchange of knowledge, goods, and ideas. Through millennia of arduous exploration and effort, humans have come to form intricate trade routes and value chains that have become very sophisticated, specialized, and interdependent.

However, economic integration does not necessarily mean mutual prosperity. To answer the questions of production and distribution of the traded products, an analysis of the global political economy is necessary to examine its underlying economic system. This paper will argue that the North-South divide in the global economy is created through imperialist exploitation under capitalism since around the 16<sup>th</sup> century and thus forms the fundamental and inequitable structure in the present day. The first section will provide a brief historical grounding to situate present inequalities and understand the effects of the lengthy processes that were active in the previous centuries. The second section will argue that after the period of brief dirigisme Post World War II, one can again witness many aspects of the same processes emerge. Specifically, this can be seen through income deflation, increasing inequality, resource diversion according to the needs of the North, declining living standards, and foreign takeover of assets. This will be demonstrated by studying cases related to nutrition, agriculture in the Global South, finance and trade of the South with the North and differentiated responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. The third and final section of this paper will offer conclusions and considerations for contextualizing these complex issues.

While this is a vast amount of literature and research on the topic of imperialism during the 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> century, and on neoliberalism, there is only a small but growing literature which connects the two periods and compares the fundamental nature of both of them. This paper

attempts to contribute to this literature through the use of several case studies and by incorporating the ramifications of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic upon the global economic relations, something which has not been studied at a significant depth yet.

### **Theory and Historical Overview**

Within the history of ‘commercialism’ and capitalism since the 16th century, there have been varying perspectives on the idea of ‘free trade’, ‘mutual prosperity’ and their relation to imperialism. While European nations tussled with each other till 18<sup>th</sup> century through protectionist and mercantilist policies - the orthodox, Victorian view of British engagement with other ‘regions’ of the world in the 19th century was that of free trade, commerce and expansion – exemplified by Seeley in his work *The Expansion of England* (1983). It was claimed free from any coercive method, while “opening up of an economy” was understood as inherently peaceful. Nevertheless, this view also used racial and economic logic to legitimize annexation and colonization of foreign lands. Famous proponents of this perspective include John Locke and John Stuart Mill (Bell, 2010), who saw it the duty of Britishers to colonize the land of inferior foreigners for more “productive use.”.

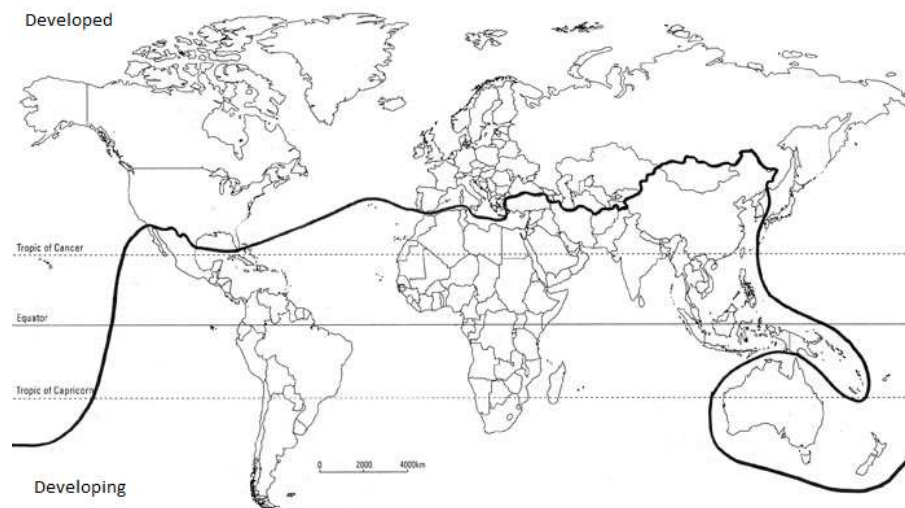
However, Gallagher and Robinson (1953) denote an alternative view in their work “Imperialism as Free Trade”. This research considers the phenomenon of free trade as imperialistic and states that it is not formal colonization (done only when necessary), but informal imperialism which marked the central aspect in British strategy and as a precursor to colonization.

It is now necessary to understand the meaning of imperialism. Lenin (2010), the foremost theorist of imperialism in the Marxist tradition, defined imperialism as essentially containing five characteristics. Primarily, the concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life; secondly, the

merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation of a financial oligarchy; thirdly, the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance; fourthly, the formation of international monopolist capitalist combines which share the world among themselves, and, finally the territorial division of the whole world among the largest capitalist powers is completed. Here, only the third and fourth characteristics will be considered. Additionally, an important theory of imperialism being employed in this paper is the one Patnaik and Patnaik (2017) present in their book, *A Theory of Imperialism*. The theory states that ‘income deflation’ and demand suppression in the South is necessary to extract sufficient resources from these regions without bringing a threat of inflation to the currencies of the North.

It is also important to note here that the author defines Global South and North according to the classification presented by the Brandt Lines shown below, which was created by former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt (Lees, 2020).

**Figure 1: The Brandt line and the division of the World as Poor South and Rich North**

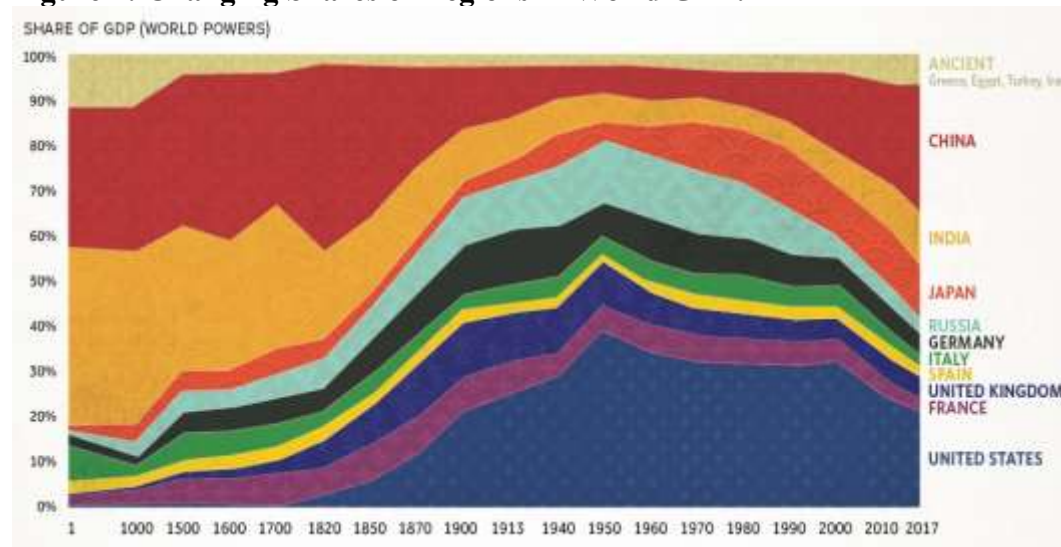


Source: Wikimedia Commons. Author: jovan.gec.

It is now necessary to investigate the history of the formation of global relations under capitalism in order to receive the appropriate context to understand the present scenario. Maddison

(2008) estimates that before the beginnings of commercialism by the Companies of Europe, China and India together accounted for 60% of the global economy. By 1947 and 1949, however, they had 4.4% and 4.2% of the global economy's share, respectively.

**Figure 2: Changing Shares of Regions in World GDP.**



Source: Maddison (2008), *The West and the World Economy*.

There are various theories which propose understandings of the process which created such a profound shift in the center of economic gravity of the world. In the case of India, most historians agree that while colonialism spanned centuries and had different stages, it could be roughly divided into a former phase in which commercialism, intra-European rivalry for territories played a role and a latter in which taxation, surplus & resource extraction, and deindustrialization played a role. The British East India Company initially engaged in buying of goods such as cotton, handicrafts and spices, gradually gaining favors from kings, and then with the needs of British industrialization, engaged in the violent destruction of the subcontinent's industries, especially in its eastern parts of Bengal and Bihar (Bagchi 1976). Taxation became a significant source of revenue for the East India Company as it found territories under its administrative control after the Battles of 1757 and 1765. Bagchi (2010) writes:

Until 1756, the EIC had to import several hundred thousand pounds of silver to India in order to finance their trade in the country, because the balance of trade was always in favour of India. But there was no import of silver into Bengal at all from 1757 to 1797. From 1765, the EIC obtained the Dewani of Bengal and Bihar from the Mughal emperor in Delhi, and the land revenues of Bengal financed not only the EIC's 'investment' but also the wars of conquest that the EIC officials waged (p.27).

By the late period of colonization in India, the method of surplus extraction had evolved and come to depend on what is now known as the “drain of wealth” from India. Patnaik (2006) provides a brilliant theory of this process. Her analysis, backed by massive research and data, says that Britain appropriated the foreign exchange surplus of India in its entirety, which was second only to the United States in its amount. The received export earnings of India came from export earnings themselves and an astonishing one-third of tax revenue extracted from India diverted for this purpose while the actual export earnings went directly to Britain. All in all, Utsa Patnaik estimates that Britain extracted £9.2 trillion (or \$44.6 trillion) from India between 1765 and 1938. To put this in perspective, Britain’s current annual GDP is close to \$3 trillion. It would require Britain to transfer fifteen years of its GDP only to India to repair the historic inequality imposed between the two countries.

While India and the Indochina region were mainly used as a source of tax revenue, resource extraction, and for growing crops according to the needs of the British, there was a diversified, intricate form of the global division of labour based not on respect for *mutual sovereignty*, but by sheer force, exploitation, and gunboat diplomacy. Latin America had become the most important source of gold and silver for the European powers. Along with being seen as a source of precious metals, Africa was moulded as the source of labour for building the New World by creating transatlantic slavery. China, one of the most flourishing empires having a huge trade surplus with Britain, was imperialized through unequal treaties, and was made to forcibly consume opium (to

reduce Britain's deficit, for which it earlier used to pay through silver and gold extracted from Latin America) which was forcibly planted in the Northern plains of India.

The central character of inequality produced by colonialism is aptly summarised by Bagchi (2010): "colonialism started with the market failure that has been the birthmark of capitalism emanating from Europe, namely, the use of arms, to grab what could not be earned in peaceful trade" (p.37). I will now turn to the period after independence and examine the situation and potentialities which rose thereupon.

### **The Era of Independence**

The Post-World War II global political situation was radically different from the one which existed till the 1940s. More than seventy countries had fought the anti-colonial struggles to gain an independent state and demanded an end to colonialism. These nations witnessed the beginning of a new era, in which many were carried forth by leaders who saw it necessary to have the state as an essential organ in the national economy and polity and believed in a variation of socialism through which they sought the development of their nation (Prashad, 2007).

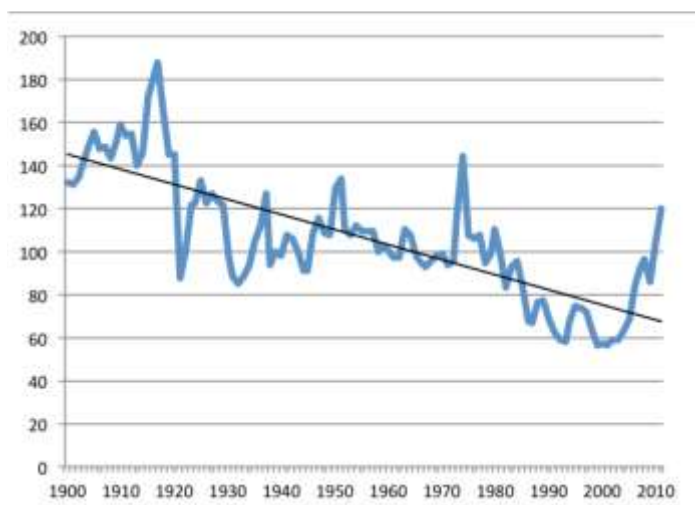
However, the reality was far more challenging to work with. These nations, together roughly represented by the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) or the G77, had begun to realize that political sovereignty was not of any substance if they continued to live under the global system created under colonialism, in which the 'Global North' had monopolised *economic* power and had left the newly independent states impoverished, with no industries and dependent on the export of primary commodities to the industrialized nations. This sentiment is echoed by Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first President, in his speech at the Organization of African Unity:

We have already reached the stage where we must unite or sink into that condition which has made Latin America the unwilling and distressed prey of imperialism after one-and-a-half centuries of political independence. As a continent, we have emerged into independence in a different age, with imperialism grown stronger, more ruthless and

experienced, and more dangerous in its international associations. Our economic advancement demands the end of colonialist and neo-colonialist domination of Africa (para. 3).

These nations lacked access to technology, expertise, and capital itself, which had become highly concentrated in the G7 countries, representing merely 11% of the world population. What was even more concerning was that there was a decline in terms of trade of the primary commodities (produced by the South) in comparison to the manufactured commodities, produced mainly by the industrialized countries in the North. The gap between the Global North and Global South's income shares of the global economy had more than doubled between 1938-1966 because of the immense growth which Bretton Woods countries witnessed during this time (Anghie, 2019).

**Figure 3: Trends of Real Commodity Prices.**



Source: Grilli, E. and Yang, M.C. 1988.

Advised by Raul Prebisch of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and author of the theory of declining terms of trade, the G77 came together and asked for the passing of the resolution for a New International Economic Order at the UN. The G77 thought that perhaps a more equitable world is (or should be) possible upon certain conditions that were present and out of sheer necessity at this time Through *The New International Economic*

*Order* (NIEO), they demanded among other things, full sovereignty over their natural resources, stabilization of primary commodity prices, the establishment and recognition of state-managed resource cartels and the regulation of transnational corporations, transfer of technology, financial resources and expertise in order to facilitate industrialization in the Global South (Gilman, 2015). Of course, the developed countries fulfilled none of the binding resolutions and demands. Stephen Krasner, who would later become the Director of policy planning in the U.S. State Department under George W. Bush, qualified the lack of engagement on the basis that “the NIEO was to capture the structure of international organizations created by the United States at the conclusion of World War II.” Gilman (2015) writes, “The most common reaction, however, was neither uncompromising naysaying nor sympathetic accommodation but rather playing for time and accentuating divisions among the members of the G-77 (p.7).”

The 1980s dashed the hopes of the Global South and the world saw the most influential attempt by these countries to instate global equality, to reverse the damages of colonialism become almost wholly forgotten in global political discourse in the coming years. What has been observed in the coming years is thus the reinstatement of imperialist economic relations, which has brought forth the fragility of mere political sovereignty without economic independence.

The 1980s and early 1990s saw profound changes in the global economic and political system. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the second most significant power globally and an exporter of economic, technological support to many countries in the Global South, collapsed. Many countries of the South also found themselves unable to finance their Balance of Payments and were reeling with deficits prominently due to the rise in import prices of oil since 1974. Upon having no choice but to take high-interest loans from the US-founded International Monetary Fund and World Bank, they agreed to the Structural Adjustment Programmes, which the institutions

bound as a condition for provision of the loans (Peet, 2003). These programmes demanded downsizing state capacity, social programmes, privatization, market access and free inflow of foreign capital.

The objective from these ‘adjustments’ in close to 70 countries was to globalize the capitalist relations and integrate the South in accordance with the needs of the capital of the North. The removal of foreign inflow of capital restrictions in the South created the new paradigm of ‘*global finance capital*’, which was highly mobile, and untied with any specific nation. Additionally, Manufacturing wages and competition between the US, Japan and Germany, created a situation where relocation of factories to regions with cheaper labour was the only option (Brenner, 2006). These adjustments weakened the states of the Global South, which post-Independence leaders created with a vision of reconstruction of their nations in a dirigiste manner. Now, the holistic economy, including the health and education sectors became privatized and unprotected from global flows of capital. The following section will examine the various aspects of this phenomenon closely. Through examples of some cases, it will demonstrate that the living conditions and the *global economic processes* have come to resemble the colonial relations in the previous centuries increasingly.

### **The Return to Austerity**

#### *Health and Agriculture*

A critical method of exploitation in the Global South is the dictation of crop production on domestic agricultural land. The imperialist nations dictated the production of those crops they wished to export for use (industrial or otherwise). Thus, there was a diversion of land away from foodgrains consumed by domestic citizens towards commercial and export crops. In India, there is a secular decline of around 27 percent in foodgrain output and over 25 percent in its availability

between 1900-1947, which demonstrates that Indian foodgrain availability progressively worsened over the decades (Patnaik and Patnaik, 2017).

There is also a similar decline in foodgrain availability per head after the neoliberal reforms in the early 1990s. While the state-led policies had taken the availability per head to 177 Kg by 1991, an increase of 40 Kg since independence, there is still an acute decline. Patnaik and Patnaik (2017) write, “The gain of forty years of effort was lost after the introduction of neoliberal reforms starting in 1991, which entailed income deflation, and particularly after trade liberalization in the mid-1990s, which initiated diversion of land to export crops” (p.102). The availability stood at 174.2 kg for 1997–98, at 155.7 kg for 2002–03, lower than the average figure (159.3 kg) for the pre-war period 1933–38. While this research falls out of the scope of this article, there are also similar and notable trends in many other nations in the Global South, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>1</sup>

#### Figure 4: British India, 1897-1946 – Net Output, Imports, and Availability of Foodgrains

British India, 1897–1946: Net Output, Imports, and Availability of Foodgrains (five-year averages except last year)

Period	Net Foodgrain Output (000 ton)	Net Foodgrain Import (000 ton)	Net Foodgrain Availability (000 ton)	Population (million)	Output per Head (kg)	Availability per Head (kg)
	1	2	3			
1897–1902	44196.84	–475	43721.84	219.74	201.1	199
1903–1908	41135.94	–1105.83	40030.11	225.79	182.2	177.3
1909–1914	47292.59	–1662.83	45629.76	231.3	204.5	197.3
1915–1920	45298.31	–336	44962.31	232.81	194.6	193.1
1921–1926	44607.21	–203.67	44403.54	239.18	186.5	185.6
1927–1932	43338.46	858.83	44197.29	253.26	171.1	174.5
1933–1938	41786.79	1374.67	43161.46	270.98	154.2	159.3
1939–1944	42702.91	521.83	43224.74	291.03	146.7	148.5
Single Year						
1945–1946	41397.13	596	41993.13	307	134.8	136.8

Source: Reprinted from “Republic of Hunger”, in Patnaik, U., Republic of Hunger and Other Essays (p. 127), 2008.

The reduction in calorific consumption per head by Indians since the Structural Adjustment Programs also illustrates the increasing impoverishment of health and nutrition of persons in the Global South. While by the conventional methods the poverty rate in India has decreased over decades after independence, measurements of poverty relating to health indicators saw increases since the 1980s. Figure 4 represents flows from Patnaiks' (2017) theory of imposed impoverishment and demand suppression in the Global South which demonstrates that sufficient land is able to be diverted for the needs of the Global North.

The situations between colonial and post-SAP India are extremely similar. Bagchi (2010), therefore, insists on looking at the colonial rule as “the equivalent of a two-century long IMF-style structural adjustment programme (SAP).” He writes:

Under the impact of the colonial SAP, hundreds of thousands of artisans lost their livelihood, productivity-increasing investment in agriculture shrank, and business communities in many parts of colonial India were pushed out of the most profitable avenues of trade or became subordinate collaborators of European businessmen. India witnessed some of the biggest famines in history, in Bengal from 1769, in south India from the 1780s down to the 1830s, and again between the 1870s and early 1900s in western and southern India, apart from many smaller famines that were not officially recognized (p.22).

As noted above, the history of the past 30 years in India and many other nations has, unfortunately, begun to resemble that of their colonial histories in terms of their agricultural sovereignty, nutrition, and consumption.

**Figure 5: Trend in Rural and Urban Poverty, 1973-1944 to 2009-2010, All-India (percent of persons)**

<i>Rural</i>	1973-1974	1983	1993-1994	2004-2005	2009-2010
A) Below 2400 calories poverty line	72	70	74.5	87	90.5
B) Below 2200 calories poverty line	56.4	56	58.5	69.5	75.5
<i>Urban</i>					
Below 2100 calories poverty line	49.6	58.8	57	64.5	73

Source: Reprinted from “Metropolitan Demand on Tropical Landmass”, in by Patnaik, P. & Patnaik, U., A Theory of Imperialism, (p. 114), 2017.

*The Formation of 'International Finance Capital'*

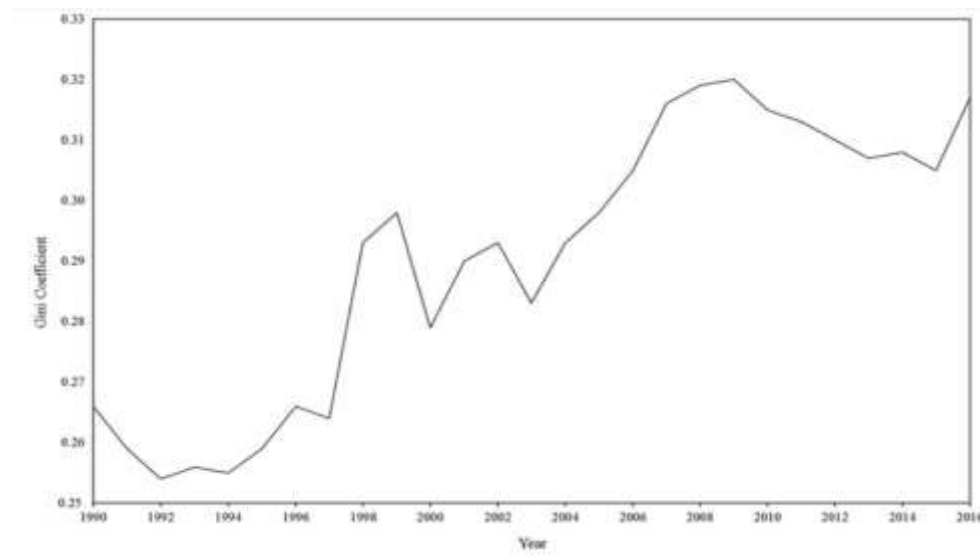
Through globalization, there has been a formation of a global structure of finance in which Northern corporates and investments play a pivotal role. Since the 1980s, capital has been moving out of the North Atlantic areas of developed nations and instead seeks the higher returns of the poorer countries and its availability of cheap labour. The central problem with these investments in the third world is that such mobile capital potentially holds excessive leverage over a government. They are also short-term flows of capital, which could devastate the economy in the event of capital flight. The case of South Korea's 1997 crisis below will explain this point further. South Korea's state-coordinated capitalism provided major dividends to the country until the early 1990s. Upon pressure from the domestic conglomerates (*chaebols*) and global investors, Korea agreed to the liberalization of its economic system. The government agreed to lose regulatory and coordinating responsibilities of the investments of Chaebol. Controls over short-term capital inflows, especially loans, were relaxed Crotty & Lee (2008). Foreign capital, now, flowed in excess. Chaebol wished to take considerable loans within the context of the unregulated environment. Consequently, debt to foreign banks tripled between 1994 and 1996. By late 1997, it reached \$120 billion, with about 20% of this due in early 1998. The devaluation of the Thai Thai currency created a domino effect over the whole region, which thoroughly destabilized this already precarious position of Korea. By January 1998, the exchange rate of the won *halved*. Crotty & Lee (2009) write:

Foreign banks rushed for the door, and portfolio investors pulled out of the region. Net private capital flows to Asia dropped from \$176 billion in 1996 to \$69 billion in 1997 and to near zero in 1998. Total net private financial flows into Korea fell by \$38 billion between 1996 and 1997, *almost eight percent of 1997 GDP*, a shock that would stagger *any* financial system, no matter how well run (p.5).

The IMF, during such a crisis, placed its demands of 'radical restructuring' to aid the foreign investors of North. It demanded the breakup of Korea's conglomerates (the *chaebol*) that

dominated the economy, to allow for the expansion of foreign capital, labour retrenchments and its informalization, and freedom for foreign investors in the share market (including majority takeovers of Korean firms). A massive transfer of Korean assets into foreign hands ensued. Samsung, POSCO and Hyundai became mostly foreign owned, as well as much of the banking sector. Since foreign investors alone were flush with funds, they jumped at the opportunity. Small firms were shut down, the working class was informalized, and inequality rose (Crotty & Lee, 2009).

**Figure 6: Inequality Trend, South Korea, 1990-2016 (Gini Coefficients)**



Source: Data from South Korean Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES)

Conclusively, South Korea, one of the leading industrialized nations from the South, was made to be 'adjusted' according to the dictates of global finance capital at a time in crisis, and experienced foreign takeover of its assets, loss in its independent economic policy, and drastic increase in income inequality from the year 1997 (demonstrated in Figure 6). Korean Financial Crisis presents itself as a perfect example of Lenin's belief that capital exports from the imperialist

nations flood and seek profitable investment elsewhere and essentially take over foreign enterprises.

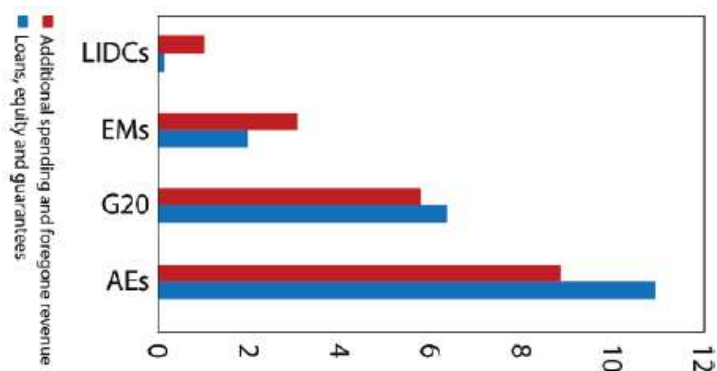
The foreign takeover of assets of Global South, a defining paradigm under colonialism, is also witnessed in India where dozens of debt-stressed companies have sold significant stakes to foreign companies at paltry prices. A *Bloomberg* report (2019) notes, “*distress is all that excites PE [private equity] investors now*” (Mukherjee, 2019, para. 4). Great distress and crisis bring greater scope for foreign investors to pick up assets at distress prices from desperate corporates. RUPE (2020) writes:

the growing weight of foreign-owned firms in the Indian corporate sector will further shape government policy in favour of foreign investors. In the event that any future government were to attempt to regulate them in the public interest, foreign firms could twist the government’s arm with the influence of their home countries (p.111).

Thus, the trend towards capital export from the North and takeover of nations’ assets in the Global South is a recurring phenomenon.

#### *The COVID-19 Pandemic and Fiscal Inequality*

**Figure 7: LIDCs = Low-Income Developing Countries; EMs = Emerging Markets; G20 = Group of Twenty; AEs = Advanced Economies.**



Source: “Fiscal Monitor Database”, International Monetary Fund, June 2020.

The economic condition made due to the coronavirus pandemic has created a precise watershed moment in the world economy. The outcome of this situation cannot be the continuation

of the previous scenarios. It will either be an intensification of the present system of global inequality or the creation of a radically different one. It seems, although, that the economy may be favouring the former.

Throughout the pandemic thus far, the livelihoods, employment, education, nutrition, and incomes of a large majority of the planet have been devastated. To counter the devastation to the world economy, nations and international institutions have attempted to provide fiscal and monetary stimuli into their economies to offset the damage caused by the pandemic. However, the size of this stimulus, clearly delineates a deep divide between nations in the Global North and South. Nearly all the developed nations have introduced massive fiscal stimulus, almost all of them providing close to 10% of the GDP as additional spending. The entire stimulus, including credit and equities, takes it to close to 20%. The situation for the developing countries, however, is strikingly different. The fiscal stimulus for the 'Emerging Markets' amounts to 6.2%, while for the 'Low Income Countries' it is a mere 2.4% of their GDP.

The most urgent question is the reason for such stark disparity. The answer lies in the double standards of the global financial system's approach towards public spending in the Global South and North. While the logic of neoliberalism over the last 40 years has demanded fiscal austerity and least public spending, the developed nations seem to have abandoned and are allowed to shift away from this strategy for now in the name of continuity and stability for an international economy also tied to developed nations. The case for Global South, however, has been very different. The system has not permitted similar inflow and has instead exploited dependence of the Global South on the foreign inflow of capital for economic development. On South's low spending, Ghosh and Chandrashekar (2021) write,

One reason is the fear that enhanced deficit spending could trigger the flight of foreign investors, especially from financial markets. A feature of recent capital account trends even

in poor countries is the growing reliance on private sources of capital. [...] Private foreign creditors and investors abhor proactive fiscal policy measures. So, the accumulated presence of private foreign debt and investments generate fears that resorting to deficit spending may cause the exit of this capital (paragraph 9).

Duvviri Subbarao, the former governor of Reserve Bank of India, stated:

Global markets are much less forgiving of unconventional policies by emerging market central banks [...] Rich countries can afford to throw the kitchen sink at the crisis because they have the firepower and they issue debt in currencies that others crave. Emerging markets don't have that luxury (RUPE, 2020, p. 48).

The 'conditions' on which these loans have been provided to the developing countries by the IMF and other institutes have been even worse. In a recent analysis by Oxfam (2020) has found that for 81 countries, 76 out of 91 IMF loans either explicitly or encouragingly call for further fiscal austerity. For example, Ecuador has been 'advised' to retreat from increases in healthcare spending, stop cash transfers to the unemployed, and cut fuel subsidies (Oxfam 2020). Nine countries, such as Angola and Nigeria, might have to introduce or increase the collection of value-added taxes (VAT), which apply to everyday products like food, clothing, and household supplies. The resulting impacts falls disproportionately on impoverished and marginalized communities. Additionally, 22 countries, including Barbados, El Salvador, Lesotho and Tunisia, have been encouraged to cut public sector employment and reduce wages.

During the colonial era, the extraction of tribute also required the income deflation of nations in Global South, of depressing of their domestic demand so that maximum surplus could be exported without the rise of the threat of inflation to the metropolitan currency. For Patnaik and Patnaik (2017), this mechanism of income deflation, executed through wage cuts, decreasing their purchasing power, privatization, shutting social programmes, is fundamental to the process of imperialism. As demonstrated, this financial imperative is eerily similar to the assault on India's food sovereignty and nutritional health, on the Korean labour's purchasing power, and on the

‘fiscal austerity’ measures espoused by the IMF since the 1980s and especially throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

These measures highlight the continuing inequalities within the relationship between the Global South and North and confirm that the world economy is now increasingly structured in such a manner that it resembles the economic mechanisms present during the era of colonialism.

### **Conclusion**

The world has experienced turbulent changes in the past 500 years. Through an examination of the relations between the Global North and South in its respective historical context, imperialism has been demonstrated as being alive and well in the continued relationship within the international economy. Persistent structural inequality under imperialism represents the fundamental inequality in the present world. Further, while situations after World War II had significant potential for creating a more equal economic relationship between ex-colonies and ex-colonial nations, efforts to democratize wealth were, unfortunately, in vain.

Through a holistic examination of the global economy in sectors such as trade, agriculture, finance capital, and health, the onset of ‘neoliberalism’ illuminates the ongoing reinstatement of similar conditions and processes that existed during the era of imperialism. This can be observed through increasing inequality, diversion of the resources of the South according to the needs of the North, declining living standards, the foreign takeover of assets, and the increasing *influence* of international finance capital over the *policies* of Global South nations, exemplified by the *fiscal inequality* during COVID-19. An important aspect of imperialism which requires further investigation is the deindustrialization process of the Global South and the extent to which this process continues to impact dependency on imports from the North.

There is significant overlap today of the same processes of imperialism which existed before the independence of colonized nations. Therefore, there are quantitative and qualitative similarities between the two periods considered within the scope of this research. However, are still many opportunities to contribute to this paradigm of research considering the historical imperial context of global economic relations. Certainly, the global economy is moving towards a more aggravating, polarising situation, and the further developments will be of interest to the analyst. Specifically, the inequality of fiscal strength highlighted by COVID-19 will especially be an important issue demanding immediate research and attention of policymakers.

## References

- Anghie, A. (2019). Inequality, Human Rights, and the New International Economic Order. *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 10(3), 429-442. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hum.2019.0016>.
- Bagchi, A.K. (1976). *Essays in Honour of Professor S.C Sarkar*. New Delhi: People's Publishing House.
- Bagchi, A.K. (2010). *Colonialism and Indian Economy*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Bell, D. (2010). John Stuart Mill on Colonies. *Political Theory*. 38(1), 34-64. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591709348186>
- Brenner, Robert. (2006). *The Economics of Global Turbulence*. London: Verso.
- Chandrashekhkar, C.P. & Ghosh, J. (2021, Jan 11). The post-Covid world is set for a surge in inequality. The Hindu BusinessLine, India. <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/columns/c-p-chandrasekhar/the-post-covid-world-is-set-for-a-surge-in-inequality/article33551763.ece>
- Crotty, J., & Lee, K. K. (2009). Was IMF-Imposed Economic Regime Change in Korea Justified? The Political Economy of IMF Intervention. *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 41(2), 149–169. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0486613409331422>
- Gallagher, J., & Robinson, R. (1953). The Imperialism of Free Trade. *The Economic History Review*, 6(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2591017>
- Gilman, N. (2015). The New International Economic Order: A Reintroduction. *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*. 6(1). 1-16.
- Grilli, E. R. and Yang, M. C. (1988). Primary Commodity Prices, Manufactured Goods Prices, and the Terms of Trade of Developing Countries: What the Long Run Shows, *World Bank*

- Economic Review*, 2(1), 1-47,  
<https://EconPapers.repec.org/RePEc:oup:wbecrv:v:2:y:1988:i:1:p:1-47>
- Lees, N. (2021). The Brandt Line after forty years: The more North–South relations change, the more they stay the same? *Review of International Studies*, 47(1), 85-106.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S026021052000039X>
- Lenin, V. (2010). *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Delhi: People’s Publishing House.
- Maddison, A. (2008), The West and the Rest in the World Economy: 1000 A.D - 2030, *World Economics*, 9(4), p. 75-100, <https://EconPapers.repec.org/RePEc:wej:wldecn:355>
- Mansury, Y. & Cho, J. (2019). Household Characteristics at the Bottom, the Typical, and the Top of the 2016 Income Distribution in South Korea: A Quantile Regression Analysis. *Regional Science Policy & Practice*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/rsp3.12177>
- Oxfam. (2020, October 12) *IMF paves way for new era of austerity post-COVID-19*.  
<https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/imf-paves-way-new-era-austerity-post-COVID-19>
- Patnaik, P. & Patnaik, U. (2017). *A Theory of Imperialism*. New York: Colombia University Press.
- Patnaik, U. (2008). *The Republic of Hunger and Other Essays*. Delhi: Three Essays Collective.
- Peet, R. (2003). *Unholy Trinity: The IMF, World Bank and WTO*. London: Zed Books
- Prashad, V. (2007). *The Darker Nations: A People’s History of the Third World*. New York: The New Press.
- RUPE, Research Unit for Political Economy. (2020). *Crisis and Predation: COVID-19, India and Global Finance*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Seeley, J. R. (1885) *The Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures*. London: Macmillan.

**The widening gap between the Uighur and the Han Chinese in the Xinjiang Region: A literature study on how policy changes, the new economic paradigm and the control over mass media affect social cohesion**

Tomas Bilevicius, Briek Lathouwers, Elsa Lotten M Vallgård, and Sofia Xavier Villafaña Santos,  
Vrije Universiteit Brussel and Ghent University

**Abstract**

The conflict between the Chinese government and the Uighur minority is examined through the lenses of sociology, communication, and political science studies in this interdisciplinary paper. It responds to the research question, "How do the autonomous region's political structure, the shift in the economic paradigm, and control over mass media fuel the loss of social cohesion in the Xinjiang Uighur conflict?" According to the sociological perspective, the long-term turmoil in the Xinjiang region is caused by a lack of social cohesion and inequality. Furthermore, Weber's theory of social stratification is being used to explain the formation of Han-Chinese stable power. China's mass media is state-owned but uniquely liberalized, giving Uighurs the opportunity to be stereotyped negatively. Although Xinjiang is designated as an autonomous region, it lacks autonomy, and strong ethnic boundaries separate the minority from the majority. This paper concludes that the region's structure, social organization, and mass media all contribute to the polarization and inequality between Uighurs and the Chinese government.

**Keywords:** Uighurs, China, Xinjiang, social class, media, stereotyping

## Introduction

Conflicts between different communities within polities have occurred all over the world at various points in time and space. They differ in shape, size, and form, and are typically found between dominant and dominated, or majority and minority. While the majority of these conflicts in liberal nation-states make their way into public debate and consideration, others are more difficult to identify for a variety of reasons. This phenomenon will be referred to as a "hidden conflict" in this paper. The conflict between a Chinese government and the Chinese minority, the Uighur, will be discussed in this paper. On one side of this conflict is the Chinese government, which is led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and seeks full sovereignty over the country. The Xinjiang region is rich in essential natural resources such as oil and coal, as well as having political significance due to its proximity to Russia and the rest of Central Asia (Towadi, 2021). It is also home to the ethnic Uighur minority, who have a distinct culture, religion, and language from Han-Chinese. Over the years, China has attempted to suppress this conflict through a variety of means, including surveillance of the minority, as well as forced assimilation in religion and language (Terhune, 2016; Towadi, 2021). The government's suppression could also be seen in the formation of the People's Liberation Army's pseudo-military organization, the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XCPP). This organization works to enforce and ensure compliance with Uighur-specific laws, as well as to ensure that they are followed (Terhune, 2016). Some scholars consider China's government actions in the Uighur conflict to be "cultural genocide" (Finnegan, 2020, p. 17). The Uighur minority, on the other hand, wants the Xinjiang region to become an independent state (Terhune, 2016). The region accounts for roughly one-sixth of China's territory, and Uighurs make up roughly 45 percent of the 19 million people who live there (LibGuides: Chinese Ethnic Groups: Overview Statistics, 2021). Han-Chinese people are increasingly

migrating to Xinjiang and imposing their culture, while Uighur culture is being repressed, partly by law (Axelsson, 2008). Furthermore, the Uighur are an ethnicity that is sometimes organized in smaller, autonomous organizations that are religious and sometimes radicalized (Soloshcheva, 2017). The end of the Cultural Revolution, the opening up of the free market from the 1960s to the 1980s, and the effects on social cohesion in the region are critical to understand the purposes of this paper. The planned economy had resulted in famine and political chaos, and Mao Zedong wanted to maintain his political power and strength by launching the Cultural Revolution (MacFarquhar, 2011). Only ten years later, following Mao's death in 1976, the emergence of Deng Xiaoping as the paramount leader of the People's Republic of China (PRC) marked the end of the Cultural Revolution and the start of a period of economic reforms known as "Boluan Fanzheng" (*eliminating chaos and returning to normal*). The primary goal of these reforms, which included the opening of the Chinese market, was to achieve Xiao-Kang (*a relatively comfortable life*) levels of prosperity (Wong, 1998). We assume that the transition to a free-market economy had several significant side effects, which this paper will investigate.

In this paper, we attempt to address the loss of social cohesion in the Xinjiang region by answering the research question: "How do the autonomous region's political structure, the shift in economic paradigm, and control over mass media fuel the loss of social cohesion in the Uighur conflict in Xinjiang?" As the topic of social cohesion in the Xinjiang region is understudied in academia, the goal of this paper is to identify and explore objective and subjective reasons for Uighur oppression using the grounded theory approach. The study of the formation and maintenance of social cohesion is a complex process that necessitates an interdisciplinary approach for a more in-depth understanding. Our thesis asserts, that social changes, state-controlled

communication, and the political dominance of the CCP are fuelling the oppression of the Uighur community in Xinjiang.

### **Literature Review**

We draw on classical and critical thinkers such as Marx, Weber, and Gramsci to understand and explain the lack of social cohesion in the Xinjiang region. To comprehend the effects of mass media on the population, Marx critical theory is applied. According to Marxists, the relations of production articulate themselves through dominance, and thus power relations pervade society (Dickens, 2003). By investigating the economic models' structures of the PRC mass media, this article applies this theory to the PRC mass media in order to understand the effects of underlying power relations in shaping the media in China. Furthermore, we employ Weber's (1921) theoretical framework to comprehend how the dynamics of explicit inequality operate in the Xinjiang region. Weber argues that modern societies are becoming less organized on the basis of tradition, personal ties, and beliefs, while they rely more on rationalization, procedures, standardization, and impersonality (O'Neill, 1986). He argues that in pre-capitalist societies life chances were largely determined by ascriptive characteristics, while in capitalistic societies they depend on the individual's placement in the market. Thus, capitalism destroys old ways of allocating life-chances and replaces that with more impersonal, rational procedures.

Contrary to Marx, Weber argues that modern societies are defined by multiple principles of social division (whilst for Marx modes of production are dominant). He underlines three main principles of social stratification: 1) class, which in economic sense is defined by the market position; 2) status-group, which refers to stronger awareness of being in a group and sharing the same sub-culture; 3) party, which refers to a group that is created to pursue common goals. Weber argues that these three principles can be arranged in continuum by the level of its 'groupness'

starting from the 'class' (least) and finishing with 'party' (most). He argues that the three criteria often align, so that dominant-classes have their own dominant-status-groups and their own dominant-parties. The combination of three divisional principles forms a stable power (Weber, 1921) Albeit Marx theory provides a powerful lens to study and understand inequality, more than single-dimensional approach is needed. Thus, the principles provided by Weber will be applied to study the loss of cohesion and power relations between Uighur and Han. Additionally, to elaborate further on the emergence of Han' dominance, we presume that the loss of social cohesion can to a large extent be ascribed to the dominance of the mass media and the governmental control. This phenomenon will be analysed from both macro and micro perspectives.

From a macro perspective, it is evident that China's mass media sector is partially liberalized, resulting in a phenomenon of coexistence of two opposing ideologies (Hearn-Branaman, 2009). However, this model appears to provide the PRC government with a powerful tool of dominance and promotes media commodification. Furthermore, the cultivation theory and the schemata theory can be applied from a micro-perspective. According to the cultivation theory, media is a part of people's socializing processes, and thus the more people who are exposed to communication of a certain value as negative or positive, the more likely it is that consumers will conform to that idea (Potter, 1994). This is especially likely if the value corresponds to societal norms (Mosharafa, 2015). The schemata theory, on the other hand, helps to explain how cognitive mental schemas are constantly reducing and generalizing influences from the world perceived by the individual. Thus, if a particular phenomenon is repeatedly presented in a negative light, negative stereotypes and feelings about that object will emerge, resulting in the formation of a specific cognitive mental schema (McVee, 2015). Finally, to round out our analysis of the hidden conflict, we will look at macro and micro explanations of the conflict from a political science

perspective. The Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States will be used for an analysis at the macro level (Newton, K. & Van Deth, J., 2016). The Convention listed four key elements that a state must have in order to be considered a state: (1) a permanent population, (2) a defined territory, (3) a government, and (4) the ability to engage in relations with other states (Montevideo convention on the Rights and Duties of the states, 1933). Furthermore, from a micro perspective, we draw on Barth's theory of "ethnic boundaries" (1998). According to him, a cultural entity is not founded on shared cultural norms and values, but rather on viewing a common culture as a result or implication rather than a primary characteristic of an ethnic group (Barth, 1998). With the culture-bearing aspect of a culture as the primary characteristic, ethnic groups are recognized and determined based on the morphological characteristics they possess. This type of 'culture-identifying' necessitates a preconceived point of view (Barth, 1998). To avoid this bias, Barth contends that group boundaries are a two-way construct. Each individual is a human being with a unique set of characteristics (e.g., religion, language, race, behaviour). This means that those characteristics can be used to determine whether or not a person identifies with a group (Han, 2010). A person does not have complete freedom to choose which group to identify with because certain characteristics are part of the given set that are inherited through personal descent (Chandra & Wilkinson, 2008). The ability to identify with a group is dependent and constrained by external processes such as social confrontation and categorization. It is only during conflict that different potential group members realize how similar they are with the people they have an interaction with, or opposite, how different they are (Han, 2010). Understanding the theories of classical authors and conventions in different social sciences disciplines will, therefore, help us to analyse the intricacies of media coverage in the country, socioeconomic stratification as well as territorial

status of the region which are rooted in the complex power struggle between dominant and dominated groups in the Xinjiang region in China.

### **The Uighur Dilemma from a Weberian Perspective**

In 2010, China overtook the United States as the world's second largest economy, despite having one of the world's oldest and largest societies. When we examine China's composition more closely, we can see significant geographical and societal divisions. Several indicators show that China underwent structural transformations during the last century. Among these, life expectancy at birth nearly doubled, from 44 years in 1960 to 78 years in 2018. (WorldBank.org, 2021). Although this development appears to be positive at first glance, the question is whether it benefited all social groups equally. The Xinjiang region experienced dramatic changes in the last century, the effects of which can be seen in the challenges that the community faces today. The end of the Cultural Revolution and the era of Deng Xiaoping saw the establishment of a state-controlled market economy, with the privatization of state-owned enterprises and the disintegration of people communes. This was accompanied by the state-orchestrated migration of Han people into Xinjiang, with the goal to slowdown the reproduction of Uighur and in the long term to destroy the community. Eventually, the new societal value system that came with the market economy eroded the state-sponsored socio-economic cohesion within the country. The conflict between Uighur and Han is based not only on income or economic inequality, but as well social status and political power dynamics which accompanied China's structural transformation.

To comprehend the growing discontent in Xinjiang, as well as the Uighur insurgency, the social cohesion theory must be considered. It is especially useful in understanding China's rapid social changes since the 1970s. The concepts of neighbourhood, community, and social cohesion were central to twentieth-century sociology in the Western world. "Shared spaces, close kinship

links, shared religious and moral values were being replaced by anonymity, individualism, and competition" (Forrest & Kicalearns, 2001, p. 1) as a result of widespread urbanization. Special consideration was given to social cohesion because of these transformations. This is a "glue" in society that "involves building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income, and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges, and that they are members of the same community" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 13). People's communes were the highest of the three administrative bodies in Chinese rural areas between the late 1950s and the early 1980s. During the Cultural Revolution, communes served governmental, political, and economic functions, and they oversaw collective activities such as labour and meal preparation, allowing workers to share local welfare. In Xinjiang, these communes served as a material foundation for social cohesion.

Despite the fact that the Uighur insurgency existed prior to the establishment of the People's Republic, the 1960s and 1970s were relatively peaceful decades. However, the Uighur insurgency re-emerged in the 1980s following the fall of Mao's regime; it escalated in the late 1990s and culminated in a series of terroristic attacks before the 2008 Beijing Olympics, as well as a riot in Urumqi in 2009: "the insurgency's development curve closely resembled the growth trend of Islamic radicalism in the region" (Zhao, 2010, p. 40). This evolution is inextricably linked to the transformation of the region's social cohesion. With the collapse of the collective economy and the introduction of the market economy in China, economic relationships between individuals became more competitive, and the growing economic gap between Uighur and Han, who are now mass immigrants, led to social estrangement (Zhao, 2010). As a result of the growing socioeconomic divide, each group developed implicit trust for their own in-group and distrust for the out-group (Zhang et al., 2013). Turok et al. (2005) defined social cohesion as having five major dimensions:

1) material condition; 2) passive social relationships; 3) active social relationships; 4) social inclusion; and 5) disparity in access to opportunities or material circumstances. The material condition serves as a foundation for all of the other dimensions. With the emergence of the new economic paradigm of market capitalism, the social class divide became even more pronounced. As a result, the threat to social cohesion posed by the rise of Uighur insurgency and Islamic radicalization can be explored further from the interconnected perspectives of social class relations, economic stratification, and political representation.

### **Social Class and Economic Stratification**

Historically, the concept of social class has been at the heart of sociology. As previously stated, social class and inequalities can be examined using various sociological accounts. In this context, employing the Weberian approach to social stratification aids in delving deeper into the various factors that contribute to the dynamics of explicit inequality. Although research on ethnicity and its relationship to economic inequality in Xinjiang is limited, existing research points to ethnic differences in schooling (Hannum & Xie, 1998) and labour market discrimination (Mackerras, 2001) as important reasons for Uighur and Han income inequality. Zhao (2010) emphasizes in her research that a sectoral distinction approach could be used to analyse income inequalities in the region. Although there is no evidence of significant income disparities between Uighur and Han workers in the state sector, research shows significant income disparities between Uighur and Han workers in the non-state sector. "The exposure of the state sector and non-state sectors to market competition and affirmative action differs, and this has implications for intergroup inequality" (Zhao, 2010, p. 146). These distinctions could be attributed to the market liberalization process. Following the implementation of a liberal market system, non-state firms in China had to become more efficient and profitable. As a result, they hire and compensate

employees based on their expected productivity. Because the majority of the outcomes generated in non-sector firms are the result of collaborative efforts, determining an individual employee's productivity is difficult.

Consequently, employers tend to rank employees based on characteristics thought to be associated with productivity, such as loyalty to the company, ability to work in a team, and inter-ethnic harmony with Han colleagues (Zhao, 2010): "[b]ecause the majority of employers are Han Chinese, Uighur workers are at a disadvantage in this subjective ranking process. Desirable characteristics are unfairly assigned to Han workers during this process" (Zhao, 2010, p. 147). According to Zhao's (2005) research, Uighur are less likely than Han to work in the state sector, join the CCP (Uighur – 13%, Han – 30%), or have a father who is a state worker (32,2% and 49,3% respectively). The Uighur respondents are less educated than the Han respondents, but the gap is not large. The average income of Uighur workers is 892,00 yuan (137,15 US dollars), while the average income of Han workers is 1141,00 yuan (175,44 US dollars), representing a 21,8% income difference between the two ethnic groups. The unequal variation in income persists even after controlling for education, health, full-time employment, membership in China's Communist Party, and having a father state worker. Collectively, economic isolation, social marginalization and perception of social disparity and injustice was the primary cause of the increasing thirst for orthodox and conservative Islam among the Uighur "who now find themselves greatly unsatisfied with and largely marginalized by the society and as a result turn to religion to seek relief, consolation, and hope" (Zhao, 2010). Thus, when analysing the economic differences of social class in Xinjiang as a result of market liberalisation transformations using Weber's theoretical framework, the Han take a dominant position.

## Political Power

The other category described by Weber is “party” – i.e., a group that is deliberately developed to realize collective goals and acquire power (Weber, 1924, p. 938). The ability of Uighurs to associate can be discussed in two contexts: within the CCP and within their own organizations. When we examine CCP membership, we first notice that when ethnicity is controlled for, membership shows a vast majority of Han representation. According to data published by the CCP State Council Information Office, from 2009 to 2019, CCP membership increased from 78 million to 92 million, but Han representation decreased from 93,42% to 92,60% (with an absolute increase of 12,24 million), while ethnic minority representation increased from 6,48% to 7,30% (increase of 1,67 million) (Statista, 2020). To control ethnic minorities' influence within the CCP, it could be assumed that the Party follows careful ethnicity representation when confirming new admissions (Li, 2016). Furthermore, it is critical to pay attention to the representation of CCP authorities in the regions, as well as ethnic minority group representatives who play important roles in implementing CCP policies in the regions. “A review of the status of ethnic minority leaders in China, especially in minority autonomous regions, can help shed light on the dilemmas that the top leadership confronts with respect to ethnic tensions” (Li, 2016, p. 2). Han representation in the 17<sup>th</sup> Central Committee amounted to 89,2%, while Uighur only of 0,8%. These differences imply that Uighur’s representation in the existing schemes of governing could not be considered as effective.

If the Uighurs do not feel politically represented by the existing governing structures, it should be investigated how the community organizes itself in other ways. When Xinjiang's economy began to boom in the 1980s, it brought with it a slew of social problems. As “most of Muslim communities in Central Asia have no strong traditions of individual entrepreneurship and

are not very adaptive to or competitive in a market economy” (Zhao, 2010, p. 47), the introduction of liberal market economy in China pushed them towards religiosity where Uighurs felt that their values are being represented. Economic isolation of Uighur, social marginalization, and perception of social disparity and injustice led to declining cohesion. The primary consequence of this was the increasing need of conservative Islam among Uighurs, who turn to religion “to seek relief, consolation and hope” (Zhao, 2010, p. 45). Since the 1990s, Islamic puritanism has grown in popularity among Uighurs. The strong unrepresentativeness in the CCP, as well as the widening gap between Uighur and Han, pushed some Uighurs to seek relief through religious social action. However, some scholars underline that “desire of the Uighurs to fight for freedom has successfully been used by terrorist organisations, such as Al Qaeda and ISIL, to penetrate into the minds of these Chinese separatists and make them fight in different countries, even more so than in the PRC” (Soloshcheva, 2017, p. 422). The religious Islamic Uighur community in Xinjiang could be then considered as a Weberian “party”, as members of this group are consciously aware of the membership to a community and consider the goals described in the religious texts as the leading goals of their group (Li, 2016; Weber, 1921).

To conclude, in this section we discussed the theory of social cohesion and its applications in Xinjiang. While analysing the matter from a Weberian framework of ‘groupness’, we observe that there is a wide gap, a polarization between the Han and the Uighur from economic, cultural, and political perspectives. While Uighurs are being dominated, Han holds a stable aligned power, as we were expecting from the analysis based on the Weberian framework (Li, 2016; Weber, 1921; Zhao, 2010). Further on, to understand how this subjectively and objectively inferior Uighur view is being created we are going to analyse how the mass media in China operates. The following

section will try to explain the role of media in reinforcing dominant discourse and shaping the perceptions about Uighur people.

### **Duality of Capitalism and Communism**

From private communication between two people or groups to mass communication in society, media has been an important variable in analysing agency and society for centuries. While conducting research on the case of media ownership and influence over society and individuals in China, it is important to understand that “news value, and the flow of information in general, is connected to cultural values, to social and political contexts, and to power relations” (Boden, 2016, p. 122). As we’ve noticed in our research, most of the Western communication studies theories concentrate on the Eurocentric media analysis where the values of market-capitalism, neo-liberalism, individualism, and consumerism and concepts such as equality and democracy are considered as constants that are rooted in the past of Western history and philosophy (Anievas & Nişancioğlu, 2015).

On the other side of the spectrum, Sinocentrism could also influence us with a biased Chinese perspective. Whilst European history is built on the Roman-Greek tradition and gives a high value for speaking in public, debating, arguing, reaching consensus, obtaining information, and defending the freedom of speech, China with its Confucian background traditionally has one centre of authority and a centralized dominant discourse that needs to be followed (Boden, 2016). This leads us presume that researching the media’s systems and the media’s influence over individuals solely based on the Western theories and philosophical perspectives leads to Eurocentric results. Therefore, in our research, we are trying to be highly aware of the application of these theories.

## **Political Economy of Communication**

In comparison to Western media systems, the analysis of China's mass media structure provides us with unusual insights. The Chinese economic regime allows the government to shape the masses' attitudes toward the Uighur population. While the media sector in the West is mostly liberalized and market-based (Albarran, 2010), we find a partially liberalized sector in China that is ideologically dualistic – representing both capitalistic and communist values (Hearn-Branaman, 2009). Industrialization and the rise of capitalism resulted in the separation of the political and economic spheres in the Western world. In the People's Republic of China, the media economy is inextricably linked to political power (Pan, 2017). Using Marxist critical theory, we can identify the characteristics of media control and ownership that shape the content of the media in China, as well as the implications for Uighur attitudes.

China's control over the media goes back to the founding of the People's Republic. Under Mao's rule (1949-1976), the central government owned and controlled all the media (Kuhnhen, Lee & Zhang, 2020): “[it was] largely [used] as a propaganda tool by the Chinese Communist Party” (Pan, 2017, p. 113). During this time propaganda in the mass media was used to foster citizens loyalty towards the regime and to promote a variety of economic and social policies, including “one-child” policy (Pan, 2017). However, from 1980s with the introduction of free market mechanisms and China's integration into the global economy, the country's commercial media started adopting certain characteristics of the Western media. China's economic liberalization caused the media reform as the PRC was not able anymore to fund state-owned structures, including the media sector (Kuhnhen, Lee & Zhang, 2020). Before the reform, the government was not only paying for the production and distribution of media goods, but these were also distributed for free. During the economic liberalization, the government reduced its

financial burden by requiring the media to become more profitable and able to self-sustain, while remaining state owned (Hong, 2014). The media liberalization was implemented in several ways (Kuhnenn, Lee & Zhang, 2020). For example, the government decentralized the media sector at the local level, as long as local entities were following the national media guidelines, set by the CCP. A fierce competition to earn revenue from advertising and subscriptions drove journalists and reporters to cater to audience interests and tastes more effectively (Chan, 1993). The increase and diversification of the media, however, did not bring about more media freedom, as the Chinese government adopted comprehensive measures to harness market power for its own objectives (Zhao, 2000). According to Pan (2017), the state's monopoly on collection and delivery of information was maintained, as "the co-optation of media professionals by business owners aligned with the Party, and a variety of financial incentives have become effective instruments of media capture" (Pan, 2017, p. 114). Moreover, when China joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, the media was one of the few sectors which remained closed to foreign ownership or operation under the WTO's "preferential treatment to developing countries" clause (Lee, 2003, p. 13). Today, the media's sector remains vastly owned by the government or government-aligned private capital. Finally, the circulation of media in China remains restricted: the purchase of media units between different regions is prohibited (Hearns-Branaman, 2009). According to Hearns-Branaman (2009) this phenomenon is the contrary to that is expected by Western media studies, which claim that with the market liberalization state steps away from the media ownership or explicit direct control over its contents.

### **Hegemony and Commodification of Media**

The ideas of the liberalization of the media sector in China are linked to the concept of hegemony as described by Antonio Gramsci. This refers to the control over society not through

force but persuasion and the consequential transmission of values (Gramsci, 1971). If in the Western world, the media are representing neo-liberal values such as individualism or consumerism (Anievas & Nişancıoğlu, 2015), in China this ideological domination is two-fold (Hearns-Branaman, 2009). First, as most of the media enterprises are fully responsible for their own survival, they must gain income from advertising. Therefore, they need to prioritize the content that would generate the highest profit. This transmits values as consumerism and individualism. However, as the media's capital movement and content are strongly influenced by the government, the hegemonic political ideology of dominant state regime is also transmitted. This is a unique phenomenon, hardly found in the Western world. To ensure their own survival, media went through a process known as commodification.

With the end of the government subsidies, media increasingly had to rely on a new paradigm, turning public information and content which are free and available for everyone in their nature, as private goods that could be sold for profit (Garnham, 2000). From 1978 to 1992 the number of television channels in China rose from 32 to 591 respectively and the number of radio stations between 1988 and 1992 increased from 93 to 666 (Kuhnenn, Lee & Zhang 2020). Consequently, the advertisement market was growing at an average of 40% annually (Chinese Advertising Association, 1993). Moreover, with the fast emergence of the internet, the spread of the social networks in China followed the same rapid pattern (Kantar, 2019). At the end of 2018, the social network "WeChat" counted 1,098,000,000 users, followed by "QQ" with 1,000,000,000, "Alipay" with 807,000,000 and "Taobao" with 636,000,000. Usually, in these social networks, native advertisement, where "advertisers create, or sponsor content intended to blend in with the editorial content" (Carlson, 2015, p. 850) is found, increasing the market for it in China, from 37,1 billion yuan in 2013 to 446,86 billion yuan in 2020 (Statista, 2020). According to Cramer-Flood

(2020) China is second in the world by the expenditure on media ads (105,25 billion USD), exceeding Western Europe's combined spending (Cramer-Flood, 2020).

When analysing the patterns of ownership, it is important to understand the differences in ownership models for various media. Today, television channels, newspapers and radios are still publicly owned, while social networks can be privately owned (Wang, 2020): "WeChat" and "QQ" are owned by "Tencent Holdings", "Alipay" and "Taoba" by the "Alibaba Group". These companies constitute a duopoly over the social networks of the country, limiting the competition and easing the control over their content. While the privatization of certain media platforms and the consequent need to rely on the advertisement is contributing to the diffusion of capitalistic values, the strong control of the government over the media units still protects the communist ideology. The hybrid-communism model did not fully liberalize the media market and this system is not without consequences at individual, subjective level. This, together with the control that the government has on the media's content, has an impact on the attitudes towards the Uighur in Xinjiang.

### **The Effects of Media on the Chinese Population**

Chinese mass media and mass communication is a valuable example of how media affects the population by promoting the hegemonic political ideology. Cultivation theory explains media's effect on the individuals (Mosharafa, 2015; Loisen & Joye, 2017) and suggests that media are a part of the enculturation process that individuals go through. This part of the socializing process is an ongoing with different factors that shape both the individual and their community. Even though it is hard to measure media's influence on society or individuals, it should be considered as a relevant factor (Mosharafa, 2015). However, the influence of media as a socializing element depends on how the communicated values stand in relation to other socializing segments (Potter,

1994). This means that if many segments of the society communicate the same norms and culture then that will have a stronger influence than when many pluralistic views are encountered (Mosharafa, 2015). Another factor is the quantity of the media. “TV viewers who say they are exposed to greater amounts of TV are predicted to be more likely to exhibit perceptions and beliefs that reflect the TV world messages” (Potter, 1994, p. 1). In China, the television usage among adults is 1,65 hours per day and the usage of computer and mobile devices is 5,11 hours per day (Yu, 2019). According to the cultivation theory the audience is active and selective, but not entirely resistant. This is in line with the schemata theory, that argues that new information is processed and constructed through a cultural cognitive filter and categorized in an ideal artefact. People who live in a society where some values are promoted will therefore to some extent comprehend new information in a way that confirms these values (McVee, 2015). According to schemata and cultivation theories, if Chinese media consistently portrays a negative view of the Uighur, the majority of the Chinese population will likely conform to these values. According to the logic that China has a dominant media market with a consistent supply of values, the messages should affect the Chinese people and influence their ideologies (Mosharafa, 2015; Luqiu & Yang, 2018).

### **Power of Media in Creating the Character of ‘the bad Uighur’**

The Uighur in the Xinjiang region majorly stereotyped in two ways by the media (Axelsson, 2008). Firstly, when the media write about the Uighur it is often to show to the majority their exotic culture. The life in the region is romanticized but the people are seen as trivial and uncivilized. These notions belong to a colonial discourse which could be considered racist. The ‘others’ are defined as less than the norm: less educated and less cultivated (Axelsson, 2008). The purpose of this view is to enforce the picture of China as a multicultural, open, and diverse country (Luqiu & Yang, 2018). The second way of stereotyping the Uighur is to show them as threatening

Islamic radicals. This is done in different ways, for example by associating Uighur to terrorist organizations, Osama bin Laden or the 9/11 events (Luqiu & Yang, 2018). China often tries to explain these attitudes against Uighur by convincing that this is done to “win support in international politics” (Alexsson, 2008, p. 1). Luqiu and Yang (2018) explored islamophobia in the Chinese media. They scanned the Chinese news broadcaster CCTV.com with the keywords “Muslim”, “Xinjiang” and “Islam” for a period of ten years (2005 - 2015) and identified a clear misrepresentation.

Additionally, they determined that the number of articles depended on the global context the time, in order to maximize domestic benefits within the country. During these years 40,3% of all articles with the used keywords were related to conflict, 14% talked about anti-terrorism and 9% of the articles concerned extremism. The news coverage about Islam, Muslims and Xinjiang decreased significantly in 2010, because the “Arab Spring triggered comparisons to China’s internal situation, and CCP worried that Chinese citizens would be encouraged by the uprisings in different countries” (Luqiu & Yang, 2018, p. 609). The representation of the Uighurs is not only negative but is also limited. Given the cultivation and schemata theories discussed above, there are effects on the Chinese society’s attitudes towards Uighur and Muslims (Mosharafa, 2015; Luqiu & Yang, 2018). Uighur themselves subjectively express that they feel represented in a negative way and that the news coverage is insufficient. Also, they seem to believe that the general level of knowledge about Islam in China is low (Luqiu & Yang, 2018). The report shows that the Muslims are being structurally discriminated on different levels from government services to public service officials, and up to strangers. According to the Luqiu and Yang (2018) there is a clear non-linear correlation between the level of experienced discrimination and the level of stress among Uighur. The economic setting of the mass media sector in China provides with a powerful

tool to dominate over people's minds (Hearns-Branaman, 2009; Mosharafa, 2015). The quantitative research done by Luqiu and Yang (2018) provides us with evidence that this setting is being used to generate and create negative attitudes towards Uighur in Xinjiang.

This section discussed the structure of media ownership in China and how it relates to the Xinjiang conflict. The Chinese government's control of the media enables the CCP to maintain dominant values can be understood through Gramsci's concept of hegemony. This mainstream paradigm has thus solidified the image of 'bad Uighurs' through attitude formation based on stereotypes that benefit their ideologies. Given the complexities of the constantly deteriorating social cohesion and the powerful mass media sector, which is still heavily used for attitude formation, we will investigate further whether the Uighur in Xinjiang can be considered a nation and whether it has any tools to change the framework of the oppressive situation.

### **The Stateless Nation of the Uighurs**

Since the rise of the Greek city-state, as seen in Plato and Aristotle's writings over 2400 years ago, the concept of a state has fascinated political thinkers and philosophers. Beginning in the nineteenth century, the concept of state in the European context shifted increasingly toward that of nation-state, in which "members of the core national group see the state as belonging to them and consider the approximate territory of the state to be their" (Britannica, 2020). The Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1933) identifies four necessary conditions for defining a territorial organization as a state. Even though the Convention only had 19 signatories and was limited to American states, it is now recognized as customary law and is applied to all states around the world.

Firstly, the territorial dimension of the state is crucial, as it is the material base on which the sovereign rights of the country are exercised: "a state entails a territory that it considers to be

its own [...] To the territory of a state belongs the air space above it as well as its coastal waters” (Newton & van Deth, 2016). While many factors can explain the conflict in Xinjiang, the regional autonomy' is a source of tension that has exacerbated the conflict. The pressure from Beijing's policy swings to assimilate and unite the country under the CCP and the autonomy arrangements enacted to protect the territorial integrity and rights of the Uighur minority are inherently contradictory. The formalization of the region's territorial boundaries, as well as the promise of autonomy embodied in the name Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), provides space for Uyghur political imagination (Bovingdon, 2002). Since the Qing Empire's annexation of the region in 1759, the Xinjiang region has been largely under Chinese control. It has only had brief periods of independence in the last 250 years. Nonetheless, resistance movements continue to exist (Hyer, 2006). The history of the Xinjiang region demonstrates a long-term historical struggle for autonomy over the territory that Uighurs considered their home. However, since its annexation in 1949, Xinjiang has had no sovereignty over its own territory, which is now an integral part of the PRC.

Second, the concept of government intertwines with two fundamental facets. The first is the government's effectiveness, or the central power's actual ability to make and enforce decisions over the territory. The second characteristic is its independence, which is not to be taken literally: a government is only independent if the source of its sovereignty is independent, not dependent on the will or authority of another state. As a result, the concept of effective government is inextricably linked to that of sovereignty. This concept refers to a state's ability to act with complete freedom and independence within its own territory (Newton & Van Deth, 2016). Sovereignty has two equally important dimensions: external and internal. Externally, the state must be recognized as equal by other states, while internally, it must have legitimacy among its people

(Newton & Van Deth, 2016). These definitions are inextricably linked to the concept of "autonomy." Being autonomous is thus synonymous with being sovereign (Dworking, 1988). If the central government is the only fully sovereign body in a unitary state, "a central authority is combined with a degree of constitutionally defined autonomy for sub-central, territorial units of government" in a federal state (Newton & Van Deth, 2016, p. 86). Despite the fact that the adjective "autonomous" appears to imply some level of sovereignty in the region's name (Cornell, 2002; Bovington, 2004), Xinjiang does not fall under the principle of "one country, two systems," which grants a high degree of autonomy (as it is the case for the Hong Kong and Macao).

During the creation of Xinjiang in 1955 the CCP simultaneously promoted the idea that the region belonged to 13 different *minzu* groups (refers to ethnic minorities in China). They preached the idea of ethnic recognition, while counteracting the powerful political and demographic dominance of Uighur (Weiwuer et al., 1995). In 1954, more than 50% of the regional area was covered by autonomous counties, districts, townships, or prefectures, where Uighur accounted for less than 50% of the population (Zhuguang & Yongfu, 1996). By 1960, the government had annexed predominantly Uyghur regions, occupying one third of Xinjiang's territory (Atwood, 2004). The system of autonomies was designed, in theory, to give non-Han control over their designated units. In practice, it gave no power or ability to make a sovereign change. Cornell (2002) discovers that in subnational regions such as Xinjiang, institutionalization and support for distinct identities increases groups' "cohesion and willingness to act," as well as their capacity to organize themselves. While Cornell's (2002) argument explains minority group insurgency, it fails to explain why Xinjiang differs from China's other autonomous regions. One reason discovered was that most of the fundamental features Cornell considers standard in autonomous regions are either absent or present in a diminished form in Xinjiang. The Chinese Han have colonized the

region's government institutions and subordinated them to all levels of the CCP party structure (Bovingdon, 2004). Uighur and other *minzu* political leaders have been meticulously selected by the national government and forced to bolster disliked policies to ensure that these leaders do not develop popular constituency (Bovingdon, 2004). Therefore, while Beijing's policies in the region was meant to increase Uighur sense of collective identity, they in fact reduced the group ability to act collectively.

In addition, we can see a systematic national plan for *minzu* regional autonomy that secured a set of institutions, cultural and linguistic rights, and a carefully defined relationship between these institutions and the state (McMillen 1979; Shichor 2004). Despite the fact that the organizational principles for autonomous regions were implemented to secure sovereignty, this was contradicted in 1984, when PRC legislation implemented "confirmation measures" when recruiting college students, selecting employees in state companies, and training public officials. In articles stating that all autonomous government machines must "obey the Government Council," this law reveals the limits of the political system (Junde, 2001; Bovingdon, 2004). As a result, the Uighur have no sovereignty over the region: the local government is neither effective nor independent.

### **People and Cultural Boundaries**

A state would be unable to exist without its most important component – the people, who can be defined as "a group [...] whose common consciousness and identity make them a collective entity" (Newton & Van Deth, 2016). However, only when this group of people lives together, sharing a culture with a common language, religion, history, and symbols, does the state become a nation-state (Meyer et al., 1997). According to Newton and Van Deth (2016), when one government rules over many cultures, separatist movements and outbreak attempts are common.

The reason for this is that the population may reject internal sovereignty, and if this occurs, the state may be deemed illegitimate (Newton & Van Deth, 2016). The efforts of modern nation-states in nation-building are processes of demarcating or generating external boundaries and removing internal boundaries (Han, 2010). Structures in the social field, such as (political) institutions and power structures, can have a significant impact on the formation of boundaries (Wimmer, 2008).

As previously described, Barth's (1998) concept of ethnic boundaries can be applied to the people of Xinjiang. The first boundary marker to be noted is religion: while the majority of Han people are atheists, the majority of Uighur people are Muslim. Han (2010) discovered that dietary differences (due to the Halal-diet in Islam) demarcate a boundary between the two groups to a large extent. Being a religious entity is a type of intra-group ascription, and some Uighurs may regard Han-Chinese as unsanitary due to their diet (Han, 2010). A spatial difference could also be identified as a boundary maker. While the Uighur tend to live in the old towns of cities, the Han-Chinese prefer to live in the new towns. This suggests that there is significant residential segregation in Xinjiang's cities (Bellér-Hann, 2002). These concrete examples from Xinjiang society demonstrate how the mechanisms of ethnic boundary formation described by Barth can be applied in the region. It also demonstrates that policies are not the only factor influencing the segregation of two ethnic groups. The ethnic boundary is also maintained by the region's minority, reinforcing the government's duality (Bellér-Hann, 2002). Other consequences can also be identified, for example, increasing external categorization, as previously mentioned, leads to a decrease in within-group differences. The Uighurs have weak internal boundaries and strong external boundaries. We argue that people of Xinjiang can be considered a nation because they share a culture and a sense of belonging to the same group (Bellér-Hann, 2002; Han, 2010; Thum, 2012). To summarize, despite having a distinct ethnic boundary in Xinjiang, the Uighur minority

is a stateless nation. This is due to the ethnic group's strong feelings of cultural sharing. However, these nationalist sentiments lack political heft. The policies implemented to secure the region's sovereignty were gradually replaced by other policies that weakened the region's autonomy and functioning of its government, failing to secure the legal conditions to define it as a state.

## **Conclusion**

The ethnic conflict in Xinjiang is a complex matter which can only be fully grasped through an interdisciplinary perspective. In this paper we applied the perspectives of sociology, communication studies and political science to understand how the CCP policies, the change in economic paradigm and the control over mass media fuelled the loss of social cohesion in the Uighur conflict in Xinjiang.

Firstly, we conclude that the region of Xinjiang could not be considered as a nation–state, but rather as a stateless nation. The mix of policies implemented by the central government, together with the political system of the PRC and the ethnic boundaries in the region cause ethnical segregation of distinct groups who differ in their culture, religion, language, attitudes, and lifestyles. These divisive policies make it impossible for the constituencies to act in unity, and it denies autonomy for the region. Secondly, we observe that mass media setting in China is playing an important part in deepening the ethnic segregation. Based on our analysis using the schemata theory and cultivation theory, we presume that China is responsible for setting the majority's attitudes towards the Uighur minority. The well organised and highly controlled mass media sector in China provides with a powerful tool to dominate people's minds. We see that, through governmental control, media creates negative cognitive mental schemas towards the Uighur. This means that the Chinese population has patterns in their thinking formulated through time by the dominant mass media that connects the minority of Uighur to negative ideas, feelings, and

stereotypes (Mosharafa, 2015; Luqiu & Yang, 2018). Moreover, people in China are socialized to see the minorities negatively. In our research we consider that the Uighur experience discrimination subjectively and objectively, also because of the negative representation in the mass media. Eventually, the alienation of this stateless minority and the ability to control certain impression in the minds of the population are being translated into real-life societal consequences. This is seen from the weakening of the social cohesion and the widening gap between Uighur and Han. We observe that the difference is not only economic, but as well cultural and political. This division corresponds to Weber's pluralistic model approach, as the three principles align to form a dominant class, the Han maintain stable economic, social, and political power despite being a numerical minority in Xinjiang.

### **Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to thank Dr. D. Vandebroek, professor of sociology at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, and his teaching assistants F. Ali and H. Schneider for providing guidance, advice, and insight while preparing this article.

## References

- Advertising law of the people's republic of China. (n.d.). Ministry of Commerce People's republic of China. <http://english.mofcom.gov.cn/aarticle/lawsdata/chineselaw/200211/20021100053452.html>.
- Albarran, A. (2010). The Media and Communication Industries: A 21st Century Perspective. *ComHumanitas: Revista Científica De Comunicación*, 1(1), 59-68.
- Anievas, A. & Nişancıoğlu, K. (2015). *How the west came to rule: The geopolitical origins of capitalism* (first edition). Pluto Press.
- Atwood, C. P. (2004). *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire*. New York: Facts on File.
- Axelsson, M. (2008). *Uigurerna – de Andra*. Lund University, the Institution of Political Sciences, 1-28.
- Barth, F. (1998). *Ethnic groups and boundaries: The social organization of culture difference*. Waveland Press.
- Bellér-Hann, I. (2002). Temperamental Neighbors: Uighur-Han Relations in Xinjiang, Northwest China. *Imagined Differences: Hatred and the construction of identity*, (5), 57–81.
- Boden, J. (2016). Mass media: Playground of Stereotyping. *The international Communication Gazette*, 78(1-2), 21-136.
- Bovingdon, G. (2004) Autonomy in Xinjiang: Han Nationalist Imperatives and Uyghur Discontent. *Policy Studies*, 11, ix-77.
- Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2020, March 23). Nation-state. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/nation-state>

- Carlson, M. (2015). When news sites go native: Redefining the advertising–editorial divide in response to native advertising. *Journalism*, 16(7), 849–865. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884914545441>.
- Chan, J. M. (1993). Commercialization without Independence: Trends and Tensions of Media Development in China. *The China Review* (25), 1-21. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23451606>.
- Chandra, K., & Wilkinson, S. (2008). Measuring the effect of “ethnicity”. *Comparative Political Studies*, 41(4-5), 515-563. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414007313240>
- China Questions and Answers -- china.org.cn. (n.d.). China.Org.Cn. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/Q&A/161608.htm>
- Chinese Advertising Association. (1993). The ten major achievements of the prosperous advertising industry of China. *Chinese Advertising*, 4, 3–4.
- Cornell, S. E. (2002). Autonomy as a Source of Conflict: Caucasian Conflicts in Theoretical Perspective. *World Politics*, 54, 245–276.
- Cramer-Flood, E. (2020). How Our Ad Spending Outlook Has Changed for the US, China and the Rest of the World. *Insider Intelligence*. <https://www.emarketer.com/content/how-our-ad-spending-outlook-has-changed-us-china-rest-of-world>.
- Dickens, P. (2003). The labour process: How the underdog is kept under. *Society & Animals*, 11(1), 69-72.
- Dworkin, G. (1988). *The Theory and Practice of Autonomy* (first edition). Cambridge University Press.

- Finnegan, C. (2020). The Uyghur Minority in China: A Case Study of Cultural Genocide, Minority Rights and the Insufficiency of the International Legal Framework in Preventing State-Imposed Extinction. *Laws*, 9(1), 1- 20. [https://doi.org/ 10.3390/laws901000](https://doi.org/10.3390/laws901000).
- Forrest, R., & Kearns, A. (2001). Social Cohesion, Social Capital and the Neighbourhood. *Urban Studies*, 38(12), 2125–2143. <https://doi.org/10.1080%2F00420980120087081>.
- Garnham, N. (2000). *Emancipation, the Media, and Modernity: Arguments about the Media and Social Theory* (First edition). Oxford University Press.
- Gladney, D. C. (1990). The ethnogenesis of the Uighur. *Central Asian Survey*, 9(1), 1.28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634939008400687>.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. New York: International Publishers.
- Han, E. (2010), Boundaries, Discrimination, and Interethnic Conflict in Xinjiang, China. *International Journal of Violence*, 4(2), 244 – 256. <https://doi.org/10.4119/ijcv-2829>.
- Hannum, E., & Xie, Y. (1998). Ethnic Stratification in Northwest China: Occupational Differences between Han Chinese and National Minorities in Xinjiang, 1982-1990. *Demography*, 35(3), 323-333. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3004040>.
- Hearns-Branaman, J. (2009). A Political Economy of News Media in the People's Republic of China. *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*. 6(2), 119- 143.
- Hong, Y. (2014). Between corporate development and public service: The cultural system reform in the Chinese media sector. *Media, Culture & Society*, 36, 610-627.
- Hyer, E. (2006). China's policy towards Uighur nationalism. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 26(1), 75-86. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13602000600738731>

- Junde, A. (2001). Minzu quyue zizhifa shi zenyang xiugai de (How the law on minzu regional autonomy was amended). *Zhongguo minzu*, 4.
- Kantar (2019). China Social Media Landscape 2019. Research conducted by Kantar's CIC Intelligence. <https://www.kantar.com/inspiration/social-media/the-china-social-media-landscape-2019>
- Kuhnhen, M., Lee, M., & Zhang, W. (2020). Talking With the 'Hermit Regime'| Media Liberalization: Control and Consumption of Foreign Media in North Korea, China, and East Germany. *International Journal of Communication*, 14(17). <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/10902>.
- Li, C. (2016). Ethnic Minority Elites in China's Party-State Leadership: An Empirical Assessment. *China Leadership Monitor*, 20, 1–13. <https://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/CLM25CL.pdf>.
- LibGuides: Chinese Ethnic Groups: Overview Statistics. (2021, April 21). Library of the University of North Carolina. [https://guides.lib.unc.edu/china\\_ethnic/statistics](https://guides.lib.unc.edu/china_ethnic/statistics)
- Loisen, J & Joye, S. (2017). *On media and communication* (first edition). Acco Leuven.
- Luqiu, L. & Yang, F. (2018). Islamophobia in China: news coverage, stereotypes, and Chinese Muslims' perceptions of themselves and Islam. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 28(6), 598-619.
- MacFarquhar, R. (2011). *The Politics of China: Sixty Years of The People's Republic of China* (third edition). Publisher: Cambridge University Press.
- Macionis, J. J., & Plummer, K. (2012). *Sociology: A global introduction*. Harlow. England: Pearson/Prentice Hall.

- Mackerras, C. (2001), Xinjiang at the Turn of the Century: The Cause of Separatism. *Central Asia Survey*, 20(3), 298-299. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634930120095321>.
- Maxwell, J. (1996). *Social Dimensions of Economic Growth*. University of Alberta, Department of Economics.  
<https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.491.241&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- McVee, M. (2005). Schema Theory revisited. *Review of Educational Research*, 75(4). Pp: 531-566. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.3102/00346543075004531>.
- Meyer, J., Boli, J., Thomas, G. & Ramirez, F. (1997). World Society and the Nation-State. *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(1). Pp, 114-181.
- Montevideo convention on the Rights and Duties of the states. (1933, December 26). University of Oslo.
- Mosharafa, E. (2015). All you need to know about: The Cultivation theory. *Global Journal of Human-Social Sciences*, 15(8), 23-37. [http://95.179.161.193/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/558/All\\_you\\_Need\\_to\\_Know\\_About\\_The\\_Cultivati.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y](http://95.179.161.193/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/558/All_you_Need_to_Know_About_The_Cultivati.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y).
- Newton, K. & Van Deth, J. (2016). *Foundations of Comparative Politics* (third edition). Cambridge University Press.
- O'Neill, J. (1986). The disciplinary society: from Weber to Foucault. *British Journal of Sociology*, 37(1), 42-60.
- Pan, Y. (2017). Managed liberalization: Commercial media in the People's Republic of China. In A. Schiffrin. *Center for International Media Assistance*, 111–124.
- Potter, J. (1994). Cultivation theory and research: A methodological critique. *Journalism & Mass Communication Monographs*, 147(1), 1-22.

- Soloshcheva, M. A. (2017). The Uyghur Terrorism: Phenomenon and Genesis. *Iran & the Caucasus*, 21(4), 415-430.
- Statista. (2020). China's native advertising market revenue 2013–2020. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1066626/china-native-advertising-market-revenue/#:%7E:text=In%202017%2C%20the%20market%20revenue,billion%20yuan%20revenue%20in%202020.>
- Statista. (2020). Market share of TV programs in China 2018, by TV channel type. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/944975/china-market-share-of-tv-programs-by-tv-channel-type/>.
- Terhune, V. & Matusitz, J. (2016) The Uighur Versus the Chinese Government: An Application of Realistic Conflict Theory. *Journal of Applied Security Research*, 11(2), 139-148. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361610.2016.1137174>.
- Thum, R. (2012). Modular history: identity maintenance before Uyghur nationalism. *The Journal of Asian Studies* 71(3), 627-653. [http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract\\_S0021911812000629](http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0021911812000629).
- Towadi, M., Kasim. N.M., Rumawi. & Tahir, S.A. (2021). An Indication of China's Policy towards Uighur and its Implications by International Law Aspects. *Jambura Law Review*, 3(1), 55-71. <https://ejurnal.ung.ac.id/index.php/jalrev/index>.
- Turok, I., Kearns, A., Fitch, D., Flint, J., McKenzie, C., & Abbotts, J. (2006). *State of the English cities: Social cohesion*. Department of Communities and Local Government, London.
- Verhoest, Pascal. (2020). Introduction to the Political Economy of Communication [Lecture Recording]. Vrije Universiteit Brussels. <https://vub.cloud.panopto.eu/>.

- Wang, J. (2020). Regulation of digital media platforms: The case of China. *The Foundation for Law Justice and Society*.
- Weber, M. (1924). *Economy and Society* (Eds. Roth, G. & Wittich, C). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Wimmer, A. (2008). The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries: A Multilevel Process Theory. *American Journal of Sociology*, 113, 970 - 1022. <https://doi.org/10.1086/522803>.
- Wong, J. (1998). Xiao-Kang: Deng Xiaoping's socio-economic development target for China. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 7(17), 141-152. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10670569808724309>.
- WorldBank.org (n.d.). Life expectancy at BIRTH, TOTAL (years) - China. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN?end=2018&locations=CN&start=1960&view=chart>.
- Xingzhong, Y. (2004). From State Leadership to State Responsibility—Comments on the New PRC Law on Regional Autonomy of Ethnic Minorities [Working paper]. Chinese University. [www.cuhk.edu.hk/gpa/xzyu/work1.htm](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/gpa/xzyu/work1.htm).
- Weiwuer, X. & Tongjiju, Z. (1995). *Xinjiang Tongji Nianjian* (Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook) Beijing: Zhongguo Tongji Chubanshe.
- Yu, B. (2019). Distinct associations of computer/mobile devices use and TV watching with depressive symptoms in adults: A large population study in China. *Depression and Anxiety*, 36(9), 879-889.
- Zhang, S., Xu, M., Li, X., Fang, H., Yang, S., & Liu, J. (2013). Implicit trust between the Uyghur and the Han in Xinjiang, China. *PloS one*, 8(8), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0071829>.

- Zhao, T. (2010). Social Cohesion and Islamic Radicalization: Implications from the Uighur Insurgency. *Journal of Strategic Security*, 3(3), 39-52. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.3.3.4>.
- Zhao, Y. (2000). From commercialization to conglomeration: the transformation of the Chinese press within the orbit of the party state. *Journal of Communication* 50(2), 3-26. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2000.tb02839.x>.
- Zhuguang, Y., & Yongfu, M. (1996). *Xinjiang minzu guanxi yanjiu* (Research on minzu relations in Xinjiang). Urumchi: Xinjiang Renmin Chubanshe.

## **Populism, Inequality, and *Lëvizja Vetëvendosje* in Kosovo: Shaping Society Through Populist Discourses**

Rafael Campos-Gottardo, Wilfrid Laurier University

### **Abstract**

This paper examines Lëvizja VETËVENDOSJE's (LVV) support in Kosovo using a populist lens. Traditionally, scholars argue that support for LVV's populist rhetoric is due to ethnic nationalist factors. An additional explanation for the LVV's success is the inclusion of economic inequality in Kosovo in LVV's populist discourses and their division of society. Once the LVV included Kosovo's inequalities in their populist discourses they were able to achieve electoral success. The LVV and their leader Albin Kurti divide Kosovo's society into three groups through their discourse. These groups include the 'pure Albanian Kosovars', the 'corrupt' international and local Albanian 'elite', and the corrupt Serbian government. The 'corrupt international elite' force the local elite to support a dialogue with Serbia, drawing the 'elite's' attention away from inequality in Kosovo. Through their populist discourses, Albin Kurti and the LVV attempts to reshape political rhetoric in Kosovo to focus on issues of inequality and corruption.

**Key Words:** Populism, Inequality, VETËVENDOSJE, Kosovo, Albin Kurti, LVV

On February 15, 2021, the left-wing political party, *Lëvizja Vetëvendosje* (Self-Determination Movement in English or LVV for short), won a plurality of seats in the Kosovan parliament. The party's victory paved the way for their long-time party leader Albin Kurti to become Kosovo's prime minister again (Hajdari, February 15, 2021). Democracy Plus (2021) reports that LVV won 50.28% of the popular vote with a 48.8% voter turnout, which means that LVV is the largest party in the Kosovan parliament with 58 of the 120 seats (Hajdari, February 15, 2021). The LVV has been classified as a populist movement since its inception (Yabanci, 2015). Visoka (2017) believes that "LVV is a typical critical-populist movement that [has] embraced national-populism as an ideology of resistance" (p. 117).

Scholars often link LVV's appeal to the party's Albanian ethnic nationalism (Smajljaj, 2020; Visoka, 2017). This paper will provide deeper insight into the LVV's popularity by demonstrating that economic inequality is also a focus of the LVV's populist discourses *in lieu* of only ethnic nationalism. Therefore, the goal of this paper is to link the LVV party's firm stance on Serbia to their fight against corruption and their focus on economic inequality as it appears in their leaders' populist discourses. To analyze this phenomenon, I answer the following questions: (1) How has the LVV included the existing inequalities in Kosovo in their populist discourse? (2) How did these discourses lead to the LVV's 2021 electoral success? While answering these questions I argue that the LVV uses the concept of inequalities in their populist discourses to construct three groups in Kosovo's society. This paper uses Brubaker's (2019) definition of populism that divides society into three groups. These groups include the 'pure people,' the 'corrupt elite,' and the 'corrupt people' (Brubaker, 2019). In Kosovo 'pure people' are ignored by the ruling class or 'corrupt elite,' while the 'corrupt elite' panders to the 'corrupt people'

(Brubaker, 2019). Kurti identifies these groups as the ‘pure Kosovar Albanians,’ the ‘corrupt international and local Albanian elite’ and the ‘corrupt Serbian people.’

## **Methodology**

Methodologically, this paper uses thematic discourse analysis to study economic inequality in Kosovo through a populist lens (Boyatzis, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This paper identifies the following three measurable factors as Kosovo’s most pressing economic inequalities: low average incomes, high unemployment rates, and high levels of perceived corruption. These factors have worse indicators when compared to other European countries. These three factors are apparent in the populist discourses analyzed below. I analyzed Kosovo’s Prime Minister Albin Kurti’s and Kosovo’s President Vjosa Osmani’s speeches and interviews that appeared in a variety of English language sources. As party leader and founder Kurti serves as a representative of the views of the LVV party for this paper. Osmani is an LVV ally, and her discourses are used to complement Kurti’s. This paper analyzes eleven English language sources from *Aljazeera*, *The Guardian*, the *BBC*, *Euronews*, *European Western Balkans*, *The Irish Times*, *The Financial Times*, *Faces of Democracy*, and the *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* (e.g., Crowcroft, 2021, February 16; Wintour, February 8, 2021). This paper uses a thematic analysis to analyze Kurti’s and Osmani’s populist discourses as they relate to economic inequalities that exists in Kosovo.

The author used a deductive coding approach for thematic discourse analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The author coded four main themes from the literature and identified them within the discourses analyzed. Following an analysis of the data, the code was reconceptualized to match the dominant themes in the data. The first theme is based on Brubaker’s (2019) definition of populism and the notion that populist discourses divide society into three competing groups, the ‘pure people,’ the ‘corrupt elite,’ and the ‘corrupt people.’ The second

theme is that economic inequalities play a key role in the discourses of populist leaders in unequal societies. This theme is grounded in the work of scholars that have examined economic inequality in populist discourses (Tambakaki, 2019; Matthews, 2018; Greve, 2019). The third theme is based on Tambakaki's (2019) idea that leaders who rely on populist discourses provide simple solutions to widespread economic issues in society. The final theme also emerged from Brubaker's (2019) examination of populism and is that populist discourses create the perception that the 'elite' is too focused on the 'corrupt people' and while ignoring the substantive concerns of the 'pure people.' For the purpose of this paper these concerns are economic inequalities.

Identifying these themes in the data will demonstrate how economic inequalities can be included in populist discourses. Therefore, this paper provides a case study of how populists in Kosovo draw on existing inequalities and inequities in a country to garner support. This paper is divided into three sections. The first section of the paper will explore the contested definition of populism as either a movement, ideology, or form of discourse before settling on a definition for the paper's analytical purposes. The definition of populism used in this paper is Brubaker's (2019) definition of populism as a form of discourse that divides society into three groups, a 'corrupt elite,' the 'pure people,' and the 'corrupt people.' This paper also uses Tambakaki's (2019) notion that populists propose simple solutions, such as removing the 'elite,' to complex societal problems. This section of the paper discusses the rise of populism as well as the growth of inequalities worldwide. The following section explores the economic inequalities that exist within Kosovo and chronicles how Kosovo is becoming a more unequal society. Finally, I will explore how Kurti and his LVV allies use economic inequality in their populist discourse. Throughout this paper the goal is to understand how populism and inequality are linked in Kosovo and provide a case study that demonstrates the successful usage of inequality in populist discourse.

### **Theoretical Framework: Populism and Inequality**

Canovan's (1999) early work on populism defines it as "an appeal to 'the people' against both the established structure of power and the dominant ideas and values of the society" (3). She adds that populism represents a grassroots resistance against the established power structures in the name of the people (Canovan, 1999). Other definitions conclude that populism is an ideology or worldview that separates society into two groups. These groups include 'the pure people' in competition with a 'corrupt elite' (Mudde, 2004). However, the people have no concrete form and are constructed through discourse (Featherstone & Karaliotas, 2019). Instead, the people are simply those whose demands "cannot be accommodated within the current institutional order" (Featherstone & Karaliotas, 2019, p. 33). In this sense, populism creates a division between an 'elite' group and the plebians where the people or plebs then can "become a political subject able to impose ... [their] authority via electoral politics to push for radical reform, as part of the discontinuous history of political liberty" (Vergara, 2020, p. 237).

Other scholars characterize populism not as an ideology but as a style of rhetoric or political communication (Norris & Inglehart, 2019; Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). Norris and Inglehart (2019) also claim that populist leaders challenge the traditional ideas in terms of who has the authority to rule and claim that the people are the only source of legitimate authority. Therefore, a lack of consensus regarding the definition of populism is further complicated by the theoretical difficulty of coming to a consensus on what constitutes a populist movement (Brubaker, 2017).

Populist movements can be broadly divided into two categories, left-wing populist movements and right-wing populist movements. Right-wing populism is typically characterized by aversion to immigration and xenophobia (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). Leaders that typically fall into this definition are former US President Donald Trump and Hungarian President Victor

Orbán. Norris and Inglehart (2019) characterize this form of populism as authoritarian populism that directs “tribal grievances ‘upwards towards elites ... and ‘outwards’ towards scapegoat groups perceived as threatening the values and norms of the in group” (p. 7).

Left-wing populist movements or Libertarian populists are more progressive and have seen growing support in Europe (Norris & Inglehart, 2019). Left-wing populism is generally supported by individuals who believe they have not been allocated an appropriate number of resources. These individuals are educated but not reaping the benefits of capitalist society (Schwander, Gohla, & Schäfer, 2020). Left-wing populist movements include the Syriza government in Greece (Kaniklidou, 2019). One key factor of left-wing populism is the idea that the ‘elites’ ignore the interests of the people in favour of their own agenda. Therefore, they earn the title of the ‘corrupt elite’ (Kaniklidou, 2019). This paper focuses on left-wing populism.

Woods’ (2014) argues that scholars have created a coherent definition of populism but this definition lacks internally consistent assumptions. Therefore, this paper uses Brubaker’s (2019) definition of populism as a form of rhetoric that divides society into three groups. Actors can then use populist rhetoric to garner support in political campaigns. Populists divide society into three groups the ‘pure people,’ ‘the corrupt elite,’ and the ‘corrupt people’ (Brubaker, 2019). This definition creates a vertical and horizontal division within society (Brubaker, 2019). The vertical element of this conceptualization divides society into a three-part hierarchy with the two poles representing morally corrupt people. The ‘elites’ represent the top of the hierarchy and are characterized by money, power, and education. The ‘pure people’ are portrayed as hard working, family people who are economically struggling. Finally, the bottom is constructed as deviants or parasites (‘corrupt people’) who do not belong in society and are pandered to by the ‘elites’ (Brubaker, 2019). The second aspect of Brubaker’s (2019) definition is the horizontal aspect which

bounds the people as a collective against outside influences. In the case of left-wing populism these influences include globalization, imperialism, and international organizations (Brubaker, 2019, p. 31). This paper also draws Tambakaki (2019) notion that Populist parties define politics as a “struggle *against* those who benefit from the absence of X” and not a “struggle *to* provide X” (p. 110). Tambakaki’s idea demonstrates that populist rhetoric espouses simple solutions to complex issues. Populist discourses posit that removing the corrupt ‘elite’ will rectify economic inequalities without providing a concrete plan.

For the purpose of this paper, populism is defined as a form of discourse of rhetoric that divides society into three groups. Several reasons have been posited for populist support including changing culture (Norris & Inglehart, 2019), fear (Vergara, 2020), government spending (Sawer & Laycock, 2009) and anger with ‘elites’ (Tambakaki, 2019). Two common reasons for support of a populist party include: ideological similarity and protest voting (Schwander, Gohla, & Schäfer 2020). This paper focuses on ideological similarity as it relates to economic inequality as a cause of populist sympathy. Populism in Kosovo is critically understudied (Visoka, 2017; Yabanci, 2015; Smajljaj, 2020). However, studies throughout Europe and North America find that increased economic inequality creates sympathy for both right and left-wing populist discourses. Jay and colleagues (2019) through a study of far-right populism conclude that economic insecurity can reverse the effects of cultural revolutions and generate support for right-wing social movements (Jay, Batruch, Jetten, McGarty, & Muldoon, 2019). Additionally, income inequality contributes to “collective angst about rising inequality [that] erodes social trust and cohesion and heightens perceived threat[s] for all in society” (Jay et al., 2019, p. 421).

Left wing populism has also seen an increase since the 2008 financial crisis that devastated many individuals’ economic positions (Featherstone & Karaliotas, 2019). Matthews (2019) in a

study of the Occupy London movement demonstrates how discourses of inequality surrounding the movement contributed to two competing forms of populism, the right-wing Brexit and the left-wing Corbynism. The Occupy movement with its slogan “We are the 99%” divides society into two groups the powerful 1% that controls the money and systems of governance and the 99% playing the role of ‘the people’ (Matthews, 2019). Therefore, the movement contains discourses designed to divide society into two competing and unequal groups, the group that specifically benefits from global capitalism and the group that does not. The Greek Syriza party also demonstrates how a left-wing populist party can garner support in segments of society that have been excluded or alienated through discourses of equality (Tambakaki, 2019). Additionally, Tambakaki (2019) notes that while left-wing populist parties do institute change, they face challenges when governing as they become constrained by the system.

Economic inequalities also lead individuals in unequal societies to easily be swayed by populist discourses and simple solutions including trickle-down economics (Greve, 2019). Schwander, Gohla, and Schäfer (2020) studied income inequality, voter turnout and populism. They determined that voter turnout is lower in more unequal countries and voter turnout decreased when left wing populist parties were present. However, if the populist party is the incumbent party there is a positive effect on voter turnout and the data suggest “that the negative effect of inequality on turnout is small if populist parties govern” (Schwander, Gohla, & Schäfer, 2020, p. 278).

The literature suggests a link between economic inequality and support for populist movements fueled by populist rhetoric. Support for left-wing populism originates within social groups that hold specific economic grievances against globalism or neo-liberal capitalism. Therefore, politicians can build economic inequalities into their populist discourses and take advantage of the divisions in society created by economic inequality.

Kurti has successfully employed left-wing populist discourses in Kosovo. Using Brubaker's (2019) conception of populism Kurti divides society into three distinct groups. These groups include the pure Albanian people (the 'pure people'), the 'corrupt' domestic and international 'elites' (the 'corrupt elite'), and the corrupt Serbian people (the 'corrupt people') that draws the 'elite's' attention away from issues of inequality in Kosovo. The LVV argues that the elite has "squander[ed] Kosovo's first years of independence with corruption and mismanagement" and the dialogue with Serbia is an aspect of this mismanagement (Aljazeera, 2021, February 14). Therefore, Kurti argues in his populist discourses that Kosovo's 'elite' has not served to address the growing inequalities in Kosovo, which are outlined below, and instead has focused on a dialogue with Serbia to detract attention from their failures.

### **Economic Inequality in Kosovo**

Worldwide economic inequalities "have risen significantly almost everywhere, to levels similar to those experienced before World War II" and Kosovo is no exception (Jay et al. 2019, p. 419). Kosovo has a GDP of 7.61 billion USD and a GDP per Capita of \$4230.28 (World Bank, 2020). One measure of income inequality is the Gini coefficient (Morgan, 1962, Bowman, 1945). The Gini coefficient provides an index with which economists can use to measure inequality. The Gini coefficient is measured on a scale of 0 to 1. Zero represents complete equality and one represents complete inequality. Kosovo's Gini coefficient is 0.29 as of 2017. This is a 8% change from 2016 when Kosovo's Gini coefficient was 0.267. Kosovo's Gini data were compared to eight other countries including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy and Norway (Table 1). Three of these countries are from the Western Balkans six countries and four are EU members, while Norway is considered one of the most equal countries in the world. In recent years Kosovo is one of the more equal countries examined (Table 1). Out of all the countries

analyzed Serbia has the highest Gini Coefficient and is the most unequal. However, Kosovo's inequality is rising again after a long period of decline from 2010-2015.

**Table 1: Gini Coefficients 2010-2018 (World Bank Estimates, 2021)**

Country Name	Country Code	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Albania	ALB			0.29		0.346	0.329	0.337	0.332	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	BIH		0.33							
Croatia	HRV	0.324	0.323	0.325	0.32	0.321	0.311	0.309	0.304	0.297
France	FRA	0.337	0.333	0.331	0.325	0.323	0.327	0.319	0.316	0.324
Germany	DEU	0.302	0.305	0.309	0.311	0.309	0.317	0.319		
Italy	ITA	0.347	0.351	0.352	0.349	0.347	0.354	0.352	0.359	
Kosovo	XKX	0.333	0.278	0.29	0.263	0.273	0.265	0.267	0.29	
Norway	NOR	0.257	0.253	0.257	0.264	0.268	0.275	0.285	0.27	0.276
Serbia	SRB			0.399	0.395	0.405	0.405	0.388	0.362	

Although, similar to or lower than other European countries, the Gini Coefficient does not tell the whole story. Kosovo is one of the poorest countries in Europe. Average income in Kosovo was €9 454 in 2020 down from €10 127 in 2019. In contrast Germany's average income was €41 505 in 2018 (World Inequality Database). Kosovo also has the highest unemployment rate out of the nine countries examined (Table 2). Kosovo had an unemployment rate of 26.17% in 2020 compared to 11.7% in Albanian which had the next highest unemployment rate in the countries examined (Table 2). Although Kosovo's unemployment rate has recently been declining, it still remains the highest of all the nine countries examined.

**Table 2: Unemployment rate percentage of total labour force (World Bank estimates, 2021)**

Country Name	Country Code	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Albania	ALB	14.09	13.48	13.38	15.87	18.06	17.19	15.42	13.62	12.3	11.47	11.7
Bosnia and Herzegovina	BIH	27.31	27.58	28.01	27.49	27.52	27.69	25.41	20.53	18.4	15.69	16.85
Croatia	HRV	11.62	13.68	15.94	17.25	17.29	16.18	13.1	11.21	8.43	6.62	7.2
France	FRA	8.87	8.81	9.4	9.92	10.29	10.35	10.04	9.41	9.02	8.44	8.62
Germany	DEU	6.97	5.82	5.38	5.23	4.98	4.62	4.12	3.75	3.38	3.14	4.31
Italy	ITA	8.36	8.36	10.66	12.15	12.68	11.9	11.69	11.21	10.61	9.95	9.31
Kosovo (National Estimate)	XKX			30.88		35.15	32.93	27.47	30.34	29.42	26	26.1700001
Norway	NOR	3.52	3.22	3.12	3.42	3.48	4.3	4.68	4.16	3.8	3.69	4.62
Serbia	SRB	19.22	22.97	24	22.15	19.22	17.66	15.26	13.48	12.73	10.4	9.08

Finally, a focus of Kurti's campaign was tackling corruption in Kosovo. Kurti believes that the established Albanian political 'elite' are focused on achieving a deal with Serbia and an eventual EU membership bid instead of tackling corruption in their own community. He believes that Kosovo "should shift from [debating] control over territory towards the rights of the citizens and the needs of the communities" (Hopkins, 2019, December 15). Kurti's believes that the dialogue with Serbia is fruitless and concludes with the idea that the 'elite' are 'corrupt' in their relentless pursuit of a deal with Serbia over domestic issues (Cecchi, 2021, February 23).

A survey conducted in Kosovo demonstrates that Kosovars also believe the ‘elite’ of their country to be corrupt. To measure corruption, the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (CPI) was used. The CPI surveys businesspeople and experts on the perceived level of public sector corruption in their country. The index is on a scale from 0 to 100 with 0 being the most corrupt and 100 being the least corrupt. In 2020 Kosovo scored 36 on the index and is tied with Albanian second lowest score (Table 3). Bosnia and Herzegovina was the most corrupt country in 2020 with a score of 35. Kosovo has been low on the index since 2012 and in 2015 it was the most corrupt country of the nine analyzed (Table 3). Perceived corruption in Kosovo is very high and Kosovo’s index score is well below the 2020 worldwide average of 43. The people of Kosovo therefore believe corruption is a pressing issue in their country.

**Table 3: Corruption Perception Index scores 2012-2020 (Transparency International, 2020)**

Country	CPI Score 2012	CPI Score 2013	CPI score 2014	CPI score 2015	CPI score 2016	CPI score 2017	CPI score 2018	CPI score 2019	CPI score 2020
Albania	33	31	33	36	39	38	36	35	36
Bosnia and Herzegovina	42	42	39	38	39	38	38	36	35
Croatia	46	48	48	51	49	49	48	47	47
France	71	71	69	70	69	70	72	69	69
Germany	79	78	79	81	81	81	80	80	80
Italy	42	43	43	44	47	50	52	53	53
Kosovo	34	33	33	33	36	39	37	36	36
Norway	85	86	86	88	85	85	84	84	84
Serbia	39	42	41	40	42	41	39	39	38

Based on the data presented above, income inequalities within Kosovo are lower or comparable to other European countries. However, Kosovo is following the general trend of rising inequality that has led to increased support for populism worldwide. Additionally, Kosovo's economic prosperity and total wealth are substantially lower than its European and Balkan neighbours. Kosovo's unemployment rate is significantly higher than other European countries and perceived corruption is also high. Kosovars can easily perceive that their country is falling behind in prosperity compared to their European neighbours. Therefore, Kosovo's political parties, especially the LVV can use discourses of economic inequality to garner electoral support from Kosovo's electorate. In Kosovo the LVV incorporates information about the low average income, the high unemployment rate, and the high perceived corruption rate in their populist discourses. The LVV blames the 'elite' and its obsession with Serbia for exacerbating inequalities in Kosovo as is outlined below.

### **LVV and Populist Discourses of Inequality**

The LVV movement was founded by Albin Kurti in 2005. Prior to founding the LVV, Kurti was an activist within the Kosovo Action Network (KAN). During his time as a member of the KAN, Kurti took a multi-ethnic approach to the reconciliation and worked with Serbian communities (Visoka, 2017). However, when Serbia refused to change its stance towards Kosovo, Kurti founded the LVV. He believed that Serbia's stance was hostile towards Kosovo's people. The goal of the LVV was to protest international missions in Kosovo and voice support for self-determination (Visoka, 2017). Beginning in 2010 the LVV ran candidates in Kosovo's elections with the goal of linking the people to government and giving them a voice in parliament (Bruce, 2013). The LVV first achieved electoral success in 2020 forming a government with a coalition that included the right-wing LDK political party (). The 2021 election was the first "landslide"

victory the LVV achieved. Various factors related to inequality are used by populist movements to garner support and these factors are at play in Kosovo, a society that is portrayed as unequal on the global stage and that has not benefitted from global capitalism. In particular Kosovo suffers from high unemployment rates and high rates of corruption. Therefore, it is important to analyze the discourses of the LVV through the lens of populist discourses related to economic inequality.

### **Kurti's Groups in Kosovo**

This analysis, based on the first theme from the literature, establishes the ways that Kurti's discourses divide society into three groups based on Brubaker's (2019) definition of populism. The best source for this information is a 2011 interview with Kurti (Kurti, 2011). In this interview Kurti's divisions of society can be mapped onto Brubaker's (2019) three groups, the 'corrupt elite,' the 'pure people,' and the 'corrupt people.' In Kosovo these three groups are the international imperialists and their domestic supporters (the 'corrupt elite'), the Kosovo people as a multiethnic society (the 'pure people'), and the Serbian government and its supporters (the 'corrupt people').

Kurti first describes his version of the 'pure people.' He references "the 12,000 dead Albanians, the thousands of raped Albanian women, and the 2,000 Albanians still missing, or ... the several hundred killed or missing Serbs and Roma," as those who the international community and its allies do not support (Kurti, 2011, p. 91). Kurti makes it especially clear that there has been no justice for the Kosovar people and specifically mentions the Albanian population. Kurti also describes how the wellbeing of Kosovars is being ignored by the 'elites' and their security regime. Kurti (2011) believes that international "military troops became the measure of security in Kosova, not the wellbeing of citizens and their future prospects" (p. 91).<sup>1</sup> Kurti creates a perception that the

---

<sup>1</sup> In direct quotes from Kurti, Kosovo is written in Albanian as Kosova. Kurti uses Kosova as it is the Albanian name for the country. Kosovo is the Serbian and English name for the country. For Albanians, the name Kosovo represents the history of colonization, and genocide of in their country which is why Kurti refers to the country as Kosova (Baci, 2020, November 5).

Kosovars are unequal when compared to the ‘elites.’ He also states that the international community is more concerned with physical security than economic security for the people.

After, Kurti has established who should be defined as the ‘pure people,’ he turns to the most important aspect of populism, defining the ‘corrupt elite.’ The international mission in Kosovo is constructed being as the ‘corrupt elite’ holding back Kosovar society. Kurti (2011) argues that the “imperialist viewpoint of the internationals’ rule sees no people in Kosova,” and includes people “who are always worried but in fact never care” (p. 91, 89). Kurti views the international community as blind to the struggle and needs of the Kosovar people. His discourse clearly creates the perception of the international community as the enemy of the Kosovar people.

Kurti then explains how Kosovo’s local political ‘elite’ has allied itself with the ‘corrupt internationalists.’ According to him, the international “paradigm of stability in Kosova means holding executive power over the country’s institutions. As a consequence, local politicians are obedient and servile” (Kurti, 2011, p. 90). He also believes that Kosovo’s political ‘elites’ are agents of the international missions in Kosovo, which he believes are corrupt. He argues that Kosovo “is quite weak, but that is due to internal capture after external liberation from Serbia” (Hopkins, 2019, December 15). Therefore, according to Kurti Kosovo is “enslaved from within” (Hopkins, 2019, December 15). Consequently, Kurti thinks that Kosovo’s political ‘elite’ is also ‘corrupt.’ Kurti makes his opinion clear in the following passage:

Years of international rule have turned local politicians and NGOs into ‘international locals’, a species that differs from their compatriots in Kosova. The ‘local internationals’ and the ‘international locals’ are kept together by a happy marriage of interest, providing the system’s internal cohesion. Instead of working for the rights of the people, they talk about the needs of the communities; instead of fighting for justice, freedom and equality, they encourage advocacy and

lobbying; instead of protests and demonstrations (where dissatisfied people get together in a public physical sphere) they promote campaigns (with billboards and TV ads in a public virtual sphere, which people watch alone) (Kurti, 2011, p. 92).

Kurti clearly believes that Kosovo's political 'elite' has been corrupted by the international community. He creates the perception that the political 'elite' is not only different from Kosovo's 'pure people,' it is also the enemy of Kosovo's people. Kurti argues that the "state of Kosova unfortunately has elements of capture state, therefore it is a weak state, and we must make it stronger by democratizing it and by bringing rule of at the forefront" (Kurti, 2021, January 25, 14:46-15:00). The 'elite' does not focus on the issues of rights, freedom, and equality, which Kurti believes are the most important issues in Kosovo. Instead, he argues the 'elite' is focused on implementing the internationalists' agenda and weakening state capacity to the detriment of Kosovo's people.

Kurti finally draws a distinction between Kosovars and Serbians. Kurti does not see Serbia as a country that Kosovo can reason with and he believes that "Kosova does not lack status but the people of Kosova lack freedom; and Kosova is not a problem for whose solution we should partner up with Serbia; Kosova has a problem—Serbia's official stance" (Kurti 2011, p. 93). Kurti views Serbia and certain Serbs as an enemy of the people that are drawing all the attention of the 'elite.' Kurti's discourse demonstrates that he views Serbia as opposing the democratic will of the Kosovars. He argues that the 2021 election "is not simply another round of early elections but rather a referendum where people will have to decide between different figures. Of same old guard and politicians for new era" (Kurti, 2021, January 25, 3:56-4:14). During the 2021 election, Kurti expanded on the idea that Kosovo's relationship with Serbia has consumed the 'elite's' attention instead of 'real' issues of inequality.

Ethnic nationalism also plays a role in Kurti's discourses and his views on Serbia. The LVV's name means self-determination and is focused on the Kosovars forging their own destiny. For Kurti self-determination means a union with Albania. Kosovo is 90% ethnic Albanian and the idea of a union with Albania is popular among Kosovar Albanians. Kurti said in an interview that he believes Kosovo's constitution should be amended so that Kosovo "could join a federation with Albania or an EU federation" (Crowcroft, 2021, February 16). He would also support a referendum for the unification of Kosovo and Albania and "[o]nce ... [Kosovo] can do it peacefully and democratically ... [he] would vote yes." (Crowcroft, 2021, February 16). Therefore, ethnic nationalism remains one part of LVV's discourses. However, economic and political inequality is now the guiding force in their discourse and Kurti would not support a referendum until he has "[s]trengthen[ed] ... the state in Kosovo" (Crowcroft, 2021, February 16).

Kurti therefore, divides Kosovo's society into three distinct groups at odds with each other. First, he constructs the idea of the 'pure Kosovars' (Albanians). These are people who want freedom and independence from Serbia and international intervention. These people hope to be in control of their own destiny and free from the corruption and domination of international missions and the local political 'elite.' He then explains how the international missions remove the freedom of the Kosovars and have developed the political 'elite' as a client network. Kurti claims that these groups oppose the interests of the people and do not address issues of economic inequality in Kosovo. Finally, Kurti constructs Serbia and Serbians that oppose independence as a 'corrupt people.' He argues that these groups hurt the Kosovars by denying them the ability to forge their own destiny. These groups also distract the 'elite' from the real issues in Kosovo, mainly economic inequality and corruption. In 2011 Kurti had already divided society into the three groups that he would use to succeed in the 2020 and later 2021 elections. During his two successful elections

Kurti played on the inequalities that exist in Kosovo's society and constructed them as a competition between these three groups.

### **Economic Inequalities in Kurti's Populist Discourses**

Following his ousting in 2020, Kurti campaigned again in 2021 "with this idea of jobs and justice" (McLaughlin, 2021, February 15). Kurti's rhetoric is consistent with the second theme from the literature, that economic inequality is an important aspect of populist discourses. Kurti demonstrates that Kosovo is a very unequal society in which most people do not have the rights and privileges they deserve. Kurti states that the "joke in Kosovo is why are the macchiatos so good and the answer is because they are made by those with master's degrees in sociology" (Wintour, February 8, 2021). Kurti's joke demonstrates his vision that unemployment and underemployment are the greatest problems facing Kosovo. The people of Kosovo are unable to participate fully in society and achieve their full potential. In this sense the "jobs" aspect of his campaign is about jobs for the ordinary Kosovars who Kurti believes are severely disadvantaged by the current economic situation in Kosovo. He adds that in Kosovo and the Western Balkans "The real crisis is ... the lack of a vision [on] how to move on further," and the region "need[s] welfare states" (Hopkins, 2019, December 15). Kurti's discourse focuses on the 26% unemployment rate in Kosovo. He is acutely aware that Kosovo's unemployment rate is significantly higher than other European and Balkan countries and tries to humorously appeal to those affected by unemployment in his populist discourse.

Kurti blames Kosovo's current financial situation on 'corrupt Kosovar Albanian elite', especially those who he considers to be the 'corrupt elite' as per this paper's definition of populism. Kurti, argues that "[t]he corruption has been huge, but it is very concentrated at the top, we believe we can beat it. Many people preach the free market but in practice we get oligarchs and cartels,

and industries reserved for the old guard” (Wintour, February 8, 2021). Kurti believes that the ‘elite’ oppose an equal free market in favour of a corrupt system that favours their client networks. He believes that the old ‘elite’ are “all those who promised miracles they made miraculous fortunes for themselves” (Kurti, 2021, January 25, 10:27-10:31). This discourse demonstrates his view that the ‘people’ are excluded from full participation in Kosovo’s society by the ‘corrupt elite.’ Kosovo’s low score on the CPI demonstrates that the Kosovar people agree with Kurti that corruption is high and is likely a pressing issue within Kosovo. Kurti therefore, can be confident that blaming corruption for Kosovo’s economic is popular with the ‘pure people.’ Therefore, the ‘justice’ aspect of Kurti’s campaign focuses on removing the perceived corruption of the ‘elite’ class.

### **Kurti’s Solutions to Economic Inequalities**

The third theme examined in the data that emerged from the literature is that populist discourses propose radical and simple solutions to complex issues. Specifically, populist discourses claim that the removal of the ‘corrupt elite’ will improve the ‘pure people’s’ economic position. Kurti also proposes a radical and simple solution to tackling corruption in Kosovo. He argues that “It’s better to go forward even though you suffer some near epic death because you will get the chance for resurrection. Rather than staying in power by all means with compromises and concessions to everybody” (Wintour, February 8, 2021). In keeping with populist discourse, Kurti proposes removing the ‘elite’ as a solution to corruption. His solution is to create a new kind of politics that is different from the current ‘corrupt elite.’ Kurti also, believes that fighting corruption is the will of the people. He states “[w]hereas to cut[ting] corruption, [and] fight[ing] organized crime ... [the people] want to see that immediately and that’s exactly what we plan to do” (Kurti, 2021, January 25, 10:50-10-57). He claims he will not compromise like his

predecessors did. Instead, he is willing to support the people by all means necessary, but without giving a concrete plan.

This discourse is echoed by other members of his alliance including President Osmani. Osmani claims that “The biggest obstacle in front of us is this huge wall of crime and corruption over the years” (Wintour, February 8, 2021). Osmani also presents the ‘corrupt Albanian elite’ as the enemy of the people and believes they represent the greatest issue for Kosovo’s society. She also proposes removing the ‘elite’ will tackle the issue of corruption. She believes that:

“In order to tear ... [the wall of corruption] down we need to join forces. We may have had differences in the past but what has brought us together is something much stronger and that is fighting the main internal enemy of our country – state capture. It was not that we lack institutions to fight corruption, it was the political will. Once the high-level politicians are corrupt, it seeps down through the system” (Wintour, 2021, February 8).

Her solution to corruption is a political alliance with Kurti that will be strong enough to dismantle the ‘elite’ and support the people. Osmani’s discourse demonstrates her belief that corruption is not only Kosovo’s greatest problem, but also that individuals she constructs as ‘corrupt elites’ represent the enemy. Additionally, she shares Kurti’s belief that a simple solution exists to tackle the issue of corruption.

Osmani and Kurti’s discourses mirror common populist discourses in unequal societies (Tambakaki, 2019). They claim that the people are oppressed by the ‘corrupt elite.’ In Kosovo the ‘corrupt elite’ have made it difficult for the people to receive appropriate employment and therefore their networks of corruption must be dismantled in order for the people to have a chance to participate equally in society (Wintour, 2021, February 8). Both also propose a simple solution to the problems of inequality in Kosovo’s society. Instead, of engaging with the growing

inequalities worldwide and they believe that simply removing the ‘corrupt elite’ from Kosovo’s society will remove the inequalities that exist. It is also clear that both political leaders believe this electoral strategy is successful. Osmani is paraphrased in the Guardian stating, “most voters are less bothered by ideology, or electoral promises, than in being led by incorruptibles” (Wintour, February 8, 2021).

### **Distraction from the ‘Pure People’ by ‘Corrupt People’**

The final theme from the literature that was analyzed in the data is that populists do not only create distinctions between the ‘pure people’ and the ‘corrupt elite,’ but they also distinguish between the ‘pure people’ and the ‘corrupt people’ (Brubaker, 2019). In the case of Kosovo, Kurti claims that Serbia and Serbians represent another group of people that are corrupt. What is especially corrupt is the Serbian belief that Kosovo is still a part of Serbia. Although Kurti believes in a multiethnic society, much of his discourse is opposed to supporting proposals that are favoured by Serbs. His main strategy for dealing with the ‘corrupt people’ is to ignore them and not engage the problem. Instead, he defaults to discourses of democracy when discussing the issue of Serbia and Serbian recognition or includes the ‘elite’ as part of the problem (Kurti, 2021, September 11, 5:03-5:09, Kurti, 2021, September 11, 5:11-5:32).

Kurti’s strategy towards Serbia involves shifting attention away from Serbia and towards issues of inequality. He does so through discourses that downplay the importance of reaching a deal with Serbia. Kurti claims that “if you ask people in Kosova about their top ten priorities, dialogue with Serbia is number 6 sometimes number 7” (Kurti, 2021, September 11, 5:03-5:09). Additionally, he also believes he “must emphasize that this [dialogue] cannot be ... [the LVV’s] top priority ... [and] jobs and justice are ... [their] two top priorities” (Kurti, 2021, January 25, 14:58-14:06). Therefore, Kurti does not view reaching a deal with Serbia as an existential threat

and instead he treats Serbia as a country that has drawn the ‘elites’ attention away from the ‘real’ issues facing the Kosovar people. Kurti claims that having a dialogue at all is a concession and stated that “[I] made a concession by entering dialogue at priority number 4 but it cannot enter the top three priorities because I do not believe it should be treated like that and the people of Kosova when they voted for us ... they knew what they were doing” (Kurti, 2021, September 11, 5:11-5:32). Osmani has a similar stance on the dialogue with Serbia. She believes that for “too long, the daily, most acute problem of the citizens of Kosovo were left aside while the previous Kosovo leaders were hiding behind the topic of dialog (sic) to cover up their failures inside the country” (Osmani, 2021, March 15). Whereas, past Prime Ministers and Presidents of Kosovo have pursued recognition from Serbia as their primary policy objective, Kurti and Osmani view Serbia as more an annoyance than the solution to Kosovo’s problems. They also view the ‘elite’s’ focus on talks with Serbia as a cause of the corruption and inequality in Kosovo.

For example, Kurti was ousted in 2020 by a coalition of international ‘elites’ and the corrupt ‘local Albanian elite’. In March 2020 the presidential administration of Donald Trump ended Kurti’s coalition. Trump’s international interference was performed through Richard Grenell, US special envoy for Kosovo and Serbia. Grenell pressured the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), a member of Kurti’s coalition, to withdraw its support for the government. This move was made to ensure that Trump’s ‘peace deal’ between Kosovo and Serbia was signed. A deal that Kurti believed was “a meaningless diplomatic exercise” (Hamza, 2021, February 12). Kurti argues that “in [the] previous US administration [the] former envoy of former President Trump, ambassador Grenell ... advocated for a rather transaction approach and we want to see [a] more transformative approach, where both [the] states and societies of Serbia and Kosova must change from within, rather than thinking what is there to give and take” (Kurti, 2021, January 25,

12:31-13:00). In June 2020 the LDK's leader Avdullah Hoti formed a new coalition government and Prime Minister Hoti signed the agreement in fall 2020. However, in December 2020 Kosovo's Constitutional Court ruled that Hoti's coalition was unconstitutional and called for the February 14 election (Hamza, 2021, February 12).

Together, the 'corrupt' international 'elite' and local 'elite' committed an illegal act to achieve what Kurti believes to be a pointless agreement. For Kurti, Trump's actions demonstrate the lengths the 'corrupt elite' are willing to go to maintain the dialogue with Serbia while not addressing Kosovo's real issues. Kurti views this agreement as detrimental to Kosovo. He claims that Kosovo cannot "afford any more disputes between Washington and Brussels when it comes to the Balkans. If there are contradictions other super powers like Russia will jump in" (Wintour, 2021, February 8). During the period when Kurti was not Prime Minister, Kosovo's COVID-19 pandemic worsened which he believes demonstrates the 'elite's' willingness to forgo the Kosovar people's needs in favour of meaningless international deals (Crowcroft, 2021, February 16). Before Kurti was re-elected he argued that when re-elected he must pull "Kosova from [the] current crisis which is not only [a] health one due to pandemic COVID-19 but also [a] political, socioeconomic, and cultural [one]" (Kurti, 2021, January 25, 4:42-4:52).

Kurti is also opposed to many of the other measures that have been proposed to resolve Kosovo's status question with Serbia. When discussing land swaps, Kurti claims he wants "democratic solutions" and he wants "peaceful solutions" and he believes that land swaps do not represent these solutions (Kurti, 2021, September 11, 5:03-5:09). Land swaps represent a "way of doing politics where Presidents or Prime Ministers think they are monarchs in medieval times, where they consider territory of the state as it is their private property" (Kurti, 2021, September 11, 6:49-7:08). What is clear from this quote is that Kurti believe the 'elite' are 'corrupt' in their

attempts to run Kosovo as their own private property and use their talks with Serbia to justify their ‘corruption.’ Kurti also incorporates international intervention into his discourses surrounding the conflict with Serbia. In his discourse Kurti places an emphasis on the ‘elites’ as the enemy of the people that pander to Serbia. Instead, he argues that the ‘elites’ treat engaging with Serbia as too important, and this prioritization ignores the needs of the people.

Kurti adds that the dialogue with Serbia is primarily a Serbian problem and to solve Kosovo’s status crisis Serbia must “face its own past” and Serbs must “liberate themselves from Kosovo” (Crowcroft, 2021, February 16). Kurti argues that Kosovo’s status is an internal matter for Serbians to come to terms with having lost Kosovo. Once Serbia realizes that it “is great without Kosovo,” the reconciliation between Kosovar Albanians and Serbians can occur (Crowcroft, 2021, February 16). In the meantime, he believes that reconciliation with “Serbs in Kosovo, ... is not necessary because” Kosovo’s fight is “against Belgrade” (Crowcroft, 2021, February 16). Kurti states that only Serbia and Serb’s have the solution to the status question and once Serbs accept that Kosovo is independent the two states can peacefully coexistence.

Kurti has however been forced to submit to the Brussels dialogue because he still hopes for EU membership which is contingent on a dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. Thus, Kurti admits he is “ready to engage in a dialogue where people will be the beneficiaries” (Crowcroft, 2021, February 16). Therefore, in July 2021 Kurti agreed to “participate in this process, which is difficult” (European Western Balkans, 2021, July 15). However, his commitment is to present new ideas “[w]hile the other side talked about old ideas” (European Western Balkans, 2021, July 15). Kurti’s states that for “the next dialogue with Serbia we do not [want to] see ... a tit-for-tat approach ... [and are not] going to seek a quick deal [or] a quick fix but rather a sustainable agreement with an European and Euro-Atlantic frame where brussels and Washington will work

and participate hand-in-hand” (Kurti, January 25, 13:06-13:28). Although Kurti’s desire for Kosovo’s EU membership has led him reluctantly participate in a dialogue with Serbia, he has done so on his own terms. Therefore, he commits himself to a policy of “no dialogue with maps” (Hopkins, 2019, December 2019). He has also pursued this dialogue with the interests of Kosovars as his top priority instead of the ‘corrupt elite’s’ self-interested reasons.

### **Limitations**

One methodological limitation of this paper is that only English sources are analyzed to limit the scope this study. As LVV’s rise to prominence is understudied, future scholars should also analyze Albanian and Serbian resources. Additionally, scholars may wish to study news coverage in addition to political discourses to create a richer image of the populist discourses used by LVV and reactions to these discourses. Furthermore, this paper only analyzes one cause for populist sympathy and one potential explanation for the LVV’s electoral success. Other potential factors that may explain the LVV’s success include the COVID-19 pandemic, and President Trump’s treatment of Kurti; however, analyzing these factors is outside the scope of this paper.

### **Conclusion**

The discourses described in this paper demonstrate that Kurti, his political ally Osmani, and the LVV party have divided Kosovo and its surrounding neighbours into three distinct groups. First, Kurti describes the pure people as Kosovars who support independence and want freedom from both Serbian and international domination. These people also want equality and accountability against corruption from their leaders. Next Kurti, describes the ‘corrupt elite’ as international interventionists and their local allies. These people ignore the needs of Kosovo’s people in favour of an international agenda that overplays the importance of a deal with Serbia while downplaying the people’s demands for “jobs and justice.” Finally, Kurti constructs the

Serbian people as an enemy who are unworthy of Kosovo's attention. Although Kurti believes in independence from Serbia, he does not believe a deal is of the utmost importance. Instead, Kurti's discourses focus on how Serbia has been the focus of the 'elite' to the detriment of the well-being of the people. Finally, when referring to Serbia, Kurti places an emphasis on the 'corrupt' actions of the 'elite' in reference to their engagement with Serbia. Kurti argues that as an enemy, Serbia allows the 'elite' to justify their 'corrupt' actions internationally and their inaction domestically. The LVV members believe these groups have led to increased inequality in Kosovo through their corruption and inaction.

Albin Kurti and the LVV won the 2021 parliamentary elections in Kosovo with the express intention of solving the problems of "jobs and justice." He believes that tackling the growing economic inequality and record high unemployment in Kosovo is necessary for the country's future success. This paper used Brubaker's (2019) and Tambakaki's (2019) definition of populism to examine the LVV's discourses surrounding inequality. This paper analyzed the use of specific economic inequalities in the LVV's populist discourses. These economic inequalities include low average incomes, high unemployment rates, and high levels of corruption. The use of economic inequalities in populist discourses was analyzed in eleven English language interviews with Kurti and Osmani in newspapers and other online sources. To analyze these interviews this paper used deductive thematic analysis to explain the use of economic inequality in Kurti and the LVV's populist discourses. The four themes identified in the literature are (1) that populist discourses divide society into three competing groups; (2) that economic inequalities play a key role in the discourses of populist leaders; (3) that leaders who rely on populist discourses, provide simple solutions to widespread economic issues in society; and (4) that populist discourses create the

perception that the 'elite' is too focused on the 'corrupt people' and ignore the substantive concerns of the 'pure people.' These themes emerge in Kurti's discourses that were analyzed in this paper.

In order to frame the problem of corruption and economic inequality in Kosovo, the LVV uses populist discourses and divides society into three main groups. These groups are framed as being in competition with one another for control over Kosovo. The LVV claims to speak for the people of Kosovo who they believe are oppressed by the 'corrupt elite.' This 'elite' group includes internationalists and foreign interventions in Kosovo as well as the domestic Albanian political 'elite' who supports these interventions. Therefore, Kurti believes that this group is 'corrupt' and serves their own interests and not the interests of the people. Finally, the LVV constructs a third group in society that includes those individuals who are opposed to Kosovo's independence. This group mainly includes Kosovo Serbs and Serbia. Kurti argues that this group hinders the future prospects of the Kosovar people by drawing the attention of the 'elite' away from Kosovo's most pressing issues. Instead of focusing on economic inequality and corruption, this third group captures all the resources of the 'elite' to accommodate their requirements. Kurti and the LVV view this group as distracting the political 'elite' from the needs of the people. Thus, engaging with this group should not be a national priority.

Populists also propose simple solutions to problems and Kurti is no exception. He claims that eliminating the 'elite' and their focus on the Kosovo's status *vis-a-vie* Serbia will allow his party to tackle issues of inequality and justice. Kurti's alliance also claims they are the only group capable of implementing the change that is necessary in Kosovo's society. Populist discourses divide society into competing groups and then propose to eliminate the 'elites' as a solution to the challenges facing a society. Kurti uses populist rhetoric to construct simple solutions to the corruption and inequality in Kosovo. The LVV's electoral success clearly demonstrates that his

style of populist discourse resonates with Kosovo's 'pure people.' The LVV also demonstrates how a party can focus their populist discourse on issues of corruption and economic inequality and still be successful.

It is clear that Kurti's populist discourses discussed in this paper were widely popular in Kosovo's February 2021 election. Kurti's discourses also linked pre-existing and measurable inequalities within Kosovo's society to the perceived abuses by the 'elites.' Hence, he was able to use the discourse of economic inequality to support his populist assertions that Kosovo's 'elite' was working to oppress the people.

This paper supports the idea that Kurti uses populist discourses focused on economic inequalities within Kosovo. In doing so this paper contributes to the wider literature surrounding populism and inequality. It demonstrates how populist discourse can exist and be highly appealing in an unequal country. This paper also explores how leaders can use the language of inequality to create divisions within society. These divisions can then be used to present simple solutions to problems of inequality regardless of the underlying causes of inequality or larger worldwide trends. Kosovo represents an example of a country where a populist leader has successfully used economic inequality in his populist discourse to achieve electoral success. However, given the challenges faced by Kosovo it is unclear whether Kurti and the LVV can create a lasting solution to Kosovo's problems.

## References

- Aljazeera (2021, February 14) *New generation faces old guard in Kosovo election*.  
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/14/kosovo-polls-pit-new-generation-against-an-old-guard>.
- Baci, E. (2020, November 5). *Spelling a Nation's Name*. Sapiens: Anthropology Magazine.  
<https://www.sapiens.org/archaeology/kosova-or-kosovo/>.
- Bowman, M. J. (1945). A Graphical Analysis of Personal Income Distribution in the United States.  
*The American Economic Review*, 35(4), 607–628.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code*
- Brubaker, R. (2017). Why populism? *Theory Society*, 46(5), 357–385.
- Brubaker, R. (2019). Why Populism? In G. Fitzzi, J. Mackert, & B.S. Turner (Eds.), *Populism and The Crisis of Democracy* (vol. 1, 27-46). Routledge.
- Bruce, H. (2013). The Movement of a Movement: VETËVENDOSJE! and the Transition from Grassroots to Government. *Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection SIT*.
- Canovan, M. (1999). Trust the people! populism and the two faces of democracy. *Political Studies*, 47(1), 2–16. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.00184>
- Cecchi, R. (2021, February 3). *Kosovo: A cocktail of anti-corruption, jobs and nationalism, leads to landslide electoral victory for the anti-elite party*. Cerdendo.  
<https://credendo.com/cs/node/314>.
- Crowcroft (2021, February 16). *I would vote to unify Albania and Kosovo, election winner Albin Kurti tells Euronews*. Euronews. <https://www.euronews.com/2021/02/16/i-would-vote-to-unify-albania-and-kosovo-election-winner-albin-kurti-tells-euronews>.

Democracy Plus. (2021). *Kosovo Election Results*.

<https://elections.dplus.org/result/NationalAssembly/2021/National/?ballotType=Party>.

European Western Balkans (2021, July 15). *The meeting between Kurti and Vučić concluded, the next round of dialogue in July*. <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2021/06/15/the-meeting-between-kurti-and-vucic-concluded-the-next-round-of-dialogue-is-in-july/>

Featherstone, D., & Karaliotas, L. (2020). Populism. *Soundings*, 72(72), 31–47. <https://doi.org/10.3898/soun.72.02.2019>

Greve, B. (2019). *Welfare Populism, and Welfare Chauvinism*. Policy Press.

Hajardi, U. (2021, February 15). *Ousted ex-PM wins historic victory in Kosovo election*. Politico. <https://www.politico.eu/article/ousted-ex-pm-wins-historic-victory-in-kosovo-election-albin-kurti/>

Hamza, A. (2021, February 12). *Kosovo is slowly recovering from Trump's coup*. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/2/12/kosovo-is-slowly-recovering-from-trumps-coup>

Hopkins, V. (2019, December 15). *Kosovo 'enslaved from within' by corruption, says incoming PM*. Financial Times. <https://www.ft.com/content/ddc2f794-060e-11ea-a984-fbbacad9e7dd>

Jagers, J., & Walgrave, S. (2007). Populism as political communication style: An empirical study of political parties' discourse in Belgium. *European Journal of Political Research*, 46(3), 319–345. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2006.00690.x>

Jay, S., Batruch, A., Jetten, J., McGarty, C., & Muldoon, O. T. (2019). Economic inequality and the rise of far-right populism: A social psychological analysis. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 29(5), 418–428. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2409>.

- Kaniklidou, T. (2019). Left-Wing Populist Discourses in The Greek Press. In E. Hidalgo-Tenorio, M.-A. Benítez-Castro, & F. De Cesare (Eds.), *Populist Discourse; Critical Approaches to Contemporary Politics* (pp. 259-274). Routledge.
- Kurti, A. (2011). JISB Interview: Kosova in Dependence: From Stability of Crisis to the Crisis of Stability. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 5(1), 89–97.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2011.541787>
- Kurti, A. (2021, January 25). *A Conversation with Albin Kurti, Former Prime Minister of Kosovo*. Wilson Center. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/conversation-albin-kurti-former-prime-minister-kosovo>
- Kurti, A. (2021, September 11). *PM Albin Kurti: Will US troops retreat from Kosovo too?*. Talk to Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/program/talk-to-al-jazeera/2021/9/11/pm-albin-kurti-will-us-troops-retreat-from-kosovo-too>.
- Matthews, J. (2019). Populism, inequality and representation: Negotiating ‘the 99%’ with Occupy London. *Sociological Review*, 67(5), 1018–1033.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0038026119851648>
- McLaughlin, D. (2021, February 15). *Kosovo election winner targets ‘justice and jobs’ over Serbia talks*. The Irish Times. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/kosovo-election-winner-targets-justice-and-jobs-over-serbia-talks-1.4485544>
- Morgan, J. (1962). The Anatomy of Income Distribution. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 44(3), 270–283.
- Mudde, C. (2004). The populist zeitgeist. *Government and Opposition*, 39(4), 542–563.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-7053.2004.00135.x>

- Mudde, C., & Kaltwasser, C. (2017). *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9780190234874.001.0001>
- Norris, P., & Inglehart, R. (2019). *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Osmani-Sadriu, V. (2021, March 15). *The Goal is to See the Republic of Kosovo as a Vibrant Democracy*. Faces of Democracy. <https://www.faces-of-democracy.org/vjosa-osmani-sadriu>
- Sawer, M., & Laycock, D. (2009). Down with elites and up with inequality: Market populism in Australia and Canada. *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 47(2), 133–150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14662040902842836>
- Schwander, H., Gohla, D., & Schäfer, A. (2020). Fighting Fire with Fire? Inequality, Populism and Voter Turnout. *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, 61(2), 261–283. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11615-020-00247-1>
- Smajljaj, A. (2020). Populism in a never ending and multiple system transformation in Kosovo: the case of Vetevendosje. *Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe*, 28(2–3), 199–223. <https://doi.org/10.1080/25739638.2020.1857935>
- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*, Sage.
- Tambakaki, P. (2019). Populism and the Use of Tropes. In P. Cossarini & F. Vallespín (Eds.), *Populism and Passions: Democratic Legitimacy after Austerity* (pp. 102-114). Routledge.
- Transparency International. (2020). *Corruption Perception Index*. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/>

- Vergara, C. (2020). Populism as Plebeian Politics: Inequality, Domination, and Popular Empowerment. *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 28(2), 222–246.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jopp.12203>
- Visoka, G. (2017). *Shaping Peace in Kosovo: The Politics of Peacebuilding and Statehood*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wintour, P. (2021, February 8). *Candidates in Kosovo election call for alliance against corruption*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/08/candidates-in-kosovo-election-call-for-alliance-against-corruption>
- Woods D. (2014). The Many Faces of Populism: Diverse But not Disparate. In D. Woods & B. Wejnert (Eds.), *Many Faces of Populism: Current Perspectives* (22<sup>nd</sup> vol., 27-52). Emerald Books.
- World Bank. (2020). *GDP (current US\$) – Kosovo*.  
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=XK>
- World Bank. (2020). *GDP per capita (current US\$) – Kosovo*.  
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=XK>
- World Bank. (2021). *Gini Index (World Bank Estimate)*.  
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI>
- World Bank. (2021). *Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate)*.  
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS>
- World Bank. (2021). *Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (national estimate)*.  
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.NE.ZS>
- World Inequality Database (2020). *Germany*. <https://wid.world/country/germany/>
- World Inequality Database (2020). *Kosovo*. <https://wid.world/country/kosovo/>

Yabanci, B. (2016). Populism And Anti-Establishment Politics In Kosovo: A Case Study of Lëvizja Vetëvendosje. *Contemporary Southeastern Europe*, 3(2), 17–43.

## **The relationship between location and political socialization of young people through voluntary organizations: A case study of Youth Work Ireland**

Danielle Gayson, University College Cork, Ireland

### **Abstract**

This research project aims to explore the link between involvement in a voluntary youth organization and levels of political engagement as well as the influence of location on this relationship. The Belgian Political Participation Index will be discussed and will form the basis of our analysis. A case study approach was adopted for this research to provide rounded, detailed illustrations of first-hand experiences. For the participants of this project political engagement is not about the activities undertaken but rather about the issues which they support or are passionate about. The activities are a secondary thought to represent their passion. Therefore, it is possible to hypothesize that Youth Work Ireland as a representation of youth voluntary organizations, acts as an agent of socialization to support young people in their political development, it is also evident that the location of both the young people and organizations can influence this development both positively and negatively.

**Keywords:** Youth political participation, youth organizations, political socialization, youth work, voluntary engagement, Belgian Political Participation Index

### *Acknowledgements*

I would like to thank Dr. Clodagh Harris of the Department of Government and Politics at University College Cork for her continued support and supervision of this research. I would also like to extend a warm thanks to all of those involved in Youth Work Ireland but particularly the young people who gave up their evenings to participate in focus group sessions.

## **Introduction**

Young people are confident, aware, and educated members of our society (UNICEF, 2000). They often understand popular topics in politics better than those in charge because they are the ones feeling or expecting to feel the impact of policies.

Engaging young people in politics is not a new practice, in fact, it has been happening for years. Many attempts have been made by governments and decision-makers to involve young people in decision-making, perhaps to ensure policy development is fair and equal. Those of voting age can influence decisions that will affect them whereas young people are not afforded this luxury yet suffer the same consequences. Inequality begins to present itself in this scenario, with the implication by age alone one is a more valuable member of society. Yet despite this inequality, young people have ensured they are a part of the process as early as the 1960's when the world witnessed the Civil Rights Movement, within this movement a significant number of young people decided to become activists for social justice (Library of Congress, n.d.). Since then, society has seen hordes of young people engaging, particularly in recent debates on the voting age, abortion, and marriage equality (Mohan, 2018). The fact that these young people often are not of voting age but are still committed to going out and expressing their opinion highlights the dedication these young people have to the world of politics.

So, is there a link between this engagement and voluntary organizations? Would these young people get involved in these organizations that did not exist? As an agent of political socialization, voluntary organizations work to encourage and educate people on social issues.

This thesis looks to explore the role of voluntary organizations in developing the political socialization skills of young people as well as the influence of location on this development.

This research project aims to explore the link between involvement in a voluntary youth organization and levels of political engagement as well as the influence of location on this relationship. This will be examined through an analysis of political socialization, the agents of socialization and the role of youth organizations. The Belgian Political Participation Index will be discussed. This Index will form the basis of our analysis, which will highlight the differences that can occur naturally during the socialization process and the impact that inequality of access and opportunity can have on young people.

This research aims to compare the factors that influence changing levels of political socialization in young people based on their location, be that urban or rural. To achieve this aim, several objectives were created. These are as follows; to identify suitable case studies, assess the existing literature on socialization and the agents of socialization, evaluate the experience of young people in developing their political interests, explore the concept of location within the area of socialization and finally to determine the relationship between the topics investigated. The case study identified was Youth Work Ireland. This organization works with over 76,000 young people a week making it the largest youth organization in Ireland (Youthworkireland. ie, n.d.).

This paper aims to answer the research question by drawing the link between the topics of political socialization and youth organizations with a discussion on the influence of location thus answering the question of, “how does the location of a young person influence their engagement with voluntary organizations as an agent of socialization and in turn impact on the political socialization of that young person?”

## Literature Review

### *Socialization*

Socialization is evident in every aspect of life; organizational socialization is how one settles into their position within a company (Kramer, 2010). There are also specific texts on parliamentary socialization where Beauvallet and Michon (2010) researched integration into the European Parliament for MEPs by looking into their biographies. Grusec and Hastings (2014) describe socialization as how an individual is assisted in becoming a member of one or more social groupings, involving a variety of outcomes covering social, cognitive, and personal values. Saprio (2004, p. 1-23) examines two broad categories of socialization, macro, and micro socialization. Macro socialization according to Saprio is when society transfers norms to individuals whereas micro socialization is the concept which frames the processes and patterns of how people engage. This uses not just society as a whole but has a clear focus on the specific individual (Saprio, 2004, p. 1-23). This can relate to how the youth worker and youth organizations support the political socialization of a young person (macro) compared to the path and decisions the young person makes themselves to support their socialization (micro).

To expand on this definition of socialization we can begin to look at political socialization as how an individual is assisted in becoming a member of one or more social groupings where development is based on social and political values. This form of socialization often begins at a young age (Heywood, 2019). Langton (1969) outlines political socialization as “the process mediated through various agencies of society, by which an individual learns politically relevant attitudinal dispositions and behaviour patterns”.

### *Agents of Socialization*

Amna (2012, p.611-627) outlines the agents of socialization as institutions that can impress social norms upon an individual, from here she discusses the role of peers, parents, school, and voluntary organizations as agents in her work. Quintelier (2015, p.51-69) expanded this by including media.

Derived from concepts of socialization, Albert Bandura formed the Social Learning Theory in which he asserts that behaviour is a direct result of one's environment (1977). He believes that this concept is reinforced by the agents of socialization. Moreover, he outlines how if one is in an environment of socialization particularly political socialization, they will develop greater participation habits (Bandura, 1977). Quintelier and Van Deth (2014, p.153-171) draw upon social learning theory to show that adolescents now see political participation as a moral and collective value, which supports the development of a positive attitude in society thus supporting an increase in political socialization through peers.

### *Measurements of Agents of Political Participation*

There have been several papers exploring the impact of various agents of socialization particularly on the role of parents and peers.

The Belgian Political Panel Survey which resulted in the Political Participation Index (hereafter known as PPI) took place from 2006 to 2011 and included over 6,330 adolescents who were 16 years of age (Hooghe, Havermans, Quintelier and Dassonneville, 2011). To analyze the results of this survey, the researchers created an index of seven items to represent political participation. They were wearing a badge, signing a petition, participating in a demonstration, boycotting products, forwarding political emails, displaying a political message and lastly, attending a political meeting. This index covers a broad range of areas that are accessible to young

people while also being specific enough to focus on one agent of socialization. Their survey was limited to the extent that it included only Belgian adolescents and did not cover earlier age groups or other countries. However, the authors felt the study did not represent a specifically Belgian phenomenon, but a general process of political socialization (Quintelier and Van Deth, 2014, p.153-171). This study will be used to evaluate the role of a different agent of socialization in this piece of research.

In 2014, Quintelier and Van Deth used this data set to explore the relationships between political attitudes and behaviour. Their findings indicate that it is more likely that political participation strengthens political attitudes than attitudes triggering participation (Quintelier and Van Deth, 2014, p.153-171). The PPI will assist in evaluating the role of voluntary youth organizations as agents of socialization; however, we are also looking to evaluate the impact of location on this process. Location can determine the equality of opportunity amongst young people, the opportunity is where participation begins and access to amenities can be vital to the development of citizenship. This in turn can impact either negatively or positively on the political socialization of young people.

#### *Urban versus Rural*

Research has been conducted on the relationship between location and specific agents of socialization. Hava and Taft (2011) researched three locations, Portland, Oregon and California, the focus of their research in these locations was on the ethnic and religious make-up within youth activist networks. This research concluded that the education and services provided in an area had a clear impact on the development of youth activists. This research supports highlighting the inequality that can appear in citizenship development and political socialization. If one lives in an

area where participation is difficult, they would be more likely to remain disengaged than someone in an area with multiple activists and youth amenities.

Research by the National Youth Council of Ireland reveals that rural and urban differences do exist in Ireland, and they do have an impact on young people (NYCI, n.d.). It finds differences in the areas of public transport, employment, and mental health services. Young people in rural Ireland have less access to all of these services compared to young people living in urban areas. There are many reasons that these differences occur and often it is not directly due to the funding provided to specific groups but rather the areas that this money has to be spent on. Many rural groups have to spend significant amounts of their finances on private transport to allow for young people to gather. In an urban setting, this cost is significantly less due to greater public transport, therefore that funding could be used elsewhere (National Youth Council of Ireland, n.d.). The NYCI report represents the views of 380,000 young people and highlights the importance of investigating the depth of this divide in all aspects of life to ensure adequate programmes and facilities can be provide equal opportunities for all young people.

However, despite all of this research, there remains a gap when looking at location and the sole agent of voluntary engagement. This research paper aims to narrow this gap by looking at voluntary engagement as an agent of political socialization and how it may differ for young people in an urban location versus that of a rural location.

### *Voluntary Organizations*

Voluntary organizations are noted as an agent of socialization (Quintelier, 2015, p.51-69). Amna (2012, p.611-627) and Quintelier (2015, p.51-69) find that young people develop skills that are relevant for political participation through voluntary organizations, deepening their role as an agent of political socialization. These skills include the understanding of community spirit, shared

identity, and representation (McFarland & Thomas, 2006, p.421-405). Children and young people are often influenced and mobilized by their peers on socio-political issues and develop sets of values (Lee et al., 2013, p.669-697). While school and social environments can allow for these personal developments and interactions amongst peers, voluntary organizations can encourage and support them in an open and safe environment.

Youth organizations are catalysts for political socialization thus leading to increased political engagement. Youth organizations have a role in preparing young people for a life of political engagement through their informal events and peer-supported discussions. They offer opportunities for leadership and support the development of understanding adults. However, as previously outlined the ability to access these organizations may impact a young person's process of political socialization. It is important to fully understand this in order to counter it.

## **Methodology**

### *Case Study*

A case study approach was adopted for this research to provide rounded, detailed illustrations of first-hand experiences. Youth Work Ireland was selected as the case study. This organization works with over 76,000 young people a week making it the largest youth organization in Ireland. Youth Work Ireland is a charity-based organization and mainly relies on government and European Union funding. They work with young people between the ages of 10-25 and have a broad range of programmes including a rural outreach, garda diversion, and social evening groups (Youth Work Ireland, n.d.).

Youth Work Ireland was chosen for many reasons. A long personal experience with the organization sparked my initial interest in this research. The experience of being a youth member developed questions on how it influenced my strong levels of political involvement from a young

age. From looking at the organization in detail, it became clear they run a broad range of programmes and many member services run the local Comhairle na nÓg. Comhairle na nÓg are child and youth councils in the 31 local authorities of the country, which give children and young people the opportunity to be involved in the development of local services and policies (Comhairle na nÓg, n.d.). Programmes such as this and the integrated youth work model including informal education which they use made it clear that Youth Work Ireland fits the criteria of being an agent of socialization. This was particularly evident as many of these programmes encourage running for election, for committee positions, and creating proposals to local government.

Youth Work Ireland has a strong history of looking to engage young people in politics and decision making. They often cooperate with other national organizations and government bodies to achieve this. It is hoped that this thesis will allow for feedback to the organization to further support the development and engagement in these decision-making structures.

### *Sample and Population*

Due to the nature of this study along with the time and financial restraints this study is based on a relatively small sample. This research took place during COVID-19 travel and social restrictions and therefore arranging a time with young people proved difficult. The sample used aims to provide a starting point for further national and international research to take place on this topic of political socialization and the inequality location may cause.

Primary research for this paper will be focusing on Cloyne Diocesan Youth Services and Youth Work Ireland Tipperary. These are large populations that cover a wide area of both counties. From these populations, a sample needed to be chosen for which a call for participants was put out within the Youth Service and their online media. The result of this was cluster samples based on location (Greetham, 2019). The final sample included 26 young people.

As the locations of the participants is vital in answering the question posed, a differentiation of urban and rural was required. Following the 2016 census, the Central Statistics Office has updated their classifications of urban and rural areas. Which are defined as:

**Figure 1: (Introduction-CSO-Central Statistics Office, 2019)**

Cities	Population greater than 50,000
Urban	Population between 1,500 and 49,999
Rural	Population less than 1,500

### *Instrumentation*

This research is comparative and explored the similarities and differences in the responses of those from an urban area to those from a rural area. The research, therefore, is a combination of qualitative and quantitative information gathered through focus group sessions that included a short online questionnaire.

Qualitative data forms the majority of the data used for this paper, gathered through focus groups with the young people as discussed above. The focus group sessions included a short online questionnaire completed on a google form. The purpose of this questionnaire was to gather statistical data. The questions clarified the location of the participants and the youth groups they were involved in before moving on to ask questions based on the Political Participation Index from the Belgian Political Participation Study (Hooghe, Havermans, Quintelier and Dassonneville, 2011). This index was employed as it allows for clear and concise comparative data under each category.

## **Data Analysis**

### *Conducting the Research*

To answer the research question posed, three main discussions had to take place surrounding the topics of political engagement, leadership in Youth Work Ireland and location. For each discussion topic, a matching aim was created to ensure the discussion stayed focused. From these aims, the question list was created. Figure 2 outlines the topics and aims that were decided upon.

**Figure 2: Outline of Topic and Accompanying Aim for Question Development**

Topic	Aim
Political Engagement	Explore the political interest of the young people and the role YWI played.
Leadership in YWI	Establish a level of engagement in YWI groups.
Location	Assess the impact of location on engagement with YWI and in turn engagement in politics.

As the current climate of a global pandemic has impacted all aspects of life, several questions regarding COVID-19 and youth work were included at the end of the focus groups.

### *Coding*

To properly analyze the data the Braun and Clarke process of thematic analysis was used. This is an accessible and theoretically flexible approach to analyzing qualitative data (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.77-101). It was chosen as it allowed for the development of the discussions which took place in the focus group settings. The Belgian Political Participation Index heavily informed this analysis. The quantitative data generated from the surveys conducted provide some insight into this index however from generating codes and creating themes from the qualitative data of the focus groups it became clear that the themes generated directly relate to the index. This will allow for deductive conclusions to be drawn with a latent approach. According to Braun and Clarke

(2006, p.77-101), a thematic analysis at the latent level goes beyond the semantic content of the data and starts to examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations. This ability to examine ideas and assumptions supports the functions of focus groups which are discussion-based and often open-ended.

### *Themes*

As discussed above many themes appeared through the coding process. Figure 3 demonstrates the process of how the codes were gathered, then grouped into appropriate themes.

**Figure 3: Development of Code and Themes**

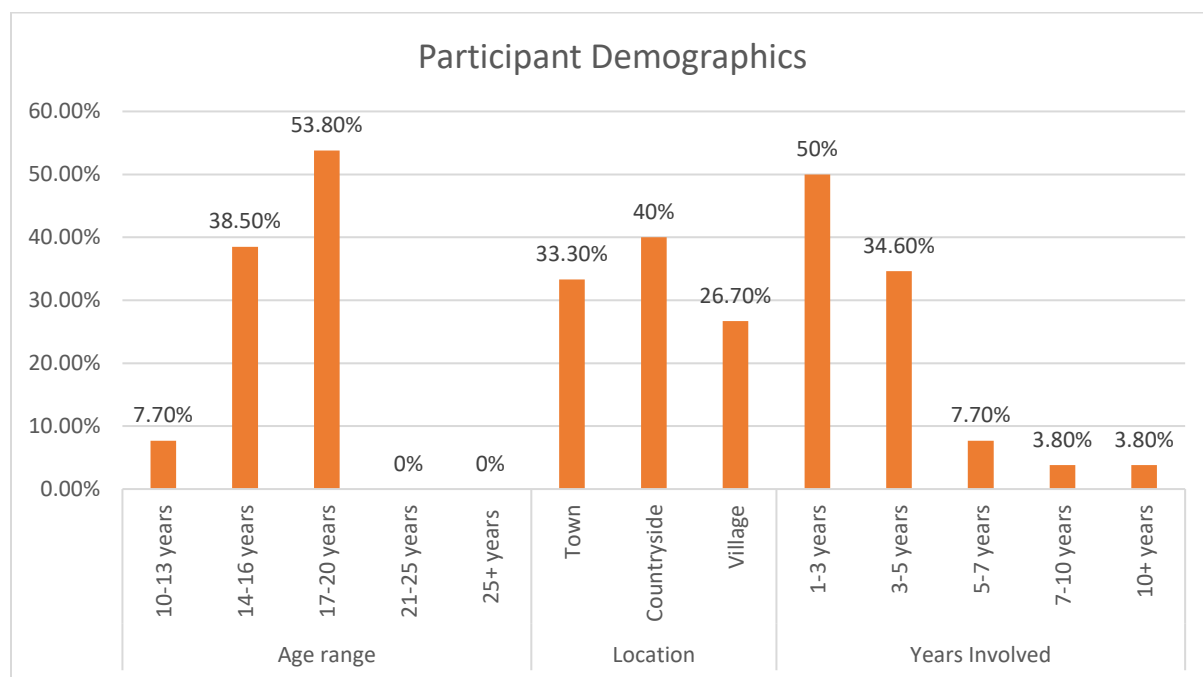
Codes	Themes
LGBT, BLM, environment, sex education, mental health, SDG's, human rights	Issues
Confidence, Debating, forming opinions, People skills, moving out of comfort zone, coping with anxiety, technical skills, opportunities.	Skills
Politics, county council, junior leaders, Comhairle, socially active, have a say in the youth club, what is politics.	Engagement
Personal cost, parents, grants, busses, journeys, lack of events, trying to make local versions of big events, pick-up points.	Location
Zoom, internet, family, lack of the safe youth club space, self-censorship, lack of face-to-face interaction, want to see online structures exist alongside face to face.	Covid

## Findings

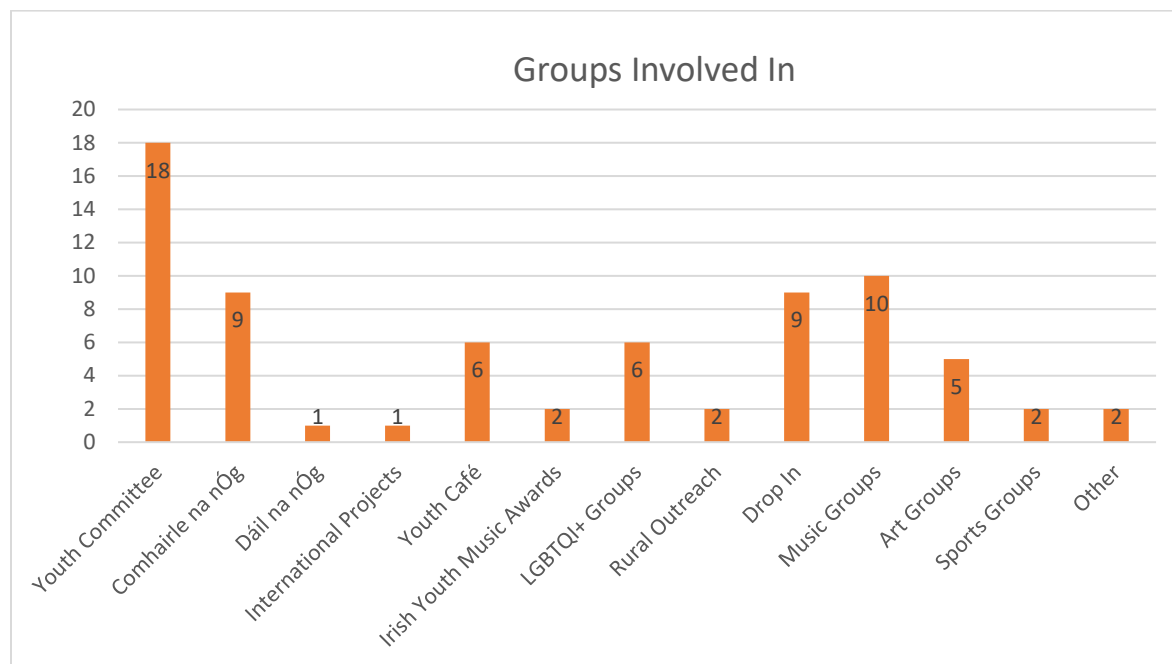
### *Demographics and Participation*

The total sample population for this study was 26 participants, aged from 10 to 20 years of age with 7.7% between 10 and 13, 38.5% between 14-16 and 53.8% being 17-20 years of age. As location plays a significant role in answering this question it is important to note that 33.3% of participants lived in urban areas, and 66.7% lived in a rural area to which was further broken down by the young people as 40% lived in the countryside and 26.7% in villages. The participants have been involved in their local projects for a variety of periods. With 50% of the participants being involved for 1-3 years, 34.6% being involved for 3-5 years, 7.7% as 5-7 years and 3.8% for both 7-10 years and 10+ years.

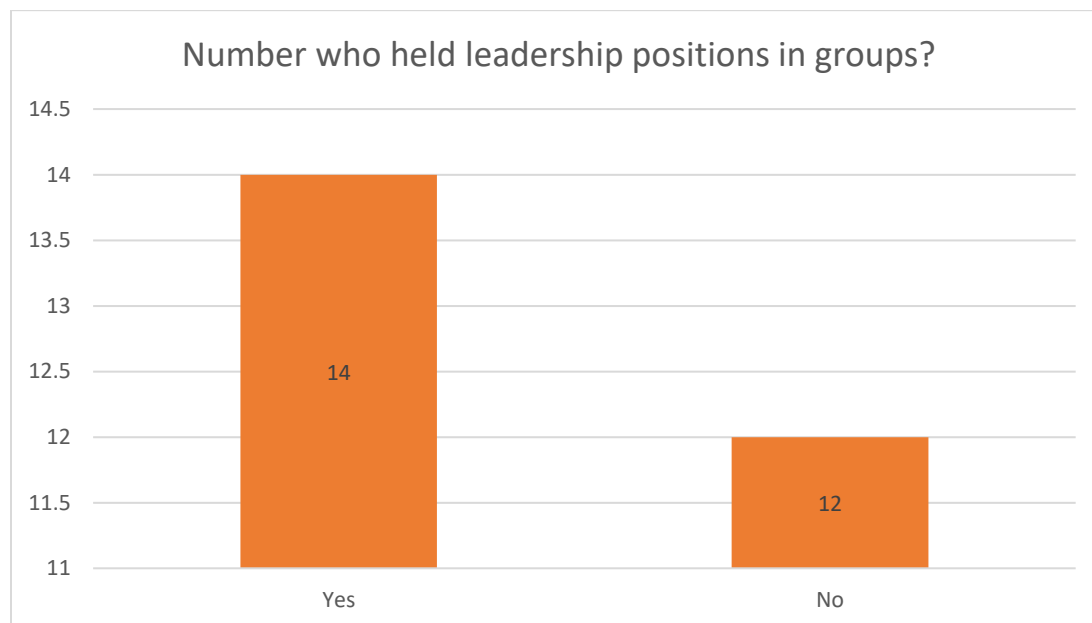
**Figure 4: Participant Demographics**



The participants are involved in a broad range of groups including youth committees, international projects, rural outreach, LGBTQI+ groups and more.

**Figure 5: Groups**

Of the 26 participants, 15 said they hold leadership positions in their groups such as chairperson, secretary, P.R.O or as a junior leader.

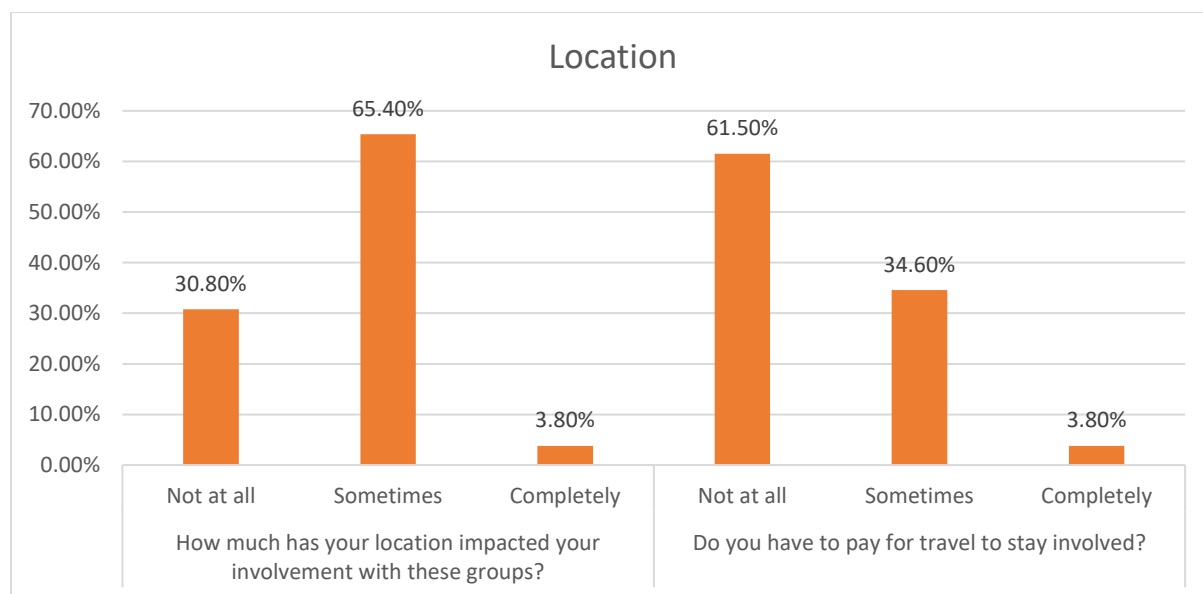
**Figure 6: Leadership Positions**

### Survey Results

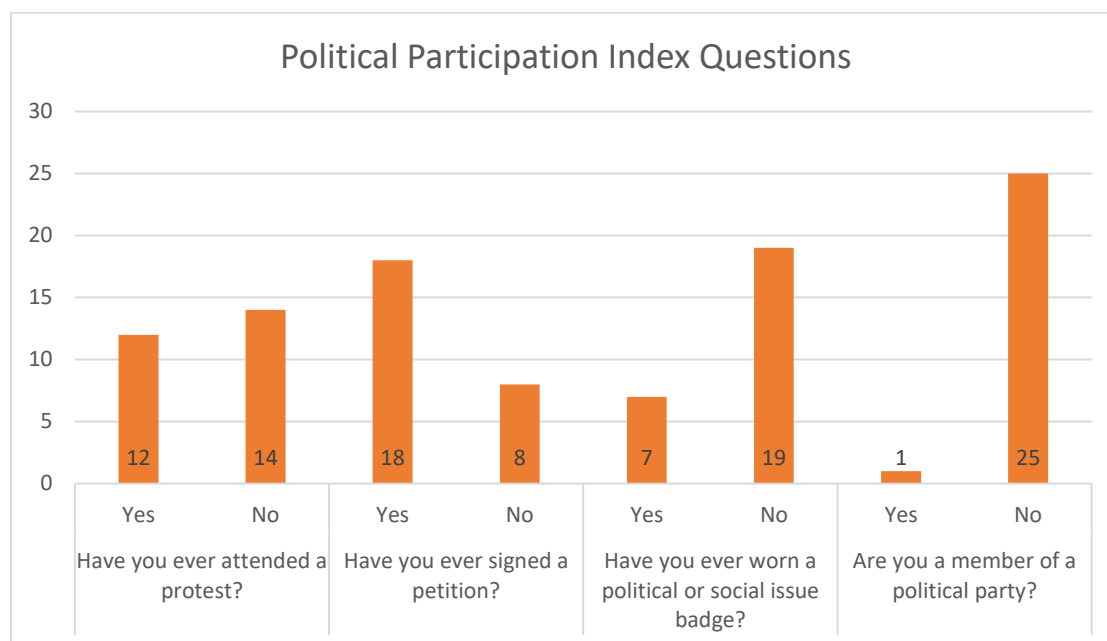
The breakdown of location can be seen in figure 4 above, following this question another was asked to establish the level of personal cost on staying involved with their youth service groups.

Figure 7 shows that 61.5% of participants selected 'not at all'. From the discussion to follow it became clear that this was partially due to the youth service providing transport for certain events. However, many young people still had to pay for a local bus or train service to get to the nearest town or village to avail of this funded transport. These results assisted in the development of the theme of 'location' which will be discussed further in this chapter.

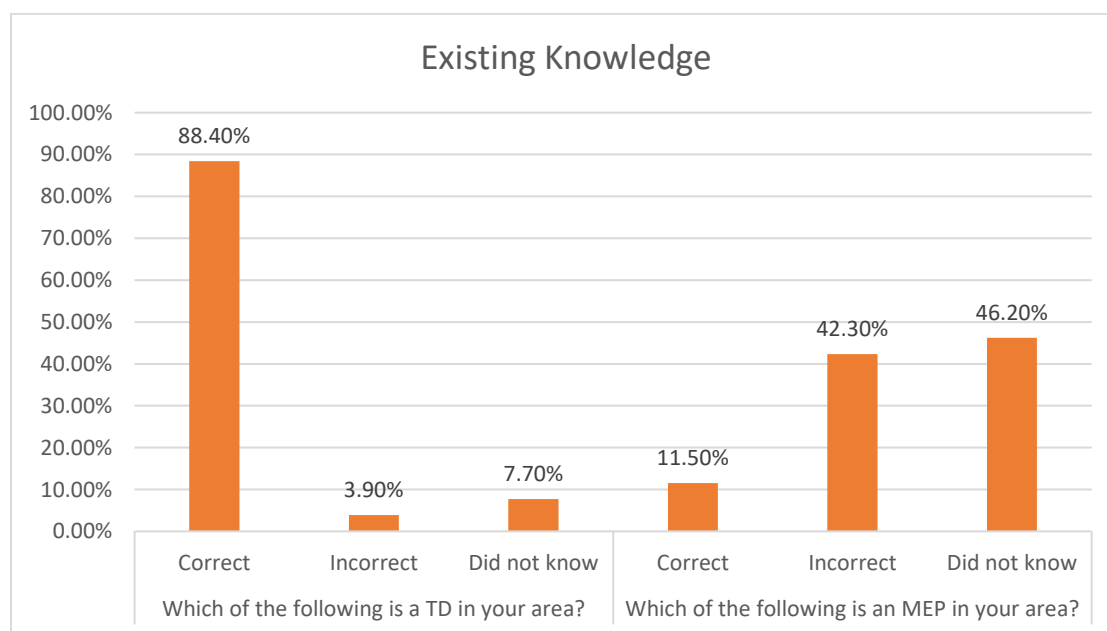
**Figure 7: Location Impact**



The final survey questions addressed the indicators from the Belgian Political Participation Index. These results provide evidence that the participants do engage in the types of political participation identified in the Belgian Political Participation Index thus proving their political engagement. The responses gathered in the focus groups further deepen this assertion and provide an insight into political engagement outside of this index.

**Figure 8: Political Participation Index Question**

The survey also sought to evaluate existing knowledge of political representatives. The participants were faced with a question on their local T.D. is and their European Parliament Representative. The results were as follows.

**Figure 9: Existing Political Knowledge**

The participants have a better awareness of local politics compared to European politics. This was strongly reiterated through the focus group discussions as the issues and actions of the participants were linked to national and local topics.

## **Discussion of Themes**

### *Issues*

The young people regularly spoke of the social issues of concern to them and issues they face on a day-to-day basis. These issues represented a broad range of topics including LGBT+, environmental concerns, the recent Black Lives Matter movement and human rights. It was clearly expressed that their engagement in activities such as protests on these topics was a direct result of the skills developed from their engagement in Youth Work Ireland. Along with the political activities of the Belgian Political Participation Index, the participants listed those in which they are engaged. These included reading articles, organizing events and discussions with peers. Many of these indices were referenced naturally by the young people when discussing the issues concerned. Particularly many young people mentioned attending demonstrations and wearing badges on these issues with several participants even highlighting local demonstrations they established to prevent travelling to cities during the pandemic including a Black Lives Matter protest and a petition to tackle homelessness. They outlined that these were developed on their own accord separate to the youth service, however, they did clearly state that without the experience and skills of event management gained from the youth service it would not have happened.

### *Skills*

This theme emerged from discussions on subjects such as confidence, debating, leadership, technical development, and opportunities. The participants appeared highly passionate on this

topic with thanks to voluntary organizations for teaching them these skills. The participants discussed how skills gained from their youth service are different from those of a home or school environment. They expressed the feeling of being heard as they discussed issues they themselves were interested in compared to the structured learning of the school environment. Several young people are involved in international projects, the skills for which they accredited to their time in Youth Work Ireland. All of the participants spoke of their skill development through Youth Work Ireland and how it has supported their engagement in social and political issues. The young people spoke highly of their ability to speak and debate on these subjects as a way to express opinions and share thoughts. Several participants also discussed using these language skills on online platforms such as Twitter to connect and network with other young people.

### *Engagement*

Topics such as attending council meetings, joining new or different youth groups and organizations, becoming a leader, and sitting on committees created the theme of engagement. These participants spoke strongly about their positions on these boards and committees as counting and as voting members. They do not feel they are only there to tick a box or be showcased. This came across as important to all participants from international topics such as climate change to national issues like the Vote at 16 campaign down to having the ability to influence decisions within their youth clubs and projects. While this discussion outlined activities undertaken by the participants such as attending county council meetings on their behalf, joining new youth representative groups, and wearing badges, the participants did not see this as political engagement. One participant accredited their personal increased engagement to their time with Youth Work Ireland by saying “Youth Work has shown me how broad politics is, I am more passionate about issues now that I know what to be passionate about.”

It became very clear throughout the focus group sessions that the participants go above and beyond the definition of political engagement from the Political Participation Index. The participants of this study engage with numerous activities and events which are not defined in this Index. The level of engagement by the participants highlights the broader understanding of what constitutes politics and political engagement.

### *Location*

Location was the next theme to appear through the focus groups and surveys with discussions on personal costs to attend events, the length of journeys, lack of public transport and reliance of parents to drive the young people to these groups and events. One participant spoke of the personal cost of ten euros to attend her local youth club and this cost has often deterred her from attending and she has seen numerous events she has missed due to this. Another participant highlighted that even when transport to and from an event is covered by the youth service, they rely on their parents being home to get to the collection point or local train station. A group of the participants expressed their frustration at the city-based organization of events by setting up their own smaller demonstrations in their local towns on issues such as the Black Lives Matter movement and climate strikes. The young people have a certain amount of transport provided for them for certain events this highlights the role of the youth service as an agent of socialization, in this capacity of providing transport to events it is directly assisting the engagement of young people in political events thus allowing them the opportunity to develop political thoughts and deepen their engagement.

### *COVID-19*

Many questions regarding the impact of COVID-19 were prepared to be asked in the focus groups however, the topic came up naturally by the participants as something which they are

concerned about. Initially, this conversation was regarding the lack of in-person socializing and online events compared to in-person events. However, the conversation delved deeper into exploring the structures that have been put in place and how they are not all negative. It was clear from all participants that they miss the face-to-face interaction that the youth service provides with some highlighting the importance of their youth club as a safe space. This discussion quickly turned to look at the positives COVID-19 has provided, the participants highlighted their attendance at political meetings, council meetings and private meetings with elected representatives has increased. They attributed this to the online platforms Zoom, MS teams, and google meets meaning they did not have to facilitate travel. A large number of participants outlined that they would like to see the online structures co-exist with in-person events at the end of COVID-19. While a number expressed that online facilities have made it easier to meet with elected representatives, other participants expressed concerns about bad internet connection and fear of family members overhearing certain discussions. However, these restrictions have not hindered the engagement of the young people they are adjusting and using what they can to their advantage.

### *Discussion*

The Young People who participated in this study are politically engaged. However as mentioned, a large number of these young people personally felt they were not until the end of the discussion. When questioned on this the participants spoke of actions such as voting, running for election, and canvassing as political engagement. They did not recognize their activities as being political until it was explained to them that any action on an issue or topic that you are interested in is politics. Some young people said they could not be politically engaged because they are under 18 so cannot vote or are not a member of a political party. This highlights the lack of understanding

as to what political engagement means and the various forms it takes. As the discussion developed the young people then discovered they were indeed politically active.

From all of the themes outlined and their connection to the Political Participation Index, it is very clear to see the connection between Youth Work Ireland, a voluntary organization as an agent of socialization and the development of political engagement in the young people. This connection was highlighted by the participants themselves numerous times throughout the focus group discussions.

When looking at the Political Participation Index it is vital to understand that it is qualitative and deductive. The discussions that take place are personal to the young people and are based on experience. The Political Participation Index was fulfilled in many ways through the discussion which took place, and it is evident that the participants engage in politics through the manners outlined in the index. This study with its mixed-method approaches, however, shows engagement and activities by the participants which go further than the Index.

It is also clear that location can hinder the participant's engagement with some of them not getting involved because of transport and with others finding online meetings more suitable. The participants noted that while the youth service provides transport for their events when they want to participate in something on a personal level transport, location and finances come to the forefront of the decision. While some steps have been taken to reduce the impact of location it is something that will continue to be felt as urban centres continue to host large events.

All of this shows that how people engage has changed. For the participants, political engagement is not about the activities undertaken but rather about the issues which they support or are passionate about. The activities are a secondary thought to represent their passion. The variety of these activities has also been broadened to include reading articles from local papers and

social media accounts which they have shared on their accounts or with friends, peer discussion on topics of interest particularly on the education system and gender and organizing events in local areas to mimic those which take place in cities.

## **Conclusion**

The research presented in the previous chapters has shown that these organizations are in fact agents of socialization and the location can have a significant influence as to the scope of their abilities. When explored with the case study of Youth Work Ireland and the groups they offer, it is possible to hypothesize that Youth Work Ireland as a representation of youth voluntary organizations, acts as an agent of socialization to support young people in their political development, it is also evident that the location of both the young people and organizations can influence this development both positively through networking and negatively through accessibility and financial issues.

The nature of this study was limited in scope and only allowed for the examination of one organization based in two counties. It is also vital to note that participants engaged in a level of self-selection as youth workers put a call out for young people to join. Because of this, however, several participants may have already been actively engaged which may have a bearing on the positive results of this study. Furthermore, the conclusion of the participants not being self-aware as to their level of political engagement shows that this previous engagement is not relevant in their eyes. A broader qualitative study of a similar nature would provide greater responses with a larger discussion focused on the Political Participation Index.

This research has contributed to the literature on the agents of socialization in developing political interest and engagement in young people. It has provided the ground necessary for further research to be conducted on a larger scale covering many organizations such as Scouting Ireland,

Foroige, the National Youth Council of Ireland, Spun-out and other locally run groups. This research has begun to highlight the differences in the politics of inequality for young people. With many not getting engaged due to resources and transport. This in turn means decisions are being made to represent young people without actually engaging a wide section of the youth population. From here it can be seen why active citizenship decreases the further away from an urban centre you travel. Were this study to have been completed more recently in 2021 we may have also seen greater COVID-19 related inequalities for these young people around vaccination certs and online schooling. This study has provided an opening for further research into the political socialization of young people and the inequality that can exist in this development.

This study has not only discussed and implemented the existing literature on the topic, but it has also represented first-hand thoughts of the young people concerned. It also serves as a testament to the youth's ability to engage in an online setting with a moderator.

It has been made clear that voluntary organizations indeed are agents of socialization and in turn agents of political socialization. Youth Work Ireland has supported the development of the skills and abilities needed for young people to match the Political Participation Index and how to express this themselves amongst their peers.

## References

- Abramson, P. (1967). The Differential Political Socialization of English Secondary School Students, *Sociology of education*, 40(3), 246-269.
- Amná, E. (2012). How is civic engagement developed over time? Emerging answers from a multidisciplinary field, *Journal of adolescence*, 35(3), 611-627.
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Beauvallet, W. & Michon, S. (2010), Professionalization and socialization of the members of the European Parliament, *French politics*, 8,(2), 145-165.
- Beyers, J. (2010). Conceptual and methodological challenges in the Study of European socialization, *Journal of European public policy*, 17(6), 909-920.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology, *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Comhairle na nÓg. (n.d.). *Who We Are*. Comhairle na nÓg. <http://www.comhairlenanog.ie/who-we-are/>
- Cso.ie. (2019). *Introduction*. - CSO - Central Statistics Office. <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/purli/urbanandrurallifeinireland2019/introduction/>
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs, (2011). *Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making Briefing Note*. Government Publications.
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs, (2015). *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015-2020*. Dublin: Government Publications, 1-12.

- Dolan, K. (2011), Do Women and Men Know Different Things? Measuring Gender Differences in Political Knowledge, *The Journal of politics*, 73(1), 97-107.
- Frevort, U., Eitler, P., Olsen, S., Jensen, U., Pernau, M., Brückenhaus, D., Beljan, M., Gammerl, B., Laukötter, A. & Hitzer, B. (2014), *Learning How to Feel: Children's Literature and Emotional Socialization, 1870-1970*, Oxford University Press, Incorporated, Oxford.
- Gordon, H. R. and Taft, J. K. (2011) 'Rethinking Youth Political Socialization: Teenage Activists Talk Back', *Youth & Society*, 43(4), 1499–1527.
- Heywood, A. (2019), *Politics*, Fifth edn, Macmillan International Higher Education/Red Globe Press, London.
- Hooghe, M., Havermans, N., Quintelier, E. and Dassonneville, R., (2011). *Belgian Political Panel Survey 2006-2011*. Leuven: K.U. Leuven.
- Kramer, M.W. (2010), Organizational socialization: joining and leaving organizations, *Polity*, Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA.
- Lee, G., (2019). *Young people across country rally for climate action*. RTE.  
<https://www.rte.ie/news/2019/0920/1077055-irish-students-to-demonstrate-for-climate-action/>
- Lee, N.-J., Shah, D. V. and McLeod, J. M. (2013) Processes of Political Socialization: A Communication Mediation Approach to Youth Civic Engagement, *Communication Research*, 40(5), 669–697.
- McFarland, D.A. & Thomas, R.J. (2006). Bowling Young: How Youth Voluntary Associations Influence Adult Political Participation, *American sociological review*, 71(3), 401-425.
- Mohan, C., (2018). *The power of young people in politics in Ireland* - SpunOut.ie.  
<https://spunout.ie/voices/opinion/power-young-people-politics-ireland>

- National Youth Council of Ireland, (November 22). *Rural Youth: Public Transport, Employment and Investment in Youth and Mental Health Services Key Issues*. NYCI. <https://www.youth.ie/articles/rural-youth-public-transport-employment-and-investment-in-youth-and-mental-health-services-key-issues/>
- Quintelier, E. (2015). Engaging Adolescents in Politics: The Longitudinal Effect of Political Socialization Agents, *Youth & Society*, 47(1), 51-69.
- Quintelier, E., Van Deth, J. W. (2014). Supporting democracy: Political participation and political attitudes exploring causality using panel data. *Political Studies*, 62, 153-171.
- Sapiro, V. (2004) 'Not your parents' political socialization: introduction for a new generation'. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 7, 1-23.
- Savat, S., (2020). *The divide between us: Urban-rural political differences rooted in geography*. Washington University in St. Louis. <https://source.wustl.edu/2020/02/the-divide-between-us-urban-rural-political-differences-rooted-in-geography/>
- The Library of Congress. (n.d). *Youth in the Civil Rights Movement*. <https://www.loc.gov/collections/civil-rights-history-project/articles-and-essays/youth-in-the-civil-rights-movement/>
- UNICEF, (2000). Young People in Changing Societies. *Regional Monitoring Report*. Siena: UNICEF.
- Verba, S. & Nie N.H., (1972). *Participation in America: Political democracy and social equality* (1st ed.), Harper & Row, New York (1972).
- Youthworkireland.ie. (n.d). *About Us* | Youth Work Ireland. Retrieved November 25 from <https://www.youthworkireland.ie/who-we-are/about-us>

**Feminist Urban Design: Theories of Justice in Denver, CO by**

Megan Morrell, University of Denver

**Abstract**

Feminist Urban Design is a burgeoning field in the world of urban planning that seeks to critically examine the intricate relationships between gender and space. Yet, there exists a significant theoretical gap in the field to clearly delineate key components of feminist design in practice. This article analyzes existing literature in feminist urban design, propose a new framework of inclusivity criteria for urban spaces using the case of Vienna, Austria, and finally, apply that framework to the fascinating case of Denver, Colorado. This research article questions: What does feminist urban planning look like, and to what extent do urban spaces in Denver embody it? The methodological tools used in this article include an analysis of past urban design literature in Vienna to abstract key feminist planning principles that can be applied to other urban cases. This article develops a novel theoretical contribution to the urban planning field through the construction of an evaluative framework that mechanizes both procedural and distributive notions of justice. The conclusions drawn from this investigation reveal that Denver is progressing towards feminist design in terms of horizontal decision-making, safety features, and increased mobility, but is significantly limited regarding considerations for domestic labor and the naming of city spaces.

**Keywords:** Urban design, feminist design, Denver, Vienna, gender inclusivity

## Introduction

Gender identities are lenses through which we view the world around us and conceptualize our own positionality within it. Physical space itself isn't neutral, but rather it has significant social meaning: it reflects and reproduces socio-cultural values, including patriarchal ideology. Namely, urban built spaces implicitly and disproportionately prioritize men and male bodies. Philosopher Henri Lefebvre argues that all "space is derived from the body and... all space has social meaning...[because] space, as well as society, participates in constructing the limits of the self, but the self is also projected onto society and space" (as cited in Kuhlmann, 2013, p. 5). Further, Dr. Dörte Kuhlmann extends this point into the urban dimension to say that "architecture uses its spatial and non-spatial means to influence the production, reproduction, and representation of gender and the body" (Kuhlmann, 2013, p. 6). Lefebvre and Kuhlmann's work go to show that the spaces all around us are deeply meaningful for communities and societies. There currently exists a plethora of research into theories of justice, the lack of gender representation in the planning field, urban gender-based violence, and economic spatial analyses. Yet, there is a clear lack of research that would articulate how cities can embody feminist justice in their planning and spaces themselves. As an attempt to fill this gap, this article proposes a list of non-exhaustive criteria as a framework for evaluation of gender-based justice in cities, using theories of procedural and distributive justice to make sense of some key feminist issues existing today in cities.

The principal project of feminist urban geography is the actualization of both procedural and distributive justice to create gender equity. A useful definition of gender for this analysis comes from the City of Vienna planning case report, which refers to gender as "a person's social gender... and also includes the respective person's upbringing according to gender roles, social expectations and (behavioral) norms" (City of Vienna). This analysis embraces gender not as being

binary or assigned, but rather fluid and individually defined. There are deeply historical roots to gender oppression, especially regarding non-men. When discussing equity, this tends to look like centering historically disenfranchised genders, which include non-men.

### **Procedural and Distributive Justice**

Definitionally, procedural justice occurs when systems of decision making have “properties that make it intrinsically just... [and] using a different procedure to produce the same result might be objectionable” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). In other words, justice lies within a rigorous procedure, which we can trust to produce fair results. Essentially, this conceptualization would assess justice in urban planning through examining the process by which decisions are made. Are the existing decision-making processes themselves constructed in a fair and just manner? Procedural justice might look like the hiring of planners with diverse social identities, and intentionally asking many community members for their input in making decisions about the allocation of space, time, and resources, etc.

On the other hand, the outcome of the decision-making process is also tremendously important to consider. Distributive justice is concerned with the “outcomes that [a system] tends to produce” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). For urban planning, whether the outcome of urban decision-making yields better inclusion, equity, opportunities, etc. for citizens would be assessed in this perspective. Interrogating justice from both angles reveals a more holistic picture of justice, from which cities can be evaluated. This two-pronged approach is the basis for the framework that will be utilized for this analysis and to view the existing arguments made by planning scholars.

Given this, many feminist urban geographers tend to focus their arguments around three major concerns for this project of gender equity and inclusion in cities. Namely, they include: male

dominance in the urban planning field, gender-based violence and safety, and considerations for domestic labor.

### **Literature Review**

Firstly, there is a stark lack of gender representation within the urban planning community. Globally, “women occupy just 10 percent of the highest-ranking jobs at leading architecture firms and urban planning offices” (The World Bank, 2020). Even worse, “women, girls and sexual and gender minorities are rarely asked to participate in community planning and design processes” (The World Bank, 2020). If planners from gender minorities are not often even present and gender minorities are not thoroughly consulted in the planning process, the decisions made by planners are informed almost solely based on the experiences of men planners. Feminist Urban Geographer Dr. Leslie Kern writes that “to imagine the city and its structures as neutral places where complicated human social relations are staged is to ignore the simple fact that *people* built these places” (Kern, 2020). This is not to say that the outcomes of planning done by men are necessarily or inherently sexist or problematic, but rather the processes by which decisions about city space ought to include diverse perspectives. There is no singular or monolithic experience of any gender. Yet, diversity in identity is undoubtably necessary for a holistic and informed background to planning. This is especially salient considering the deep relationship between our social identities, bodies, and space. Thus, the feminist urban geographic project includes purposeful search for diverse input.

Secondly, gender minorities disproportionately experience gender-based violence in cities. Gender-based violence describes “violence that is directed at an individual based on [their] biological sex or gender identity... [including] physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and psychological abuse, threats, coercion, and economic or educational deprivation, whether

occurring in public or private life” (Women For Women International, 2017). In terms of prevalence, the YWCA has published statistics that “65 percent of all women have experienced street harassment... [and] among all women, 23 percent have been sexually touched, 20 percent have been followed, and 9 percent have been forced to do something sexual” (YWCA). The nonprofit organization Stop Street Harassment published data that found of people who have experienced harassment, “66 percent said they'd been sexually harassed in public spaces... [and] public forums are where you see the more chronic experiences of sexual harassment” (Chatterjee, 2018). City streets and public areas are the sites of much of this violence, making it an issue that cities themselves need to address. Further, the harms of gender-based violence are not isolated to incidents of violence, but rather have implications for survivors’ navigation of urban environments. Specifically, “harassment and fear of violence can impede free movement of girls and women and stop them reaching their full potential” (Fleming, 2018).

Further, violence perpetrated against transgender and non-binary folks is also staggeringly high. In a 2015 survey conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), almost half “(46%) of respondents were verbally harassed in the past year because of being transgender” (National Resource Center on Domestic Violence). Furthermore, “nearly one in ten (9%) respondents were physically attacked in the past year because of being transgender” (National Resource Center on Domestic Violence). Harassment is certainly not unique to cisgender women, but an issue that necessitates solutions for all minoritized genders. The clear message from urban environments to gender minorities is that the city space is not safe for their bodies. Cities are not built for their safety nor comfort. To construct or reconstruct the built environment in a way that centers the safety of people that are vulnerable to gender-based violence is to subvert this violent reality.

Thirdly, one's participation in domestic and/or wage labor influences one's interactions in and relationships to a city. Domestic or reproductive labor describes "the numerous tasks associated with maintaining a household" whereas wage labor describes the selling of one's time and skills for a wage in a traditional job setting (Open Education Sociology Dictionary). While there have certainly been advances for women, and non-men broadly, in terms of entering traditionally male-dominated wage labor settings, many still disproportionately do domestic and reproductive labor as well. Scholar Ann Markusen writes that in cities, "the location and organization of households are generally considered of economic interest only as the locational source of labor power and buying power... [and] neoclassical studies hypothesize that household-location decisions are primarily a function of the journey to work and secondarily reflect preferences for accessibility to open space, good public services, retail markets, and housing" (Markusen, 1980, p. S26). Capitalist economic systems are constructed to value certain kinds of labor and activity that is seen as 'profitable' and 'productive,' which is deeply reflected in the physical structure of cities. From this, Location Theory attempts to "[address] the questions of what economic activities are located where and why" (Encyclopedia Britannica). In a capitalist mode of production, the location of economic activities and structure of the city is based on efficiency for those who participate in capitalistic wage labor rather than domestic or reproductive labor. It's not a coincidence that gender minorities disproportionately do domestic work and that it is structurally undervalued. It's estimated that "married American mothers spend almost twice as much time on housework and childcare than do married fathers" (Bianchi et al. 2012, p. 55-63). This phenomenon of non-men continuing to do the majority of domestic work is not "a glass ceiling, [but] a sticky floor" (Burkeman, 2018).

Further, mobility chains can be used to compare the spatial layout of mobility for a typical domestic laborer in comparison to a wage laborer. People doing domestic tasks usually have multiple daily sites that they complete their work. For instance, a domestic laborer who is a parent might in one day go to the grocery store, daycare, laundromat, etc. as well as going to work. On the other hand, someone who only does wage labor would likely only need mobility between their house and work, with few other stops. This means that issues of transportation and mobility are intrinsically tied to domestic work, yet our cities are designed to ignore this work in favor of a wage labor orientation. Transit in many major cities is designed to get people from their home to the office rather than locating goods and services around transit stops. *Polycentric* city designs create many decentralized clusters of businesses, schools, residences, etc. that logistically support complex mobility chains more than *monocentric* structures can (City of Vienna). The issue of intra-city mobility thus becomes a gender equity issue.

### **Framework Proposal: Vienna, Austria Case Lessons**

While these three issues (and more) are regularly identified as gendered problems facing urban spaces in particular, there is far less academic substance in terms of clear evaluative criteria. Despite a lack of useful framework, the case of gender mainstreaming in Vienna, Austria is a fantastic model of reforms that target the aforementioned concerns. The concept of *gender mainstreaming* is used as a systemic approach to inclusion where considerations for gender inequity is an “integral part of all political and planning decisions” (City of Vienna). The City of Vienna since 1995 has “conducted about 60 gender-sensitive pilot projects and assessed another 1,000 (Hunt, 2019). Work projects after 1995 were characterized by a radical centering of gender minorities both in the process and outcomes of planning.

An exemplar of this work in Vienna is the public high density housing complex called “Frauen-Werk-Stadt (Women-Work-City) [which is] a 357-unit complex made by women and completed in 1997... [and] characterized by a woman’s perspective at every level: from pram storage on every floor and wide stairwells to encourage neighbourly interactions; to flexible flat layouts and high-quality secondary rooms; to the height of the building, low enough to ensure “eyes upon the street” (Hunt, 2019). This project alone comprehensively tackles the earlier identified issues of lack of representation of gender minorities in planning, safety concerns, and considerations for domestic laborers. While there is no one singular “woman’s perspective,” the steps taken to make Frauen-Werk-Stadt shows the safety and accessibility insights gained through representation of some women’s critical design perspectives.

Further, in the early 2000s, Vienna “street lighting was improved in 26 areas identified in surveys as inducing anxiety; traffic lights were altered to prioritize pedestrians; and seating was installed in nine new locations... and more than a kilometer of pavement was widened, and five areas were made entirely barrier-free, so as to better accommodate prams, wheelchair users and elderly people” (Hunt 2019). These improvements demonstrate intentional planning that addresses street safety issues often identified in cities. While gender-based violence is a deeply socio-cultural phenomenon that cannot be completely solved with physical infrastructure, this planning in Vienna one of many steps towards facilitating a safe, inclusive, and just space for all people.

The construction and reconstruction of parks and public spaces in Vienna were also informed by gender mainstreaming practices, with the city claiming that “if parks are to be used by girls and boys on equal terms they need to be planned and designed in ways that ensure gender equality... [and] much depends on additional features such as teams of park supervisors trained in leisure time management and social pedagogics” (City of Vienna). The allocation of space,

resources, etc. in a park implicitly reveals the kinds of activities that are being prioritized, and from that the kinds of people the space was designed for. Access to changing tables, shade, water, etc. are also examples of how parks themselves can be built with resources that all people need. All of these examples model the tangible ways in which gender mainstreaming can be actualized in city spaces.

Some key principles from Vienna can be abstracted to be applicable to other cities. The procedural issues discussed by the Vienna report are quality assurance in the planning process, targeted resource use, exchange and communication of know-how, and methodological innovations (City of Vienna). Essentially, these points question who is being consulted in the planning process, what kinds of projects are being funded, and whether or not the study methodology is just. The distributed issues identified in this case include polycentric urban structure, city of short distances, high quality public spaces, access to green transportation, safety, barrier freedom, and daily life considerations (City of Vienna). These reforms have decentralized Vienna's Central Business District (CBD) and increased green mobility to resources including public spaces.

### **Criteria for Gender Inclusive Urban Planning**

Based on the gender mainstreaming work done in Vienna, the framework proposed intends to analyze the inclusivity of urban planning and is illustrated in the table below. These criteria compose a holistic view for nations, states, and cities to examine and improve urban gender inclusion. Specifically, it's useful to think about gender mainstreaming in terms of procedural and distributive justice, and the essential components and indicators of each. This isn't to say that the framework is exhaustive, but rather it cannot ever be complete as cities and societies change rapidly. Nevertheless, each criteria draws on lessons learned from the Vienna case, and abstracts

the necessary components of gender mainstreaming for diverse cities. This framework will then be used as an evaluative tool for the city of Denver, Colorado.

<b>Table 1: Gender Inclusive Urban Planning Framework</b>	
<b>Procedural Justice</b>	<b>Distributive Justice</b>
1. Horizontal Decision Making 2. Diverse representation of in decision-making process 3. Wage and Domestic Labor Mobility Chains	4. Safety Features 5. Naming of streets, monuments, blocks 6. Eliminating separation between work and residential areas

#### **Analysis: Procedural Justice in Denver, CO**

In terms of horizontal leadership strategies and pluralism, the City of Denver appears to exhibit a progressive structure. For instance, the community engagement with planning and development is quite easily accessible to the public. The Denver Planning Board has meetings available live and recorded on the City of Denver website (City and County of Denver). Polls and feedback sites are present on the City of Denver website as well (City and County of Denver). The composition of people on the Denver Planning Board appears to be diverse in terms of gender. However, it is difficult to distinguish externally the inner mechanisms of the planning department, and whether or not the actual decision-making uses truly inclusive processes. It's also difficult to gauge the diversity of the board without personal knowledge of their identities and background. Nevertheless, accessible spaces for community members to make contributions to community design and planning whether or not it is used, and at least the appearance of hiring diverse people is probably better than the alternative. At the very least, the planning board appears to value diversity and inclusion.

Further, the Downtown Denver Partnership non-profit organization aims to make downtown Denver the “first center city in the world that has a strategy and a platform specifically focused on women and meeting their needs” (Singer, 2019). The non-profit collaborates with the City of Denver and views gender mainstreaming as an “economic imperative” and a way for women to “contribute to economic vibrancy” in Denver (Downtown Denver Partnership). This has been labeled “women-first design,” which attempts to address some spatial and cultural barriers to women in cities, such as *“too-heavy doors (often built to be opened easily by the average middle-aged man, who weighs 201.7 pounds)”* (Downtown Denver Partnership). While this partnership might initially appear to be a commitment to include women in the space of downtown Denver, the cited reasoning for centering women in planning is not inclusive of the broad umbrella of non-men, and inclusion is used as a strategy for increasing consumer capitalism. All gender minorities should be included in planning because they deserve equitable treatment and consideration, not because they are an opportunity for businesses to increase profit. This makes the Downtown Denver Partnership limited in its feminist mission. Nevertheless, even acknowledging that the city is not a neutral space for all identities is a place to start.

Regarding considerations for domestic labor, the City of Denver doesn’t overtly declare a dedication to city planning that is inclusive of the needs of both wage and domestic labor. In this way, there is room for improvement. Regardless, the city’s focus on transit-oriented development and mixed land uses would yield increased mobility for people who have complex trip-chains, who tend to do domestic labor. More will be mentioned about this in the section on Denver’s efforts to become a “city of short distances.” The procedural aspect of considering how different types of labor influences how people move throughout the city isn’t explicitly articulated, but the justice in the distributive sense is there all the same. Conceptualizing transportation as the linkage between

workers' houses and jobs is to ignore the ways in which mobility is different for people doing domestic work. Constructing daycares, grocery stores, laundromats, etc. around already existing transportation and building new transportation that gives access to these goods and services is a deeply feminist cause.

### **Distributive Justice Criteria**

Increases in safety features in Denver have seen some improvements over the past few years. For instance, The City of Denver's "Blueprint Denver" program encourages "multi-modal streets [that] accommodate more trips by more people by improving transit and providing better pedestrian and bicycle facilities, so that people of any physical ability feel safe using any mode of travel" (City and County of Denver). Physical safety in transportation is being addressed through this plan. The ability for people to be in close proximity to bikers and walkers could reasonably reduce the ability for street harassers to make physical contact. However, the City has not directly articulated intention to mitigate the gender-based violence experienced in the city. Thus, there is room to expand the city's strategic plan to include reducing issues experienced disproportionately by gender minorities.

The goal of making Denver a "city of short distances" is also being intentionally addressed by the City of Denver. In particular, the Denver 2040 Plan is quite explicit and intentional in providing greater mobility and access to the Denver-metro area (City and County of Denver). There also has been growth in other business districts like the Denver Tech Center in South East Denver, which shows a kind of progress since the 1970s. The Downtown Denver Partnership has also played a role in advocating for better transportation and mobility for people living in Denver. Also, the City of Denver has published a Transit-Oriented Development Strategic Plan (City and County of Denver). This strategic plan also intentionally seeks mixed land usage and mixed

communities. This approach would facilitate mobility for people who engage in trip-chaining, like seen in the mobility chain image. The more Denver is developed to facilitate easier access and closer proximity to goods and services, the easier it is for people who do domestic labor and tend to trip-chain. In this way, Denver is on the right track to making the city have a more equitable structure.

In terms of naming, Denver has seen some advancements in the naming of streets, towns, parks, etc., but still has room to improve. The naming of the urban built environment signals to its inhabitants the kinds of people, things, ideas, etc. that ought to be praised and valued by that community. Historically, people recognized for praise have been disproportionately white men, no matter the value of their contribution to the community. For instance, the Denver neighborhood called Stapleton has changed its name to Central Park in response to an anti-racist and decolonial community movement (Tabachnik, 2020). The neighborhood was previously named after former mayor Benjamin Stapleton, who was an active member of the Klu Klux Klan (Tabachnik, 2020).

Moreover, renaming streets like Evans Avenue in South Denver to perhaps recognize work being done by non-men could shift the narrative and tone for naming within urban environments. Evans Avenue is named after John Evans, who has been found to have played a meaningful role in the brutal 1864 Sand Creek Massacre in Eastern Colorado (University of Denver, 2014). The naming of this street is a continual reminder and glorification of John Evans himself. Renaming is a feminist cause alongside its intersections with decolonial and anti-racist work, as well.

Alternatively, the Aspern district of Vienna, exemplifies a space intentionally dedicated to diverse naming as “all of the streets and public spaces are named after women” (Kern, 2020). This is an initial step towards recognition of community members that are deserving of it but ought not end only with women’s names. Real equity would work intentionally to include the names of

excellent folks of color, individuals in the LGBTQ+ community, etc. rather than only prioritizing women's names. Thus, it's not necessary that Denver renames all streets, suburbs, monuments, etc., but increased signaling of the importance of non-men and people of color in the Denver community would be beneficial.

The application of this evaluative framework to the city of Denver has yielded a complex conclusion. In some ways, Denver is purposefully working to make the city more equitable, but there is still significant room for improvement. Denver's successes mainly surround horizontal decision making, safety features, and increased mobility. The areas with the most room to improve are considerations for domestic labor and the naming of city streets, monuments, and blocks.

### **Limitations**

The major restrictions for this analysis are firstly, the focus by scholars on cisgender, straight, white, women with kids, secondly, the operation of proposed reforms within a capitalist economic system, and thirdly, the interaction of gender mainstreaming with other competing concerns. When feminist urban geographical work is centered around how to make cities more equitable for cisgender, straight, white women with kids, it misses the point entirely. To advocate for an "emancipatory geography," (Sidaway, 2017) but only for some is to replicate and entrench the existing problematic system. This analysis intentionally seeks out data that are inclusive to different intersecting identities, but there is vast room for improvement within existing discussions of feminist urban geographic data, theories, etc. A meaningfully intersectional approach to gender mainstreaming is undoubtedly necessary in further research.

Further, the proposed framework's suggested reforms would still operate under a capitalist economic system. Many scholars argue that much of the structural inequalities that are seen in cities exist because of the unequal nature of capitalism and neoliberalism (Thrasher, 2015).

Racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. existed before capitalism, but have become tools of the economic order to concentrate power and wealth with the privileged. With this in mind, strategies that intend to include disenfranchised genders through the use of capitalism, are questionable. The Downtown Denver Partnership's "women-first design" exemplifies gender equity work being done within a larger and fundamentally inequitable system. Further research and efforts to implement gender mainstreaming that is anti-capitalist is essential.

Lastly, marginalized identities are not the only salient considerations for cities when planning. Rather, gender also "[competes] with other, sometimes conflicting, concerns – climate resilience, migration, the better-access lobby – for resources and attention" (Hunt, 2019). An intersectional approach, while necessary to true inclusion in cities, complicates the processes of planning significantly. Deeply complex issues demand complex solutions.

## **Conclusions**

The subject of feminist urban geography is rich with data and theory potential. Further research ought be done in this subject, with concepts of distributive and procedural justice in mind. Alongside gender inequities in the city, the ways in which other intersecting identities are supported in the built environment is certainly worthy of further study. Cities like Vienna, Austria are at the forefront of gender mainstreaming implementation, and should be in communication with other cities with knowledge sharing and mentorship.

The answer to the question 'What does feminist urban planning look like, and how can it be applied to the Denver case?' is certainly not simple. Rather, the proposed framework provides a guide for how cities like Denver can work to center gender minorities in their building. The three issues identified by most feminist urban geographers (representation, safety, domestic labor, etc.) are the central concerns addressed by the proposed framework. Overall, Denver is heading in a

positive direction for becoming a more gender equitable place. There is certainly room to improve and adapt for all cities, including Denver. Urban space is not neutral, and the body is not equitably projected onto our built environment. Ultimately, when Dr. Lefebvre says that all space has social meaning (Kuhlmann, 2013, p. 6) that meaning ought to be equitable and just.

## References

- Burkeman, O. (2018, February 17). *Dirty secret: why is there still a housework gender gap?* The Guardian. Retrieved November 19, 2020, from <https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2018/feb/17/dirty-secret-why-housework-gender-gap>
- Chatterjee, R. (2018, February 21). *A New Survey Finds 81 Percent Of Women Have Experienced Sexual Harassment.* NPR. Retrieved November 14, 2020, from <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/02/21/587671849/a-new-survey-finds-eighty-percent-of-women-have-experienced-sexual-harassment>
- City and County of Denver. (n.d.). *Community Planning and Development.* Retrieved November 19, 2020, from <https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/community-planning-and-development.html>
- City and County of Denver. (n.d.). *Planning Board.* Retrieved November 19, 2020, from <https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/community-planning-and-development/planning-and-design/planning-board.html>
- City of Vienna. (n.d.). *Gender Mainstreaming in Urban Planning and Urban Development.* Retrieved November 9, 2020, from <https://www.wien.gv.at/stadtentwicklung/studien/pdf/b008358.pdf>
- City of Vienna. (n.d.). *Parks – ways to implement gender mainstreaming.* Retrieved November 19, 2020, from <https://www.wien.gv.at/english/administration/gendermainstreaming/examples/parks.html>
- Downtown Denver Partnership. (n.d.). *Building a City for Women as an Economic Imperative.* Retrieved November 18, 2020, from <https://www.downtowndenver.com/building-a-city-for-women/>

- Encyclopedia Britannica. (n.d.). *Location Theory*. Retrieved November 19, 2020, from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/location-theory>
- Fleming, A. (2018, December 13). *What Would a City That is Safe For Women Look Like?* The Guardian. Retrieved November 13, 2020, from <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/dec/13/what-would-a-city-that-is-safe-for-women-look-like>
- Hunt, E. (2019, May 14). *City with a female face: how modern Vienna was shaped by women*. The Guardian. Retrieved November 19, 2020, from <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2019/may/14/city-with-a-female-face-how-modern-vienna-was-shaped-by-women>
- Kern, L. (2020, July 6). *'Upward-thrusting buildings ejaculating into the sky' – do cities have to be so sexist?* The Guardian. Retrieved November 17, 2020, from <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/jul/06/upward-thrusting-buildings-ejaculating-cities-sexist-leslie-kern-phallic-feminist-city-toxic-masculinity>
- Kuhlmann, D. (2013). *Gender Studies in Architecture: Space, Power and Difference*. Taylor & Francis Group.
- Markusen, A. (1980, Spring). *City Spatial Structure, Women's Household Work, and National Urban Policy*. *University Press Journals*, 5(3). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3173805.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A5b228545abecae037c24893cbf1caeb4>
- National Resource Center on Domestic Violence. (n.d.). *Violence Against Trans and Non-Binary People*. Retrieved November 13, 2020, from <https://vawnet.org/sc/serving-trans-and-non-binary-survivors-domestic-and-sexual-violence/violence-against-trans-and>

Open Education Sociology Dictionary. (n.d.). *Definition of Domestic Labor*. Retrieved November 13, 2020, from <https://sociologydictionary.org/domestic-labor/#:~:text=of%20Domestic%20Labor-,Definition%20of%20Domestic%20Labor,associated%20with%20maintaining%20a%20household.>

Sidaway, J. D. (2017, October 16). *The Anarchist Roots of Geography: Toward Spatial Emancipation*. Taylor and Francis Online. Retrieved November 19, 2020, from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/2325548X.2017.1366846>

Singer, D. (2019, March). *It's a Man's World—But It Doesn't Have to Be: Could Denver become the first city in the country to be designed for women?* 5280. Retrieved November 14, 2020, from <https://www.5280.com/2019/02/its-a-mans-world-but-it-doesnt-have-to-be/>

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. (n.d.). *Justice*. Retrieved November 09, 2020, from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice/#ProcVersSubsJust>

Bianchi, S. M., Sayer, L. C., Milkie, M. A., Robinson, J. P. (2012). Housework: Who Did, Does or Will Do It, and How Much Does It Matter?, *Social Forces*, 91(1), 55–63, <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sos120>.

Tabachnik, S. (2020, August 1). *Stapleton residents vote “Central Park” as new name; “It really is a meaningful first step”*. The Denver Post. Retrieved November 19, 2020, from <https://www.denverpost.com/2020/08/01/stapleton-neighborhood-name-change-final-vote/>

Thrasher, S. W. (201195, December 5). *Income inequality happens by design. We can't fix it by tweaking capitalism*. The Guardian. Retrieved November 19, 2020, from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/dec/05/income-inequality-policy-capitalism>

University of Denver. (2014, November). *Report of the John Evans Study Committee*.

Women For Women International. (2017, November 21). *Series: What Does That Mean? Gender-based Violence*. Retrieved November 13, 2020, from [https://www.womenforwomen.org/blogs/series-what-does-mean-gender-based-violence#:~:text=Gender%2Dbased%20violence%20\(GBV\)%20is%20violence%20that%20is%20directed,in%20public%20or%20private%20life](https://www.womenforwomen.org/blogs/series-what-does-mean-gender-based-violence#:~:text=Gender%2Dbased%20violence%20(GBV)%20is%20violence%20that%20is%20directed,in%20public%20or%20private%20life).

The World Bank. (2020, March 7). *Gender-Inclusive Cities: Can Urban Planning Take into Account Women and Minorities?* Retrieved November 9, 2020, from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2020/03/07/ciudades-feministas-diseno-urbano-para-mujeres-y-minorias>

YWCA. (n.d.). *Gender-Based Violence Facts*. Retrieved November 13, 2020, from <https://www.ywca.org/wp-content/uploads/WWV-GBV-Fact-Sheet-Final.pdf>

## **Slaughtering Our Minds: Mental Health Concerns Amongst Slaughterhouse Employees**

Jude Kelley, York University

### **Abstract**

As a generous amount of slaughterhouse employees fall under the realm of precarious work, corporations are seldom held to the same ethical standards for protecting their employees due to the grey zone within which these precarious workers reside. This paper aims to answer how conditions for slaughterhouse workers are representative of mental health concerns and barriers in high-stress, high-risk jobs. Further, it works to identify who is responsible for upholding employee rights and how to improve workplace support services, policies and legislation, and systemic change to advocate for the emotional and mental well-being of those working within slaughterhouses. The findings of this paper indicate that constant exposure to violence and a lack of psychological support resources harm employee mental health. Additionally, this paper explores methods to support slaughterhouse employees through workplace environment and legislative changes.

**Keywords:** Mental health, precarious work, slaughterhouse work, human rights, slaughterhouses

## **Introduction**

Slaughterhouse employees work in environments with high emotional stress as well as physical pressure jobs with limited access to ethical working conditions. Employees face varying types of violence, from partaking in animal abuse and torture prior to slaughtering animals, exposure to unethical and unsanitary working conditions, and a lack of human rights through being denied bathroom or meal breaks (Muller, 2018, p. 91). Their mental health concerns range from heightened levels of stress, depression, anxiety, dissociation, and substance abuse (Dillard, 2008, p. 397). Unfortunately, slaughterhouse workers face barriers to accessing mental health support while the corporate livestock industry simultaneously manipulates legal structures to dismiss any obligation they may have to support employee well-being. Slaughterhouse employees are primarily refugees, migrant workers, or impoverished with few alternative employment options, confining them to industries with little inadequate protective legislation for employee health (Muller, 2018, p. 82-83). As a result, some slaughterhouses face upwards of a 100% turnover rate per year from employee burnout, exhaustion, and injury (Muller, 2018, p. 91). Recommendations for better supporting slaughterhouse employees regarding protecting the mental health of precarious workers include improving working conditions, supporting individual well-being, providing employees with easier access to resources, and making legislative changes to hold corporations lacking in ethical conditions accountable (LaMontagne et al., 2014, p. 3-6) (Schultz et al., 2010, p. 369).

Slaughterhouses exploit their employees by targeting precarious populations, paying low wages, and neglecting to provide programs and support to avoid the negative impacts of slaying livestock. Conclusively, employers overlook slaughterhouse workers' rights, leaving employees facing psychological repercussions without access to adequate support. This paper aims to answer

how conditions for slaughterhouse workers are representative of mental health concerns and barriers in high-stress, high-risk jobs. Further, it works to identify who is responsible for upholding employee rights and how to improve workplace support services, policies and legislation, and systemic change to advocate for the emotional and mental well-being of those working within slaughterhouses.

### **Pressure, Expectations, and Precariousness**

High-stress work environments such as law enforcement, the military, and slaughterhouses indicate higher emotional stress and trauma levels due to their constant exposure to violence. This trauma can manifest in settings outside of the workplace, such as familial life, social settings, or interpersonal relationships if workers are not substantially emotionally and mentally supported (Denk-Florea et al., 2020, p. 16-18). Meanwhile, stressful working conditions encourage “turning off one’s feelings” or emotional numbing to minimize the emotional impact and fixate on maximizing productivity (Glover, 1992, p. 644). Trauma-focused environments such as medicine and war also refer to this as desensitization, and while the circumstances are vastly different, this emotional disconnect also occurs within the livestock industry (Denk-Florea et al., 2020, p. 5). The high-stress structure within these occupations further impacts workforces surrounding death due to the inability to connect stress and emotional processing (Griffin & Bernard, 2003, p. 4). As a result, the expectation of livestock execution per minute curates emotional numbness due to its consistent and detached focus on gaining profit and efficiency (Dillard, 2008, p. 392).

Though some policies exist to protect employees, many fail to address how work-life can impede life outside of labour. Slaughterhouse work effectively targets marginalized populations with few other options to support themselves financially, such as precarious workers (Muller, 2018, p. 82-83). Vosko defines precarious work as “... work for remuneration characterized by

uncertainty, low income, and limited social benefits and statutory entitlements,” such as those who do not maintain legal status, work seasonally, or workers of colour (Vosko, 2010, p. 2). Due to the grey zone that precarious workers reside in, exploitation is unnoticed, limiting employer obligation to produce ethical working conditions and support (Bison-Rapp & Coiquaud, 2017, p. 6-7). Regrettably, employees experience a violent cycle of labour exploitation with few escape methods.

Muller (2018) documents that most slaughterhouse employees consist of undocumented immigrants, people of colour, and refugees, henceforth placing many of these employees in vulnerable working positions (p. 82-83). As a result of poor healthcare coverage, dangerous working conditions, and low wages, precarious work results in exploitation as labour policy and legislation ignore the need for precarious employee rights and protection (Hughes, 2014, p. 178). Unfortunately, many incidents and signs of mental distress are regularly undocumented in unequal workplaces as corporations neglect any duty to defend employee rights (Muller, 2018, p. 83). Nibert's (2014) piece documents this history of how slaughterhouses target immigrant populations due to their lack of legal and economic obligations (p. 6). Therefore, to fully comprehend the layers of exploitation within slaughterhouses, identifying the intersectional barriers (such as race, legal status, and socioeconomic position) stacked against slaughterhouse workers is necessary to conceptualize the full-scale impact this work has on emotional and mental health.

### **Trauma and Mental Health Concerns**

Slaughterhouses are fast-paced environments with high expectations of their employees to maintain rapid movements for processing goods. According to Dillard (2008), in 2006, the average slaughterhouse worker made \$10.34 per hour. Meanwhile, employees make as many as five cuts per 15 seconds (p. 393). Another study by Leibler et al. (2016) documents that employees are expected to make at least 360 heads per hour (p. 105). Similarly, a report by Human Rights Watch

(2004) documents some facility standards ranging from processing 400 cattle and pigs per hour or employees cutting upwards of 30,000 times per day (p. 33, p. 36). Assessing the various studies and reports analyzing slaughterhouse working environments, the pressure and speed employees face is not their only barrier. Some facilities have as high as a 100% turnover rate annually due to the exhaustion and injuries employees experience. What's more, employees easily work twelve-hour days, often seven days a week, while also being denied basic bathroom breaks. To avoid urinating themselves, or being fired for taking breaks, some employees turn to wearing diapers to work, or avoid drinking water or eating (Muller, 2008, p. 91). Amongst the hasty experience, slaughterhouses operate in unsanitary and unethical conditions, with animals in small, feces and blood-covered cages (Dillard, 2008, p. 394-395). Slaughterhouses often spark concerns around working conditions, but the introduction of the assembly line worsened water contamination, overcrowding, and dim lighting, putting employee health at higher risk. Regardless of the danger, livestock corporations focus on boosting productivity and reaching their financial goals (Nibert, 2014, p. 6).

Slaughtering occurs in various ways, from ripping off the heads of chickens, slitting throats, boiling animals alive, and whipping or beating them to death (Dillard, 2008, p. 395-396). However, animal abuse occurs prior to the execution of livestock as well. Nibert (2014) documents some of these horrific acts, including stabbing animals in the eyes to make them go blind, spraying them with high-pressure water to force animals to move, stomping on parts of their bodies, and electrically shocking them (p. 3). Nibert (2014) raises questions about how abuse translates to life outside of work as many of these vulnerable workers may experience and commit abuse (physical, sexual, verbal) outside of their work life. While the agricultural corporations may not acknowledge that being surrounded by violence can impact one's well-being, the trauma in the slaughterhouse

can translate to other environments. Emhan et al. (2012) document that several employees mention finding pleasure in murdering animals, raising concerns about barriers preventing people from behaving violently outside of work (p. 320). Violent and sexual crime rates within communities near slaughterhouses also prove to be higher than those without such facilities (Fitzgerald et al., 2009, p. 172-174). The brutality, unjust working conditions, and lack of employee protection allude to a lack of empathy and human rights within such workplaces; therefore, better policy and legal measures must identify and protect the rights of slaughterhouse workers.

As mentioned earlier, most of the research around slaughterhouses concerning health focuses on the physical impacts and injuries. Employees are at higher risks of injuries due to executing animals using repetitive, forceful actions (Leibler & Perry, 2017, p. 23-24). However, minimal research addresses the mental health concerns surrounding the constant exposure to trauma (Leibler et al., 2016, p. 105). Of the few studies that aim to tackle this topic, many allude to the idea that exposure to violence within slaughterhouses correlates with poor employee mental health and higher crime rates.

In 2010, Kessler et al. developed a scale for screening mental health status through a brief, six question series about mental health to establish an idea of the well-being of the general population (p. 6-7). A study conducted by Leiber et al. (2016) focuses on serious psychological stress (SPD) rates amongst workers in slaughterhouses using the Kessler-6 model (p. 106). They found that 14.6% of participants had moderate to mild psychological distress within the past 30 days of their study. Their study concludes that employees might be at risk of SPD caused by their work and, thus, that better psychological resources are necessary to support and treat employees that work in slaughterhouses (p. 107). This study supports the evident need for psychological

support and mental health resources in the slaughterhouse industry as it indicates that mental health concerns and trauma are prevalent amongst workers.

In addition to serious psychological stress, a study by Emhan et al. (2012) identifies higher rates of psychopathology in those who work at slaughterhouses than meat packagers. Using quantitative methods, the authors interview slaughterhouse workers, meat packagers and office workers to analyze levels of psychopathology through a checklist of symptoms, such as anger, psychoticism, paranoia, depression, and obsessive compulsiveness (p. 320-321). Slaughterhouse workers scored higher in all areas than the control group (office workers) on psychopathology (p. 321). Additionally, butchers had higher rates of anxiety, anger, and psychoticism than those who worked in the meat packaging business, suggesting that being a butcher was a factor in mental health concerns (p. 322). This study is significant to understand that exposure to slaughtering animals heightens the risk of mental harm, indicating that livestock corporations jeopardize the rights of their employees by lack of access to mental health supports.

To further understand the mental health impacts of working in slaughterhouses, Dillard (2008) argues that workers experience a form of PTSD known as Perpetration-Induced Traumatic Stress (PITS), where the perpetrator develops trauma from their actions/role. PITS can manifest in a variety of ways, "... including drug and alcohol abuse, anxiety, panic, depression, increased paranoia, a sense of disintegration, dissociation or amnesia, which are incorporated into the 'psychological consequences, of the act of killing.'" (p. 397). This study implies that employees develop traumatic stress in response to their repeated killing of animals at rapid paces, resulting in adverse mental health conditions. Dillard (2008) also argues that some employees may experience "doubling," which is a form of dissociation people develop to disconnect themselves from the acts (often harmful ones) committed (p. 398).

Moreover, multiple studies call into question the impact of slaughterhouses on the crime rates within surrounding communities. For example, a 2009 study conducted by Fitzgerald et al. indicates that rural communities in the United States with slaughterhouses have higher violent and sexual crime rates than counties without these facilities. While the non-slaughterhouse industries scored relatively similarly on the rates of community violence, sexual crimes, and arrests made, on all accounts, the communities with slaughterhouses scored higher, indicating a correlation between increased violence and criminal activity within rural communities with slaughterhouses (p. 172-174). Muller's (2018) article also discerns that communities with nearby slaughterhouses have higher crime rates, rape, murder, and abuse, indicating a correlation between the psychological impacts of assembly-line killing and criminal activity (p. 97). Analyzing these studies reveals a definite psychological impact from slaughterhouses and insufficient resources to support employees.

### **Reluctance and Responsibilities**

Due to the levels of stress and mental illness slaughterhouse workers display, companies in the United States must have policies to protect the well-being of employees. Employees work upwards of twelve hours a day, seven days a week, sometimes without the freedom to have government-mandated breaks (Muller, 2018, p. 91). However, the amount and quality of mental health support within animal agriculture are minimal at best. Within the United States, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is responsible for mandating safe and ethical work environments, including ensuring employee health and well-being are upheld by employers (Human Rights Watch, 2004, p. 26). Consequently, corporations and legislative protection continue to dismiss employee mental health and the negative impact of inhumane working conditions; all the while, OSHA scarcely holds companies accountable for these

conditions (Dillard, 2008, p. 403-404). OSHA's responsibility is to oversee workplace conditions and determine how a work environment "truly is," however, OSHA sparingly uses its power in the context of slaughterhouses due to company politics. OSHA may well know the injustice, but they rely on financial support from outside sources and thus tend to tip-toe around addressing concerns in certain corporate environments to avoid tarnishing their relationships with their sponsors (Dillard, 2008, p. 404). Ultimately, OSHA's efforts fail to adequately defend slaughterhouse employees from being subjected to inhumane working conditions and health concerns or to protect slaughterhouse workers from mental health issues caused by work (Dillard, 2008, p. 403).

Another identifiable form of legal support for employees is "workers' compensation," which monetarily compensates for any harm employees experience in a workplace. Deceptively, there are multiple areas of workers' compensation that exclude non-physical injuries, prohibiting this resource from being available to cases of psychological harm (Dillard, 2008, p. 405). While compensation may seem like a straightforward process, some barriers limit addressing mental health concerns. The focal point of workers' compensation is to target a specific event, so it is challenging to address the everyday occurrence of stress working in a slaughterhouse perpetuates. The mental strain slaughterhouse work causes focuses more on the systematic mindset employees develop and the overarching environment than specific traumatic events (Dillard, 2008, p. 405-406). Dillard (2008) indicates that high-stress occupations can avoid responsibility through intentionally and evenly distributing psychologically straining work across their employee population to prevent the sudden build-up of stress on a singular person. When stress is evenly distributed across parties, no one will be able to complain about individual issues as the stress is perceived as the norm (p. 406). Further, Neumann (1993) identifies limitations to the workers' compensation practice of using stress-based tests to determine eligibility for claims within high-

stress environments since the baseline level of stress for workers in these fields is higher than in other situations (p. 175-176).

Thanks to societal demand, animal agriculture is a growing industry, with companies such as Tyson Foods rapidly expanding and demanding more employees to maintain a high yield profit. Unfortunately, while these corporations have a high demand for employees, they seldom put their funds into providing employee support programs or revise company policies to ensure a safer working environment (Dillard, 2008, p. 392). Until these corporations address the creation of humane working conditions and inadequate employee support, mental health concerns will prevail within the slaughterhouse industry. So then, how can the animal agriculture industry better support the mental well-being of their employees?

### **Recommendations for Change**

As evidence surrounding the growing concern of employee mental health becomes more apparent, numerous authors recommend changes companies can make to benefit employee mental health within the workplace. LaMontagne et al. (2014) argue that support needs to occur on three levels: 1) reduce work-related factors that encourage the roles of occupational overseers to mandate companies take responsibility and maintain better conditions; 2) promote positive aspects of work by both organizations and individuals; and 3) address mental health concerns regardless of the cause, which could be highly influential in the situation of slaughterhouses (p. 3-5). With these measures in place, employees will have better access to resources and support surrounding mental health, thus fostering a more ethical work environment.

LaMontagne et al. (2014) also suggest that holistic approaches address mental health concerns effectively. Firstly, holistic methods can assist employees in understanding their long-term goals and methods of stress management within the workplace. This approach actively assists

employees in identifying their individual significance in their workplace and what they want to achieve through their labour. Secondly, they suggest that companies address employee assistance and provide better services to ensure they have access to the necessary resources for handling potential psychological impacts. By implementing these holistic measures, companies will have a stronger foundation for supporting employee mental health, which can be beneficial to the overall success of a company (p. 6).

In addition to critiquing individual companies, holding legal structures responsible for subjecting employees (particularly precarious ones) to unethical working conditions is a necessary step in enacting change and better advocating for labour rights. Research covering slaughterhouses is only beginning to raise concerns about desensitization when operating in highly stressful environments as research around the psychological impact remains minimal (Leibler et al., 2016, p. 105). Deconstructing the layers of oppression slaughterhouse workers often face requires systematic, overarching change; change that addresses the rights of precarious workers and the responsibility of animal agriculture corporations, and mental health concerns (Schultz et al., 2010, p. 368-369). Otherwise, unethical labour will proceed to target marginalized populations and profit from their exploitation instead of advocating for fostering healthy work environments.

Additionally, conversations about mental health may be more common these days, but employees still face barriers in accessing mental health support within the workplace. Opening up conversations about mental health, in general, is a barrier for many and added intersectionality covering gender, race, and class make finding a safe, supportive space to process emotions few and far between (Schultz et al., 2010, p. 368-369). Therefore, opening a conversation is not sufficient for change in addressing employee well-being concerns. Rather, implementing legislation and policy reform to support workers mental well-being would serve more beneficial

as it provides a stable, documentable, and actionable method of accountability (Dillard, 2008, p. 407).

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this paper aimed to answer how conditions for slaughterhouse workers are representative of mental health concerns and barriers in high-stress, high-risk jobs. Slaughterhouse employees are often in precarious positions with little opportunity to leave the high-stress, high-risk work due to factors such as legal citizenship, refugee status, and living within poverty (Muller, 2018, p. 82-83). The livestock industry takes advantage of the vulnerability of these workers by avoiding protecting employee mental health despite the constant exposure to violence, death, and inhumane working conditions employees face (Muller, 2018, p. 91). As a result, slaughterhouse employees show heightened mental health issues such as depression, paranoia, anxiety, substance dependence, and aggression (Dillard, 2008, p. 397). Further, government programs, including OSHA and Workers Compensation, also fail these workers as they seldom use their power to hold companies accountable for regulating the working conditions and providing employees with mental health support. Despite these concerns, positive changes can be made to improve the working conditions and experiences of slaughterhouse workers. Recommendations for change in the industry and its workers include improving working conditions in slaughterhouses, providing employees with access to resources and support, and legislative changes to better protect those working in high-stress and precarious positions (LaMontagne et al., 2014, p. 3-6) (Schultz et al., 2010, p. 369). Without actively changing the slaughterhouse industry to better improve employee mental health and protect precarious workers, employees will remain in a cycle of exploitation as slaughterhouses profit off unethical working conditions.

## References

- Blood, sweat, and fear : workers' rights in U.S. meat and poultry plants.* (2004). Human Rights Watch.
- Bisom-Rapp, & Coiquaud, U. (2017). "The Role of the State towards the Grey Zone of Employment: Eyes on Canada and the United States." *Revue Interventions Économiques*, 58, 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.4000/interventionseconomiques.3555>.
- Denk-Florea, Gancz, B., Gomoiu, A., Ingram, M., Moreton, R., & Pollick, F. (2020). "Understanding and supporting law enforcement professionals working with distressing material: Findings from a qualitative study." *PloS One*, 15(11), 1-28. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0242808>.
- Dillard, J. (2008). "A Slaughterhouse Nightmare: Psychological Harm Suffered by Slaughterhouse Employees and the Possibility of Redress through Legal Reform." *Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law & Policy*, 15, 391-408. <https://heinonline-org.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/HOL/Contents?handle=hein.journals/geojpovlp15&id=1&size=2&index=&collection=journals>.
- Emhan, A., Yildiz, A. S., Bez, Y., & Kingir, S. (2012). "Psychological Symptom Profile of Butchers Working in Slaughterhouse and Retail Meat Packing Business: A Comparative Study." *Kafkas Univ Vet Fak Derg*, 18, 319-322. <https://doi.org/10.9775/kvfd.2011.5494>.
- Fitzgerald, Kalof, L., & Dietz, T. (2009). "Slaughterhouses and Increased Crime Rates: An Empirical Analysis of the Spillover From "The Jungle" Into the Surrounding Community." *Organization & Environment*, 22(2), 158-184. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026609338164>.

- Glover, H. (1992). "Emotional Numbing: A Possible Endorphin-mediated Phenomenon Associated with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders and Other Allied Psychopathologic States." *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 5, 643-675. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.2490050413>.
- Griffin, S. P., & Bernard, T. J. (2003). "Angry Aggression Among Police Officers." *Police Quarterly*, 5, 3-21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611102250365>.
- Hughes, P. (2014). "Remedying the Experiences of Vulnerable Workers: Links with Employment Equity." In C. Agócs, *Employment Equity in Canada: The Legacy of the Abella Report* (pp. 176-194). University of Toronto Press.
- Kessler, Green, J. G., Gruber, M. J., Sampson, N. A., Bromet, E., Cuitan, M., Furukawa, T. A., Gureje, O., Hinkov, H., Hu, C.-Y., Lara, C., Lee, S., Mneimneh, Z., Myer, L., Oakley-Browne, M., Posada-Villa, J., Sagar, R., Viana, M. C., & Zaslavsky, A. M. (2010). "Screening for serious mental illness in the general population with the K6 screening scale: results from the WHO World Mental Health (WMH) survey initiative." *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research*, 19(S1), 4-22. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mpr.310>.
- LaMontagne, A. D., Martin, A., Page, K. M., Reavley, N. J., Noblet, A. J., Milner, A. J., Keegel, T., & Smith, P. M. (2014). "Workplace Mental Health: Developing and Integrated Intervention Approach." *BMC Psychiatry*, 14, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-244X-14-131>.
- Leibler, J. H., Janulewicz, P. A., Perry, M. J. (2016). "Prevalence of Serious Psychological Distress among Slaughterhouse Workers at a United States Beef Packing Plant." *Work*, 57, 105-109. <https://doi.org/10.3233/WOR-172543>.
- Leibler, J. H., & Perry, M. J. (2017). "Self-reported occupational injuries among industrial beef slaughterhouse workers in the Midwestern United States." *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene*, 14(1), 23-30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15459624.2016.1211283>.

- Muller, S. (2018). "Zombification, Social Death, and the Slaughterhouse: U.S. Industrial Practices of Livestock Slaughter." *American Studies*, 57, 81-101. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ams.2018.0048>.
- Nibert, D. (2014). "Animals, Immigrants, and Profits: Slaughterhouses and the Political Economy of Oppression." In J. Sorenson, *Critical Animal Studies: Thinking the Unthinkable*, 3-17. Canadian Scholars Press.
- Neumann, L.A. (1993). "Workers' Compensation and High Stress Occupations: Applications of Wisconsin's Unusual Stress Test to Law Enforcement Post-traumatic Stress Disorder." *Marquette Law Review*, 77(1), 147-178. <https://scholarship.law.marquette.edu/mulr/vol77/iss1/7>.
- Schultz, I. Z., Duplassie, D., Hanson, D. B., & Winter, A. (2010). "Systemic Barriers and Facilitators to Job Accommodations in Mental Health: Experts' Consensus." In *Work Accommodation and Retention in Mental Health*, 353-372. Springer, New York. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-0428-7\\_19](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-0428-7_19)
- Vosko, L. (2010). *Managing the Margins Gender, Citizenship, and the International Regulation of Precarious Employment*. Oxford University Press.

## **The Politics of Inequality: An analysis of the policies aimed at protecting transgender, non-binary, and intersex people in Canada**

Patrick Cochrane, University of Ottawa

### **Abstract**

How much should a state intervene to promote greater social inclusion for transgender, non-binary, and intersex individuals? Though much literature surrounding the trans community focuses on secular little ponder questions surrounding the higher policies aimed at the protection of this community. Through an analysis of the barriers trans people encounter in social sectors including employment and healthcare in Canada, this article asserts that further state intervention is needed to promote greater social inclusion. Findings include that transgender individuals have increased unmet healthcare needs, face discrimination in hiring as well as have increased chances of being victims of sexual misconduct within the workplace. Further arguments display that transgender individuals face a cycle of poverty because of high unemployment and discrimination within homeless shelters. It is demonstrated that all of this is present despite multiple human rights legislations that guarantee protections based on gender identity and expression such as the *Canadian Bill of Rights*.

**Keywords:** Human rights, transgender, non-binary, gender diverse, discrimination, workplace, healthcare, Canadian armed forces

## Introduction

Ever since the Stonewall riots of 1969 the world has seen a surge in advocacy and policy promoting equality for members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community. Canada is no exception to this, and since the federal policy legalizing same-sex marriage in 2005, the country has been making strides to ensure the protection and equality of LGBTQ Canadians. Federal, provincial, and territorial governments have even gone as far as to aim their policies towards the protection of certain groups within the LGBTQ community. An often-targeted group consists of individuals who identify as transgender, non-binary, or intersex. Despite this, it is commonly understood that members of the LGBTQ community who identify as transgender, non-binary, or intersex often face extreme hardship within society ranging from homelessness, discrimination, and exclusion (Abramovich, 2016; Chavanduka *et al.*, 2021; Fraser *et al.* 2019; Jaffray, 2020). The literature surrounding the hardships faced by the wider trans community often focuses on secular issues like the ones mentioned and few pertain to a broader questioning surrounding high-level policies that may come to affect them. By proposing a wider scope to the study of trans exclusion we can better understand and generalize the surface level issues that act as barriers to their daily life. With that in mind, I intend to contribute to the growing literature on LGBTQ issues by proposing the following question; how much intervention by the state is legitimate to promote greater social inclusion?

This essay will attempt to answer this question by stating that Canada's attempts, though valiant in effort, to provide a sense of greater social inclusion to those who identify as transgender, non-binary, and intersex have had little impact on the safety and well-being of these individuals as they continue to be threatened to the extent that further state intervention is necessary. To expand on this position, it is first important to recognize the rights and freedoms that transgender, non-

binary and intersex people in Canada currently hold. The argument will then begin by displaying some key areas where these individuals continue to face discrimination despite the rights granted to them by the government. These key sectors include healthcare and the workplace and examples displayed in emergency care, family care, staffing, homeless shelters services, and the Canadian Armed Forces show that Canada must further intervene to protect transgender individuals.

### **Human Rights Legislation in Canada**

To prepare for the argument that is to follow, it is important to understand what rights and freedoms have been granted to Canadian citizens and residents over time. The first piece of legislation on rights and freedoms introduced in Canada was the 1946 Saskatchewan Bill of Rights. Although not a federal piece of legislation, this bill was the first of many laws that would aim at the basic protection of people. Following the legislation introduced in Saskatchewan, many other monumental bills came into effect. A 1962 bill saw the province of Ontario become the first to create a human rights code and before in 1961, a human rights council to go along with it. The aim of the council is "to prevent discrimination and to promote and advance human rights in Ontario." (Ontario Human Rights Commission, Dec 3, 2020, para 1) as well as allow Ontarians a place to report human rights violations. In the years following, all legislations followed suit to introduce their own respective human rights bills or acts. Nova Scotia introduced its human rights act in 1969, Alberta introduced their bill of rights in 1972, and Quebec in 1976. At the time, the laws did not provide an extensive or descriptive set of protections about transgender, non-binary or intersex people. Nonetheless, it is important to highlight the effort made by the provinces that have led to policies we now see today.

It wasn't until 1982 that the federal government introduced new legislation that would further push human rights in the country. Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau introduced, within

Canada's new constitution, the country's first *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* a document that would be the precursor of many more pieces of legislation aimed at protection and inclusion. Once signed by Queen Elizabeth II, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* granted citizens, residents, and all other people physically present within Canadian territory fundamental rights and freedoms. Included in these rights and freedoms is the right to equality, it reads

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability. (*Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, s 15 (1), Part 1 in *Constitution Act*, 1982)

This passage is the basis of equality within Canada. It is important to recognize the role that the Charter plays in federal services, laws, and mandates as these will later be the topic of criticism. However, the Charter is not where human rights legislation stops, the following pieces of legislation further define protected groups and areas which will provide greater insight for the arguments to follow.

Although the Charter does have significant impacts on the way Canadians are offered public services it does not provide much detail on how transgender, non-binary and intersex individuals are protected within Canada. Rather, human rights codes and acts, as previously mentioned, offer us more insight into the rights that aim at protecting those who may identify outside of the gender binary. Human rights codes and acts are found at all levels of government throughout the country, including the federal level and, no province or territory has chosen not to adopt such a code or act. It was in 2002 that the Northwest Territories became the first jurisdiction in the country to adopt a bill that would add gender identity and gender expression as prohibited grounds of discrimination within their *Human Rights Act* (Cossman, 2018). The addition of these words is some of the sole protections for transgender, non-binary and intersex individuals however,

they have a significant impact. By adding gender identity and gender expression to the prohibited grounds of discrimination, transgender, non-binary and intersex individuals are now, under law, free from discrimination in social areas such as accommodation, employment, goods, services, and facilities, among others (Ontario Human Rights Commission, Dec 3, 2020, para 2). Ten years following the legislation in the Northwest Territories, similar amendments were introduced in Ontario, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia (Cossman, 2018). Shortly thereafter, all other provinces and territories had implemented similar amendments to their respective human rights codes or acts. The federal government was the last to implement protections to trans and non-binary individuals doing so in 2016 after an almost decade-long battle in the House of Commons and the Senate.

The evolution of human rights legislation in Canada has enabled transgender, non-binary, and intersex individuals to become more exposed in mainstream conversations surrounding protection and rights. In an article from CTV News, trans legal aid lawyer Nicole Nussbaum has expressed the importance of having gender identity and expression explicitly mentioned within human rights legislation. She asserts that explicit mention will help make the issue more prevalent as the topic of gender identity and expression will now become included in educational materials, in conversations about human rights and overall “sends a message that this kind of discrimination is not OK.” (Ubelacker, 2015) Another particularly important benefit to the explicit mention of gender expression and gender identity within human rights legislation is that now, lawmakers must consider this protected area when exploring cases of discrimination when creating legislation and more (*Ibid*). Overall, individuals within the transgender community have garnered a renewed sense of hope since the bills adding gender identity and expression were passed across the country (Mas, 2016; Plett, 2017). Though this legislation has allowed transgender, non-binary, and intersex individuals to look forward and embrace themselves within society, the fact remains that these

individuals continue to face significant barriers. Looking at two distinct and important sectors within society we will observe that Canada must do more to help the transgender community and that further state intervention is necessary to promote greater social inclusion of those people who identify outside the traditional gender binary.

### **The Healthcare sector: A Consistent Barrier**

The healthcare sector is no stranger to anyone. Regardless of gender, age, sex, color, race, etc., every human being will require health care at one point in their life. In Canada, healthcare is even more accessible than ever as the country upholds a universal healthcare system run by each province under the umbrella term Medicare. However, despite the accessibility of healthcare in the country, transgender, non-binary and intersex people are often subject to discrimination within the system that is made to help and protect individuals. Many news articles published by CTV News highlight the barriers faced by the people whose gender identity may be different than what was assigned to them at birth. A certain news article titled “Trans and non-binary people in Canada face higher levels of discrimination: study” brings an insight into the topic. The article brings forward a 2019 report from Trans PULSE, a country-wide survey initiative from the University of Western Ontario that aims at examining “the health and well-being of trans and non-binary people in Canada.” (Trans PULSE Canada, 2019). This report provides significant statistics on how transgender, non-binary and intersex people are treated within healthcare and other sectors. Upon further investigation, a 2015 report from the same organization was found that also highlights similar data. To better understand the barriers faced by trans, non-binary and intersex individuals, within healthcare, a comparison of the two reports will be presented. In particular, the goal will be to focus on their data about emergency and family care as these are often the most accessed forms of health care. This, within the context of human rights legislation in Canada, will help understand

why the country needs to further intervene to provide better social inclusion for transgender, non-binary and intersex individuals.

As is known, human rights legislation in most provinces and territories protects against discrimination based on gender identity as well as gender expression within public services and facilities. These protections came into effect mostly between 2012 and 2017, therefore both reports from Trans PULSE will illustrate experiences of trans individuals before, during, and after human rights legislation on gender identity and gender expression was introduced. To begin, the first sub-sector of analysis is emergency care. For many transgender, non-binary and, intersex individuals, the emergency room presents a multitude of potential problems. In particular, transgender individuals who had presented themselves to an emergency room and had identified their felt gender to healthcare workers were often refused treatment or were dismissed because of their gender identity (Bauer and Scheim, 2015). Furthermore, among survey participants, the Trans PULSE study displays that, twenty-five percent of transgender individuals report that they had faced some sort of harassment from a health care professional while seeking treatment in the emergency department (2015). Mistreatment from health care workers and refusal of care does not provide a safe and inclusive environment for trans, non-binary and intersex individuals. In a sector that often means life or death, this can prove to have a significant impact on many lives. Although legislation to prevent discrimination was presented in all areas of the country by 2017, the 2019 report from Trans PULSE presents similar data to 2015. Despite legislation aimed at protecting them, “12% [of trans or non-binary individuals] had avoided going to the emergency room [...] despite needing care” (Trans PULSE, 2019). The consistent barrier that is brought by fear of harassment or mistreatment makes the emergency healthcare department a non-safe space for transgender, non-binary and intersex individuals.

Similarly, the family healthcare sector also presents significant barriers to accessing proper medical care for individuals who feel themselves outside their assigned gender at birth. For ninety-one percent of Canadians, a family physician is their primary source of care (Hutchinson, Brian, et al. 2011). Family care provides basic needs such as checkups, blood sampling, etc., and is an effective way of primary assessment to healthcare needs. Thankfully, transgender, non-binary, and intersex people do not have a harder time finding a family doctor compared to cisgender individuals (Giblon, Bauer 2017) However, this does not imply that they do not face significant challenges when accessing family health care services. In 2015, 40% of surveyed individuals noted that they had faced discrimination by their family doctor (Bauer and Scheim). Comparatively in 2019, 45% of transgender or non-binary individuals reported having unmet healthcare needs despite 81% of the same individuals reporting they have a primary healthcare physician (Trans PULSE). It is such discrimination that threatens the lives of transgender, non-binary and intersex individuals daily. Despite the efforts of governments to further protect these individuals, through human rights law, the safety and wellbeing of transgender, non-binary and intersex people are still constantly subject to discrimination as noted in the emergency and family healthcare sectors. It is with this first obstacle that the call for greater state intervention stems.

### **Challenges in Employment and the Workforce**

Much like health care, employment is no stranger to most Canadians. Employment is undoubtedly a necessary component of life, providing humans with the abilities to feed themselves, house themselves and become productive members of society. Federal, provincial, and territorial governments recognize this importance and have hence made employment a sector in which discrimination is banned under their respective human rights legislation. This implies that all social areas protected from discrimination, including gender identity and gender expression cannot be

grounds for dismissal at any stage of the hiring process and any point in a person's career. Second, it implies that a workplace cannot discriminate or make assumptions within the said prohibited grounds. With these laws and regulations in place, a workplace should be an extremely diverse and safe space for all individuals however, it is easy to acknowledge that this is not the case. As will be demonstrated, transgender, non-binary, and intersex people face serious barriers within a workforce at all stages of the employment process (Jaffray, 2020). From harassment to withdrawal, those who do not identify with their gender assigned at birth tend to face more hardship than their cisgender peers. A 2017 Public Service of Canada employee survey found "that gender-diverse employees are 2.2 to 2.5 times more likely to experience discrimination and workplace harassment than their cisgender male coworkers" (Waite 2020). This reality causes many gender diverse individuals to lose their employment, terminate their contracts, or be withheld from career advancements due to a toxic work atmosphere. Trans PULSE's 2015 report will allow for a further investigation on this topic and an analysis of the further barriers that are presented to transgender, non-binary and intersex members.

For transgender, non-binary and intersex individuals, personal identity is often at the heart of their beliefs. How an individual feels, how they choose to express themselves, and how they identify are important in wellbeing, self-assurance, and self-confidence. In the process of employment, from hiring, working, promotion, career advancement, etc. job seekers or employees will often be asked to provide relevant material that pertains to their qualifications, their experience, etc. Although at times critical, asking for proof of documentation often causes a barrier for transgender, non-binary or intersex individuals. According to the study conducted by Trans PULSE, 58% of those surveyed could not receive requested documentation in their proper name or sex designation. This risks a potential bias as employees or jobseekers are often forced to come

out to employers in these situations where proper documentation is unavailable (Bauer and Scheim 2015). None withstanding the harm that this may cause the transgender individual, these situations create further harm as they may now put the individual in an uncomfortable situation where they may face discrimination from their employer or other employees. It is reported that 13% of trans Ontarians were refused a job simply because they were trans (Bauer and Scheim 2015). These numbers are astonishing when one considers the protections that have been put in place to protect these individuals through human rights legislation.

The barriers presented in job seeking and retention also presents a major safety and wellbeing issue for the trans, non-binary and intersex community regarding economic stability. These discriminatory practices within the workforce make members of the transgender community more susceptible to homelessness, underemployment, or financial strain (Bauer and Scheim 2015). Studies conducted around the topic of homelessness have found that transgender individuals are two times more likely to experience homelessness in their lifetime compared to cisgender individuals (Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2019; Statistic Canada, 2021). This rate only increases when one considers intersections such as age, race, and education. Despite the high rate of homelessness among the members of the trans community, homeless shelters are often ill-equipped to support these individuals (Abramovich, 2012). This only furthers the cycle of homelessness for transgender, non-binary and intersex individuals as they then lack access to materials and support that they need to re-enter the job market (*Ibid*). Abramovich in his article surrounding trans homelessness and the shelter system demonstrates that multiple policy options have been recommended to shelters to better support trans individuals. This includes sensitivity training, accommodations for trans individuals, and facilities equipped with gender-neutral options (Abramovich, 2012) Unfortunately, the recommendations highlighted by Abramovich in 2012 and

by many other scholars have not been implemented as articles such as one from CBC in 2020 report similar issues within homeless shelters. The perpetuated exclusion of trans individuals within systems of security such as employment and homeless shelters despite the human rights laws that prohibit such exclusion highlights the need for further state intervention.

### **Sexual Misconduct – An Additional Barrier in the Workplace**

Unfortunately, obstacles that impact transgender, non-binary and intersex individuals within a workplace do not stop at discriminatory practices in hiring and accommodation, it also includes harassment and sometimes assaults within the workplace. A prominent and public employer within Canada, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) displays this unfortunate truth too well. Although trans members of the Canadian Armed Forces are allowed to serve openly, this does not inherently mean they will be included within the ranks. Major D.L. Allen is critical of this reality within the Canadian Armed Forces in their dissertation about non-binary and transgender issues. In their work, Major Allen calls on the institution to create more inclusive policies if it wants to remain a modern, relevant, and diverse institution (2016). The lack of inclusive and protective policy within Canada's primary defense institution presents CAF members with a severe risk of harassment which is only worsened as the intersectionality of gender, race, and more stray away from the typical cisgender white male. A MacLean's article highlights a study from Statistics Canada which reports that one in three CAF members have experienced or witnessed harassment based on sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity (McKnight 2017). Furthermore, the article also states that some transgender CAF members feel a constant "degree of open misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia" often leading to changes in military unit or a voluntary discharge from the forces (McKnight 2017). This issue is not recent, reports highlight that multiple allegation were filed against different senior members of the CAF

and have lingered since as early as 2015 showcasing the longstanding issue within the institution (Connolly, 2021). Reports from Statistics Canada also highlight that sexual harassment within the CAF has remained high since 2016 when a survey among members regarding sexual assault was first conducted (Cotter, 2019).

The Forces have made many attempts, on-top of the preceding laws and regulations imposed on them by the federal government, aimed at promoting greater social inclusion within their organization and combating the culture of harassment. Examples of such policies include Operation HONOUR, a now-defunct initiative that aimed at removing harmful and inappropriate sexual behavior from the CAF. Operation HONOUR was created in August of 2015 “as a whole-of-service response” to an independent external review that found “a sexualized culture [within the CAF] that is hostile to many members – but in particular, those who are women, gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender” (Cotter, 2019) Virtually 100% of CAF members stated that they were aware of the policy surrounding sexual misconduct and almost 50% of Regular Force members have expressed their trust in the policy (*Ibid*). Despite this, the whole operation came to a halt in 2020 when allegations of sexual assault surfaced against former Chief of Defense Staff General Jonathan Vance who spearheaded the Operation HONOUR initiative. This goes to show that despite a want for change within the institution, the CAF remains an unsafe space for transgender, non-binary and intersex members. These realities come to negatively affect the employment, security, and wellbeing of members of the trans community in the short or long term. Efforts by the Department of National Defense, the CAF, and the federal government, to mend the issues of sexual misconduct and re-create the defense institution are ongoing but until further protections are guaranteed, and the culture shifts within the CAF, it is clear the space remains one that is unsafe for members of the transgender community. When considering the protections outlined in human

rights legislation surrounding employment discrimination, much more needs to be done by the CAF. This furthers the argument that further state intervention is required to promote greater social inclusion of transgender, non-binary and intersex individuals.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, although Canada's efforts may have been well-intended, the truth of the matter is the current human rights regulations do not enable enough protection for individuals whose gender identity or gender expression differs from that assigned at birth. The country sees a constant threat to this population in the healthcare sector where trans, non-binary and intersex people face discrimination and experience unmet health needs, in critical health sectors like emergency and family care which puts their lives in jeopardy. It is also displayed in the employment sector as the trans, non-binary, and intersex community face the fear of losing or being refused a job due to their gender identity. This in turn leads to economic instability and possible homelessness another sector where trans individuals face a repeated cycle of discrimination and abuse. Finally, transgender members of the Canadian Armed Forces, a prominent employer in Canada face increased risks of sexual misconduct and harassment which creates an unsafe work culture and often causes members to leave their posts. Both factors present serious socio-economic and life-threatening issues that lead to the oppression of gender-diverse Canadians. Future literature on this topic should turn their focus to policy recommendations that would come to benefit the trans community. Taking from Abramovich, possible solutions could remain as simple as providing training surrounding support for transgender and gender-diverse people and making spaces more accessible and inclusive. If Canada would like to continue to be a leader in diversity and inclusion on the world stage, it should attempt to target new legislation or policies that would aim at further social inclusion. Although the effort does not stop at the federal

level, nor does it stop at the public sector. All institutions within Canada should attempt to eliminate the barriers that create unsafe and exclusive environments. Not only is this beneficial for the institution but it will also be majorly beneficial to society, the transgender community, and the generations that are yet to come.

## References

- About*. Trans PULSE Canada. (2019, June 27). <https://transpulsecanada.ca/about/>.
- Abramovich, I. A. (2012). No Safe Place to Go - LGBTQ Youth Homelessness in Canada: Reviewing the Literature. *Canadian Journal of Family and Youth / Le Journal Canadien De Famille Et De La Jeunesse*, 4(1), 29–51. <https://doi.org/10.29173/cjfy16579>
- Abramovich, A. (2016). Preventing, Reducing and Ending LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness: The Need for Targeted Strategies. *Social Inclusion*, 4(4), 86–96. <https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v4i4.669>
- Allen, D. L. (2016). *Beyond The Gender Binary: Tackling Non-Binary And Transgender Issues In The Canadian Armed Forces*. Canadian Forces College. <https://www.cfc.forces.gc.ca/259/290/317/286/allen.pdf>.
- Burke, D. (2020, February 21). *Coming out means going homeless for some LGBTQ youth in Nova Scotia* | CBC News. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/homelessness-lgbtq-poverty-shelters-1.5468262>.
- Chavanduka, T. M. D., Gamarel, K. E., Todd, K. P., & Stephenson, R. (2020). Responses to the gender minority stress and resilience scales among transgender and nonbinary youth. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 18(2), 135–154. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2020.1719257>
- Connolly, A. (2021, November 25). *TIMELINE: The Canadian Forces sexual misconduct crisis - National*. Global News. <https://globalnews.ca/news/7883717/canadian-forces-sexual-misconduct-timeline/>.
- Cosman, B. (2018). Gender identity, gender pronouns, and freedom of expression: Bill C-16 and the traction of specious legal claims. *University of Toronto Law Journal*, 68(1), 37–79. <https://doi.org/10.3138/utlj.2017-0073>

- Cotter, A. (2019, May 22). *Sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces Regular Force, 2018*. Statistics Canada: Canada's national statistical agency / Statistique Canada : Organisme statistique national du Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-603-x/85-603-x2019002-eng.htm>.
- Fraser, B., Pierse, N., Chisholm, E., & Cook, H. (2019). LGBTIQ Homelessness: A Review of the Literature. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(15), 2677. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16152677>
- Gender identity and gender expression*. Gender identity and gender expression | Ontario Human Rights Commission. (n.d.). [http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/code\\_grounds/gender\\_identity](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/code_grounds/gender_identity).
- Giblon, R., & Bauer, G. R. (2017). Health care availability, quality, and unmet need: a comparison of transgender and cisgender residents of Ontario, Canada. *BMC Health Services Research*, 17(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-017-2226-z>
- Greta, B. R., & Scheim, A. I. (2015, June 1). *Transgender People in Ontario, Canada - Statistics from the Trans PULSE Project to Inform Human Rights Policy*. TransPulse. <https://www.transpulseproject.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Trans-PULSE-Statistics-Relevant-for-Human-Rights-Policy-June-2015.pdf>.
- Hutchison, B., Levesque, J.-F., Strumpf, E., & Coyle, N. (2011). Primary Health Care in Canada: Systems in Motion. *Milbank Quarterly*, 89(2), 256–288. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0009.2011.00628.x>
- Jaffray, B. (2020, September 9). *Experiences of violent victimization and unwanted sexual behaviours among gay, lesbian, bisexual and other sexual minority people, and the transgender population, in Canada, 2018*. Government of Canada, Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2020001/article/00009-eng.htm>.

- Jones, A. M. (2020, March 13). *Trans and non-binary people still face health-care barriers in Canada: study*. CTVNews. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/trans-and-non-binary-people-still-face-health-care-barriers-in-canada-study-1.4852486>.
- LGBTQ2S Housing Needs and Challenges*. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (n.d.). <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/blog/2019-housing-observer/lgbtq2s-housing-needs-challenges>.
- Mas, S. (2016, May 18). *Trudeau government introduces Bill C-16 to give transgender Canadians equal protections* | CBC News. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/transgender-bill-trudeau-government-1.3585522>.
- Plett C. (2017, July 6). *For transgender Canadians, Bill C-16 is symbolic-yet meaningful*. Macleans.ca. <https://www.macleans.ca/opinion/for-transgender-canadians-bill-c-16-is-symbolic-yet-meaningful/>.
- Statistics Canada. (2021, June 15). *A statistical portrait of Canada's diverse LGBTQ2 communities*. The Daily. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210615/dq210615a-eng.htm>.
- The Ontario Human Rights Code*. The Ontario Human Rights Code | Ontario Human Rights Commission. (n.d.). <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code>.
- Report - Health and health care access for trans and non-binary people in Canada*. Trans PULSE Canada. (2021, April 26). <https://transpulsecanada.ca/results/report-1/>.
- Ubelacker, S. (2015, April 16). *Trans community seeking beefed-up human rights protection*. CTVNews. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/lifestyle/trans-community-seeking-beefed-up-human-rights-protection-1.2329914>.
- Waite, S. (2020). *Should I Stay or Should I Go? Employment Discrimination and Workplace Harassment against Transgender and Other Minority Employees in Canada's Federal Public*

Service. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 68(11), 1833–1859.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2020.1712140>

McKnight Z. (2017, August 25). *Being transgender in the Canadian military*. Macleans.ca.  
<https://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/being-transgender-in-the-canadian-military/>.

## **The Feminist International Assistance Program and Future Approaches to Feminist Foreign Policy**

Alysha Aziz, University of Ottawa

### **Abstract**

Feminist analysis can highlight previously hidden or unrecognized inequalities in foreign policy. To better understand ongoing efforts to include feminist analysis in foreign policy, I look to Canada's first feminist foreign policy. The goal of this analysis is threefold: to evaluate Canada's Feminist International Assistance Program (FIAP), to understand its contribution to feminist foreign policy, and to explore the lessons learnt. I begin with a brief review of relevant concepts, followed by an exploration of feminist foreign policy, including a description of Canada's FIAP. Finally, I present various critiques of this policy and recommendations for future iterations of feminist foreign policy. I argue that Canada's FIAP is inadequate and thus unable to holistically address gender inequality.

**Keywords:** Foreign policy (analysis), Feminist theory, Canada, intersectionality

## Introduction

Gender equality remains an important issue as women worldwide continue to work to overcome issues related to gender-based violence, the wage gap, childcare, and unpaid labour. International efforts to support gender equality can be seen in the different commitments made by international multilateral organizations or through the domestic policies of different governments. The Canadian government has undertaken different strategies in recent decades to support gender equality, such as developing Gender Based-Analysis (GBA). In 1999, the GBA was developed to evaluate federal programs and policies. This involved training, developing and coordinating, accountability tools, case studies, and research and education to address gender inequality in various aspects of federal programs and policies (Brodie, 2008, p.156-157). However, the GBA faced criticism as it lacked an intersectional feminist lens and focused on heteronormative analyses of inequality (Mason, 2019 p. 210). Based on these criticisms, the Government of Canada launched GBA+ in 2011, but many remain skeptical as they felt GBA+ treats intersecting identities as only an accessory to issues related to gender inequality (Mason, 2019 p. 210). These shortcomings in federal policy and other related efforts towards gender equality remained contentious under the Harper government, but feminist policy re-entered public discourse in the subsequent Trudeau government. Just before the 2015 Canadian election, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau proudly declared himself a feminist, and this paved the way for his government to release Canada's first feminist foreign policy in 2017. This commitment was illustrated as he achieved gender parity in his first cabinet. The Trudeau government has repeatedly cited the importance of gender equality, and the FIAP was released as a part of this commitment.

Throughout this analysis, I use the term women to discuss the experiences of gender inequality by individuals who identify as women. The purpose of this terminology is not to

intentionally dismiss the inequalities faced by gender diverse individuals, but rather a result of the limited lens undertaken by the policies explored in this analysis. Feminist analysis can highlight previously hidden or unrecognized inequalities in foreign policy. This analysis aims to evaluate Canada's FIAP, understand its contribution to feminist foreign policy, and explore the lessons learned. I begin with a brief review of concepts related to this policy, followed by an exploration of feminist foreign policy, including a description of the Canadian FIAP. Finally, I present various critiques of this policy and recommendations for future iterations of feminist foreign policy. Although Canada has repeatedly expressed its commitment to gender equality, efforts to meet this goal seem without direction. I argue that Canada's FIAP is inadequate and thus cannot address gender inequality at an international level. The FIAP is unable to challenge structures that reproduce gender inequality and thus fails to be truly feminist.

### **Conceptual Framework**

To begin this analysis, several key authors and concepts will be discussed. Sjoberg's (2017) analysis of the invisible structures that overlap in international relations presents three explanations of how gender-related hierarchical structures exist. For this analysis, the explanation of gender hierarchies is useful as it describes how the exclusion of gender analysis in global politics ignores various issues amplified in the lives of affected women. Gender hierarchies can be seen in the unequal distribution of benefits based on gender, rape as a military tactic in ethnic conflict. Without understanding gender hierarchies, any foreign policy presents an incomplete picture of the international system. Feminist lenses are frequently omitted from discussions in international relations, and this omission can be explored through Enloe's (1996) argument. According to Enloe (1996), a political system or power dynamic cannot be understood from the perspective of individuals or groups of individuals in power as this perspective frequently overlooks the

experiences of those on the margins. Therefore, a political system should be explored from the margins as it provides a more thorough examination of a political system. In applying Enloe's (1996) argument, understanding the androcentric international system without a feminist analysis allows for an oversimplification of the power dynamics involved. A feminist analysis of power dynamics should include an intersectional feminist lens to understand the intersecting and structural power balances in a holistic manner. While fully applying a feminist perspective in analyzing the international system may seem utopian or challenging, Wendt (1992) disagrees. In their analysis of the anarchic international system, Wendt argues that the participating states and their actions or decisions create the international world order; similarly, adopting an intersectional feminist approach is not an impossible task, nor does it have to be a unique approach undertaken by select states. In applying Wendt's (1992) argument, the international system could become more aware of gender inequality and related issues if states adopted an intersectional feminist analysis to develop their foreign policies. Wendt's analysis would contribute to a new norm within the international arena and normalize feminist analysis in foreign policy.

Further, Sabaratnam (2013) explains the importance of reconsidering the norms of international relations as they frequently perpetuate colonial narratives and power imbalances. New and critical approaches to international relations, such as applying an intersectional feminist lens, can encourage the decolonization of international hierarchical relationships. However, as Sabaratnam (2013) notes, the decolonization of international hierarchical relationships benefits those at the top of the power structure and thus would be very difficult to change. Florini's (1996) explanation of why international norms and behaviours change over time and how this connects to Wendt's (1992) argument regarding the potential for change in international relations highlights the capacity to change international norms. According to constructivists, norms are built based on

the interactions of states and their pursuit of state interests. Therefore, states could develop the norm of feminist international policy if they regularly engaged with an intersectional feminist lens in the development of their policies.

There are various challenges that come with changing international norms. Canada has approached but not completely met the first step in the norm life cycle as Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) described. There are three stages of the norm life cycle; the first stage requires emerging actors to garner state support, encourage other states to engage with this new norm and develop reasonable standards. The second stage requires the continued presence of this norm, and the final stage is the internalization and thus ongoing conformance with this new norm. While Canada has touched the first stage of the norm cycle by mobilizing state support, the country has been unable to develop standards or persuade other states also to develop international feminist foreign policies. The introduction of feminist policy and the inclusion of feminist analysis was an initiative undertaken by the Trudeau government, and it is unclear whether future governments will continue with a feminist approach to foreign policy. Historically, Canada has been inconsistent in its dedication to feminist goals, as witnessed during the Harper years (Tiessen and Carrier, 2015). Notably, the Harper government changed policy wording from *gender equality* to *equality between men and women*. While this may seem like a minor language change, it had a reciprocal effect leading to reduced funding for women's advocacy groups and a decrease in funding for the Department of the Status of Women, known today as Women and Gender Equality Canada. This change also erased discourses of the intersecting oppressions outside of the gender binary, such as the intersecting experiences of Black or transgender women. This limited the scope of issues related to and intersecting with gender inequality in Canada, making it significantly more difficult to address. Administrations that succeed the Trudeau government may be unwilling to commit to

feminist foreign policy. This unpredictability is further evidence that Canada falls short in solidifying the second stage of the norm cycle. These variables prevent Canada from being a leader in this emerging norm.

### **Feminist Foreign Policy**

It is important first to review common interpretations of foreign policy. Achilleos-Sarll (2018) describes foreign policy as a country pursuing its interests outside of its borders, including military, social, or economic interests. For example, a country may be interested in maintaining peace in a neighbouring country as it could reduce the number of refugees that enter their country or if they depend on that country for importing food or other items. As international relations are the arena in which states interact and build relationships, a gender analysis or feminist foreign policy can provide deeper insight into the power hierarchies and how they interact within the international system (Achilleos-Sarll, 2018). A feminist foreign policy similarly places a state's interests first but pursues and frames these issues through a feminist lens. Understanding the structural roots and consequences of gender inequality is essential because these are often regarded as issues that only manifest on the micro or individual level. Similar to other forms of oppression, gender inequality manifests at all levels and working on tools such as a feminist foreign policy focuses on recognizing scope of gender inequality and allows for the issue to be addressed at all levels. Women of various backgrounds need to be engaged in developing a feminist foreign policy to address all levels in which gender inequality persists. Scheyer (2019) further argues that contrary to neoliberal approaches to feminist foreign policy that primarily focuses on the availability or access to opportunities for women, feminist foreign policy needs to reconstruct foreign policy completely. Scheyer (2019) provides a brief overview of what they think comprises a feminist foreign policy, and these include complete disarmament, the inclusion of civil society,

intersectional analysis, and the fostering of communities through empathy (p. 61). This approach presented by Scheyer (2019) highlights how international relations are built and reproduced through masculinities, compared to neoliberal approaches that center on equalizing women's potential for individual economic opportunity that resembles that of men.

The FIAP is Canada's first feminist foreign policy and was released in 2017 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chrystia Freeland, and the Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Marie-Claude Bibeau. Consultations for the development of the FIAP describe the involvement of over 65 countries and thousands of participants. The goal of this policy explains that "Canada is adopting a Feminist International Assistance Policy that seeks to eradicate poverty and build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world. Canada firmly believes that promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls is the most effective approach to achieving this goal." (Global Affairs Canada, 2017, p. VIII). Throughout this document, addressing gender inequality is framed as a method of eliminating global poverty. For example, the policy explains the potential benefits of women and girls as agents of change and their empowerment is illustrated through their potential to contribute to economic growth. Subsequent text provides a synopsis of some of the barriers to meeting the goal of ending global poverty through women's empowerment, such as gender-based violence or economic deprivation. The feminist lens undertaken in enacting this policy "...is based on the conviction that all people should enjoy the same fundamental human rights and be given the same opportunities to succeed." (Global Affairs Canada, 2017, p.8). At the core of the FIAP are six action areas that connect to different United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG). Each action area explains the barriers experienced by women and girls, how Canada will address these problems, and examples of how these policies work. For example, the third action area titled "Growth That Works for Everyone"

and connects to the UNSDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth and UNSDG 10: Reduced Inequalities. This action area highlights socio-political, legal, cultural, and economic factors that limit women's abilities to participate in local and international markets. These factors can be seen in the overrepresentation of women in unpaid care work or through legal restrictions that prevent women from entering the paid labour force. To address these issues, the FIAP explains the ways Canada plans to support economic success for women through investments in vocational and technical training, supporting entrepreneurs through Canada's Development Finance Institute or increasing economic leadership of women (Global Affairs Canada, 2017, p.39). This action area concludes with the example of the agricultural workforce in Senegal, which heavily relies on women for food production, and improved access to technology could help their communities reduce poverty and malnutrition (Global Affairs Canada, 2017, p. 40). The final section of the FIAP focuses on mechanisms used to measure the efficacy of this policy. The three guiding goals listed are more effective engagement with fragile states and countries in crisis, stronger partnerships for sustainable development, and productive partnerships for transition. The FIAP concludes with a brief discussion re-emphasizing its commitment to eliminate poverty through the empowerment of women and girls. Curiously, there is no increase in spending to accompany these commitments made by the Trudeau government in 2017 (Parisi, 2020, p.163).

Canada's FIAP resembles many of the characteristics of neoliberal feminism. The neoliberal approach to feminist foreign policy has oversimplified feminism and perpetuates feminist ideas that comfortably fit within the neoliberalist world order. Parisi explains this well in their description of the term feminist neoliberalism. For Parisi (2020), feminist neoliberalism pursues gender equality primarily through economic means and as a proponent for economic growth (p.164). However, feminism is a dynamic and evolving term that focuses on gender

equality through various means. While there is some variation on the evolution of the women's rights movement in North America and other Western nations, women earned the right to vote and work in the 20th century. Women's participation in the labour force is relatively new and has become an important achievement in the women's movement. However, many criticize this focus on the emancipation of women through economic means, especially as existing patriarchal power structures continue to separate specific work areas for women of intersecting identities such as Indigenous women, queer women, or disabled women. The fight for gender equality did not end when women achieved access to the paid workforce, and feminist analysis needs to consider economic opportunities as just one aspect of achieving equality. Additionally, women's intersecting identities compound to shape the different inequalities they experience. Crenshaw (1991) highlighted this intersection of identities as compounding and contributing to women's different oppressive gendered experiences of women. The use of intersectional feminist analysis will be discussed in greater detail later in this analysis.

Through a human rights and international development approach, the eradication of poverty serves as a method of securitization for Canada. Each action area consists of a description and facts about ongoing initiatives to support that action area. For example, the Human Dignity action connects to the UNSDG goal for quality education, and quality education is described as important for young girls because it could increase their future earnings by 10-20% (Global Affairs Canada, 2017, p.26,). When reading the FIAP, it repeats that the goal of this policy is to address gender inequality to tackle global poverty, compared to the Swedish model of feminist foreign policy that seeks to eradicate gender inequality as an end goal. In its first feminist foreign policy, the Swedish Foreign Service action plan for feminist foreign policy 2015–2018, including indicative measures for 2018 (2014), was broken down into five sections that begin with guiding

principles and ethics. A discussion of key actors (such as EU partners and multilateral organizations) follows the guiding principles, and the document concludes with an explanation of the three 'R's' (rights, representation, and resources) as guiding accountability measures and the importance of Swedish interdepartmental cooperation to achieve gender equality. The critical difference between the Canadian and Swedish foreign policies is how Sweden treats gender equality as the end goal, whereas Canada describes gender equality and women's empowerment as a method of ending global poverty. Like Canada's FIAP, the Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy also connects UNSDGs to the different mechanisms under each policy objective. Both the Canadian FIAP and the Swedish 2015–2018 feminist foreign policies were important first steps, but both policies could not include intersectional and decolonial lenses meaningfully. While the FIAP is an important contribution to the growing number of feminist foreign policies, it lacks many essential elements to make it an effective feminist foreign policy.

### **Critiques**

Crenshaw's (1991) introduction of the term intersectionality to academic discourse significantly contributed to feminist theory. Intersectional feminism explores how one's gender identity can overlap with other identities such as race, religion, class, and sexuality, these compounding and intersecting identities affect the advantages and disadvantages one experiences due to interconnected oppressive structures. Intersectional analysis is essential because it includes the often-overlooked intersecting identities that have been historically omitted from discussions of gender inequality. The FIAP lacks a clear definition of feminism and does not embody an intersectional feminist lens (Mason, 2019, p.207). This omission discounts the important historical and theoretical contributions of intersectional feminist scholars, who articulated the compounding oppression experienced by those with intersecting identities to academia (Mason, 2019).

Further, this lack of recognition of intersectional feminism re-introduces the binary gender discourses under the previous Harper government. Tiessen and Carrier (2015) discussed the Harper government's approach to gender equality that focused exclusively on the equality between men and women, which led to an oversimplification of gender inequality. Similar to the Harper approach, the FIAP neglects to recognize the intersecting identities and oppressions women experience. Additionally, it is important to examine colonial implications; as Achilleos-Sarl (2018) explains, the FIAP and other Western feminist approaches reproduce imperialist relationships in which white Western women are tasked with liberating women in the Global South. This approach reinforces colonial, imperial, and racial hierarchies and frames women in developing countries as weak, helpless, or in need of saving by Western states. The absence of an intersectional lens allows these ideas to reproduce in international relations. Sabaratnam (2013) specifically recognizes the reproduction of liberal peace through colonial ideas and power structures; these structures continue to reproduce oppressive ideas and structures that disadvantage women. Thus, a decolonial lens should be used to examine Canada's relationships to countries that have been historically disadvantaged due to colonialism. This will be a challenge for Canada if it does not engage with genuine efforts to address the ongoing colonial violence against Indigenous communities domestically.

Additionally, Cadesky (2020) highlights how the FIAP fails to recognize the different experiences of women as the FIAP describes women as a monolith. Women do not exist as a monolith, and the absence of an intersectional analysis fails to understand the social construction of gender (Cadesky, 2020, p.7). The lack of differentiation omits the inequalities experienced by those who identify outside of the gender binary, and this reduces the possible breadth of issues that could be addressed if the FIAP had undertaken gender-inclusive feminist analysis. Further, the

FIAP places the resolution of gender inequality solely on the shoulders of women. While it expresses an interest in including men and boys in discussions of gender equality, it does not provide concrete ways for men and boys to support this effort. Despite the document beginning by citing the importance of men and boys in addressing gender inequality, it is absent of clear and concrete actions for men and boys to address gender inequality. However, while the FIAP attempts to promote and encourage men and boys in discussions of gender equality and women's empowerment, there are few mechanisms presented as to how men can contribute to women's equality. For example, throughout the FIAP, women's empowerment through their contribution to the paid labour market is repeatedly discussed, and their contributions to the unpaid or reproductive labour market are seen as something that holds them back (Global Affairs Canada, 2017, p.40.). Women who participate in paid and unpaid labour are often described as doing a double shift. As a result, many of these women express feeling overworked and struggle to meet the demands of both types of labour.

Further, Parisi (2020) makes an important contribution to this discussion as the FIAP repeatedly homogenizes poor women as unable to navigate power imbalances and must rely on Western nations to save them (p.175). Finally, Cadesky (2020) provides an important discursive criticism that highlighting the interchangeable use of the terms gender equality and women's empowerment throughout the FIAP. Women's empowerment refers to uplifting women's self-esteem and recognizing the contributions of women to society, whereas gender equality focuses on achieving equality for all, regardless of gender. The difference in these terms is important when conducting a feminist analysis, and the lack of distinction between these terms further reinforces the concerns identified by Tiessen and Carrier (2015).

As the goal of the FIAP is to use gender inequality to eliminate extreme poverty, it is therefore logical to assume economic mechanisms would be used to support the empowerment of women, instead of a multifaceted approach which includes economic mechanisms to alleviate gender inequality. This approach is a significant omission by the FIAP as it ignores the political, social, and historical factors that uphold gender inequality. Additionally, eliminating poverty through gender equality ignores the various other factors that contribute to poverty, such as the exploitation of labour, fragile labour markets, or religious conflict. Barring women from entering labour markets or limiting their economic participation may be one of the contributing factors to poverty, but this does not provide a complete picture of other mechanisms that problematize poverty. This approach to ending poverty through gender equality neglects the complex, multifaceted, and interwoven factors contributing to global poverty. It also ignores the social inequality of women and the overt and covert patriarchal and misogynist beliefs that continue today. For example, the FIAP uses the example of women fleeing domestic violence, explaining that a woman fleeing domestic violence would require economic independence to support herself and her children, as friends and family might ostracize her for leaving her husband (Global Affairs Canada, 2017, p.20,). While it is true that a single mother might need a job to support herself should she choose to leave her partner, who might have been the breadwinner of the family, it does not address the situation that allows for domestic violence to prevail or the ostracism that she experiences by her community. The inferiority of women is coded in societal values and reproduced through various forms of socialization and cannot be solved through a single approach. Even when the FIAP looks to focus on women's empowerment through mechanisms such as education, it connects this back to a woman's potential to contribute to the labour force and fails to consider the other potential benefits of a well-educated woman (Global Affairs Canada, 2017,

p.26,). While the FIAP provides an important first step towards the emerging norm of feminist foreign policies, it fails to challenge the structures that reproduce gender inequality, making it ineffective as a feminist policy. Therefore, there are many lessons Canada and other countries can learn from this iteration of feminist foreign policy.

### **Future Feminist Policy**

Adopting an intersectional feminist analysis in the development of feminist foreign policy would highlight how gender inequality is reproduced through various structures today. In engaging with an intersectional feminist analysis, it is important to discuss the theoretical origins of intersectional feminism and recognize the contributions of Black feminist theorists, such as Kimberle Crenshaw. Therefore, a clear explanation of the feminist analysis used and crediting the contributions of feminist scholars is essential. Additionally, to conduct an intersectional analysis, it is crucial to understand the power structures and their origins in different regions of the world. These different power structures contribute to the sexist, racist, or other oppressive experiences of women and those with intersecting identities. For example, recognizing the intersection of religious and gender identity as two oppressive structures is necessary if a religious community is marginalized in a certain region. An intersectional approach would also address the marginalization of individuals whose identities overlap, such as women who are a part of the LGBTQ+ community. Addressing the inequalities of those who experience oppression due to patriarchal or misogynistic structures but do not fit within the gender binary needs to be included as a part of efforts towards gender equality. As previously mentioned, the FIAP repeatedly used the terms gender equality and women's empowerment interchangeably. Future feminist foreign policies should improve both gender equality and women's empowerment and should treat them as different goals. For example, programs that support women-led initiatives and recognize

women's unpaid labour highlight positive contributions to society by women and support women's empowerment. These programs could also encourage the shared distribution of unpaid labour and contribute to efforts towards gender equality.

Additionally, the FIAP attempted to include men and boys in discussions towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment but provided few concrete actions on how men and boys could contribute. Inclusive and diversified consultations could also involve discussion into the different ways men and boys can address gender inequality. These consultations would also highlight the barriers men face because of gender inequality. Diversified feedback would provide another important contribution in developing an intersectional feminist approach. In addition to inclusive approaches to consultations, publishing the details or findings of these consultations would increase the transparency of this process. The publication of these findings would also provide a clearer picture of the context in which these policies were developed. Similar to the work done by Rao & Tiessen (2020), consultations with overseas NGOs and other civil society groups would also provide helpful insight into the efficacy of feminist foreign policies. Thompson (2020) suggests connecting the goals of improving gender equality and women's empowerment abroad with the goals of a country's domestic policy, and Fearon (1998) discusses the ways international and domestic policies are interrelated. Both Canada's international and domestic policies neglect to address colonial legacies and their impact on women. For forthcoming feminist foreign policies, the connection between domestic and foreign policy goals would prevent policymakers from othering women overseas or treating gender inequality as an issue only in foreign countries. Connecting the policy landscape would also prevent treating women in non-Western countries as a homogeneous group.

The FIAP presents women's inequality as a barrier to ending global poverty rather than a barrier. Therefore, the FIAP presents economic tools to support the inclusion of women into the paid labour market to lift them and their communities out of poverty. While economic tools such as loans and education programs can support women in overcoming gender inequality, this framing limits the potential solutions that can come from feminist foreign policy. Exploring gender inequality and women's empowerment as an issue resolved solely through economic tools ignores the social, cultural, and political ways gender inequality is reproduced in the international society. Comparatively, Sweden's approach to feminist foreign policy does not frame gender inequality as a method to eliminate another issue. Sweden's approach recognizes that gender inequality is an issue itself and that the resolving a complex issue like poverty will not eliminate gender inequality. While Sweden's approach still heavily relies on neoliberal mechanisms that focus on access to resources and opportunities, this framing of gender inequality is important as it does not minimize the scope and significance of gender inequality. Future feminist foreign policies should similarly frame the elimination of gender inequality as an end rather than a means of resolving another problem. Solutions should be multifaceted and include a variety of methods that address the different manifestations of gender inequality. Limiting the mechanisms used to address gender inequality further hinders the potential to address all aspects of gender inequality. Exploring the reciprocal relationship between poverty and gender inequality would further highlight the barriers to addressing both issues.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout this analysis, I have argued that Canada's FIAP is inadequate and thus unable to address gender inequality meaningfully. This analysis began with a brief introduction to the topic, followed by an exploration of important concepts and theoretical contributions to this field.

Following a brief description of the FIAP, an exploration of criticisms and lessons learned from Canada explored the challenges and outlook for future feminist policies. While this analysis and others are only the beginning of discussions around the future of feminist foreign policy, it highlights some of the key limitations of neoliberal Western feminism. While I sought to challenge heteronormative-patriarchal-colonial power structures throughout this analysis, my conclusions and critiques are limited by my internalized notions of gender and inequality as a cisgender woman of color in Canada. As a result, my analysis needs to be assessed within the context of neoliberal Western feminism and serve as the first step for governments, policymakers, and academics to further engage critically with the FIAP and other feminist foreign policies. Treating the ideas of a Western feminist as the best or most precise understanding of the barriers experienced by women around the world reproduces colonial hierarchies that centre Western epistemologies and the narrative that women in non-Western countries need to be saved by Western women.

Future research needs to include the perspectives of non-Western women and their interactions with Canada's FIAP and other feminist foreign policies. Analyses of feminist foreign policy should reflect on alternatives that exist outside of the imagination of Western thought to decentralize Eurocentrism and challenge neoliberal feminism. Future research can learn from the approach taken by Rao & Tiessen (2020), who analyzed feminist foreign policy through a transnational approach by speaking with NGO staff members in three African countries. Understanding the experiences of those affected by feminist foreign policies provides unique insight into their efficacy. Qualitative research that explores the experiences of the women or recipients of these programs would provide a detailed understanding of the implementation of these policies or how future feminist foreign policies can improve their approaches. This is an exciting area of research that can continue to challenge what bell hooks describes as a white

supremacist capitalist patriarchy. However, Canada's FIAP does not take on this challenge and thus fails to be truly feminist.

## References

- Achilleos-Sarll, C. (2018). Reconceptualising Foreign Policy as Gendered, Sexualised and Racialised: Towards a Postcolonial Feminist Foreign Policy. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 19(1), 34–49.
- Aggestam, K., & Rosamond, A. B. (2019). Feminist Foreign Policy 3.0: Advancing Ethics and Gender Equality in Global Politics. *The SAIS Review of International Affairs*, 39(1), 37–48. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sais.2019.0003>
- Aggestam, K., Rosamond, A.B., & Kronsell, A. (2019). Theorising feminist foreign policy. *International Relations (London)*, 33(1), 23–39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117818811892>
- Aggestam, & True, J. (2020). Gendering Foreign Policy: A Comparative Framework for Analysis. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 16(2), 143–162. <https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/orz026>
- Bergman, R. (2020). Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy and “Gender Cosmopolitanism.” *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 16(2), 217–235. <https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/orz025>
- Brodie, J. (2008). We are all equal now: Contemporary gender politics in Canada. *Feminist Theory*, 9(2), 145–164. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700108090408>
- Cadesky, J. (2020). Built on shaky ground: Reflections on Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy. *International Journal*, 75(3), 298–312. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702020953424>
- Chapnick, A. (2019). The origins of Canada's feminist foreign policy. *International Journal*, 74(2), 191–205. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702019850827>
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>

- Enloe, C. (1996). Margins, silences and bottom rungs: How to overcome the underestimation of power in the study of international relations. In S. Smith, K. Booth, & M. Zalewski (Eds.), *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond* (pp. 186-202). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511660054.010>
- Fearon, D. J. (1998). Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, And Theories Of International Relations. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *1*(1), 289–313. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.1.1.289>
- Finnemore, M & Sikkink, K. (1998). International Norm Dynamics and Political Change. *International Organization*, *52*(4), 887–917. <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081898550789>
- Florini, A. (1996). The Evolution of International Norms. *International Studies Quarterly*, *40*(3), 363–389. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2600716>
- Global Affairs Canada. (2017). *Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy: #HerVoiceHerChoice*. [https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/assets/pdfs/iap2-eng.pdf?\\_ga=2.67754449.1575068236.1638123988-1700486466.1636397079](https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/assets/pdfs/iap2-eng.pdf?_ga=2.67754449.1575068236.1638123988-1700486466.1636397079)
- Mason, C. L. (2019). Buzzwords and fuzzwords: flattening intersectionality in Canadian aid. *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, *25*(2), 203–219. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2019.1592002>
- Meier, P., & Celis, K. (2011). Sowing the Seeds of Its Own Failure: Implementing the Concept of Gender Mainstreaming. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, *18*(4), Winter 2011, 469–489, <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxr020>
- Morton, S. E., Muchiri, J., & Swiss, L. (2020). Which feminism(s)? For whom? Intersectionality in Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy. *International Journal: Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis*, *75*(3), 329–348. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702020953420>

- Parisi, L. (2020). Canada's New Feminist International Assistance Policy: Business as Usual? *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 16(2), 163–180. <https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/orz027>
- Rao, S., & Tiessen, R. (2020). Whose feminism(s)? Overseas partner organizations' perceptions of Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy. *International Journal: Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis*, 75(3), 349–366. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702020960120>
- Sabaratnam, M. (2013). Avatars of Eurocentrism in the critique of the liberal peace. *Security Dialogue*, 44(3), 259–278. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010613485870>
- Scheyer, K. (2019). Feminist Foreign Policy: A Fine Line Between “Adding Women” And Pursuing A Feminist Agenda. *Journal of International Affairs* (New York), 72(2), 57–76. [www.jstor.org/stable/26760832](http://www.jstor.org/stable/26760832).
- Sjoberg, L. (2017). The invisible structures of anarchy: Gender, orders, and global politics. *Journal of International Political Theory*, 13(3), 325–340. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1755088217711458>
- Swedish Ministry For Foreign Affairs. 2015. *Swedish Foreign Service Action Plan for Feminist Foreign Policy 2015–2018, Including Indicative Measures for 2016*. <https://www.government.se/contentassets/b799e89a0e06493f86c63a561e869e91/action-plan-feminist-foreign-policy-2015-2018>.
- Thomson, J. (2020). What's Feminist about Feminist Foreign Policy? Sweden's and Canada's Foreign Policy Agendas. *International Studies Perspectives*, Volume 21, Issue 4, November 2020, 424–437, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isp/ekz032>
- Tiessen, & Carrier, K. (2015). The erasure of “gender” in Canadian foreign policy under the Harper Conservatives: the significance of the discursive shift from “gender equality” to

“equality between women and men.” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, 21(2), 95–111.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2014.977310>

Wendt, A. (1992). Anarchy is what states make of it: The social construction of power politics.  
*International Organization*, 46(2), 391-425. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300027764>