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# letter from the editors

Dear Readers,

This 2022-2023 edition of The Attaché Journal of International Affairs marks the beginning of an exciting and transformative chapter in our publication's history. Such as previous volumes, this publication embodies the collaborative effort of our editorial team who have worked tirelessly over the past eight months to make its publication possible. However, throughout this volume's production, we have taken bold steps to transform The Attaché into an inclusive academic tri-campus journal, embracing and uplifting the invaluable contributions of students from all three campuses of our esteemed university.

As we take pride in being Canada's premier undergraduate journal of international relations and politics since 1998, we aim to reestablish ourselves as the *center of professional undergraduate research* through all our efforts. We have launched a new website, updated our brand designs, and reorganized all previous publications from magazine issues to the journal volumes.

In the production process of this journal, we expanded our outreach to students in relevant fields of study, such as African studies, Caribbean studies, Contemporary Asian studies, and more. The hard work and dedication of our editorial, communications, and design teams have allowed our journal to not only represent the academic excellence of our institution but also mirror the dynamic landscape of international relations.

Someday, we hope to see our successors embark on an even greater ambition of global reach.

This year's volume features a greater number of works than previous editions as we did not limit our scope to a specific theme. Instead, we took on the ambitious task of presenting international relations at its core—a constellation of complex, interconnected events spread out in time and space. Given the growing turbulence in the realm of international relations and the fast pace with which new developments unfold on the global stage, we can only hope that the most pressing issues of today will be fully reflected in new and comprehensive academic research of tomorrow. In the meantime, we present a body of geographically and thematically diverse work that covers a wide array of interesting and intriguing subjects.

Thank you for your unwavering support, and welcome you to the twenty-third volume of The Attaché.

Sincerely,
Julia and Nadiya,
*Editors-in-Chief*
*The Attaché 2022-2023*

# team



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# Corruption in Guatemala and Its Implications for the Northern Triangle of Central America

By Da Seul Chong

Corruption is a persistent challenge to foreign aid distribution in Guatemala. The exact amount of aid lost to corruption is unknown. The discrepancies between what the state claims to have received and the social cost of "lost funds" are evidence of the deep-rooted history of corruption in Guatemala.[1] Funds meant to address poverty and governance issues, which impede the money from getting to its intended destination, are lost to the pockets of policymakers who are unlikely to face legal consequences. Although these challenges are faced by many Central American nations, this article will look at the Guatemalan case and present a tenable policy to better address systemic corruption and the siphoning of resources.

## A History Of Guatemalan Corruption And Its Consequences

Guatemala is a country in Central America with a population of 18.2 million.[2] Despite overseeing the largest economy in Central America, Guatemala's official poverty rate sat at 52.4% in 2020. Its extreme poverty rate was 18.7% in the same year.[3] This incompatibility between the country's stable GDP and its levels of poverty are partly due to low revenues of the central government. The state struggles to provide access to healthcare, basic education, and social services.[4] Having one of the highest rates of inequality in the region further exacerbates the wealth gap and worsens poverty rates, especially in rural and indigenous areas. Despite receiving hundreds of millions of dollars in aid each year, its struggles with corruption allows for rates of criminal impunity as high as 98% and deprives citizens of their human rights.[5]

Guatemala has a long history of corruption and inequality, partly shaped by U.S. interventionism in the late 20th century. U.S. "involvement" in Latin America had the goal to secure its sphere of influence within the frame of the Cold War, excluding rival powers to protect and advance the material economic interests of its citizens and

1 Hazel Feingeblatt, "Los Costos Sociales De La Corrupción," *Observatorio Del Sistema De Justicia Penal OEA-MACCIH* (2019): 30, https://www.academia.edu/40940767/Los_Costos_Sociales_de_la_Corrupci%C3%B3n.

2 "UN Data Guatemala," *United Nations*, 2022, https://data.un.org/en/iso/gt.html.

3 "Guatemala," Latin American Economic Outlook 2021: Working Together for a Better Recovery, *OECD iLibrary*, 2021, https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/633246fd-en/index.html?itemId=%2Fcontent%2Fcomponent%2F633246fd-en.

4 Cesar Leon, "Guatemala Country Brief," *The World Bank,* March 29, 2012, https://web.worldbank.org/archive/website01270/WEB/0__CON-2.HTM.

5 "OECD Statistics," *OECD.Stat*, 2021, https://stats.oecd.org/; Coralie Pring and Jon Vrushi, *Global Corruption Barometer, Latin America & the Caribbean 2019 - Citizens' Views and Experiences of Corruption* (Berlin, Germany: Transparency International, 2019), 3; Robert I. Rotberg, *Corruption in Latin America: How Politicians and Corporations Steal from Citizens* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2019), 235.



firms.[6] The most recent and impactful example comes from the civil conflict of 1960. The 1954 coup d'etat that overthrew the democratically-elected reformist government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala was financed by the United States government.[7] Since the intervention, the "banana republic" under the influence of the United Fruit Company and under the leadership of US-approved authoritarian military men brought rampant corruption, gang warfare, drug smuggling, intense urban poverty and overpopulation, and neglect from the international community upon the Guatemalan people.[8] The United States provided military training and assistance to a succession of dictatorships in the country, directly aiding in the state's excessive use of violence in the late 1960s under the guise of development through USAID's 1970 Rural Development Plan (RDP).[9] One of the authoritarian governments that followed the operation, which excluded the indigenous population and served the economic interests of the privileged minority, resorted to violence to control protests and political instability. With more than half of Guatemalans being descendants of indigenous Mayans or of mixed European and indigenous ancestry, the population took up arms and conflict ensued for 36 years.[10]

Since the signing of the Guatemalan Peace Accords in 1996, a significant portion of foreign aid has been directed toward good governance and transparency.[11] Specifically, aid sought to strengthen weak governmental institutions that had lost the trust of the citizens through their actions during the conflict. However, this goal has largely not been met as public institutions continue to be compromised by a political system partly financed through pervasive links with drug trafficking structures and bribes from other subnational and transnational organized crime syndicates. Expensive political campaigns are financed through private donations, of which up to 25% originate from organized crime. Votes are accumulated through local municipal bribes, or direct bribes to

6 Victor Bulmer-Thomas and Jorge I. Domínguez, "US-Latin American Relations During the Cold War and Its Aftermath," in *The United States and Latin America the New Agenda* (London, UK: Institute of Latin American Studies, University of London, 1999), 33-50, 39.

7 Edwin Williamson, *The Penguin History of Latin America* (London, UK: Penguin, 2009), 323-325.

8 Ana Arana, "The New Battle for Central America," Foreign Affairs 80, no. 6 (2001): 88, https://doi.org/10.2307/20050330.

9 Copeland, Nicholas. "Greening the Counterinsurgency: The Deceptive Effects of Guatemala's Rural Development Plan of 1970," *Development and Change* 43, no. 4 (2012): 975–76, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.2012.01783.x.

10 Rubiana Chamarbagwala and Hilcías E. Morán, "The Human Capital Consequences of Civil War: Evidence from Guatemala," *Journal of Development Economics* 94, no. 1 (2011): 43, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2010.01.005.

11 James K. Boyce, *Investing in Peace Aid and Conditionality after Civil Wars* (Florence, Italy: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 42.

the population.[12] Today, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras are often referred to as the "Northern Triangle of Central America" in U.S. foreign policy. An unfavoured term in all three countries, its purpose changed from commercial to one referring to the shared struggle with migration, violence, and corruption.[13] A wave of corruption scandals has racked all three countries in recent years.

Guatemala's five previous presidents across two decades have all been involved in corruption cases. President Alfonso Portillo (2000-2004) was accused of embezzlement and accepting bribes from Taiwan.[14] Although acquitted, Portillo was extradited to the United States in 2013 and served a prison sentence for money laundering until February 2015. President Óscar Berger's (2004-2008) top officials were imprisoned for money-laundering, drug trafficking and murder, among other crimes, while President Álvaro Colom (2008-2012) was investigated for the Transurbano corruption case and the cronyism of the social welfare programme, *Mi Familia Progresa*.[15] The Guatemalan population demanded the resignation of former President Otto Pérez Molina (2012-2015) for the white collar crime organization named *La Linea,* or "the line." This criminal network operated through the Superintendence of Tax Administration (SAT) and was dedicated to smuggling, budget fraud, and money laundering in the country's main customs offices. Led by former vice-president Roxana Baldetti (2012-2015), *La Línea* misused US$10 million dollars.[16] Ernesto "Jimmy" Morales' (2016-2020) brother and son were involved in a corruption case from which they were absolved, but this case decimated his credibility in light of his own trial for illicit electoral financing.[17] Morales himself was involved in a sexual extortion case, which was dismissed for "unknown" reasons.[18] Not much is different with current president Alejandro Giamattei (2020-present), as he is presently

12 Laura Sanz-Levia and Fernando Jiménez-Sánchez, "Breaking Democracy: Illegal Political Finance and Organized Crime in Guatemala," *Crime, Law and Social Change* 75, no. 1 (August 2020): 21, 30-37, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10611-020-09918-x.

13 Benjamin Roth, John Doering-White, and Karen Andrea Flynn, "Central American Migration to the United States," *Social Work*, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1093/obo/9780195389678-0289.

14 Laura Sanz-Levia and Fernando Jiménez-Sánchez, "Breaking Democracy: Illegal Political Finance and Organized Crime in Guatemala," *Crime, Law and Social Change* 75, no. 1 (August 2020): 26, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10611-020-09918-x.

15 Sanz-Levia and Jiménez-Sánchez, "Breaking Democracy," 26.

16 "Corrupción En Guatemala," *teleSURtv*, January 14, 2016, https://www.telesurtv.net/telesuragenda/Corrupcion-en-Guatemala-20150824-0177.html; Sanz-Levia and Jiménez-Sánchez, "Breaking Democracy," 26.

17 Sofia Menchu, "Guatemala President's Brother, Son Held on Suspicion of Fraud," *Reuters*, January 18, 2017, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-guatemala-corruption-idUSKBN1522NS; Beatriz Tercero, "MP y CICIG Pide Antejuicio Contra Jimmy Morales Por Financiamiento Electoral Ilícito," *Prensa Libre,* August 25, 2017, https://www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/politica/ministerio-publico-cicig-solicitan-antejuicio-jimmy-morales-fcn-nacion/.

18 Pring and Vrushi, *Global Corruption Barometer*, 23.



accused of accepting bribes from associates for public contracts.[19]

Corruption, similar to many other social problems, affects marginalized and minority communities the most. This is clear in the number of bribes and cases of sexual extortion, or "sextortion," for public services. Women are disproportionately affected. One in five women are coerced into providing sexual favours in order to receive public services, or know someone who has been coerced. More than 70% of citizens think sextortion happens at least occasionally.[20] Similarly, the SARS-CoV-19 pandemic has revealed how governmental corruption disproportionately affects poor and vulnerable populations. A slow response to the pandemic delayed relief, while schools remained closed and rates of domestic violence against women increased.[21] Due to the virus' easy transmissibility in dense populations and limited mitigation capacity, along with the higher propensity towards chronic conditions and poor access to affordable, high quality healthcare, death rates and hospitalizations have been higher for these populations. Furthermore, social isolation measures and the global economic downturn severely impacted the population's ability to earn enough money for subsistence.[22]

Corruption has also played a role in Guatemala's COVID-19 response through its distribution of government subsidies and vaccines. Following strong pressure from corporate and banking lobbyists, the president vetoed a multimillion-dollar relief package that was intended to help small businesses, individual families, and people in the informal economy by providing relief from eviction and ensuring access to basic services like water, internet, and electricity . This left the general population vulnerable to price gouging and high interest rates when borrowing from banks. Municipal governments were asked to identify which informal workers were worthy of the government subsidy, and reports show these lists of workers were highly politicized, being carried out only in areas where the president had support of municipal authorities.[23] The veto was rejected by Congress,

19 José Pablo del Águila, "Cuatro Empresas Señaladas De Pagar Sobornos a Giammattei Aumentaron Sus Contratos Entre 2018 y 2021," *Prensa Libre*, February 16, 2022, https://www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/justicia/cuatro-empresas-senaladas-de-pagar-sobornos-a-giammattei-aumentaron-sus-contratos-entre-2018-y-2021/.

20 Pring and Vrushi, *Global Corruption Barometer*, 20-21.

21 Alberto Enríquez and Carlos Sáenz, "Primeras Lecciones y Desafíos De La Pandemia De COVID-19 Para Los Países Del SICA," *Estudios y Perspectivas*, 2021, 36-39, https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/46802/1/S2100201_es.pdf.

22 Efrat Shadmi et al., "Health Equity and Covid-19: Global Perspectives," *International Journal for Equity in Health* 19, no. 1 (2020): 9-10, https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-020-01218-z

23 Mariajosé España, "Pocas Vacunas y Un Deficiente Plan De Vacunación: Las Realidades Que Acechan a Guatemala Frente Al Covid-19," *Prensa Libre*, April 30, 2021, https://www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/comunitario/pocas-vacunas-y-un-deficiente-plan-de-vacunacion-las-realidades-que-acechan-a-guatemala-frente-al-covid-19/; Kimberly López, "El Misterio De Las

which ordered Giammattei to sanction and publish the law. Despite citing concerns over the constitutionality of the law, Giammattei eventually announced he had reached an agreement with the electric utility and telephone companies to guarantee basic services to the population.[24] Similarly, the mismanagement of more than 100 donations from national and international companies and associations to combat the pandemic and its consequences has led an already under-funded national healthcare infrastructure to fail in its efforts to effectively distribute vaccines.[25]

**Past And Current Efforts To Address Corruption**

Guatemala's International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) was the most recognized and successful effort to address corruption. For instance, the CICIG assisted in filing over 120 cases in the Guatemalan justice system throughout its twelve years of service, implicating 1,540 people and approximately 200 current or former government officials.[26] Joint investigations by the Guatemalan Attorney General's Office and the CICIG also resulted in more than 400 convictions.[27] Among these cases are the last four presidents, demonstrating an 85 percent success rate in CICIG-resolved cases.[28]

CICIG was created by the United Nations (UN) in 2006 and ratified by the Guatemalan Congress in 2007 as part of the peace agreements. Its main goal was "supporting, strengthening, and helping the institutions of the State of Guatemala to investigate, prosecute, and dismantle illegal bodies and clandestine security apparatuses that commit crimes and infringe the fundamental human rights of citizens."[29] CICIG was designed to be an autonomous investigative body with financial independence and functional autonomy to prevent domestic political interference. The head of CICIG was appointed by the Secretary-General of the UN. The head of CICIG would then recruit its own personnel.[30] Financed by the

Donaciones Para Enfrentar El Covid-19: Datos Que No Cuadran y Aportes No Registrados," *Nómada*, May 6, 2021, https://nomada.gt/pais/la-corrupcion-no-es-normal/el-misterio-de-las-donaciones-para-enfrentar-el-covid-19-datos-que-no-cuadran-y-aportes-no-registrados/.

24 Willian Cumes, "Congreso Publica El Decreto 15-2020 Que Garantiza Servicios Básicos Ante Crisis Del Covid-19," Guatevision, May 21, 2020, https://www.guatevision.com/nacionales/diario-oficial-publica-el-decreto-15-2020-que-garantiza-servicios-basicos-ante-crisis-del-covid-19.

25 España, "Pocas Vacunas."; López, "El Misterio."

26 "Fact Sheet," *WOLA Advocacy for Human Rights in the Americas*, August 27, 2019, https://www.wola.org/analysis/cicigs-legacy-fighting-corruption-guatemala/.

27 "Fact Sheet," *WOLA*, August 27, 2019.

28 "Fact Sheet," *WOLA*, August 27, 2019.

29 Arellano David Gault, *Corruption in Latin America* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2020), 192-193, https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/633246fd-en/index.html?itemId=%2Fcontent%2Fcomponent%2F633246fd-en.

30 Verónica Michel, "Institutional Design, Prosecutorial Independence, and Accountability: Lessons from the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG)," *Laws* 10, no. 3 (July 14, 2021): 5-7, https://doi.org/10.3390/laws10030058.





international community, a trust fund under UNDP-Guatemala managed contributions to CICIG.[31] Although limited by criminal procedure law to limited prosecutorial powers, the agreement required the state to provide assistance in any investigation the CICIG undertook, to guarantee access to information, to appoint special prosecutors, and to create a special police unit to aid in the investigations.[32]

The CICIG was not meant as an outsourcing of the justice system, but rather a partnership where the expertise of the CICIG and the country's prosecutors and police would help build their capacities. The organization has earned praise from the United Nations, the European Union, and Guatemalan civil society groups, traditionally garnering bipartisan support in the United States.[33] Despite these internationally praised efforts, however, recent surveys indicate that the population believes corruption has worsened, citing the expiration of CICIG's mandate as one of the main reasons[34] Although the CICIG always faced a certain level of resistance and obstructionism by the government, a combination of events in 2019 led to President Jimmy Morales's decision to shut down the CICIG. Following investigations into illicit campaign financing that implicated both political and business elites, including the powerful business coalition known as CACIF, a resistant Guatemalan Congress, and the withdrawal of strong U.S. support during the Presidency of Donald. J. Trump, Morales implemented his decision under the pretence of CICIG's unconstitutionality and risk to national security.[35]

CACIF was implicated in multimillion-dollar corruption probes starting in 2015, and members of the country's economic elite ended up hiring a DC lobbying firm, seeking to influence Members of Congress and Trump administration officials. At the same time, Morales' corruption allegations and his family's arrests for misappropriating public funds would expedite his decision.[36] In addition, the loss of support from the United States, as Guatemala's main political and economic support, enabled smear campaigns to discredit the CICIG and the return of Guatemala's old political order.[37] CICIG's final report would claim Guatemala to be a "captured and co-opted state" with a "captured democracy."[38] President Alejandro

31 "Países Donantes," *CICIG*, March 6, 2018, https://www.cicig.org/cicig/donantes/.

32 Michel, "Institutional Design," 5-7.

33 "Fact Sheet," *WOLA*, August 27, 2019.

34 Pring and Vrushi, *Global Corruption Barometer*, 4.

35 "Fact Sheet," *WOLA*, August 27, 2019.

36 "Fact Sheet," *WOLA*, August 27, 2019.

37 "Fact Sheet," *WOLA*, August 27, 2019.

38 "Informe Temático Guatemala: Un Estado Capturado," *CICIG*, 2019,

Giammattei, an ally of Morales with a political background and party that includes ex-military officials with questionable pasts, has explicitly voiced a lack of support for the return of the CICIG, opting instead for his own Presidential Commission Against Corruption, whose membership is limited to state government officials.[39]

The fall of CICIG has important consequences for the region. These include higher levels of poverty and inequality, the expansion of already-powerful organized crime groups, a resurgence of organized crime and violence that would exacerbate the wave of Guatemalan emigrants and asylum-seekers, and a dangerous precedent for the rule of law.[40] In addition, more recent efforts against corruption are more difficult to assess. With the expiration of CICIG's mandate, the remaining grassroots efforts and their leaders similarly became vulnerable to discrediting smear campaigns that would put them at risk of harm for denouncing the justice sector.[41] Although the government of Guatemala has ratified its commitment to the fight against corruption and the allocation of US$61.5 million dollars by the United States government to fight corruption in Guatemala and other Central American countries, the effectiveness of these measures is doubtful considering the active repression of anti-corruption activists by the state.[42] Human rights defenders, journalists, environmental activists and lawyers have been victims of coordinated defamation campaigns on Guatemalan social media.[43] These are often circulated by government-aligned accounts or boosted by net centers, or "centers where hundreds of accounts are managed at a time to amplify certain messages."[44] Although these campaigns do not explicitly incite violence, the American Bar Association's Center for Human Rights notes that this type of misinformation can contribute to imminent violence or physical harm.[45]

The Washington Office on

https://www.cicig.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Informe_Captura_Estado_2019.pdf, 5-75.

39 "Fact Sheet," *WOLA*, August 27, 2019; Walter Flores and Miranda Waters, "Curbing Corruption after Conflict: Anticorruption Mobilization in Guatemala," *United States Institute of Peace*, September 16, 2020, 15-16, https://www.usip.org/publications/2020/09/curbing-corruption-after-conflict-anticorruption-mobilization-guatemala.

40 "Fact Sheet," *WOLA*, August 27, 2019.

41 Adeline Hite and Álvaro Montenegro, "Guatemala's Corrupt Are Threatening to Erase Its Historic Anti-Corruption Legacy," *WOLA Advocacy for Human Rights in the Americas*, January 15, 2020, https://www.wola.org/analysis/guatemalas-corrupt-threaten-historic-anti-corruption-legacy/.

42 "El Gobierno De Guatemala Ratifica Su Compromiso En La Lucha Contra La Corrupción," *Gobierno de Guatemala Dr. Alejandro Giammattei Sala de Prensa*, June 14, 2021, https://prensa.gob.gt/comunicado/el-gobierno-de-guatemala-ratifica-su-compromiso-en-la-lucha-contra-la-corrupcion; "Torres Secures $61.5 Million for Anti-Corruption Efforts, Other Key Central America Provisions in Government Funding Bill," *Congresswoman Norma Torres*, March 10, 2022, https://torres.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/torres-secures-615-million-anti-corruption-efforts-other-key-central.

43 Muna Abbas et al., "Invisible Threats: Online Hate Speech against Human Rights Defenders in Guatemala," SSRN Electronic Journal, 2019, https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3483258, 2-3, 19, 40-41 .

44 Muna Abbas et al., "Invisible Threats," 2-3, 19, 40-41.

45 Muna Abbas et al., "Invisible Threats," 2-3, 19, 40-41.



Latin America identified some of the most vulnerable targets of such attacks. Guatemala's Human Rights Ombudsman Jordan Rodas and prominent leaders of civil society organizations have suffered extensive harassment. Rodas, as a result of his denouncement of Morales' administration and legal action taken for the release of the withheld pre-approved funds needed to close out the year, was attacked by both the president and Members of Congress in hopes of removing him from his position. On the other hand, Helen Mack, President of the Myrna Mack Foundation, was a target of surveillance and intimidation, once having been followed and photographed by four men. Claudia Samayoa and Jose Manuel Martinez, on top of being similarly mistreated in attempts of intimidation, were accused by the head of the Supreme Court of three criminal offenses as retaliation for a complaint submitted to the Constitutional Court.[46] In addition, the human rights group UDEFEGUA has documented 402 aggressions against human rights defenders, including 14 murders in 2019. Human rights and environmentalist defenders outside the capital city, mostly of marginalized and indigenous minority communities, are particularly vulnerable due to the weak state. Independent news outlets, such as Guatevision, Prensa Libre, and La Hora, and journalists were also targeted, facing stigmatizing critique from public officials, defamatory fake news from fake media accounts, and legal action to silence their publications.[47]

Although Giammattei's Presidential Commission Against Corruption resulted in the firing of two deputy health ministers after a probe into an alleged corruption ring inside the ministry, many citizens are skeptical regarding the full independence of the commission. Today's fight against corruption in Guatemala is mostly led by JusticiaYa, La Alianza por las Reformas (Alliance for Reforms), and Pacto Ciudadano (Citizen Pact). JusticiaYa consists mainly of young people and students in Guatemala City, while La Alianza por las Reformas includes dozens of CSOs . Pushing forward the mission of transparency, accountability, and good governance (TAGG), these organizations lead projects on activism, mobilization, and political education in the capital and other urban areas, while promoting constitutional and justice sector reform, monitoring elections, and assignment of new judges, and encouraging diversity in its membership. Outside of Guatemala City, civil society actors are focusing on issues of transparency and accountability at the local level. Pacto

46 Hite and Montenegro, "Guatemala's Corrupt."

47 Hite and Montenegro, "Guatemala's Corrupt."

Ciudadano includes several indigenous and peasant organizations, working mostly on anti corruption issues within public services. Guatemala's local commissions on transparency and probity also work at the departmental level, in collaboration with the Public Ministry and the Comptroller General of Accounts, focusing on social audits and working directly with local government officials.[48]

**Understanding Impunity and Pursuing Multi-Faceted Solutions**

As evidenced by the targeted actions of CICIG and local organizations, Guatemala's problem with corruption is intrinsically linked with the judiciary system's failure to prevent impunity. This considered, the factors that increase the risk and continue to enable corruption in Guatemala require an understanding of impunity and the factors that sustain it.[49] These factors can be divided into the micro and macro levels. The micro involves the managerial style of judges, the investigative strategies, tactics, and experience of prosecutors and police officers which impact clearance rates, discretionary factors, politics, socio-economic bias, race, and gender. Research indicates that cases with female victims are less likely to be investigated.[50] On the macro level, the role of past repression, the type of transition to democracy experienced by the country, the presence of networks between domestic and transnational NGOs, the influence of international law and foreign or regional courts as tools for societal actors to mobilize the law and defend rights, the role of economic development in police performance and clearance rates, state capacity, resource availability, and the ability of various domestic or international actors to respond or relate to each other according to a domestic institutional setting all play a role in the exacerbating factors of impunity.[51]

Therefore, Guatemala must find a way to tackle the judicial system first, either by reinstating CICIG or establishing the political and financial autonomy of President Giammattei's Presidential Commission Against Corruption, redesigning the institutions to address the shortcomings that CICIG faced. In the words of scholar Rachel A. Schwartz, "there is no greater testament to the CICIG's effectiveness than the overt and public resistance it has provoked."[52] Although President Giammattei's Presidential Commission Against Corruption would overcome the

48 Flores and Rivers, "Curbing Corruption," 14-16.
49 Rotberg, *Corruption in Latin*, 235-364.
50 Guatemala and the larger Central American region struggled under authoritarian regimes from the mid-to-late twentieth century. Williamson, *The Penguin History*, 315-327; Michel, "Institutional Design," 2-4.
51 Williamson, *The Penguin History*, 315-327; Michel, "Institutional Design," 2-4.
52 Rachel A. Schwartz, "Guatemala's Anti-Corruption Struggle Teeters on the Edge," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 51, no. 2 (March 2019): 200-205, https://doi.org/10.1080/10714839.2019.1617492.



challenge of CICIG's imposition on the state's sovereignty, it would be difficult to separate the commission from the politicization, which would prevent the utilization of elements that made CICIG so successful. CICIG's final report includes a recommendation of strategic criminal litigation of emblematic cases, the criminal prosecution of legal servants, specialized prosecutors, capacity transfer to the national police for more effective police investigations, the inclusion of a witness protection program, and an integrated justice system.[53] Other reports indicate the need to address the problem of such an institution affecting the sovereignty of a country and to be a hybrid anti-corruption organization with the capability to adapt and adjust to the specific context it will face. CICIG's decision to be an institution of technical and restricted responses enabled it to achieve concrete results.[54] Moreover, despite CICIG's intentional design to prevent domestic political interference, CICIG became very quickly a political actor in the Guatemalan political system. However, its inability to create institutionalized responses to properly investigate and prosecute without being harassed or infiltrated would need to be addressed in order to avoid a similar conflation of events that would bring its downfall.[55] Similarly, this new institution would require a long-term mandate, long-term funding managed by a third party inaccessible to the government to further insulate it from politics, and long-term support from the U.S. and the international community led by the UN.[56]

CICIG and similar institutions, however, cannot realistically address the intersectional, multi-faceted roots of corruption. They are only temporary solutions to the consequences of the systemic corruption that remains. The dismantling of a deeply corrupted system would require more than a band-aid solution presented by institutions such as CICIG, which do not have infinite resources or capabilities to face organized crime syndicates supported by key figures in the Guatemalan political system. Nonetheless, it could act as the sponsor and supervisor of smaller committees focused on combating financial and educational inequality, building state institutional capacity, and empowering key national actors to restore public trust in the rule of law. The Peace Accords of 1996 acknowledged the role of the

53 Michel, "Institutional Design," 9-11.
54 Laura Zamudio-González, "The International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG)," *International Intervention Instruments against Corruption in Central America*, 2020, 87-88, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-40878-7_4.
55 Zamudio-González, "The International," 87-88.
56 Matthew M. Taylor, "Lessons From Guatemala's Commission Against Impunity What Other Countries Can Learn from CICIG's First Decade," *Council on Foreign Relations*, June 19, 2017, https://www.cfr.org/report/lessons-guatemalas-commission-against-impunity#chapter-title-0-3.

educational sector in perpetuating racism in Guatemalan society through unequal access to schools, poor treatment of indigenous students, and inadequate representations of indigenous culture in the curriculum. According to some estimates, 41 to 61 percent of Guatemalan youth are not in school because they must work in the fields or sell in the market with their families during the day.[57] This same necessity leads children to join local gangs or "*pandillas*," which are perceived to be more profitable than any other profession that could be obtained by studying.[58] In addition, recent surveys indicate that only 39% of people are aware of their right to request information from the government, serving as a benchmark for how many citizens are aware of their civic rights.[59] The committees should follow the recommendations laid down by the accords, which include increased access to schools, bilingual instruction, government investment, community involvement, and institutional decentralization, in addition to curricular reform in order to construct an active civic identity.[60] Such a multi-faceted approach, which addresses bottom-up and top-bottom solutions simultaneously, would be most effective in the battle against corruption.

## Conclusion

Ultimately, Guatemala's issues with corruption largely stem from its low state capacity to deal with its weak judicial system which permits high levels of impunity. The system's lack of a sufficient budget, personnel, capable administration, and knowledge leave it vulnerable to corruption and make change difficult. Uneven and inconsistent growth of justice institutions, as well as a deficient Professional Career Service system to regulate public servants, are also highlighted as factors that leave the judicial system's independence and impartiality vulnerable to corruption.[61] Corruption also enables high levels of poverty and inequality, as the state struggles to provide access to healthcare, basic education, and social services. Rural and indigenous areas are disproportionately affected, reflecting Guatemala's long history of corruption, socio-economic inequality, and racism dating back to the colonial age.[62] The social consequences of

57 Michelle J. Bellino, *Youth in Postwar Guatemala: Education and Civic Identity in Transition* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2017), 27; "Education," U.S. Agency for International Development, March 16, 2022, https://www.usaid.gov/guatemala/our-work/education#:~:text=Exacerbating%20the%20challenge%2C%20the%20major%20ity,Highlands%2C%20which%20is%20predominantly%20indigenous.

58 Bellino, *Youth in Postwar*, 27.

59 Pring and Vrushi, *Global Corruption Barometer*, 31.

60 Bellino, *Youth in Postwar*, 33-34.

61 Lorena Escobar Noriega et. al., "Desafíos Actuales De La Justicia Penal," *Proceso De Fortalecimiento Del Sistema De Justicia, Avances y Debilidades, 2015 – 2016*, 2016, 119, http://www.asies.org.gt/desafios-actuales-de-la-justicia-penal-3/.

62 Williamson, 315-327.





corruption also continue to impact women on a large scale, incentivizing sextortion for the provision of social services.[63] Guatemala's political leadership has been involved in corruption cases for the past two decades, including the current sitting president, Alejandro Giammattei.[64] Public health policy decisions responding to the COVID-19 pandemic were similarly rendered ineffective and preferential.[65] This worsened the consequences of an already sluggish global response that prioritized the distribution of vaccines, and other resources, to wealthier nations.

The hierarchical nature of the global response to the pandemic, which exhibited the hoarding of medical supplies and talks of patenting vaccines, not only protracted the pandemic but also left lasting negative economic and geopolitical imbalances between developed and developing countries.[66] Although Guatemalan citizens believed that the introduction of CICIG was an effective institution to combat corruption in its twelve years of service, its unfortunate ousting left human rights and transparency activists to be targets of defamation by the state.[67] Giammattei's Presidential Commission Against Corruption has proven to be largely under political influence, and many citizens believe it to be an act to garner positive public opinion rather than an effective prosecution body.[68] Therefore, the reinstatement of a modified CICIG is best suited to address both the root causes of corruption and empower civil actors to fight for government transparency, while simultaneously addressing the inequality and poverty that plague the region. Such success would reinstate the faith of similar countries in the rule of law and the credibility of the UN, while at the same time reducing the concerns about migration towards the U.S. and the criminal drug trafficking that spans across the region.

63 Pring and Vrushi, *Global Corruption Barometer*, 20-21.

64 Sanz-Levia and Jiménez-Sánchez, "Breaking Democracy," 21-43.

65 España, "Pocas Vacunas."; López, "El Misterio."

66 Richard L Oehler and Vivian R Vega, "Conquering Covid: How Global Vaccine Inequality Risks Prolonging the Pandemic," *Open Forum Infectious Diseases* 8, no. 10 (2021), https://doi.org/10.1093/ofid/ofab443.

67 "Fact Sheet," *WOLA*, August 27, 2019.

68 Flores and Rivers, "Curbing Corruption," 14-16.

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# Human Rights and Sovereignty: Defending Humanity Across Borders

By Anna Lysenko

The puzzle of effectively incorporating human rights into a global order founded on sovereignty remains unsolved. Ideally, states would be sovereign and have total respect for human rights. However, we live in an imperfect world, and as such, the international liberal community is still looking to find a realistic imperfect balance between protecting people and respecting sovereignty.[1] Rising authoritarian regimes challenge human rights' global relevance; China and Iran are two autocratic states that have faced human rights abuse accusations, with evidence affirming their guilt. Their ongoing human rights abuse cases provide notable analysis material, revealing potential pathways for progress. Specifically, analysis suggests that respecting sovereignty is essential for long-term human rights respect: autocratic states must come to believe that Western states have genuine faith in human rights and are not just using them to push forward political agendas of regime change. Hence, this article proposes non-intervention ideas for how to coerce and convince states to change their anti-human rights behaviour while building long-term trust that their borders and perspectives will be respected. In response to obvious cases of states using sovereignty to justify human rights abuses, the international community ought to impose sanctions on offenders, commend local activists, and defend resistors' digital sovereignty. On a broader scale, international community members who present themselves as liberal and often promote human rights as a core component of sovereignty should lead by example and reform intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) to strengthen their legitimacy and capability to defend humanitarian principles.

This article begins with a literature review to give the following discussion context, followed by a brief introduction of assumptions. Next, this article will consider Iran's human rights abuses against anti-government protestors in 2022, proposing sanctions and direct support to protestors as potential solutions for respecting Iran's sovereignty while condemning its actions. The discussion then pivots to China's human rights abuses against the Uyghur Muslims, with the proposed solutions being liberal states' domestic efforts to uphold

1 "Democracy Index 2021: The China Challenge," *Economist Intelligence* (London: Economist Intelligence Unit, 2022), https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2021/.





human rights and unified liberal public opposition against China in IGOs. The essay concludes by considering implications and future research.

**The Value of Human Rights**

The literature reviewed revealed a general consensus regarding human rights' inherent value, with some noteworthy criticism regarding their Western-centrism. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), human rights are the rights to which persons are inherently entitled because they are human beings.[2] In this article, I define the international community as liberal states participating in international institutions, such as the United Nations (UN), and publicizing active human rights advocacy.

Human beings have an inherent understanding of human rights: it is difficult to find an individual who is ready to reject them. They are internalized in most modern societies. As such, most human-right-focused literature explores their various facets rather than questions their inherent value. Carroza and Sikkink discuss human rights in international legal contexts, and Anstis, Barnett, and Risse study the intersection of human rights, justice and cyberspace.[3] However, growing numbers of scholars have argued that human rights in their current form are reductionist, Western-centric ideals used to justify self-interested interventions instead of genuine moral concerns.[4] They claim that while states are immoral for abusing their citizens, their distrust of Western doctrines is reasonable considering inadequate implementation history, noting failed interventions in Somalia and Rwanda.[5]

China and Iran's opposition to the current humanitarian, liberal order reveals the need to incorporate nonaligned, non-Western states as equal partners in it.[6] For example, some

2 "Universal Declaration of Human Rights - English," *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, 1948, https://www.ohchr.org/en/human-rights/universal-declaration/translations/english.

3 Siena Anstis and Sophie Barnett, "Digital Transnational Repression and Host States' Obligation to Protect Against Human Rights Abuses," *Journal of Human Rights Practice* 14, no. 2 (2022): 698–725, https://doi.org/10.1093/jhuman/huab051; Paolo G. Carozza, "Subsidiarity as a Structural Principle of International Human Rights Law," *American Journal of International Law* 97, no. 1 (2003): 38–79, doi:10.2307/3087103; Mathias Risse, "Human Rights and Artificial Intelligence: An Urgently Needed Agenda," *Human Rights Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (2019): 1–16, https://doi.org/10.1353/hrq.2019.0000; Kathryn Sikkink, "Latin American Countries as Norm Protagonists of the Idea of International Human Rights," *Global Governance* 20, no. 3 (2014): 389–404, https://doi.org/10.1163/19426720-02003005.

4 Heiner Bielefeldt, "'Western' Versus 'Islamic' Human Rights Conceptions?: A Critique of Cultural Essentialism in the Discussion on Human Rights," *Political Theory* 28, no. 1 (2000): 90–121, https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591700028001005; Janne Mende,"Are Human Rights Western—And Why Does It Matter? A Perspective from International Political Theory," *Journal of International Political Theory* 17, no. 1 (2021): 38–57, https://doi.org/10.1177/1755088219832992; Ashwani Kumar Peetush, "Cultural Diversity, Non-Western Communities, and Human Rights," *The Philosophical Forum* 34, no. 1 (2003):1-19.

5 Seung-Whan Choi et al., "Human rights institutionalization and US humanitarian military intervention," *International Interactions* 46, no. 4 (2020): 606-635, doi: 10.1080/03050629.2020.1758694; Jan Nederveen Pieterse, "Sociology of Humanitarian Intervention: Bosnia, Rwanda and Somalia Compared," *International Political Science Review* 18, no. 1 (1997): 71–93, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1601449.

6 Farsan Ghassim, Mathias Koenig-Archibugi, and Luis Cabrera, "Public Opinion on Institutional Designs for the United Nations: An International Survey Experiment," *International Studies Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (2022), https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqac027.

non-aligned states have abstained from the UN's condemnation of Iran's crackdown on recent protests. It would be in the best interest of the survival and evolution of the liberal order if Western states were to respectfully approach them and aim to cultivate trust surrounding human rights and future global systems rather than impetuously condemn them for supporting dictators.[7] The discussion of specific reforms to create a more equitable order is outside this article's scope but holds questions for further research.[8]

This article's underlying assumption is that human rights are valuable, making up the foundation for sovereignty and the global liberal order. However, it also considers critiques of Western-centric human rights models, using these arguments to emphasize trust as the prerequisite for meaningful transnational human rights dialogues, thereby informing potential solutions.

## Human Rights Violations: Iran and Conservative Islam

Iran's ongoing human rights abuses and the subsequent protests demonstrate the need for international sanctions, political support, and digital sovereignty for human rights movements.

Iran's repressive regime stems from the Iranian Revolution of 1978-1979, when Iranians from various socioeconomic backgrounds united against the Shah's political repression.[9] Violent crackdowns on protesters created a self-perpetuating cycle. The Shah fled Iran in January 1979 and was replaced by clergy officials who announced Iran's return to conservative, Islamic social values.[10] The regime limited political freedoms and targeted women's rights, aiming to enforce a repressive Islamic regime through mandatory hijab laws and morality police, a domestic security group made up of around 7,000 officers tasked with ensuring Iran's religious laws are followed.[11] Attitudes in Iranian society have considerably shifted over the last decade in large part due to the spread of progressive online content.[12] In 2020, Iran saw anti-hijab uprisings and independent surveys

7 "India Abstains from Anti-Iran UN Vote," *Tribune India*, November 26, 2022, https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/india-abstains-from-anti-iran-un-vote-454698.

8 John G. Ikenberry, "The Future of the Liberal World Order," *Foreign Affairs*, October 20, 2022, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/future-liberal-world-order.

9 Janet Afary, "Iranian Revolution," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2022, https://www.britannica.com/event/Iranian-Revolution.

10 Afary, "Iranian Revolution"; Charles Kurzman, "Structural Opportunity and Perceived Opportunity in Social-Movement Theory: The Iranian Revolution of 1979," *American Sociological Review* 61, no. 1 (1996): 153–70, https://doi.org/10.2307/2096411.

11 Pardis Mahdavi, "Who Are Iran's Morality Police? A Scholar of the Middle East Explains Their History," *The Conversation*, December 8, 2022. https://theconversation.com/who-are-irans-morality-police-a-scholar-of-the-middle-east-explains-their-history-196023.

12 Holly Dagres, "Meet Iran's Gen Z: The Driving Force behind the Protests," *Foreign Policy*, November 1, 2022, https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/11/01/iran-protests-gen-z-mahsa-amini-social-media/.



showed that 72% of the population was against mandatory hijab laws.[13] Still, the regime continued uneven enforcement, ranging from workshops on "proper" hijab to direct violence against those who resisted these laws.[14]

A breaking point occurred on September 16, 2022, when Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian woman, was beaten to death by morality police for wearing her hijab improperly.[15] At her funeral, peaceful protesters called for justice and women's rights. The regime responded with violence and several arrests, sparking protests across the country. Throughout that October, calls grew from protecting women's rights into general demands for regime change.[16] As of November 24, 2022, human rights groups reported the police had killed more than 400 people in response, leading the United Nations High Commissioner to declare Iran a "full-fledged human rights crisis."[17]

The Iranian government has accused "America and the Zionist regime" of sovereignty infringement despite nonexistent evidence. Thus, the international community could respond to Iran's human rights abuse by emphasizing sovereignty as dictated by the Iranian people.[18] This would entail increasing economic sanctions, maintaining strong public support of protestors through IGOs, and strengthening protestors' digital sovereignty in the process.

Sanctions are an effective, internationally recognized tool for the international community's multilateral, legitimate condemnation of Iran's repressions. Canada, the United States, and the European Union have imposed sanctions on high-ranking officials, including the morality police. Additional sanctions would further isolate the regime's struggling economy, thereby limiting its capacity to brutalize protestors and reassuring protestors' of continued global support.[19] There

13 Ammar Maleki and Poona Tamini Arab, *Iranians' Attitudes toward Religion: A 2020 Survey Report*, Netherlands: Gamaan, 2020, https://gamaan.org/2020/08/25/iranians-attitudes-toward-religion-a-2020-survey-report/.

14 Arab, and Maleki, Iranians' Attitudes towards Religion; Bhawana Bisht, "Iran Protests: Majority of People Reject Mandatory Hijab and Islamic Regime, Survey Finds," *SheThePeople* (India), September 29, 2022, https://www.shethepeople.tv/art-culture/mandatory-hijab-iran-protests/.

15 Human Rights Watch, "Iran: Security Forces Fire on, Kill Protesters," *Human Rights Watch*, 2022, https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/10/05/iran-security-forces-fire-kill-protesters.

16 Jeremy Laurence, "Iran: Critical Situation," *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, November 22, 2022, https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2022/11/iran-critical-situation; Karishma R. Mehta, "The Iran Protests: A Crossroads in Governance?" *RAND Corporation*, November 4, 2022, https://www.rand.org/blog/2022/11/the-iran-protests-a-crossroads-in-governance.html.

17 "Iran Acknowledges More than 300 Are Dead from Unrest from Nationwide Protests," *NPR*, November 28, 2022, https://www.npr.org/2022/11/28/1139625631/iran-acknowledges-more-than-300-are-dead-from-unrest-from-nationwide-protests.

18 Akhtar Safi, "Khamenei Speaks: Protests Planned by American and 'Zionist' Regime," *IranWire*, October 3, 2022, https://iranwire.com/en/politics/108244-khamenei-speaks-protests-planned-by-american-and-zionist-regime/.

19 Council of the EU, "Iran: EU Adopts Additional Sanctions against Perpetrators of Serious Human Rights Violations," *Consilium,* November 14, 2022, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/11/14/iran-eu-adopts-additional-sanctions-against-perpetrators-of-serious-human-rights-violations/; Global Affairs Canada, "Government of Canada," *Government of Canada,* November 8, 2022,

is notable debate regarding whether sanctions are effective at achieving the intended goal of changing states' behaviour, especially considering how sanctions might harm the general population. However, there is a strong body of research that suggests that sanctions can be effective through economic impact and political pressure.[20] Sanctions lead to decreased government revenue, crippling a state's ability to buy tools and pay wages for the military to repress the population. Notably, sanctions can specifically target ruling elites, shifting their impact away from the general population.[21] Furthermore, sanctions isolate states from the international community—states may change their behaviour for want of economic and political interconnections to support their development.[22]

In the case of Iran, support from China obstructs the possibility of sanctions approved by the UN Security Council.[23] However, state ambassadors who condemned Iran's crackdowns could use the UN's collaborative platform to hold private bilateral meetings with abstaining nations to convince them to impose sanctions and to build mutual understanding regarding their desired direction of the global order.

The international community should continue using the UN to show unified political support for Iran's protestors. Research on IOs suggests that international condemnation is effective at shaping public discourse and raising awareness about ongoing human rights abuses, humiliating and pressuring the offender to change their behaviour.[24] Although international condemnation may not always lead to the issue's resolution, it is still an important way to maintain human rights norms.[25]

On November 24, 2022, UNHRC passed a resolution condemning Iran's protest repressions and creating an investigation into the crackdown, despite substantial lobbying by Iran and China to avoid

https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/sanctions/iran.aspx?lang=eng; Brianna Navarre, "How Countries Are Responding to Iran's Crackdown on Dissent," *US News,* October 7, 2022, https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2022-10-07/how-countries-are-responding-to-irans-repression; HM Treasury and Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation, "Financial Sanctions, Iran (Human Rights)," *UK Government*, accessed 2022, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/financial-sanctions-iran-human-rights.

20 Blanchard, Jean-Marc F., and Norrin M. Ripsman, "Asking the right question: when do economic sanctions work best?" *Security Studies* 9, no. 1-2 (1999): 219-253; Hufbauer, Gary C., and Barbara Oegg, "Targeted sanctions: A policy alternative." *Law & Pol'y Int'l Bus* (2000): 32.

21 Blanchard and Norrin, " Asking the right question," 226.

22 Hufbauer and Oegg,"Targeted sanctions: A policy alternative," 16.

23 Emma Farge, "China Fails to Weaken Iran Motion before UN Rights Body," *Reuters*, November 24, 2022, https://www.reuters.com/world/china-aims-weaken-iran-resolution-before-un-rights-body-2022-11-24/.

24 Berger, Guy, and Rotem Giladi. "International Organisations and Political Controversy: Does Condemnation Help?." *Political Studies* 69, no. 1 (2021): 111-131. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321720961143.

25 Berger and Giladi. "International Organisations and Political Controversy," 114.



discussing the protests altogether.[26] The resolution is commendable, indicating persisting human rights consensus and additional actions could sustain its momentum. The investigation's results should be kept confidential until the report's publicization, to ensure investigators are not aggressively confronted or pressured by challengers during their investigation, but periodic social media updates regarding the investigation's progress would indicate persisting international awareness of the crisis.[27] The UN should also use social media to commend the protestors' bravery and share information regarding protest developments, thus ensuring additional documentation for future accountability.[28]

Lastly, the international community should weaponize Iran's sovereignty defence against it by providing protestors with digital sovereignty. Throughout the protests, the internet has been essential for the protestors' unification, organization, and communication. Social media has also enabled the spread of the protestors' messages and international public support.[29] On September 21, 2022, Iran imposed major internet outages across the country, attempting to fracture protests and conceal their unjustified brutality.[30] In response, the U.S. announced it would ease some Iranian sanctions for American technology companies to provide Iranian protestors with internet services. The Iranian government subsequently claimed that this constitutes sovereignty infringement.[31] America has encouraged technology companies to protect Iran's internet by providing Virtual Private Networks (VPN) to protestors and encrypted communication channels, stimulating domestic technology production.[32] Iranian activists have stated that the internet has provided them meaningful autonomy, allowing them to communicate and organize effectively;

26 "UN Body Approves Resolution over Iran's Human Rights Violations," *Iran International*, October 26, 2022, https://www.iranintl.com/en/202211179959; "UN Human Rights Council Condemns Iran's Brutal Repression of Peaceful Protest," *Le Monde,* November 24, 2022, https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2022/11/24/un-human-rights-council-condemns-iran-s-brutal-repression-of-peaceful-protest_6005528_4.html.

27 Farge, "UN Rights Chief"; "UN Human Rights Council," *Le Monde*.

28 Michael Georgy, "Iran Protests Flare Again as U.N. Voices Concern at Detainees' Treatment," *Reuters*, October 28, 2022, https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iran-protests-flare-again-un-voices-concern-detainees-treatment-2022-10-28/; Dagres, "Meet Iran's Gen Z."

29 Dagres, "Meet Iran's Gen Z"; "UN Rights Body Launches Iran Human Rights Investigation," *UN News,* November 24, 2022, https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/11/1131022.

30 ""Iran to Continue Social Media Ban, Grant Access to Regime Insiders," *Iran International*, 2022, https://www.iranintl.com/en/202210268565; "Internet Disrupted in Iran amid Protests over Death of Mahsa Amini," *NetBlocks*, 2022, https://netblocks.org/reports/internet-disrupted-in-iran-amid-protests-over-death-of-mahsa-amini-X8qVEwAD.

31 Jacob Knutson, "U.S. Expands Internet Access in Iran as Government Cracks Down on Protests," *Axios,* September 23, 2022, https://www.axios.com/2022/09/23/us-treasury-expand-internet-access-iran; "U.S. Treasury Issues Iran General License D-2 to Increase Support for Internet Freedom," *U.S. Department of the Treasury,* September 23, 2022, https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0974.

32 Grothe Cathryn Grothe, "Countering Iran's Brand of Digital Authoritarianism," *Just Security,* October 21, 2022, https://www.justsecurity.org/83633/countering-irans-brand-of-digital-authoritarianism/.

the international community should follow this example in future human rights abuse cases.[33] Research by Stefaan Walgrave, Jeroen Van Laer, and Christian Breunig suggests that activists who use digital platforms for organization and communication are more effective at maintaining ties between protestors and fueling multiple related movements.[34]

The international community can foster cooperation with Iran by affirming its emphasis on sovereignty. However, two clarifications would be important to delineate. First, the international community must emphasize that citizens constitute sovereignty, not theocrats. Second, the international community must emphasize cyberspace's borderlessness and freedom—all global citizens are entitled to secure internet access to make informed choices vis-à-vis shaping their nations.[35]

**Human Rights Violations: China and Uyghur Muslims**

Similar to Iran, China has received international condemnation for its human rights abuses against Uyghur Muslims and used the defence of sovereignty to conceal and later justify its actions. However, unlike Iran, China has adopted a subversive human rights approach —rather than cutting political and economic ties with the liberal international community, China has attempted to infiltrate and change it to better align with its ideals. Thus, China's behaviour requires a different, tailored approach. However, the foundation of these solutions remains the same: developing a long-term understanding of respect for sovereignty while firmly uniting against human rights abuses. Considering China's ongoing repression of Uyghur Muslims, the international community can respond to documented human rights abuses by upholding human rights domestically, demonstrating genuine commitment to them, and forming long-term, unified public opposition through IGO coalitions.

Uyghurs are a Muslim-majority ethnic group in China's Xinjiang region, with a unique cultural identity and language.[36] Making up less than half of Xinjiang's population, Uyghurs have formed separatist

33 Anstis and Barnett, "Digital Transnational Repression"; Lamensch, Marie. "In Iran, Women Deploy Social Media in the Fight for Rights." *Centre for International Governance Innovation*, November 16, 2022, https://www.cigionline.org/articles/in-iran-women-deploy-social-media-in-the-fight-for-rights/.

34 Walgrave, Stefaan, W. Bennett, Jeroen Van Laer, and Christian Breunig, "Multiple engagements and network bridging in contentious politics: digital media use of protest participants," *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (2011): 325-349.

35 "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression," *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, 2021, https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc3835-report-special-rapporteur-promotion-andprotection-right-freedom.

36 Ramtin Arablouei and Rund Abdelfatah, "Who the Uyghurs Are and Why China Is Targeting Them," *NPR,* May 31, 2021, https://www.npr.org/2021/05/31/1001936433/who-the-uyghurs-are-and-why-china-is-targeting-them.



movements, with some violence, since the 1960s.[37] Since 2008, China has increased "anti-terrorism initiatives," culminating with a 2016 announcement of the "People's War" against the "Three Evil Forces" of separatism, terrorism, and extremism.[38] Increased police presence, surveillance, anti-Uyghur discriminatory policies (i.e. banning long veils), and punishments for any "anti-party actions" (i.e. not watching state media) made Xinjiang one of the world's most militarized police states.[39]

Starting in 2014 and expanding in 2017, satellites observed new prison-like facilities the Chinese state called "vocational training centres."[40] Reports revealed authorities using formal and informal methods to detain "untrusted" Uyghurs.[41] China initially denied all claims but later changed the narrative to announce the existence of"vocational training sites" for learning Chinese culture and "[nipping] terrorist activities in the bud."[42] However, human rights groups have used escapee testimonies, satellite imagery, and leaked Chinese documents to expose inhumane camp conditions marked by cruelty, degradation, and torture.[43] China has denounced these claims as false until 2019 when following international condemnation, authorities announced that re-education camps were closed.[44] However, ongoing international observations indicate some facilities are still operational. Information is limited, but human rights groups claim over 1 million Uyghurs have been detained, with unknown death tolls.[45]

China's "sovereignty" defence of its documented human rights abuses reveals the necessity for self-reflective state responses. States must demonstrate genuine domestic commitment to human rights principles to project international legitimacy. Much like Iran, China has argued that

37 Arablouei and Abdelfatah, "Who the Uyghurs Are,"; "Uyghur," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2022, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Uyghur.

38 Ruth Ingram, "Xinjiang: Life during a People's War on Terror," *The Diplomat*, November 12, 2018, https://thediplomat.com/2018/11/xinjiang-life-during-a-peoples-war-on-terror/.

39 Ingram, "Xinjiang: Life during a People's War."

40 Michael Clarke,"China's 'War on Terrorism': Confronting the Dilemmas of the 'Internal–External' Security Nexus," in *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in China: Domestic and Foreign Policy Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018): 21-54, https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190922610.003.0002.

41 Arablouei and Abdelfatah, "Who the Uyghurs Are"; Clarke, "China's 'War on Terrorism'"; Ingram, "Xinjiang: Life during a People's War."

42 Lindsay Maizland, "China's Repression of Uyghurs in Xinjiang," *Council on Foreign Relations*, September 22, 2022, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-xinjiang-uyghurs-muslims-repression-genocide-human-rights.

43 Helen-Ann Smith, "Uyghurs Say They Are Living in Fear in China," *YouTube*, Sky News, October 21, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpiVXRFRNkc; Maya Wang, "Eradicating Ideological Viruses," *Human Rights Watch*, September 9, 2018, https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/09/09/eradicating-ideological-viruses/chinas-campaign-repression-against-xinjiangs.

44 "China's Disappeared Uyghurs: What Satellite Images Reveal," *RAND Corporation*, April 29, 2021, https://www.rand.org/blog/rand-review/2021/04/chinas-disappeared-uyghurs-what-satellite-images-reveal.html.

45 Laura Clancy and Sneha Gubbala "Global Indicators Database 2021," *Pew Research Center*, March 24, 2022, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/03/24/use-our-updated-global-indicators-database-to-explore-survey-findings-from-around-the-world/.

Western states should address racial and sexual discrimination within their societies before moralizing others and does not trust Western values because of its independent conception of rights.[46] These redirecting critiques do not justify China and Iran's actions, but they are nonetheless valid.[47] As such, states promoting human rights should refocus on domestic human rights initiatives, including ones supporting free speech and religious tolerance, as an example to Iran and China, to demonstrate they are not hypocritical.

Domestic efforts to embody international values would also strengthen IGOs. China's actions against Uyghurs aim to achieve ethnic homogeneity. Accordingly, the UN could respond by demonstrating sociopolitical development achieved by reconciling differences—research has shown that open societies foster four other benefitting attitudes: tolerance, trust, civic engagement, and minimization of materialistic pressure.[48] Through proactive efforts, states would both improve national living standards and add legitimacy to their global calls for human rights compliance by exemplifying the standards they promote. IGOs should spearhead these projects as they represent shared platforms through which states can overcome some political differences to work together for a shared purpose.

**Respecting Sovereignty While Condemning Human Rights Abuses**

Over the last decade, IGOs, specifically the UN, have received condemnation and criticism for failing in their role to uphold human rights; China's response to international condemnation highlights the continued importance of improving IGOs to combat obvious human rights abuses. Goddard and Richardson point out that China is seeking to reshape, not destroy, the liberal world order by discreetly subverting liberal principles.[49] While Iran has called for boycotts of the UNHRC, China has become an active participant, passing resolutions undermining state accountability.[50] In March

46 Bao Haining, and Zhang Sheng "Xinjiang Hype Illustrates Western Media Hypocrisy," *Global Times*, March 19, 2021, https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202103/1218895.shtml.

47 Global Engagement Center, "PRC Efforts to Manipulate Global Public Opinion on Xinjiang," U*.S. Department of State*, August 24, 2022, https://www.state.gov/prc-efforts-to-manipulate-global-public-opinion-on-xinjiang/; Haining, and Sheng, "Xinjiang Hype Illustrates."

48 Arablouei and Abdelfatah, "Who the Uyghurs Are"; Krys, Kuba, Yukiko Uchida, Shigehiro Oishi and Ed Diener, "Open society fosters satisfaction: explanation to why individualism associates with country level measures of satisfaction," *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 14, no. 6 (2019): 768-778, doi: 10.1080/17439760.2018.1557243.

49 Stacie E Goddard, "The Outsiders," *Foreign Affairs*, May 13, 2022, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2022-04-06/china-russia-ukraine-international-system-outsiders; Sophie Richardson, "China's Influence on the Global Human Rights System," *Human Rights Watch*, September 14, 2020, https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/14/chinas-influence-global-human-rights-system.

50 Kevin Rudd,"The World According to Xi Jinping," *Foreign Affairs*, October 10, 2022, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/china/world-according-xi-jinping-china-ideologue-kevin-rudd; Yongjin Zhang, "China and the Struggle for Legitimacy of a Rising Power," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 8, no. 3 (2015): 306, https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/pov008.





2018, China's Advisory Committee resolution; the document spoke of "so-called universal human rights" and argued they "interfere" in countries' internal affairs.[51] The resolution failed, with 16 votes against it, but indicated a forthcoming challenge to human rights as valuable cornerstones of the international order.[52] China's 2019 public statement regarding the Uyghur camps' "closure" illustrates its desire to appear legitimate.[53] International pressure is thus an undervalued mechanism requiring sharpening; states should signal that for China to become a respected global leader, it must meet international humanitarian standards.[54]

The UN also requires reforms that reaffirm its humanitarian nature. In 2021, UN public support in Western democracies was high at 65%.[55] However, research indicates that the public hopes to strengthen the UN's current authority level and facilitate more direct citizen involvement.[56] Reforms would benefit repressed individuals by streamlining more UN aid and action and reaffirming global commitment to human rights despite challenges.[57]

Fracturing attitudes towards human rights reveal a growing fundamental rift in the world order. By questioning human rights as a legitimate necessity for successful statehood and using sovereignty as a defence against condemnation, authoritarian states aim to undermine liberal principles.[58] Authoritarian rulers make a noteworthy point regarding Western hypocrisy—their concerns do not excuse human rights abuses, but they are understandable. Such accusations reveal deep-rooted worries about Western intervention for covert regime overthrow, and the Western-centric international community should acknowledge this apprehension for effective future human rights implementations.[59] As such, this essay offered potential solutions that would provide short-term improvements and encourage

51 Richardson, "China's Influence on."

52 Farge, "China Fails to Weaken"; "India Abstains" Tribune India.

53 Goddard, "The Outsiders"; Zhang, "China and the Struggle for Legitimacy," 301–322.

54 Ghassim, Koenig-Archibugi, and Cabrera, "Public Opinion on Institutional Designs," 9; Ikenberry, "The Future of the Liberal World Order."

55 Richard Wike, "International Views of the UN Are Mostly Positive," Pew Research Center, September 16, 2022, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/09/16/international-views-of-the-un-are-mostly-positive/.

56 Ghassim, Koenig-Archibugi, and Cabrera, "Public Opinion on Institutional Designs," 11.

57 James Bell, "International Cooperation Welcomed Across 14 Advanced Economies," *Pew Research Center,* September 21, 2020, https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/09/21/international-cooperation-welcomed-across-14-advanced-economies/; Ted Piccone, "UN Human Rights Council: As the US Returns, It Will Have to Deal with China and Its Friends," *Brookings*, February 25, 2021, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/02/25/un-human-rights-council-as-the-us-returns-it-will-have-to-deal-with-china-and-its-friends/.

58 Rudd, "The World According to Xi Jinping"; Clancy, and Gubbala, "Global Indicators Database 2021."

59 Global Engagement Center, "PRC Efforts to Manipulate"; Haining and Sheng, "Xinjiang Hype Illustrates"

long-term trust and stability.

Nations supporting human rights should discredit authoritarian accusations by both recognizing sovereignty's importance, as well as emphasizing its compatibility with compassion. Iran's human rights abuse case suggests the international community should work to exemplify the human rights standards it projects abroad and secure cyberspace to allow global citizens to reclaim their sovereignty. China's human rights abuse requires a different yet related approach: the international community should also strengthen international liberal institutions through focused, unified efforts to condemn human rights abusers and oppose their discreet attempts to subvert human rights discourse. Although these cases and potential solutions have notable differences, they are founded on the shared ideas of respecting sovereignty, thus initiating long-term trust between state leaders while still condemning human rights abuse. Rising authoritarian regimes have weaponized global instability to project their power at their people's expense; their continued efforts to erode human rights should serve as a unifying catalyst for reinvigorating the global liberal order and its aspirational principle of freedom for all.

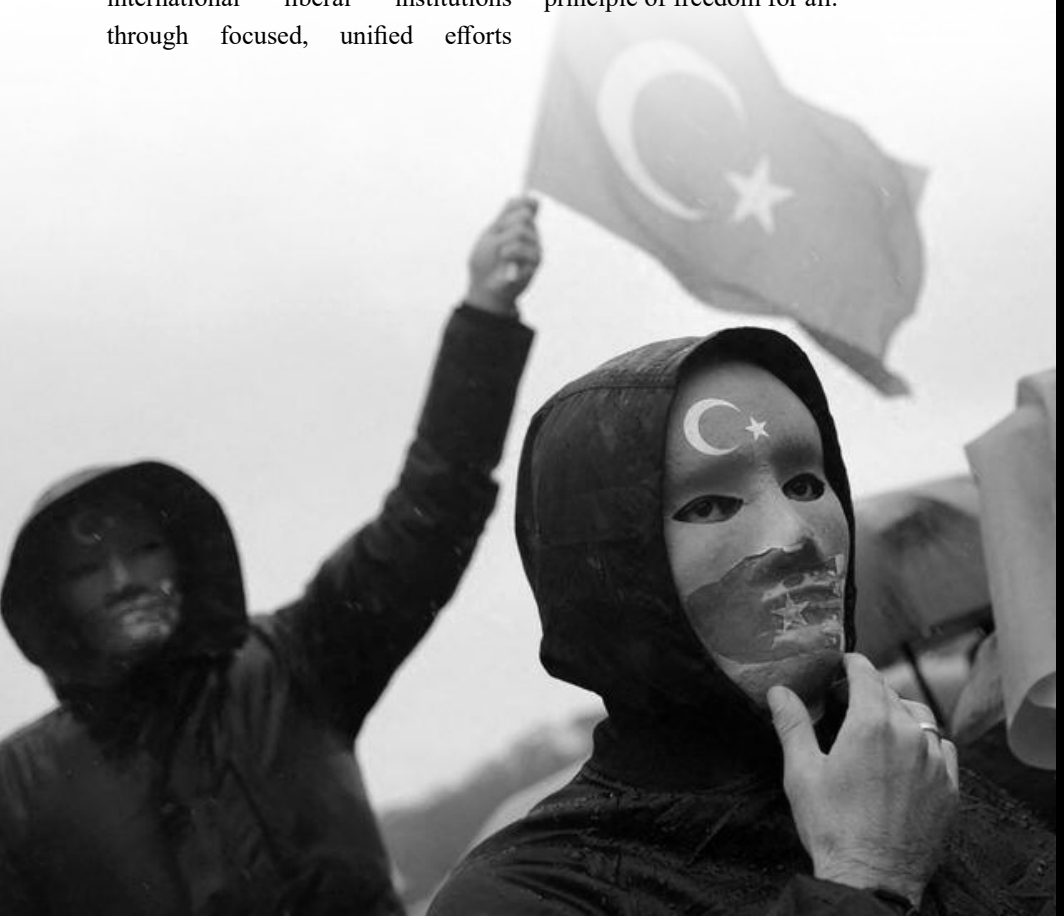






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Photo: Masked Uyghur demonstrators wave a Turkish flag during a protest against China, near the Chinese consulate in Istanbul, Turkey, on February 5, 2023. (Credit: Murad Seze)

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Photo: Women burning hijabs during a protest at Bandar Abbas, Iran, on September 19, 2022, against the death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian woman who died after being arrested in Tehran by the Islamic Republic's morality police. (Credit: Unknown)

# National Autonomy and Soviet Imperialism: A Comparative Study of Communist Parties in the Baltic States, 1940-1991

By Yiwen Su

Communist parties are illegal in the Baltic states today after over half a century of the degradation of citizens' political, economic, and cultural freedoms carried out under the auspices of the USSR.[1] At the end of the 1910s, communist forces attempted to spread the revolution globally but failed. In the case of Baltic states, this was primarily due to a lack of internal support.[2] After twenty years, with the 'help' of the Soviet Union, communist regimes were established in the region, but these still failed to last. Overall, through the support of the USSR, and particularly its strong, centrally controlled military and security services, Baltic communists maintained their monopoly on politics until the end of the 1980s.

However, the undemocratic, foreign-backed manner in which the Latvian, Estonian, and Lithuanian communist governments came to power and the demands that the central government in Moscow imposed on them rendered these governments, like numerous imperialist puppet regimes throughout history, unable to follow political, economic, cultural and educational development paths more in line with their domestic conditions. This happened in large part because the leaders of the Baltic republics were answerable only to Moscow rather than to their own citizenry.

## The Rise and Fall of the Latvian Communist Party

In 1940, the Communist Party of Latvia (LKP) had a limited role in governing the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic (Latvian SSR); orders were handed down from powerful Soviet institutions, such as the Red Army and the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD). This was due to the illegal status of the LKP in the pre-war Republic of Latvia and the Stalinist mass purges in the Soviet Union during the late 1930s. As a result, the LKP remained small throughout the 1920s and 1930s, with only 500-1100 members.[3] Despite its small size, Latvia's Communist Party remained completely under Latvian leadership. At this time, Moscow sent funds and trained cadres of the LKP to Latvia, which were then to operate

1 Ingrid van Biezen and Fernando Casal Bertoa, *The Regulation of Post-Communist Party Politics* (London: Routledge, 2018), 7, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315624518.

2 Tõnu Parming. "The Pattern of Participation of the Estonian Communist Party in National Politics, 1918-1940," *Slavonic and East European Review* 59, no. 3 (1981): 403, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4208320.

3 Andris Trapāns, "The Latvian Communist Party and the Purge of 1937," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 11, no. 1 (1980): 26, https://doi.org/10.1080/01629778000000021.





underground with party organizations within the country.[4] However, the Stalinist purges not only destroyed the integrity of the LKP at all levels, but also drastically reduced the number of Latvian communists, all of whom were replaced by Russian Stalinist cadres. This shift led to the loss of what minimal independence the LKP had.

In 1940, when the Soviet Union annexed Latvia, Stalin was embarrassed to discover that the only legal political party in the newly created Latvian SSR had only 500 members.[5] In response, Stalin sent Andrey Vyshinsky, a Ukrainian-born Polish leader of the purges and a senior member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to Riga as "Governor." Cadres were also transferred from Russia to help Vyshinsky with his work; in the process of collectivization and forced migration, for example, the NKVD played an extremely important role, arresting "enemy of the people" and other "counter-revolutionaries" en masse.[6] The LKP, by contrast, played a negligible role in this process, with its ethnically Latvian members playing an even smaller role because of their small population. The aforementioned examples demonstrate that this disparity in power and influence in Latvia began even before annexation. The LKP simply functioned as an arm of the USSR's Communist Party (CPSU) and the central government, and the prominent presence of Russian cadres in the local party compromised its national character.

Between 1944 and 1953, the LKP was merely a branch of the CPSU that served to implement Sovietization, lacking any distinct agency, will, or particular national character. Although World War II interrupted Sovietization for three years, following its conclusion, Sovietization and Russification resumed in Latvia, accompanied by a gradual recovery for the LKP and tortuous indigenization. In 1944, with the "liberation" of Latvia by the Red Army, the LKP and communist government returned to Latvia and continued Sovietization efforts. During this period, the NKVD resumed its population relocation program at a steady pace; 140,000 Latvian citizens left Latvia throughout WWII.[7] Latvia also suffered considerable population losses due to wartime casualties and German and Soviet conscription, with the neighbouring Russian population relocated into Latvia as a replacement

4 Trapans, "Latvian Communist," 27.

5 Andres Kasekamp, *A History of the Baltic States*, 2nd ed. (London: Palgrave, 2018): 117; Nataliia Lebedeva, "Deportations from Poland and the Baltic States to the Ussr in 1939–1941: Common Features and Specific Traits," *Lithuanian Historical Studies* 7, no. 1 (2002): 107, https://doi.org/10.30965/25386565-00701005

6 Kasekamp, *History of the Baltic*, 119.

7 Kasekamp, *History of the Baltic*, 127.

workforce.[8]

Additionally, some Latvians were exiled to Russia's Siberian gulags, while at the same time, the nationalization of enterprises, the industrialization of cities, and the collectivization of agriculture were all underway.[9] From a cultural and educational vantage point, the CPSU did not respect the traditional culture and religion of Latvians, systematically replacing it through imported Russian writings and atheism. This cultural impact is evident in the complete collapse of Latvia's book-publishing industry. In 1946, the Soviet Union monopolized Latvia's publishing businesses, and thereafter, all books were censored, resulting in the abridging and "rewriting" of many works.[10] In terms of content, the first books published by the Latvian SSR after the war were a collection of Stalin's speeches during the Great Patriotic War and *Robinson Crusoe*, with all religious and potentially controversial political elements removed from the narrative.[11]

Cultural institutions became highly politicized ideological vehicles for consolidating Soviet power, and the same was true of religion. Before Soviet involvement, Christianity was the state religion of Latvia, and most of its citizens were religious. However, after Soviet rule, those who remained religious, especially teachers (because they influenced the beliefs of the next generation), were deemed politically inferior and forced to renounce their religious beliefs and activities, at least in public.[12] Additionally, through the process of Sovietization, ethnic Russian cadres still held a dominant position. The Red Army and NKVD hunted nationalist guerrillas and forcibly immigrated local populations to Siberia, while the Ministry of State Security purged suspected spies and political prisoners.[13] Most of these agencies reported directly to Moscow headquarters rather than the Latvian Communist Party. All matters of state-building and ideology were in the hands of the LKP, with its minority of ethnic Latvian members, was merely a puppet regime that silenced the voice of the Latvian people. Ultimately, to win over ethnic Latvians, the LKP's youth wing, the Komsomol, was gradually localized and nationalized, laying the foundations for the

8 Kasekamp, *History of the Baltic*, 1128.
9 Heinrihs Strods and Matthew Kott, "The File on Operation 'Priboi': A Re-Assessment of the Mass Deportations of 1949," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 33, no. 1 (2002): 29, https://doi.org/10.1080/01629770100000191.
10 Andrejs Veisbergs, "The Translation Scene in Latvia (Latvian SSR) During the Stalinist Years," *Vertimo Studijos* 11, no. 11 (2018): 78, https://doi.org/10.15388/VertStud.2018.6.
11 Veisbergs, "Translation Scene in Latvia," 79.
12 Irēna Saleniece, "Teachers' Religious Behaviour in the Latvian SSR (1945–1985)," *Religiński-Filozofiski Raksti (Riga, Latvia: 1997)* XXIII, no. 1 (2017): 201, https://www-ceeol-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/search/article-detail?id=771908.
13 Ivo Juurvee, KGB „aktiivmeetmete" kasutamisest (lk 90–101) — Tuna. (2019): 93. https://www.ra.ee/tuna/wp-content/uploads/2018-3-juurvee-kgb.pdf.





"national communism" of Latvia under Khrushchev.

Despite the fact that the Soviet Union had been struggling to recruit sufficient Latvian Komsomol members from 1944 to 1948, they only recruited people who had not committed "crimes" against the Soviet Union during WWII, limiting the pool of recruits as many had been dubbed criminals with little evidence or reason.[14] As a result, in 1948, the LKP decided to organize political education in Latvian businesses and schools and develop high-performing individuals into members of the Komsomol; this policy significantly increased membership.[15] However, this also led to people who had previously been politically unacceptable to Soviet leadership before 1944 joining the Komsomol, such as those who had joined the youth groups of the Ulmanis regime, those whose parents had collaborated with German occupiers, or those who maintained their illicit religious beliefs.[16] In any event, these recruitment measures created a young and generally loyal localized group of Latvian communists, with the net effect of this development somewhat lessening the negative perception of the LKP and its Komsomol affiliates as imperialist institutions among Latvians.[17] Despite these moves, the Ministry of State Security and the Moscow Party Centre intermittently prevented individuals and groups perceived as "dangerous elements" from joining the Komsomol.[18] There was even an attempt at Russification in the last three years of Stalin's life.[19] These intermittent purges reduced the number of Latvians in the Latvian Komsomol by reinvestigating the 'problematic' origins of existing members.[20]

The aftermath of Stalin's death in 1953 initiated significant change in the region. His death and Khrushchev's *Secret Speech* in 1956 greatly reduced the outside political pressure on Latvia that had existed under Stalin.[21] Under these circumstances, some LKP cadres developed the idea of "National Communism," which pursued socialism adapted to Latvia's national conditions for the benefit of Latvians. "National Communism" was more popular among Latvians due to the politically appealing premise of limited

14 Geoffrey Swain, "Before National Communism: Joining the Latvian Komsomol Under Stalin." *Europe-Asia Studies* 64, no. 7 (2012), 1247.
15 Swain, "Before National ," 1251.
16 Swain, "Before National," 1254.
17 Swain, "Before National," 1265.
18 Swain, "Before National," 1267.
19 Swain, "Before National," 1267.
20 Swain, "Before National," 1252.
21 John Rettie, "How Khrushchev Leaked His Secret Speech to the World," *History Workshop Journal* 62, no. 62 (2006): 187, https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbl018.

autonomy without independence from the Soviet Union.[22] Eduards Berklavs, first secretary of the Latvian Komsomol during the late 1940s and vice chairman of the Council of Ministers during the 1950s (equivalent to a deputy prime minister), together with some other Latvian Communist cadres, implemented a series of political, economic, and cultural reforms amounting to national and local protectionism. For example, during the mid-to-late 1950s, under the impetus of "National Communism," the Latvian SSR significantly increased Latvian language requirements for immigrants from other Soviet republics and limited immigration generally in the process.[23] Their success in the central committee led to ethnic Russians who had previously been deeply involved in Latvian SSR governance, such as Fillipp Kashnikov and Alexander Gorbatov, withdrawing from the top leadership of the Latvian SSR in 1958.[24] [25] [26]

Furthermore, the Latvian SSR was actively altering the economic blueprint dictated to them by Moscow for the development of heavy industry. As an alternative, they tried to develop light industries that introduced less pollution to Latvia's fragile coastal environment.[27] In terms of culture and education, they opposed "Thesis 19," an order imposed by Moscow in 1958 that nominally required students to voluntarily learn Russian but was tacitly an indirect attempt at Russification.[28] Through these measures, the LKP gained great support from Latvians, as they effectively rejected policies imposed by Moscow and protected the interests of Latvians. Nevertheless, these pro-nationalism and localism policies led to a counter-offensive by Moscow and Stalinist cadres within the LKP, which led to the political purges (1959-1962) that sealed Latvia's fate for the next 25 years as an administrative region of the USSR without any political and economic autonomy. After the death of Stalin, Khrushchev started to publicly oppose Stalinism, criticizing its Russian-centralized ethnic policies, which repressed political autonomy and cultural independence, resulting in deepened inter-ethnic tensions. Therefore, Krushev even encouraged the Latvian National Communists to take power and implement pro-Latvian policies.

However, he was also aware

22 William D Prigge, "Power, Popular Opinion, and the Latvian National Communists." Journal of Baltic Studies 45, no. 3 (2014), 306.
23 Michael Loader, "Restricting Russians: Language and Immigration Laws in Soviet Latvia, 1956–1959," *Nationalities Papers* 45, no. 6 (2017): 1087, https://doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2017.1335298.
24 Fillipp Kashnikov was the Second Secretary of the Latvian Communist Party.
25 Alexander Gorbatov was the Commander of the Baltic Military District.
26 Prigge, "Power," 307.
27 Swain, "Before National," 1241 .
28 Prigge, "Power," 314 .





that an increasing sense of Latvian rather than Soviet identity would undermine the unification of the USSR, which was the common goal for both conservative and reforming leaders in Moscow.[29] As a result of Moscow's fear of Soviet citizens embracing national identities, by 1962, Latvian "National Communists" from the Politburo all the way down to local grass-roots party organizations had been demoted or dismissed.[30] Over the next three decades, the LKP lost all the gains from its brief moment of autonomy, becoming once again just the Latvian branch of the CPSU. Arvids Pelse, a Stalinist, replaced the previous first secretary Janis Kalnberzins, who had been 'unwary' of "bourgeois nationalism."[31] Under Pelse and his successors, the Latvian SSR bureaucracy dutifully carried out Moscow's orders for the further development of heavy and military industries, as well as further Russification in culture and language.[32] Riga, Latvia's capital, was the headquarters of the Baltic Military District, so a series of defence developments were necessary. Latvian citizens ultimately bore the cost of the garrison and suffered from the environmental pollution of its military infrastructure.

For example, the famous military maneuver, Zapad-81, was held in the Baltic republics and their waters.[33] The loss of cultural and language rights was also significant. Pelse's successor, Augusts Voss (first secretary of the LKP from 1966 to 1984), spoke Latvian privately yet never did so publicly to demonstrate his loyalty to Moscow. Meanwhile, his successor, Boris Pugo, was not even fluent in Latvian.[34] What remained of the Latvian Communists, as in 1940, merely served as instruments to convey and carry out Moscow's orders without recognizing and accounting for the needs and opinions of Latvians. The assimilation of Latvians failed.

In contrast, during the mid-to-late 1980s, Gorbachev commenced a series of political and economic reforms to pursue democracy and development. As Moscow gradually released their control of ideology, Latvian national culture and identity were raised again and Latvians gradually pursued independence. An act of significance was the

29 Prigge, "Power," 316.
30 Michael Loader, "The Death of 'Socialism with a Latvian Face': The Purge of the Latvian National Communists, July 1959-1962," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 48, no. 2 (2017): 177, https://doi.org/10.1080/01629778.2016.1244771.
31 Loader, "Death of Socialism," 164.
32 Michaliszyn, Monika, "Działalność i Upadek Łotewskich Narodowych Komunistów," *Studia Polityczne*, no. 28 (2011): 190, https://www-ceeol-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/search/article-detail?id=45261.
33 "'October 30, 1981' (ZAPAD - 81 and SOYUZ - 81)," *World Affairs (Washington)* 144, no. 4 (1982): 442, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20671919.
34 Sprūde Viesturs, "Latviešu komunisti veicināja tautas pārkrievošanu," *Latvijas Avīze*, 2004, http://lpra.vip.lv/parkrievosh.htm.

establishment of the Latvian Popular Front (LPF), which consisted of Latvian intellectuals, applied Latvian nationalism and successfully got backing from Latvians, including both elites and civilians. In 1990, this led to the overwhelming defeat of the Moscow-subservient, top-down LKP by the bottom-up politics of the Latvian Popular Front in the first democratic elections in 1990 after Gorbachev's *perestroika* reforms.[35] The reason for this is that the LPF included many liberal public intellectuals who advocated for a series of reforms in the interests of Latvians, such as the restoration of the Latvian language and traditional culture, political democratization and economic marketization.[36] The populace had come to view the LKP as the imperial spokesperson of Moscow in Latvia rather than the representative of the vast majority of Latvians, so they used the elections and the 1991 resistance to reject the communist regime after its decades of failure.

**The Challenges and Responses of the Estonian Communist Party**

When the Soviet Union annexed Estonia, they pursued similar Sovietization policies to those in Latvia, resulting in a ruling party and political system with little autonomy from Moscow. The Estonian Communist Party (EKP) was illegal in the pre-war Republic of Estonia, and members deemed insufficiently "pro-Soviet" were purged, leaving the party with insufficient members to play a significant role in governance.[37] Stalin placed Andrei Zhdanov as Estonia's "pro-consul," along with a considerable number of ethnic Russians.[38] Throughout the 1940s, the general situation in Estonia was similar to that in Latvia; the Soviets nationalized business enterprises and collectivized the countryside. Unlike Latvia which was more industrialized at the time, Estonia's agriculture played an important role in its economic development.Therefore, the collectivization of agriculture and the Sovietization of rural populations was more critical.

An interesting example is the Sovietization of the "Community Houses" in rural Estonia that originally hosted public entertainment and cultural activities for rural communities. When the Soviet Union annexed Estonia, Moscow either closed these Community Houses or requisitioned them and turned them into venues for communist

35 Rein Taagepera "The Baltic States," *Electoral Studies* 9, no. 4 (1990): 309, https://escholarship.org/content/qt6s22w6sr/qt6s22w6sr_noSplash_3fa8ee6d8bf142ef285bfb736e038189.pdf..

36 Andrejs Penikis, "The Third Awakening Begins: The Birth of the Latvian Popular Front, June 1988 to August 1988," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 27, no. 4 (1996): 286, https://doi.org/10.1080/01629779600000111.

37 Kasekamp, *History of the Baltic*, 117.

38 Kasekamp, *History of the Baltic*, 116.



propaganda, often promoting new Soviet policies and Russian-dominated Socialist culture.[39]

Additionally, pre-war Estonia's education and cultural institutions were comparatively well developed, so the EKP needed to intervene intensively on the front of literature and art. Under Stalin, Estonian culture was critically characterized as "bourgeois decay culture" by Soviet officials, and as a result, the intellectuals and creatives associated with it were exiled to Siberia or expelled.[40] In terms of high-level personnel changes Nikolai Karotamm, the first secretary of the EKP since 1944, was also dismissed in 1950 for "bourgeois nationalist" tendencies due to his support for decentralization policies, like the attempted establishment of an Estonian security service under EKP control instead of KGB headquarters in Moscow.[41]

The "Khrushchev thaw" following Stalin's death also eased Estonia's constraints. However, the country's local communists did not adopt the LKP's fiercely nationalistic policies and thus avoided the political purges that Latvia suffered throughout 1959-1962. In Marxist Leninist theory, the working class is the main force behind the socialist revolution, and cultural elites were often more considered reactionary. While Estonia's industry was not as developed as Latvia's, its cultural and educational institutions were much more developed, owing to Estonia having more institutions of higher education with longer histories than those in Latvia.[42] For example, the University of Tartu, established in 1632, is one of the oldest universities in Eastern Europe.[43] Although the number of Estonian communists in the EKP was rising, they had not yet developed as "National Communists" with a systematic policy approach.

Nevertheless, some similar, more liberal policies have been implemented in Estonia. For example, local officials (and, eventually, Soviet leadership) noted the detrimental effects of Stalinist collectivization upon Estonian farming. From 1945 to 1955, agricultural production in Estonia was well below its average outputs between the two World Wars, but by the second half of the 1950s, as

39 Egge Kulbok-Lattik, "THE SOVIETIZATION OF ESTONIAN COMMUNITY HOUSES (RAHVAMAJA): SOVIET GUIDELINES," *Acta Historica Tallinnensia* 20, no. 1 (2014): 158, https://www-ceeol-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/search/article-detail?id=217121.

40 Egge Kulbok-Lattik, "EESTI KULTUURIPOLIITIKA AJALOOLISEST PERIODISEERIMISEST," *Acta Historica Tallinnensia*, no. 12 (2008): 137, https://www-ceeol-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/search/viewpdf?id=45762.

41 Olev Liivik, "Julgeolekuorganite ja kommunistliku partei koostöö luubi all – Rahvusarhiiv," *Rahvusarhiiv*, (2015): 135, https://www.ra.ee/ajakiri/julgeolekuorganite-ja-kommunistliku-partei-koostoo-luubi-all/.

42 Kasekamp, *History of the Baltic*, 47.

43 "University of Tartu: Home," *University of Tartu,* accessed November 21, 2022, https://ut.ee/en.

all collective farms in the Soviet Union were allowed to independently account for their income and expenses and tractors and fertilizers came into wider use, Estonia saw rapid agricultural growth.[44] At the same time, the EKP relaxed its control over freedom of expression with the permission of the CPSU, and some intellectuals began to look back on Estonia's interwar independence period in a slightly less negative light.

An example of this would be found in the case of Voldemar Miller, then in the Estonian SSR, who called in 1957 for a more in-depth and nuanced depiction of Estonia's "bourgeois period" rather than the 'broad brush' picture of earlier history books.[45] At the same time, however, he was determined that some contradictions within Soviet society should not be whitewashed or avoided.[46] In other respects, however, the EKP did not raise many objections to Soviet policy. For example, the EKP did not object to Khrushchev's "Thesis 19," and Estonia also did not strongly reject immigrants like Latvia did at this time. In the industrial sector, Khrushchev issued several strict, pro-industry goals to the Estonian SSR in 1959. Moscow asked Estonia to increase electronics production by a factor of five and cement by a factor of six while simultaneously having to develop a chemical industry. At the same time, the production of consumer goods was greatly reduced.[47] While in the short term, such a development strategy might produce better economic outcomes for the USSR, the Estonian population's material needs and physical health suffered in the long run.[48] This show of deference kept the EKP's political unrest from becoming apparent like that of Latvia.

The Communist Party of Lithuania resembles the EKP more than its Latvian counterparts. They lacked the latter's strong "National Communism" it was simply an arm of Moscow to implement all CPSU policies in this industrially deficient state. Like the other two Baltic communist parties, the Lithuanian Communists were also outlawed during the interwar period of independence.[49] In 1939, the Communist Party of Lithuania had 2,000 members, more

44 Martin Klesment, "Estonian Agricultural Production Data: An Interpretation through comparison/Eesti Pollumajandustoodangu Andmete Vordlusi Ja Tolgendusi," *Acta Historica Tallinnensia* 12, no. 1 (2008): 153. https://doi.org/10.3176/hist.2008.1.08.

45 Helen Lausma-Saar, "Torm veeklaasis. Kaks artiklit Eesti NSV marksistliku ajalookäsitluse asjus – Rahvusarhiiv," *Rahvusarhiiv*, 2015, 110, https://www.ra.ee/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Lausma_Saar_Helen_Torm_veeklaasis_2015_2.pdf.

46 Lausma-Saar, "Torm veeklaasis," 109.

47 Maie Pihlamägi. "Development of Industry in the Estonian SSR Under the Seven Year Plan (1959-1965) in the Context of the National Economic Council Reform," *Acta Historica Tallinnensia* 19, no. 1 (2013): 125, https://doi.org/10.3176/hist.2013.1.05.

48 Kasekamp, *History of the Baltic*, 143.

49 Marius Ėmužis, "The Social Portrait of the Most Active Communists and Their Supporters in the First Republic of Lithuania," *Lietuvos Istorijos Studijos* 43 (2019): 44, https://www.journals.vu.lt/lietuvos-istorijos-studijos/article/view/13787.





than the Communist Parties of Latvia and Estonia.[50] However, this number was not enough for the Soviet Union to establish a solid system of rule over a population of more than 2 million people.[51] To make matters more difficult for the Soviets was the primary force behind the Marxist revolution, the urban and light industrial rural working class, which numbered only 28,000 in Lithuania in 1939; the vast majority of the population lived and worked in the countryside, mainly in agriculture.[52] When the Soviet Union annexed Lithuania in 1940, farmers employed passive resistance by refusing to deliver grain to the state.[53] Consequently, agricultural production dropped from 123,851 tons in 1939 to 17,733 tons in 1940.[54]

In order to secure control of Lithuania, the Soviet Union adopted similar policies as in the other Baltic states—namely, nationalization of formerly independent enterprises, collectivization of agriculture, and population migration, though the outbreak of war with Germany in 1941 interrupted these policies. When the Red Army reoccupied Lithuania in 1944, Moscow found it difficult to govern; Lithuania had the most developed resistance movement between the three Baltic states because its broader agricultural areas contributed to the accommodation of partisans.[55] At the same time, few Lithuanians cooperated with the Soviet Union, even when offered leadership positions. Bogdan Kobulov, deputy people's commissar of the NKVD, complained that it was difficult to find even two to three capable Lithuanians to lead the NKVD's branch in the Lithuanian SSR in 1945.[56] After the war, the USSR used similar tactics to those employed in Latvia and Estonia to build up local party membership, but Lithuanian cadres were generally distrusted.[57] Antanas Snieckus, first secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party, understood this, so he followed Moscow's "direction" loyally. At the time, Justas Paleckis, president of the Lithuanian SSR Supreme Soviet, attempted to preserve some Lithuanian national characteristics, attempting to give limited recognition to the historical significance of independence in 1918 and to retain the Lithuanian flag and anthem from the interwar era. This, however, was

50 Alfred Erich Senn, *Lithuania 1940 Revolution from Above* (Amsterdam; Rodopi, 2007), 190.

51 Senn, *Lithuania*, 190.

52 Ugnė Marija Andrijauskaitė, "Inventing the Communist Party of Lithuania as a Labour Movement. Narratives in Soviet Historiography," *Lithuanian Historical Studies* 22, no. 1 (2018): 96, https://brill.com/downloadpdf/journals/lhs/22/1/article-p87_5.xml.

53 Senn, *Lithuania*, 248.

54 Senn, *Lithuania*, 248.

55 Kasekamp, *History of the Baltic*, 129.

56 Rasa Balockaite, "The Hidden Violence of Totalitarianism: Policing Soviet Society in Lithuania," *European History Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (2015): 219,

57 Kasekamp, *History of the Baltic*, 131

a failure, as Lithuania adopted a new national anthem in 1950 and a new flag in 1953.[58] After this, Snieckus and his successor, Petras Griskevicius, governed Lithuania until the latter's death in 1987. For three decades, they retained Moscow's trust by faithfully following its policy line, thus exempting the local party from political purges directed by Moscow. At the same time, they gained some agency.

For example, Snieckus, as the first secretary, gained the power to nominate candidates for essential leadership positions in the republic, though he only used this power to place loyal, politically conservative cadres in power around himself.[59] Another interesting distinction for the country in this period is that, unlike Latvia and Estonia, the Lithuanian SSR was not as heavily Russified under Soviet rule. Lithuanians made up 80% of the population in 1990, rather than falling to around 62% and 52%, respectively in Estonia and Latvia. However, this is because Lithuania is mainly agricultural, partly contributing to rural Lithuanians' high fertility rate and discouraging immigration.[60] Afterall, agriculture does not require as many skilled foreign workers as urban industry.[61] Regardless, this unique situation did not allow Lithuania's communists to survive Gorbachev's *perestroika.* In the 1990 Supreme Soviet elections, Sajudis, which sought independence like its Latvian and Estonian counterparts, easily won 91 of the 135 seats.[62]

**Conclusion**

Although each Baltic communist party's relationship with both the local citizenry and leaders in Moscow differed and changed over time, in the end, their subservience to Soviet directives would lead to the same results. In the half-century from 1940 to 1990, the Baltic communists returned to their homelands, but only with the help of the Soviet army and security services. They were undoubtedly luckier than their "comrades" who had failed in 1920, for they managed to hold on to power until the tide of democratization and liberalization swept through Central and Eastern Europe beginning in the mid-1980s. However, when the Baltic communists wanted to govern the three countries in a more national, indigenous, and flexible way, Moscow was always wary of their "nationalism" and suppressed it. In this case, the communist parties in the three countries, although ethnically nationalized, derived their power from Moscow rather than the approval of their own people. As a result, they all carried out policies directed by Moscow that oppressed their people, such as the "militarization" of the country (especially in Latvia), the "Sovietization" of culture, and the "Russification" of language education.

Moreover, directives from Moscow aimed to benefit the USSR, and development in the Baltics did not consider local conditions its largest and most powerful successor state, the Russian Federation, or benefit Baltic citizens. Due to these realities, by the 1980s, when Gorbachev's *glasnost* and *perestroika* began, few Latvians, Estonians, or Lithuanians chose to support the communist parties they associated with Soviet imperialism. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, its largest and most powerful successor state, the Russian Federation, abandoned communism as its official ideology. Nevertheless, Russia continues to use the former Soviet states as its sphere of influence. It uses Soviet history and territory as a means to provide legitimacy for intervention in neighbouring countries. For both ideological and geopolitical considerations, the Baltic states still view the Soviet Union's instrument of domination over the Baltic states, the Communist Party and its ideology, as illegitimate.

58 Vladas Sirutavičius, "Between National and Indigenous Communism. Some Broad Brushtrokes in the Political Biography of Justas Paleckis: 1944–1953," *Lithuanian Historical Studies* 23, no. 1 (2019): 113, https://doi.org/10.30965/25386565-02301004.

59 This close, loyal cadre was not only built during 'official' work hours, but also through networking and leisure activities outside office, a norm continuing under Griskevicius where his hunting club was the primary venue. Saulius Grybkauskas, "The Hunting Club of Petras Griškevičius and the Consolidation of the Lithuanian Nomenklatura," *Lithuanian Historical Studies* 18, no. 1 (2013), 146, https://doi.org/10.30965/25386565-01801005; Marius Ėmužis, "ANTANO SNIEČKAUS SOVIETINIO PARTINIO ELITO KLANO FORMAVIMASIS 1956– 1974 METAIS," *Lietuvos Istorijos Studijos*, no. 30 (2012): 139, https://www.zurnalai.vu.lt/lietuvos-istorijos-studijos/article/download/7429/28802/.

60 Algirdas Stanaitis, *Soviet Lithuania population* (Vilnus, Lithuania: Mintis, 1979), 73.

61 Stanaitis, *Soviet Lithuania*, 73.

62 Taagepera, "Baltic States,"305.

Photo: Soviet troops marching into Tallinn, Estonia, in 1940. (Credit: Unknown)

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Photo: Two million people from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania formed a human chain from Pikk Hermann in Tallinn, Estonia, to Gediminas' Tower in Vilnius, Lithuania, in protest agaisnt the illegal Soviet occupation on August 23 ,1989.
(Credit: Jaan Künnap)

# US Hegemony in the Caribbean: The Grenada Chapter

By Charran Auguste

This article will focus on the invasion of the island of Grenada in 1983, which had the goal of removing a radical leftist regime and restoring law and order, to highlight an important development and feature of the international system relating to the Caribbean region. Namely, the existence and acceptance of the United States as the hegemon in the region was evident through the invasion, as other Caribbean island states, namely those that form the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, called for the assistance of the United States in order to achieve their desired outcome of restoring order in Grenada and ensuring security for the region at-large. These Caribbean countries, rather than relying on Britain with whom they shared a colonial legacy, sought integration through the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States but lacked the resources to act independently and consequently turned to the United States. While the United States accepted the request of these Caribbean nations, it had its own foreign policy agenda in the Cold War context, demonstrating that it was acting in its own interest as the major power in the Western Hemisphere.

**The Development of Grenada**

It is important to provide some temporal context to understand the events prior to the situation in Grenada, as well as the Caribbean's place in the international system and its relationship to major powers. In the latter half of the twentieth century, especially from the 1960s to the early 1980s, there was a wave of decolonization and independence for some of the former British colonies. Overall, Britain was supportive of these movements and did not hinder independence for various reasons.[1]

Importantly, Britain was not as concerned with its Caribbean possessions, as the former imperial power's domestic and foreign interests were more focused within the European community.[2] Moreover, in the period following the establishment of the United Nations, the international community's attitudes towards colonial possessions shifted to be considered reprehensible and anachronistic.[3] Even as the former territories of the British Empire joined the Commonwealth upon independence, which maintained the

1 Tony Thorndike, "The Future of the British Caribbean Dependencies," *Latin American Politics and Society* 31, no. 3 (1989): 118, https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.2307/165895.
2 Thorndike, *The Future of the British*, 118.
3 Thorndike, *The Future of the British*, 118.



link to Britain, there was a weakened presence of the British in the region, so there was a need for adjustment among the Caribbean States. In 1981, four of these independent countries, namely Grenada, Dominica, St. Vincent, and St. Lucia, joined together with the non-independent islands of Antigua, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Montserrat to form the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).[4] The independent countries of the organization shared in common that they had been Associated States prior to gaining full independence from Britain because they were at first considered too small for long-term viability.[5] Associated Statehood provided these states with limited sovereignty over internal affairs. At the same time, Britain was responsible for defence and foreign relations, so consequently, it was not until these arrangements ended in the 1970s and early 1980s that the newly independent Caribbean states were forced to reconcile with their vulnerabilities as small islands and had to determine their place in the international community.[6] Notably, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States arose out of the recognition among some Eastern Caribbean countries that integration would be conducive to survival and regional stability, and they sought to become more integrated in matters pertaining to the economy, foreign policy, and mutual defence and security.[7]

However, the continued vulnerabilities of the region to outside influence would again become evident with the situation in Grenada. Grenada had achieved independence from the British in 1974 under the leadership of Eric Gairy. It chose to remain in the Commonwealth like other Caribbean countries. However, the country soon faced a significant shift in its domestic political situation that would eventually have regional and international ramifications. Gairy became increasingly authoritarian as he suppressed dissent and had his opponents jailed. In 1979, the Marxist-Leninist New Jewel Movement led by Maurice Bishop orchestrated a coup against Gairy's government and took power, declaring a People's Revolutionary Government.[8] The People's Revolutionary Government was recognized by other states and made some progress in the country in

4 Patsy Lewis, "Revisiting the Grenada Invasion: The OECS' Role, and its Impact on Regional and International Politics," *Social and Economic Studies* 48, no. 3 (1999): 90, https://www.jstor.org/stable/27865150.
5 Lewis, "Revisiting the Grenada Invasion," 90.
6 Shery Alexander, "OECS - the Grenada Experience and Beyond," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 2, no. 2 (1998): 34, https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1080/09557578808400016.
7 D. Brent Hardt, "Grenada Reconsidered," *The Fletcher Forum* 11, no. 2 (1987): 296, https://www.jstor.org/stable/45331266.
8 David MacMichael, "Grenada: U.S. Invasion, 1983," In *Encyclopedia of Conflicts Since World War II,* edited by James Ciment (New York: Routledge, 2007, 421-422, https://books-scholarsportal-info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/uri/ebooks/ebooks6/taylorandfrancis6/2020-08-19/3/9781315704777.

areas such as education, employment, and health care, including the arrival of medical professionals from Cuba.[9] Bishop represented the more moderate faction within the political party. There was a more Soviet 'hard-line' faction, led by Deputy Prime Minister Coard, that was dissatisfied with the pace of regime transformation in Grenada. So, Bishop was eventually placed under house arrest after refusing to cooperate.[10]

On October 19, 1983, a crowd of thousands of Bishop supporters freed him from his house. Bishop led his followers to Fort Rupert, where the tensions escalated, resulting in the execution of Bishop and the killing of his peers and civilians by the Coard-led faction.[11] The hard-line faction formed a Revolutionary Military Council and announced an all-day and all-night curfew, where anyone violating it would be shot on sight.[12] The other OECS countries, along with Barbados and Jamaica, met in Barbados on October 21 and decided that collective action was needed to restore order and security in Grenada.[13] The United States soon agreed to support a military response to Grenada, and Operation Urgent Fury began on October 25. Throughout the operation, six thousand American troops had landed in Grenada. By October 28, the troops secured the island and put in place an interim government headed by the island's governor-general until proper elections could be held.[14]



**Regional and International Dynamics Surrounding Grenada**

This article primarily seeks to bring clarity in understanding the regional and international reactions to the events that transpired in Grenada and why the OECS, along with Barbados and Jamaica, requested the assistance of the United States to intervene.

Firstly, the Eastern Caribbean nations had been unsettled by the initial coup carried out by Bishop's NJM as it was the first to take place in the British Caribbean since independence, but they still chose to recognize the new Grenadian government even while the relationship had its challenges due to differences in political ideology.[15] The events of October 1983, in which Bishop was ousted and eventually killed, being replaced by the more radical Revolutionary Military Council, evoked a reaction from the other Eastern Caribbean islands

9 MacMichael, "Grenada," 423.
10 Gary Williams, "The Tail that Wagged the Dog: The Organization of Eastern Caribbean States' Role in the 1983 Intervention in Grenada," *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies,* no. 61 (1996): 97, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25675714.
11 Williams, "The Tail that Wagged," 98.
12 Williams, "The Tail that Wagged," 99.
13 Williams, "The Tail that Wagged," 100.
14 Williams, "The Tail that Wagged," 106.
15 Hardt, "Grenada Reconsidered," 98.



who were dismayed and condemned the situation, becoming involved in seeking to remedy the disorder resulting from the power struggle in Grenada.[16] The Prime Minister of Dominica at the time, Eugenia Charles, highlighted the relevance of the situation to the rest of the region by saying, "We, as part of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, realizing that we are, of course, one region, and we belong to each other, are kith and kin."[17] The Eastern Caribbean islands were close not only geographically, but they shared a common history and culture that connected them, and they had sought to be integrated through the OECS.[18] So, while Maurice Bishop's leftist movement had been incompatible with some of the more conservative governments of the time, he was considered tolerable, but the Military Revolutionary Council, with its more radical policies, unpredictability, and extreme use of force was seen as unacceptable and as a threat to regional security.[19]

A modestly sized group of men had successfully executed the 1979 coup, and more political turmoil ensued only a few years later, revealing some of the vulnerabilities of the small Caribbean islands to political instability, so there were also fears that the other islands would be susceptible to similar leftist revolutions.[20] Accordingly, they decided that military action would be imperative to restore order in Grenada, to protect civilians on the island who were now at risk, and to ensure regional security. While the Eastern Caribbean leaders were decisive and in agreement, their ability to act on their own accord was hindered due to a lack of resources. In terms of military capabilities, the OECS countries, except Antigua, only had police forces or modest defence forces that had the purpose of dealing with internal matters, while the Soviets had equipped the army in Grenada.[21] In fact, during the invasion of Grenada, the military forces supplied by the Caribbean accounted for approximately only 300 people and functioned in more of a support role to the operation.[22] So, it was evident that in order for military action to be taken, the Caribbean states would need the assistance of a greater power in the international system.

Importantly, a crucial element to consider is that OECS states, which had a long historical connection with Britain through colonial history, Associated Statehood, and continued

16 Williams, "The Tail that Wagged," 99.
17 Williams, "The Tail that Wagged," 99.
18 Williams, "The Tail that Wagged," 99.
19 Williams, "The Tail that Wagged," 99.
20 Hardt, "Grenada Reconsidered," 295.
21 Alexander, "OECS," 34; Lewis, "Revisiting the Grenada Invasion," 102.
22 Lewis, "Revisiting the Grenada Invasion," 96.

membership in the Commonwealth, did not get the assistance of Britain to intervene in Grenada. These Caribbean states had depended on Britain in the security realm, but as the relationship between Britain and its former colonial possessions shifted after independence, there was a security gap to be re-evaluated and filled.[23] Britain was being informed of the situation transpiring in Grenada through its Deputy High Commissioner in Barbados, and the OECS had intended to have Britain play a primary role in carrying out the intervention.[24] However, even while Britain appeared to be supportive of the idea of intervening, they could not deliver within the timescale that the OECS had envisioned.[25] Ultimately, there was covertness in Washington's decision-making process. Britain had been excluded, with the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee Report determining that "it was not the intention of the United States Government that the United Kingdom should be actively involved in the military intervention in Grenada, and that the timing, nature and extent of the information provided by the United States were consistent with this position."[26] The British Prime Minister at the time, Margaret Thatcher, publicly expressed disapproval of the intervention.

Meanwhile, in the Eastern Caribbean, there was a sense that Britain had further neglected the region and that the former colonial power could not continue to protect its interests.[27] In response to Thatcher's disapproval, the American Secretary of State said on behalf of his country, "we responded to the urgent request of the states in the area… they're no longer British colonies… The Caribbean is in our neighbourhood."[28] This event is an important indicator of the Caribbean's security dependence shifting from Britain to the United States, which had taken on the role of the hegemon in the region and the Western Hemisphere at large, as Britain was both unwilling and unable to act on behalf of the Caribbean. The OECS had successfully called on the United States to engage in efforts to restore order in Grenada. However, there While the United States was able to recognize that the Caribbean region's democracies felt threatened, it was a matter of coincidence that the interests of the OECS countries were aligned with the United States in a way that allowed them to benefit from American concern and military power.

Furthermore, by observing

23 Lewis, "Revisiting the Grenada Invasion," 103.
24 Williams, "The Tail that Wagged," 102.
25 Williams, "The Tail that Wagged," 102.
26 Williams, "The Tail that Wagged," 102.
27 Williams, "The Tail that Wagged," 102.
28 Lewis, "Revisiting the Grenada Invasion," 115.





the United States' foreign policy attitudes towards the Eastern Caribbean after the intervention, it becomes evident that the Americans did not intend to act at the behest of the small islands. Namely, while Grenada received financial support from the United States, the other islands felt economically neglected by the major power. They did not receive the investments that they thought would be necessary to ensure prosperity and that would protect them from the kind of political vulnerabilities experienced by Grenada.[29] Thus, it cannot be said that the Eastern Caribbean countries were in a position to pressure the Americans to act in favour of the OECS, as American participation in Grenada depended on the United States deciding in its own self-interest to assert its hegemony by intervening.

**Conclusion**

The 1983 invasion of Grenada by the United States and the other OECS countries served to demonstrate the assertion and acceptance of American hegemony in the region. The bloodshed in Grenada in the wake of conflict within the People's Revolutionary Government threatened Grenada and the surrounding islands of the Eastern Caribbean, who also feared further threats to regional security. The events leading up to the intervention, all taking place in the context of the Cold War era, highlighted the fact that the Caribbean's dependence was shifting away from Britain, with whom some of the islands had shared a long colonial history, and towards the United States. The newly independent countries of the OECS, who had sought integration through this organization upon recognizing their vulnerabilities as small islands, did not have the military capabilities to deal with the situation in Grenada effectively without the assistance of a major power. Although these Caribbean countries maintained a relationship with Britain through the Commonwealth, the British, who had become more disengaged, were unable and unwilling to act in favour of the islands, leaving a security gap which the United States was able to fill by leading Operation Urgent Fury.

Moreover, the Grenada situation further demonstrated the existence of a self-interested United States that was able to protect its citizens on the island. However, it was more importantly able to forward its own Cold War objectives of removing communist threats from its sphere of influence in the Western Hemisphere. Further, despite Grenada's small size, the United States was able to signal to the international community its unceasing power and its willingness to use military force for its foreign policy goals, especially in consideration of the previous American shortcomings

29 Williams, "The Tail that Wagged," 107.

in Vietnam. Ultimately, it was revealed that OECS countries, even while having distinct national interests, existed within a hierarchy dominated by the United States that only considered the Caribbean in its own strategic terms.






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Photo: US soldiers threaten three suspected members of the People's Revolutionary Army at gunpoint in St. George's, Grenada during the American Grenada Invasion (Credit: Bettmann Archive)

# The US Occupation of Haiti and the Rise of the Pan-African Movement

By Tourang Movahedi

The United States of America (US) invaded Haiti in 1915 and effectively colonized and racialized the oldest independent state in the Caribbean. While the federal government authorized military occupation under the pretence of maintaining law and order,[1] ironically, extreme racism and violence characterized the occupation.[2] The following article argues that the American occupation of Haiti resulted in the rise of anti-occupation and Pan-African movements within Haiti and the US. This article builds on the literature focusing on influential Pan-African leaders such as Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. Du Bois. It highlights how understudied groups in Haiti and the US also promoted Pan-Africanism through their anti-occupation activities. This article will first contextualize the motivation and reasoning behind the US invasion. Then, this article will analyze how the Haitian elite, intellectuals and media responded to the US occupation's overt racism. Finally, this article will acknowledge opposing arguments regarding this topic before examining how movements in the US also espoused Pan-Africanism during the occupation.

## The Haitian Response to the American Invasion

Following a century of independence from France, starting in 1904, Haiti underwent a politically turbulent period leading up to the occupation.[3] This period culminated in the brutal murder and public execution of Haitian President Guillaume Sam in July 1915.[4] Following this incident, President Woodrow Wilson ordered Marines to invade Haiti under the pretext of humanitarian intervention.[5] In reality, the US had organized a plan to invade Haiti as early as 1914. Influenced by Manifest Destiny and notions of moral and racial superiority,[6] key members of Wilson's cabinet defended the occupation since they believed the Haitians had shown "complete political incompetence."[7]

1 Brenda Gayle Plummer, "The Afro - American Response to the Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934," *Phylon (1960-)* 43, no. 2 (1982), 125. https://doi.org/10.2307/274462.
2 Robert Fatton, *The Guise of Exceptionalism: Unmasking The National Narratives of Haiti and the United States* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2021), 49.
3 Suzy Castor, "The American Occupation of Haiti (1915-34) and the Dominican Republic (1916-24)," *The Massachusetts Review* 15, no. 1/2 (1974), 254.
4 Castor, "The American Occupation," 254.
5 Brandon R. Byrd, "'To Start Something to Help These People': African American Women and the Occupation of Haiti, 1915–1934," *Journal of Haitian Studies* 21, no. 2 (2015), 154, https://doi.org/10.1353/jhs.2016.0012.
6 Byrd, "'To Start Something," 154.
7 Raphael Dalleo, *American Imperialism's Undead: The Occupation of Haiti and the Rise of Caribbean Anticolonialism* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016), 10.





For Assistant Secretary of State William Phillips, US violence was necessary given "the failure of an inferior people to maintain the degree of civilization left by the French."[8] Thus, US imperialism and white supremacy were the key themes of the occupation.

During the occupation, US racial prejudice and violence alienated the Haitian ruling elite, thus encouraging them to promote Pan-African resistance. Prior to the occupation, the mulatto Haitian elites took pride in their identification with French culture and were condescending of the black culture of non-elite Haitians.[9] Subsequently, the Haitian elites welcomed American intervention as they "shared some of the paternalistic and racist ideology of their American overlords" and believed Haitians were not prepared for self-government.[10] However, support for the occupation soon diminished as America's ruthless racial discrimination became evident.[11] The most significant point of contention between the Haitian elite and the US was the institution of Jim Crow Segregation laws in Haiti.[12] In general, American Marines viewed the Haitian elite and peasantry as equally uncivilized and subsequently inflicted harm and abuse indiscriminately.[13] For example, in 1917, one commander stated, "No matter how much veneer and polish a Haitian may have, he is absolutely savage."[14] Their racism was clear through their racial segregation policies, which meant that American clubs and neighbourhoods were closed off to all Haitians, even the elite Haitian owners.[15]

Given that many ruling Haitian elites had cherished their French values and traditions, unmitigated American racism undermined their colonial identity as US Marines humiliated them.[16] Throughout the occupation, American racism unintentionally resulted in the majority of the Haitian elites espousing a Pan-African resistance to the occupation in solidarity with other Haitians.[17] For example, the Haitian elite retaliated against US segregation by banning all Americans from their

8 Fatton, *The Guise of Exceptionalism*, 49.
9 Fatton, *The Guise of Exceptionalism*, 53.
10 Fatton, *The Guise of Exceptionalism*, 54.
11 Hans Schmidt, "Racial and Cultural Tensions," in *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915-1934* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 149.
12 Schmidt, "Racial and Cultural Tensions," 137.
13 Schmidt, "Racial and Cultural Tensions," 146.
14 Schmidt, "Racial and Cultural Tensions," 146.
15 Schmidt, "Racial and Cultural Tensions," 137.
16 G. R. Coulthard, "The French West Indian Background of 'Négritude,'" *Caribbean Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (December 1961), 131.
17 Fatton, *The Guise of Exceptionalism*, 54.

social events.[18] Thus, the ruling Haitian elite were forced to build a new sense of nationhood and identity that was no longer centred on the significance of colour.[19]

### Pan-Africanism Through Intellectuals and Media

Similarly, the imperial and racist ideologies that exemplified the US occupation also humiliated the Haitian intelligentsia. Haitian intellectuals of the 20th century followed French literary ideals as their cultural link with France had not broken following the Haitian revolution.[20] However, high-ranking American officials and American scientific literature supported the idea that Haitians were inferior to White Americans.[21] This is exemplified by statements from Senator Shipstead, who, during a congressional hearing, stated that Haitians "know they are of inferior race" and that they "can not compete with the white man."[22] Similarly, Lothrop Stoddard, an American historian, argued in 1921 that a Haitian "reverts back to his ancestral ways" without the guidance of white people.[23] Statements such as these were numerous and consequently humiliated and insulted educated Haitians with French literary ideals and culture.[24] Therefore, given that "faith in the French ways of doing things" had failed in the face of American occupation,[25] the Haitian intelligentsia rejected their once respected yet racist colonial identification with French culture.[26]

Haitian intellectuals began opposing Western academic literature and narratives of Haiti by championing Pan-Africanism.[27] Leading this new "Négritude" movement was Jean Price-Mars and his seminal work, *Ainsi Parla l'Oncle,* in 1928.[28] Price-Mars sought to emphasize Haiti's African cultural origins, which had long been neglected by the Haitian elite and intelligentsia.[29] By doing so, Price-Mars promoted Haitian national unity via Pan-Africanism. He did so by critiquing the Haitian elite for their colonial mindset and calling on all Haitians

18 Schmidt, "Racial and Cultural Tensions," 142.
19 Fatton, *The Guise of Exceptionalism*, 54.
20 Coulthard, "The French West," 131.
21 Schmidt, "Racial and Cultural Tensions," 142.
22 U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Conditions in Haiti. Congressional Hearing 1928*
23 Schmidt, "Racial and Cultural Tensions," 142.
24 Coulthard, "The French West," 131.
25 Coulthard, "The French West," 133.
26 Gérarde Magloire-Danton, "Antenor Firmin and Jean Price-Mars: Revolution, Memory, Humanism," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 9, no. 2 (September 18, 2005), 162, https://doi.org/10.1215/-9-2-150.
27 Fatton, *The Guise of Exceptionalism*, 54.
28 Imani D. Owens, "Beyond Authenticity: The US Occupation of Haiti and the Politics of Folk Culture," *Journal of Haitian Studies* 21, no. 2 (2015), 351.
29 Magloire-Danton, "Antenor Firmin," 164.





to "no longer scorn our ancestral heritage. Let us love it, let us consider it an intangible whole."[30] This new identity was distinctly anti-imperialist and anti-colonial as it opposed the US narrative, which identified Haitian culture as uncivilized.[31] Price-Mars's political activity would manifest itself in the 1929 student strike in Damien by more than 2000 students.[32] This strike would soon transform into a cross-class national protest against the US occupation and even received support from Pan-African groups from the US.[33] Thus, American racial and cultural antagonism resulted in the Haitian intelligentsia promoting Pan-Africanism and opposing white supremacist narratives of Haiti.

Furthermore, the US occupation resulted in the Haitian press contesting US imperialism by supporting Pan-African and "Négritude" ideologies. Throughout the occupation, the portrayal of Haiti by the American press was racist and imperialist.[34] For example, one American newspaper report of Haiti stated, "Words can convey no idea of their primitive wretchedness."[35] Similarly, during the occupation, many pseudo-ethnographic narratives were written about Haiti by US Marines, such as *The Magic Island* and *Cannibal Cousins*.[36] Hence, the White American media empathized the "primitiveness" of Haitians, the necessity of the occupation and the moral superiority of the Americans.[37]

Recognizing the imperialistic nature of the US press regarding Haiti, Haitian newspapers such as *Le Nowelliste* and *Le Matin* published the writings and speeches of Pan-African intelligentsia despite the threats of censorship by the Marines.[38] These speeches sought to unite Haitians under African cultural heritage and promoted Haiti's African nationalist movement to an international audience.[39] For example, Roberts highlights how the *Le Nowelliste* started publishing its major headlines such as "Right or wrong, our Haiti first… We are a nation since 1804… Why treat us as a colony?" in both English and French.[40] This demonstrates how the Haitian media sought support from African-

30 Shearon Roberts, "Then and Now: Haitian Journalism as Resistance to US Occupation and US-Led Reconstruction," *Journal of Haitian Studies* 21, no. 2 (2015), 249, https://doi.org/10.1353/jhs.2016.0004.
31 Imani Owens, "Beyond Authenticity: The US Occupation of Haiti and the Politics of Folk Culture," 364.
32 "More U.S. Marines Sent To Haiti: Students Strike, Editors Jailed as Patriots Protest," *Afro-American (1893-),* 1929.
33 Matthew J. Smith, "Capture Land: Jamaica, Haiti, and the United States Occupation," *Journal of Haitian Studies* 21, no. 2 (2015), 196.
34 Roberts, "Then and Now," 248.
35 C. Brown, "Little Haiti and Her People," *Afro-American (1893),* April 8, 1916.
36 Owens, "Beyond Authenticity: The US Occupation of Haiti and the Politics of Folk Culture," 353.
37 Brown, "Little Haiti and Her People," 1916.
38 Roberts, "Then and Now," 249.
39 Roberts, "Then and Now," 252.
40 Roberts, "Then and Now," 252.

American and West Indian audiences who opposed the US's occupation and imperialistic narrative. Likewise, in the 1920s, Price-Mars published various articles entitled *Le Messager du nord*, where he promoted his ideology of Pan-African unity in opposition to American imperialism to an English-speaking audience.[41] Therefore, US propaganda regarding the occupation resulted in the Haitian media uniting to challenge imperialistic narratives by promoting the works of Price-Mars and appealing to other Pan-African movements.

## The American Impact on Anti-Colonial and Pan-African Movements

Philippe Girard argues that reports of US racial violence against Haitians are inaccurate, and subsequently, their influence on promoting Pan-African movements was minimal. According to Girard, newspapers and magazines accusing the US government of enslaving, torturing, and killing were "wildly exaggerated."[42] Moreover, Girard argues that the colonialism employed by the US was "noticeably benign" compared to King Leopold's involvement in the Congo, which occurred during the same period.[43] Although there is some validity to Girard's argument regarding the relatively "benign" nature of American colonialism in Haiti, this argument ignores the multiple accurate reports of atrocities being committed by US Marines and the propaganda campaign promoted by the US government, which sought to mask these atrocities. Various documents and testimonies from US senate hearings prove that the indiscriminate violence by US Marines was a "comparatively ordinary routine" and that "killing of natives had gone on for some time."[44] Similarly, other scholars point out how investigators from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) visited Haiti and demonstrated that violence was the occupation's "most recognizable aspect."[45] Therefore, the notion that reports of violence were exaggerated is erroneous, given the plethora of primary and secondary sources that suggest otherwise.

Moreover, it is essential to note that the US government censored Haitian media in the early years of the occupation.[46] The censorship enabled American journalists to create an

41 Roberts,"Then and Now," 248.
42 Philippe R. Girard, "Benevolent Imperialism: Haiti during the First U.S. Occupation (1915–1934)," in *Paradise Lost: Haiti's Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (Basingstoke, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 83.
43 Girard, "Benevolent Imperialism: Haiti during the First U.S. Occupation (1915–1934)," 88-9.
44 Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915–1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 161-3.
45 Smith, "Capture Land," 188.
46 James Weldon Johnson, *Self-Determining Haiti*, New York, NY: Nation Associates, 1920, https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C439272.





imperialistic narrative in which Haiti was described as being uncivilized, thus justifying the violence of the occupation against "cannibals" and "savages."[47] However, following the student strike of 1929, the American "veil of secrecy" was finally lifted, revealing the true extent of US violence during the occupation.[48] Therefore, it was because of American racial violence and imperial narratives of Haiti that Prince-Mars and others in the Pan-African movement rose to provide an alternative narrative.[49]

US occupation promoted Black nationalistic movements in Haiti and Pan-African decolonial movements abroad. James Weldon Johnson, an Afro-American field secretary for the NAACP, investigated reports of Marines abusing Haitians during the outset of the occupation.[50] After five years of occupation, Johnson stated that approximately "three thousand Haitian men, women and children have been shot by American rifles and machine guns." [51] This report, which also confirmed the implementation of racial segregation, encouraged many Caribbean anti-colonial movements.[52] Dalleo highlights three West Indian activist networks, the African Blood Brotherhood, the American Negro Labor Congress and the International Trade Union, who echoed Johnsons' critique of the US government's racist occupation of Haiti.[53] These groups, whose leaders had ties with the Caribbean, used the occupation as an opportunity to unite African Americans against imperialism and became key proponents of the anti-colonialism movement in the West Indies. Witnessing the racial discrimination by Marines against Haitians, these groups believed that establishing a British West Indies Federation was the only way to prevent American domination and racial exploitation of Blacks in the Caribbean.[54] Thus, the atrocities committed by US Marines in Haiti also promoted anti-colonialism and Pan-Africanism by African-American groups such as the African Blood Brotherhood.[55]

Lastly, African-American women were also key proponents of anti-colonialism and Black nationalism throughout the US occupation of Haiti. From the outset, many African American women protested the US occupation of Haiti as they cared for the

47 Fatton, *The Guise of Exceptionalism*, 51.
48 Smith, "Capture Land," 197.
49 Roberts, "Then and Now," 248.
50 Byrd, "To Start Something," 154.
51 Johnson, *Self-Determining Haiti*, 1920.
52 Raphael Dalleo, "Regionalism, Imperialism, and Sovereignty: West Indies Federation and the Occupation of Haiti," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 24, no. 1 (March 2020), 64, https://doi.org/10.1215/07990537-8190577.
53 Dalleo, "Regionalism, Imperialism, and Sovereignty," 65.
54 Dalleo, "Regionalism, Imperialism, and Sovereignty," 67.
55 Dalleo, "Regionalism, Imperialism, and Sovereignty," 68.

welfare of Black people throughout the Caribbean.[56] Reports of Haitian abuse by the Marines from the NAACP and merchant seamen prompted Lillian Bermudez and Ana La Condre to critique the racial violence committed during the occupation.[57] Moreover, on an organizational level, women such as Layle Lane and Addie Hunton used their positions in the Empire State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs to publicly critique white supremacy and apply political pressure on the US government.[58] These women would also create the International Council of Women of the Darker Races (ICWDR), a coalition of women of colour who critiqued white supremacy in the US and the Caribbean.[59] The ICWDR was influenced by the works of Jean Price-Mars and was familiar with the racial discrimination of the US government. As a result, they quickly supported Price-Mars's Pan-African movement, advocated for the withdrawal of the US from Haiti and promoted Pan-Africanism throughout the US.[60] Thus, it is evident that on an individual and organizational level, Black women in the United States played a pivotal role in promoting Pan-Africanism through their support of the anti-occupation movement.

In conclusion, this article demonstrated how the racist and violent nature of the US occupation of Haiti galvanized anti-occupation resistance across the Caribbean and the US. These movements were championed by Haitian and American people and groups such as Price-Mars, the NAACP, and the ICWDR, united by their shared Pan-African ideology and opposition to US imperialism. The Pan-African movement persevered following the end of the occupation and had profound impacts on the future of politics in the Caribbean and the US.

56 Byrd, "To Start Something," 156.
57 Byrd, "To Start Something," 156.
58 Byrd, "To Start Something," 157.
59 Byrd, "To Start Something," 158.
60 Byrd, "To Start Something," 158.






"12000 MORE U. S. MARINES SENT TO HAITI: STUDENTS STRIKE, EDITORS JAILED AS PATRIOTS PROTEST." Afro-American (1893-), December 7, 1929. http://myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fhistorical-newspapers%2F12000-more-u-s-marines-sent-haiti%2Fdocview%2F530752460%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D14771.

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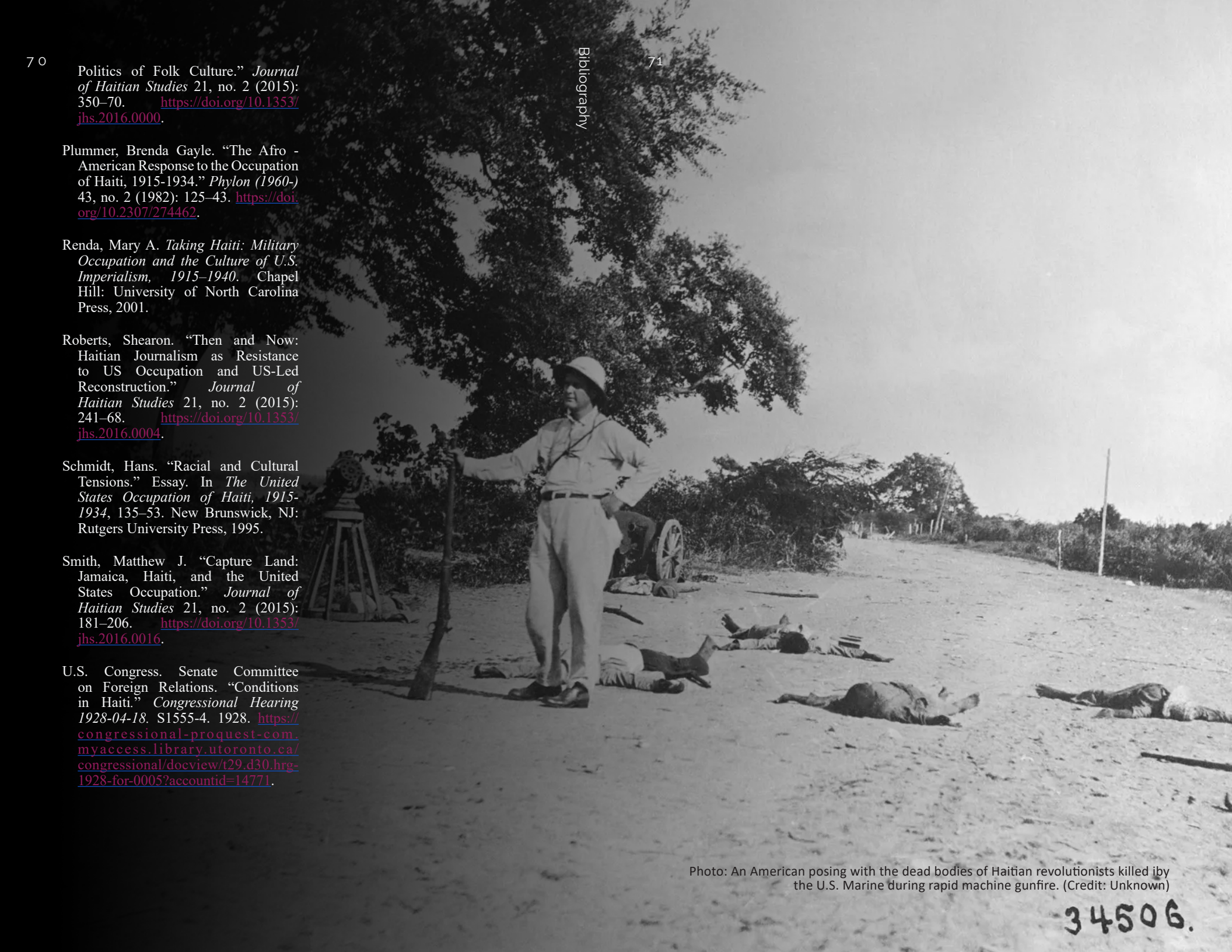


Photo: An American posing with the dead bodies of Haitian revolutionists killed iby the U.S. Marine during rapid machine gunfire. (Credit: Unknown)

# Beyond the Sea: Alfred Mahan's Influence on American Departure from Isolationism Within the Context of the Annexation of Hawaii

By Andy Liao

Alfred Mahan, an American naval captain and historian, has long been recognized for his contributions to the field of international relations, naval strategy, and grand strategy. From the late 19th century to the early 20th century, Mahan's works were widely circulated among the great naval powers, including Japan, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. His work captured the attention and respect of high-ranking officials, such as Kaiser Wilhelm II and President Theodore Roosevelt. Despite enmity between Japan and the United States during this period, the Japanese government invited Mahan to serve as their naval advisor.[1] Disregarding his celebrated status abroad, Mahan was primarily concerned with the welfare and security of the United States, and he exerted tremendous influence in dictating the terms by which the country transitioned from isolationism to active involvement in foreign affairs. This paper contends that Mahan's role as a publicist and activist intensified imperialist sentiment within American military and political discourse at the turn of the 20th century, accelerating the expansion of American foreign policy to reflect its growing interests in the East. This investigation will focus on Mahan's advocacy for developing sea power as the means for America to look outward and claim its new frontier in the Pacific. The paper first examines the historical context of Mahan's work and analyzes his general theory of sea power, geopolitics, and grand strategy. The article then applies Mahan's theory to the case of Hawaii to demonstrate the extent to which his ideas fomented American imperial ambitions.

**Historical Background**

The end of the 19th century saw the emergence of a globalized world that necessitated the erosion of American isolationism. First, the advancement in communication and transportation due to widespread industrialization led to a "shrinking world," where technologies such as the railroad, steam-powered ships, the printing press, and the telegraph facilitated the exchange of people and ideas.[2] This "shrinking world" in the second half of the 19th century corresponded with the explosion of world expositions, as countries

1 Morris Levy, "Alfred Thayer Mahan and United States Foreign Policy," Order No. 6509316, (New York: New York University: 1965), 34. https://www-proquest-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/docview/302190565?accountid= 14771&parentSessionId=nrTzQ0RxNHXeesopZ%2BMLykkQ0EqoCQqnogs2901lxuU%3D.

2 Colin Dueck, "The Sources of American Expansion," *Security Studies* 11, no. 1 (2001): 179. https://doi.org/10.1080/71400532.





were eager to display their culture and national progress to the world.[3] The 1893 Exposition in Chicago, for instance, provided the United States with the opportunity to celebrate its technological, scientific, and cultural advancements with the rest of the world. Extending from the doctrine of "Manifest Destiny," the United States sought the conference as an opportunity to demonstrate its ambition to expand beyond its domain of influence in the Americas.

At the conference, the United States "found itself swept into the vortex of world politics to a degree never known before," for the country developed an increasing economic and political interest in European affairs that facilitated its ascendence to becoming a prominent actor in international affairs.[4] The United States no longer wished to limit itself to the affairs within its traditional sphere of influence.

Imperial competition between the major European powers and Japan reached a global scale. Near the end of the 19th century, European powers competed in the Scramble for Africa. King Leopold of Belgium established control over Belgium in 1880, France conquered Tunis in 1881, and the British dominated Egypt in 1882.[5] The imperial competition spread to Asia, where the French ruled Indochina while Russia and Japan competed to control Manchuria. Alliances formed between the great European powers and the United States often found itself "taking sides on occasions, at least on an informal and emotional basis if not by formal treaties."[6] The economic motives under the Mercantilist system were to create markets for the extraction of raw materials and the sale of surplus goods, which engendered a novel form of imperialism grounded on the economic exploitation of the colonies. [7] This new form of imperialism facilitated greater economic and imperial competition among the great European powers. It facilitated conflict escalation, as illustrated by the elevated tension between the French and British during the Fashoda Crisis in 1898. Thus, the converging economic interests prescribed a multipolar, anarchic international order.

Third, the United States was increasingly connected to the emergence of a global economy. By the late 19th century, American industrialization created a wealthy elite class of "robber barons" who were eager to export and invest abroad.[8] This drive among the intellectuals for American expansion

3 Dueck, "The Sources of American Expansion," 179.
4 Levy, "Alfred Thayer Mahan," 8.
5 Levy, "Alfred Thayer Mahan," 10.
6 Levy, "Alfred Thayer Mahan," 11.
7 Walter LaFeber, "A Note on the 'Mercantilistic Imperialism' of Alfred Thayer Mahan, " *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 48, no. 4 (March 1962): 681. https://www-jstor-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/stable/1893148.
8 Levy, "Alfred Thayer Mahan," 17.

into foreign markets corresponded with the growth of the American export industry, which increased from $30 million in 1860 to $140 million by 1900.[9] However, the expansion in foreign investment was associated with a greater risk of non-compliance from the governments of "culturally and politically backward areas" that threatened entrenched American interests.[10] Since capitalism is predicated on expanding markets, the United States' participation in this system increasingly incentivizes the country to engage abroad where its economic interests are concerned. Ultimately, the country's aspiration for economic growth in an increasingly globalized economy justified and enabled the expansion of American economic activities abroad.

Yet, American public support for expansionism was limited and transitory, for domestic life took precedence over foreign affairs. After all, the American Dream was taking shape. Old diseases such as malaria, typhus, and cholera were vanishing, while improvements in farming, transportation, and food storage facilitated better eating by reducing food prices by "almost 50 percent in the last third of the century."[11] With industrialization, an increasing number of Americans were afforded the luxury of a stable job with a prosperous livelihood. Further, the mere absence of armed conflicts reflects an impression of a "Golden Age of Security."[12] Paradoxically, Mahan appealed to this sentiment of peace to challenge it, urging Americans to look beyond the mirage of security and into the power of the sea.

**Mahan's Ideologies**

Alfred Mahan held a realist view on international relations, contending that nations always act in accordance with their interests. To thrive, one must "do unto others before they do the same to you."[13] Mahan's realist perspective influenced/applied to American political and military discourse in three ways. First, Mahan opposed arbitration and the creation of international law. At the First Hague Conference, Mahan opposed compulsory arbitration, as he considered such a restriction to be the gravest threat to America's national interests and integrity.[14] In his view, the expansion of the American military will inevitably be limited by the creation of arbitration and law when international relations are, in reality, "based upon important and uncomposable differences of opinion."[15] Mahan's realism is often misinterpreted as pro-war sentiment. Yet, Mahan acknowledges the pacifists' view of

9 Levy, "Alfred Thayer Mahan," 17-18.
10 Levy, "Alfred Thayer Mahan," 15.
11 Margaret MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace: The Road to 1914* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2014): 14.
12 MacMillan, *The War That Ended,* 14.
13 Levy, "Alfred Thayer Mahan," 53.
14 Levy, "Alfred Thayer Mahan," 75.
15 Levy, "Alfred Thayer Mahan," 75-76.





war as "anything else but man's most ignoble and terrible folly" but contends that suffering can only be shortened and limited with the development of a superior military.[16] So long as evil and inequalities plague humanity, war is inevitable. Hence, force is the most important national policy instrument in an anarchic world order.

Second, Mahan's notion of sea power departs from the European system of imperialism. A core tenet of Mahan's doctrine of sea power is the protection of American commerce and manufacturing. Mahan contends that manufacturing serves as the end, as opposed to the means, when building a prosperous nation.[17] Manufacturing, as Mahan notes, sustains industries necessary to maintain the overall welfare of the nation, not just parts of it.[18] In evaluating the mercantilist system pursued by the European powers, he was concerned with the challenge of opening up foreign markets under European competition and the ethics and sustainability of such a form of economic imperialism. Instead, Mahan proposed the establishment of a world-class navy to uphold free trade paramount to sustaining American manufacturing and exports.[19] Therefore, imperialism should be carried out for the sole purpose of sustaining naval supremacy, serving a strategic base for fuelling, as opposed to an indefinite pursuit. In fact, over-expansion could be enervating due to the scattered interest that lacks a solid appeal to American needs. Thus, Mahan's conception of sea power linked the protection of American economic interests, particularly foreign investments, to imperial endeavours.

Third, Mahan's conception of political power concerns the expansion of the American navy's offensive capabilities, both as a fortification of American defence and as a bargaining chip vis-à-vis the European powers. Mahan was concerned about the country's vulnerable position relative to the imperial fervour that would inevitably spread into the Americas. The Venezuelan Crisis of 1895 provided a point of reference for Mahan, as he questioned the extent to which American espousal of the Monroe Doctrine could persist under foreign aggression when, in reality, the country had no force to substantiate its claims. However, the Monroe Doctrine constitutes a cornerstone of American foreign policy that must be defended under any circumstances, as it embodies American prestige and capability. Therefore, the crisis underscored Mahan's belief that a modern navy was "indispensable to a great nation if its external interests were to spread and be protected."[20] This

16 Levy, "Alfred Thayer Mahan," 104.
17 Alfred Thayer Mahan, "The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783" (Boston: Little Brown and Company, January 1890): 84.
18 Mahan, "The Influence of Sea Power," 83.
19 Mahan, "The Influence of Sea Power," 57-58.
20 Levy, "Alfred Thayer Mahan," 71.

capacity to assert external American interests constitutes the "single most effective weapon in the diplomatic arsenal of any major power," as it commands the force to dictate the dynamics of international politics if it so chooses.[21] Thus, as the expanding economic and political interests increasingly called for enlarging the navy as a protectorate, American foreign policy must also expand to match the footprint of its navy.

Mahan's doctrine of sea power illuminated the independence between the world's social, political, economic, and religious forces in the 19th century. He appealed to the intellectual classes as he sought to foster an imperial climate to gather the support necessary to realize American glory and power. The navy, therefore, constitutes the spearhead into complexities and competition among the world powers, a ticket to a seat at the negotiation table. During a time of ideological metamorphosis, Mahan served as an authoritative voice that divided the trends of American thought into its most fundamental form—power, as manifested by the command of the sea.

**Manifestation of Sea Power: The Annexation of Hawaii and Expansion of the American Foreign Policy**

The American expansion of influence over sea power corresponded with a series of naval reforms that modernized American fleets. In the 1890s, the American navy was weaker than Chile's.[22] During the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, the navy grew to become the third-largest in the world, behind those of Great Britain and Germany.[23] The prominent role of Alfred Mahan as an advisor and lobbyist influenced the course of the American transition to modernity, particularly in Hawaii.

The annexation of Hawaii was divisive among the American people and political elites, dividing imperialists and anti-imperialists. The push for the annexation of Hawaii was unsubstantiated and often lacked political support. President Grover Cleveland represented the prevailing sentiment of the anti-imperialists, who actively petitioned against the annexation of Hawaii. In 1893, Cleveland himself declared that the "United States shall, upon facts being presented to it, undo the action of its representatives and reinstate me in the authority which I claim as the Constitutional Sovereign of the Hawaiian Islands."[24] Cleveland firmly believed that the "Americans had unfairly victimized the Hawaiians."[25] Even when the Republican Party came

21 Levy, "Alfred Thayer Mahan," 71.
22 MacMillan, *The War That Ended,* 19.
23 MacMillan,*The War That Ended,* 20-21.
24 Keanu Sai, "The Illegal Overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom Government." *NEA*, March 2, 2018, www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/illegal-overthrow-hawaiian-kingdom-government.
25 Thomas G. Paterson, *American Foreign Relations* (Ohio: Wadsworth, 2014): 6.





into power under William McKinley in 1897, opposition to the annexation remained strong in Congress, as the annexation treaty had not been ratified in the Senate.[26] Theodore Roosevelt warned Mahan in a series of letters about the further "danger of Congress not backing up the President" in regard to Hawaii and urged Mahan to "exert his great influence… for the immediate annexation of Hawaii."[27] Roosevelt himself stated that he would persuade the senators to read Mahan's article "Hawaii and Our Future Sea Power," which, from Roosevelt's interpretation, considered the failure of annexation as "either [we] have lost, or else wholly lack, the masterful instinct which can alone make a race great."[28]

To Mahan, the annexation of Hawaii was significant for three reasons. First, the annexation of Hawaii would expand the American frontier into the Pacific, establishing a strategic stronghold that enables American control of the Pacific Ocean and provides a buffer against growing Japanese military threats. Second, the annexation of Hawaii would grant greater security protection to American shipping vessels, serving as a springboard to further American economic activities in Asia. Third, the annexation of Hawaii would indicate an extended influence of American expansionist sentiment over the anti-imperial sentiment among American policymakers, reflecting a political climate favouring and facilitating greater American involvement in international affairs.

Mahan published a series of works in the 1890s as a part of his effort to accelerate the effort on the annexation of Hawaii. In 1893, Mahan published a letter in the New York Times, which cited the growing threat of Japan as justification for annexing Hawaii before Japanese aggression.[29] In the letter, Mahan demanded the annexation of Hawaii "while we could righteously do so," as Hawaii "would be a menace in the hands of a maritime enemy."[30] Further, Mahan appealed to the militarists and bankers in urging that the "future of Hawaii would become a great natural focus for the routes of trade as well as a vital point in our strategic defence system."[31] Mahan also published "Hawaii and Our Future Sea Power" in the 1893 Forum journal, in which he invoked "Manifest Destiny" and contended that the annexation of Hawaii constituted a natural progression of America in its "divine mission."[32] In addition to his literary works, Mahan served as a policymaker on the Naval

26 Levy, "Alfred Thayer Mahan," 137-138.
27 Levy, 151.
28 Levy, 151.
29 Levy, "Alfred Thayer Mahan," 152.
30 Levy, 133.
31 Levy, 133.
32 Levy, 134.

board and actively engaged with members of Congress while residing in Washington.[33]

Strong evidence suggests that Mahan exerted considerable influence in cultivating an imperial outlook in the Congress. Both the House committee and Senate's reports aligned with suggestions from Mahan's publications. The Senate report, for instance, acknowledged that "the present Hawaiian-Japanese controversy is the preliminary skirmish in the great coming struggle between" the United States and Japan and that "the issue is whether… Asia or America shall have the vantage ground of the control of the naval 'Key of the Pacific,' the commercial Crossroads of the Pacific."[34] In all aspects, the Senate report echoes Mahan's publications on Hawaii. Further, Mahan's ideologies have been mentioned and quoted in Congressional debates. In letters exchanged with Mahan, Senator James H. Kyle stated that "many quotations had been made from his valuable and highly interesting writing" with regard to Hawaii, and he further inquired Mahan about the need to bolster the American navy to protect the Pacific states in the event of war.[35]

In 1898, the Congress passed the resolution to annex Hawaii with a two-thirds majority. As indicated by Senator Kyle, the American Congress became more receptive to naval reforms to accommodate for an increasingly expansionist foreign policy that persisted following American victory in the Spanish-American War.[36] The victory of the Spanish-American war further emboldened the country to pursue an ambitious and aggressive foreign policy, exemplified by the extensive American control over the Philippines island and the rest of the Americas.[37] While resistance remained prevalent, typified by the American anti-imperialist league, Mahan's influence on the annexation of Hawaii fundamentally shifted the discourse on American foreign policy from pure defence to offensive-defence. American foreign policy following the annexation of Hawaii falls under this latter framework, as the defence of American interests now extended beyond the confines of its borders. American foreign policy defended the political and economic interests of the United States in China, the Philippines, and the Americas with the Open-Door policy, the annexation of the Philippines, and the construction of the Panama Canal.

33 Levy, 152
34 Levy, 152.
35 Levy, "Alfred Thayer Mahan," 153.
36 Levy, 154.
37 Paterson, *American Foreign Relations*, 65.





**Conclusion**

At the turn of the 20th century, American isolationism was increasingly challenged by the forces of globalization. In this global context, the United States was undergoing an ideological metamorphosis and rapid economic growth. Alfred Mahan distilled these burgeoning thoughts into the conception of power, as achieved by the dominance of the sea. Through his connections to powerful statesmen and his influential status as an academic, Mahan instigated a fundamental shift in the American discourse from defence to offensive-defence following his successful lobbying for the annexation of Hawaii. After the annexation of Hawaii, Mahan's theory of sea power and his offensive-defence framework became the point of reference for evolving American foreign policy, which took on a more expansive role in Asia and Latin America. This transition signals the breakthrough in American diplomatic thinking that facilitated American ascendance to the world stage as a major power. Mahan believed in American preeminence from the beginning and directed the right set of course for the country heading into the 20th century when his vision was ultimately realized.

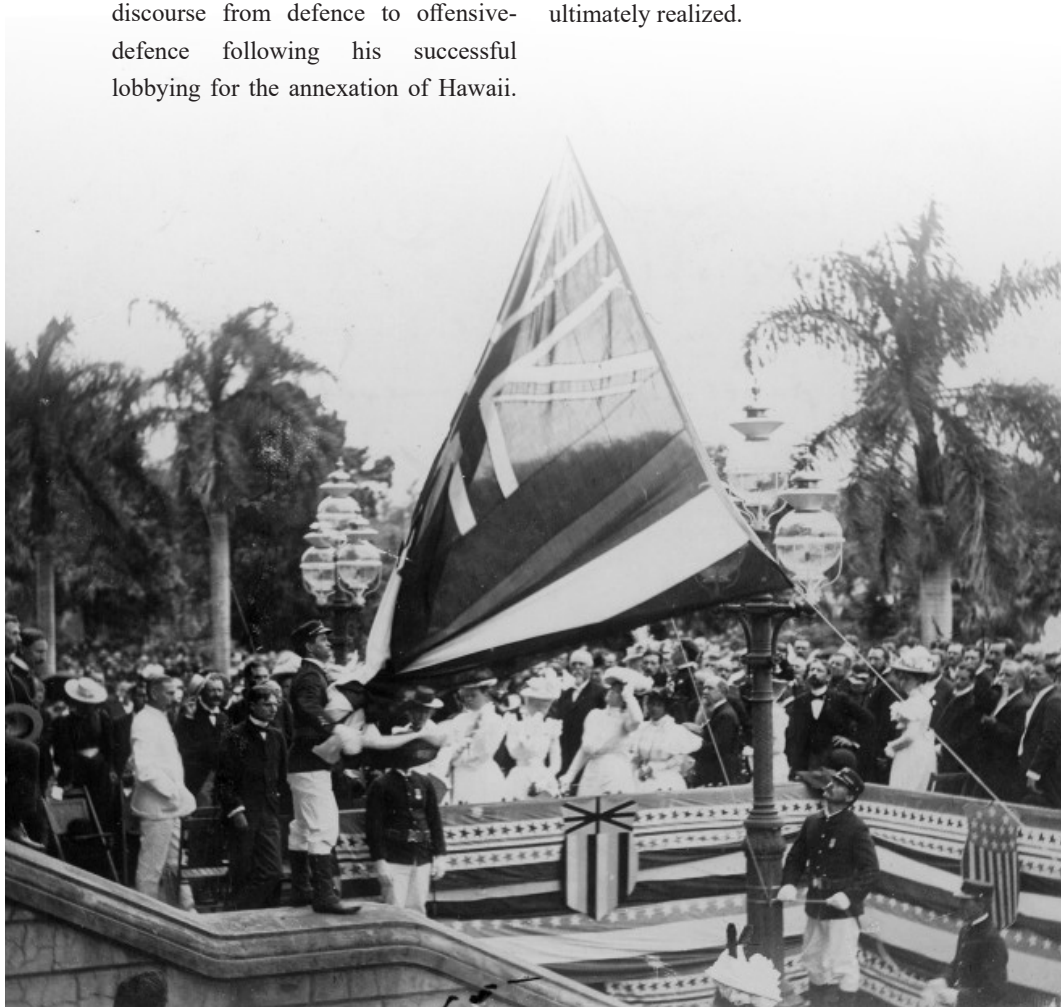

Photo: The Hawaiian flag being lowered for the American flag to be raised at the Iolani Palace in Honolulu, Hawaii, on August 12, 1898. (Credit: Hawaii State Archives)

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Photo: Military personnel and civilians at bus stop in Downtown Honolulu. Boarding the Kaimuki-Kealaolu bus on King St. at Fort St., 1944. (Credit: Hawaii State Archives)



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# Human Rights: Issues of Genesis and Complexities of Universalization in the International Realm

By Alexander Laurens Bremer

Eurocentricity has been a widely discussed issue in the field of International Relations, particularly since the emergence of meta-theories, including critical theories such as postcolonialism or intersectional feminism, which appeared in the second half of the 20th century. This discourse includes both the academic sphere, where occidental narratives and paradigms are dominant, as well as substantive processes comrpising the norms in international society, foundations of international law, and the processes of international institutions. Such critique is not entirely new. As the realist stream dates back to the *fin de siècle* of the 19th century, it has constructed arguments stating that political ideology is often interlaced with the standards of the most powerful states and that the concept of morality is constructed through legal systems backed by power.[1] These arguments were also made by Marxists such as Rosa Luxemburg, who developed conceptions about Western imperialism that would later inspire Dependency Theory and World-Systems Theory paired with the Gramscian focus on superstructure.[2] The concept of human rights is not absolved from this polemic and has been thoroughly challenged by scholars and politicians alike as a tool for Western proselytization. Human rights have been a key topic in international and global affairs since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 and have been deemed and promulgated as ubiquitous.

In the first section, this article aims to briefly define 'human rights' and 'eurocentricity', and examine the origins of this interpretation of human rights, followed by an analysis of the issues of the origins and the validity of existing critique. Secondly, the paper will explore some instances where human rights and their selective application has benefited the Global North at the cost of the Global South. Thirdly, the paper examines a theoretical solution in regard to the constitution of human rights and their function. Although the genesis

1 Time Dunne, "Liberal Internationalism," in *The Globalization of World Politics* (Eight Edition), eds. John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 104; Julian Korab-Karpowicz, "Political Realism in International Relations," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2018), https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/realism-intl-relations/.

2 Roberto Veneziani, "Rosa Luxemburg on imperialism: Some issues of substance and method" In *Rosa Luxemburg and the Critique of Political Economy,* ed. Riccardo Bellofiore (New York: Routledge, 2009), 131.





of human rights stems from largely Western historical trajectories and has been used as a tool for injustice, universal human rights can find validity through their justification practiced by discourse, inclusivity, and rejection of deductivist essentialist approaches.

**Definitions and Origins**

Human rights in international relations are made up of two categories: civil and political rights; and economic, social, and cultural rights. The first group consists of the rule of law, freedoms of speech, religion, political participation, and protection against abuse and torture.[3] The latter entails the right to access essential goods and services, such as food, housing, health care, and education.[4] Most human rights scholars and activists see them as universal: applying to all humans despite differences such as race, gender, age, religion, or citizenship. Eurocentricity refers to viewing Western philosophies, dogmas, traditions, systems, and processes as the desired standard, and the structuring of the international realm that follows from this view. It can be seen as a form of ethnocentrism that interprets the world from a European point of view. Samir Amin notes that it encompasses the exclusion of other cultures, and a perceived and realized superiority of European traditions, justifying the function of Eurocentrism as a "power system based on oppression and exploitation."[5]

The precise origins and sources of contemporary human rights are disputed, but they go as far back as Greek Stoicism and natural law doctrine,[6] and are generally associated with Christian dogma (all humans created in the image of God),[7] the Magna Carta (1215);[8] the European Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, the Enlightenment (e.g., Kant's Hypothetical Peace Treaty); the American Bill of Rights (1776); the French *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* (1789); and finally the UDHR (1948). Natural law, equality before the law, secularism, humanism, democracy, individualism, Protestant asceticism, capitalism, and self-determination are some of the elements that are intertwined with these periods and canonical texts.

3 John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens, *The Globalization of World Politics,* 8th Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 532.

4 Baylis, Smith and Owens, *The Globalization*, 536.

5 Fernando Suarez Müller, "Eurocentrism, Human Rights, and Humanism," *International Journal of Applied Philosophy* 26, no. 2 (2012): 281, https://www.academia.edu/14982854/Eurocentrism_Human_Rights_and_Humanism,

6 Joseph R. Slaughter, "Hijacking Human Rights: Neoliberalism, the New Historiography, and the End of the Third World," *Human Rights Quarterly* 40 (November 2018): 740, http://doi.org/10.1353/hrq.2018.0044.

7 Heiner Bielfeldt, "Western versus Islamic Human Rights Conception? A Critique of Cultural Essentialism in the Discussion on Human Rights," *Political Theory* 28, no. 1 (February 2000): 92, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0090591700028001005.

8 Müller, "Eurocentrism," 285.

Many of these concepts have been naturalized as inherently 'good' in a religiously ordained or Hegelian linear progressive context, and thus deeper rationalization or validation is generally omitted. Thus, criticisms by scholars such as Richard Rorty point out that the validity of human rights is reduced to historical genesis buttressed by the hegemonic position of the West in the global sphere.[9]

Problems arise by a historical examination of the contexts of which these concepts emerged and their pragmatic potency. Although Plato's *Republic* advocates for gender equality, and even though Medieval thinkers believed in ordained equality, these views were not translated into social reality.[10] Staunch defenders of democracy and human rights, such as the Enlightenment body, had a very narrow view of humanity, as there were generally no explicit arguments made in favor of extending the franchise to women or non-property-owning men (with a few exceptions, most notably those of Mary Wollstonecraft and John Stuart Mill), and others like Thomas Jefferson never even freed his own slaves.[11] That analysis fails to mention the murderous terror during and following the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen and the transatlantic slave trade, including genocides in the Americas.[12] Human rights thus emerged from problematic roots and, in the coloniality discourse, human rights have been used to justify imperialism and colonialism through a three-dimensional classification of "savages-victims-saviors" or savages, barbarians, and civilization.[13]

Another issue is that the 'universalization' of human rights via the UDHR arose not from the greater context of colonialism, inequality, and racism, but from the carnage caused by these factors in Europe. Césaire argues that colonialism was viewed differently since it was executed on the basis of a civilizing mission and that Hitler stands out as the worst of tyrants for applying these colonial practices in Europe against certain Europeans, such as European Jews.[14] Moreover, human rights are too focused on the individual's rights in market terms instead of the community or society's rights. This argument is echoed by both sides of the political spectrum. For example, Marx argued that "the human right of freedom is not based on the community of man with man,

9 Müller, "Eurocentrism," 284.
10 Bielfeldt, "Western versus Islamic," 94.
11 Müller, "Eurocentrism," 284.
12 Slaughter, "Hijacking Human Rights," 743.
13 Makua w. Mutua, "Savages, Victims, and Saviors: The Metaphor of Human Rights." *Harvard International Law Journal* 42, no. 1 (2001): 201, https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/journal_articles/570.
14 Nelson Maldonado-Torres, "On the Coloniality of Human Rights," *Revista Critica de Ciencias Sociais* 114 (November 2019): 128, https://doi.org/10.4000/rccs.6793.



it is based on the separation of man from man."[15] Carl Schmitt perceived human rights as fundamentally linked to a liberal economy, leading to communitarian disintegration, because economic calculation and private morality take priority.[16] Professor Fernando Müller makes the argument that the universalism of human rights has an explicit "economic cultural basis" to capitalism, forging a strong demand for universal laws and regulating societies to safeguard the interests of powerful capitalist institutions and governments.[17] Thus, the philosophical essence of human rights is deeply loaded with secular, individualistic, civil and political rights that take precedence over collective cultural, social, and economic rights.[18]

In addition to colonial, racist, and hypocritical connotations filled with "problematic forms of skepticism about what constitutes being a human,"[19] Professor Nelson Maldonado-Torres refers to this phenomenon as the onto-Manichean line. This concept divides the world into lighter and darker zones, in which the concept of 'human' is grasped differently and rights applied selectively.[20] One can point to responses to the European immigration crisis or comparisons in the reaction of catastrophes between regions in the periphery compared to the core or even semi-periphery. Excluding geopolitical considerations, the question raised recently is: "are Ukrainian refugees treated differently by Europeans than war refugees from other parts of the world?" Hence, it is no surprise that there is widespread suspicion that the essence of human rights and their promulgation is simply an attempt to "impose their own cultural values and norms in an imperialistic fashion."[21]

**The Cost of Human Rights**

The loci through which human rights operate in the international realm are *primus* (scholarly discussions and historiographies), *secundus* (international law), and *tertius* (international institutions). Slaughter notes that histories, theories, and criticisms from the non-Western world are often ignored in human rights discourse.[22] However, there remains unequal access to and incorporation of scholarly databases, in textual terms, is a portrayal of the overall discriminatory practices surrounding traditional human rights rhetoric.[23]

15 Bielfeldt, "Western versus Islamic," 96.
16 Bielfeldt, "Western versus Islamic," 96.
17 Müller, "Eurocentrism," 281.
18 Slaughter, "Hijacking Human Rights," 742.
19 Maldonado-Torres, "Coloniality," 131.
20 Maldonado-Torres, "Coloniality," 123.
21 Bielfeldt, "Western versus Islamic," 102.
22 Slaughter, "Hijacking Human Rights," 755.
23 Slaughter, "Hijacking Human Rights," 755.

Additionally, recent historiographies hegemonize Western histories and thus naturalize Western understandings of human rights, discluding non-Western narratives and discounting their relevancy.[24] International lawyer Martti Koskenniemi notes that professional international law began as a project by elites active in government and politics as "the clouds of nationalism, racism and socialism were rising."[25] International law regarding human rights respects Christian values to a higher degree than other religions, and prioritizes civil and political rights.[26] Hence, International law is also subject to opportunistic forces external to it. It is not *per se* neutral in its procedural rules and substance.[27] International institutions embedded in Western frameworks ignore non-Western epistemologies concerning human rights.[28] Even the United Nations, which is idealized as "the parliament of man"[29] is ultimately controlled by the member states with the most power. Therefore, the agenda and processes are "hostage to [the state's] interests and demands."[30]

Several tangible examples of these theoretical and pragmatic dilemmas exist in the international realm. For instance, the UDHR, referred to as the golden standard and used as an example of successful universalization of human rights and developed from the "combined and considered views of all systems, all religions, all cultures, and all outlooks,"[31] was in reality relatively monolithic in its outlook and construction. Not only were there articulated concerns about the neglect of including human rights with emphasis on communities and social structures in comparison to the individual,[32] but all but two of the model texts and legal documents consulted to draft the UDHR came from the democratic West, and all but two were from English-speaking sources.[33] The most ratified human rights treaty in the world, the Convention on the Rights of Children, also exposed problems with the interpretation and implementation of human rights in international law.

24 Slaughter, "Hijacking Human Right," 746.
25 Martti Koskenniemi, "Histories of International Law: Dealing with Eurocentrism," *Inaugural Address accepting the Treaty of Utrecht Chair at Utrecht University* (November 2011): 5.
26 James Thuo Gathii, "International Law and Eurocentricity," *European Journal of International Law* 9 (1998): 207. https://ssrn.com/abstract=1624888.
27 James Thuo Gathii, "International Law and Eurocentricity," *European Journal of International Law* 9 (1998): 207. https://ssrn.com/abstract=1624888.
28 Jan Aart Scholte, "Reinventing global democracy," *European Journal of International Relations* 20 no. 1 (2014): 11, https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066111436237.
29 Paul Battersby, "The globalization of global governance," in *The SAGE handbook of globalization*, eds. M.B. Steger and J.M. Siracusa (London: Sage Publications, 2014), 3.
30 Battersby, "globalization of global," 3.
31 Slaughter, "Hijacking Human Rights," 740.
32 Maria Grahn-Farley, "Neutral Law and Eurocentric Lawmaking: A Postcolonial Analysis of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child," *Brooklyn Journal of International Law* 31, no. 1 (2008): 10. https://ssrn.com/abstract=1349146.
33 Slaughter, "Hijacking Human Rights," 740.



Firstly, reminiscent of the League of Nations dilemma, the United States (which has often engaged in interventionist peacemaking 'operations' in the name of upholding human rights) has not ratified the Convention, being one of the two countries alongside Somalia that has failed to do so. Secondly, reservations were made by European nations to exclude illegal immigrant children from the Convention, which highlights the selectivity of the perception of what constitutes a human. Thirdly, while neutrality and diversity of the substantive processes were emphasized in the reservations issued to the Convention, the objections to the reservations were overwhelmingly European and made against non-European nations; 87 out of 89 reservations were against non-European countries.[34] The majority of objections were raised to those reservations that offered alternative interpretations of the boundaries of international law, such as national constitutions or Shariah law,[35] challenging Eurocentric international law. This instance strongly underlines the argument that even if neutral international law was possible to legislate, the law itself does not operate in a vacuum. Thus, the human rights discourse is vulnerable to cooptation by states and other actors to advance their political interests as well as economic interests.[36]

An infamous example of such misuse derived from the lending practices during the Washington Consensus as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank with imposed austerity measures and structural adjustment policies onto developing countries throughout the 1980s and 1990s.[37] For a country to receive financial aid, developing countries (the majority located in the Global South) had to meet conditions that included diminishing regulations for foreign investors, privatization of industries, currency devaluation, increasing interest rates, and the emphasis on resource extraction and export-focused sectors. Most importantly, government slashing was to be reduced, making it difficult for governments to create policies and programmes to bolster human rights (i.e. social programmes, and subsidized healthcare and housing).[38] These measures had pernicious and spiralling ramifications that

34 Grahn-Farley, "Neutral Law and Eurocentric Lawmaking," 27.
35 Grahn-Farley, "Neutral Law and Eurocentric Lawmaking," 31.
36 Carmen G. Gonzales, "Environmental Justice, Human Rights, and the Global South," *Santa Clara Journal of International Law* 13, no. 1 (2015): 153, https://ssrn.com/abstract=2573190.
37 Sarah Babb, "The Washington Consensus as transnational policy paradigm: Its origins, trajectory and likely successors," *Review of International Political Economy* 20, no. 2 (2013): 270, https://www.jstor.org/stable/42003294.
38 Anup Shah, ""Structural Adjustment – a Major Cause of Poverty," *Global Issues: Social, Political, Economics and Environmental Issues that Affect Us All*, updated March 24, 2013, https://www.globalissues.org/article/3/structural-adjustment-a-major-cause-of-poverty.

detrimentally impaired the capacity of the Global South to comply with human rights norms.[39]

Unfortunately, Western nations and companies leveraged these shortcomings to place themselves on a moral high ground over developing countries in the Global South. This guise also provided the framework for cultural and political critique and interventionism in various forms.[40]

Lastly, a recent example of how international law and the international framework contort the conception of human rights can be observed through the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Health Organization, later supplemented by the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, maps out that "the highest attainable standard of health" is a human right.[41] The WHO and signatories of the Covenant also committed themselves to be responsible for the control and treatment of epidemics for the benefit of all humans. Although various international bodies have stated that intellectual property rights should never take priority over human rights obligations, implementing certain policies has proven otherwise.[42] Intellectual property laws prohibited the independent production of vaccines in the Global South, and these laws have been strongly upheld and enforced. Sekalala et al. assert that the high cost of buying vaccines from the Global North increases the debt of the Global South and thwarts the abilities of those countries to realize these human rights, particularly the right to health.[43]

**Is There a Solution?**

Taking all elements into consideration, overcoming the challenges in the human rights discourse and implementation is a momentous task but not impossible. Georg Picht's conclusion that "the utopia of a global order of human rights is but an empty illusion"[44] is not given or an immutable fact.[45] Through constructivist methodology, establishing and developing the pragmatic processes of universal human rights is possible. However, several alterations, reforms, and restructuring need to occur for such a possibility.

Firstly, the dichotomous analysis between Western and non-Western assessments of human rights must be expelled, and the monolithic

39 Gonzales, "Environmental Justice," 152.
40 Slaughter, "Hijacking Human Rights," 761.
41 Sharifah Sekalala et al. "Decolonising human rights: how intellectual property laws result in unequal access to the COVID-19 vaccine," *BMJ Global Health* 6 (2021): 2. http://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2021-006169.
42 Sekalala et. al, "Decolonising human rights," 5.
43 Sekalala et. al, "Decolonising human rights," 4.
44 Bielfeldt, "Western versus Islamic," 90.
45 Bielfeldt, "Western versus Islamic," 90.





understanding of Eurocentric human rights removed. These factors base the entirety of human rights on interpretations and, therefore, prevent various competing cultural and religious ideas from engaging in discourse.[46] Human rights and the philosophies and concepts intertwined with them did not emerge collectively and linearly, and this narrative is an oversimplification of the "innumerable historical agents that contribute to the commitments that we call human rights."[47] An organicist or Hegelian view of Eurocentrism in human rights is inaccurate and thus should be rejected.

Moreover, a negative grouping of the entirety of Occidental origin expressions of human rights is disruptive, and an openness to the interpretation that certain ideological components are not naturally preventative to the discourse nor untranslatable into the real world is key for a more just process. As professor Müller points out, humanism is not just a façade for exploitation, and the results of science are also not simply an expression of exploitation.[48] Although the anti-foundationalist cultural relativists claim that arriving at true values is a performative illusion, this entails a contradiction as this position cannot be defended without "presupposing a universal right."[49] Therefore, a post-positivistic approach is needed that recognizes repressive elements in human rights.

Nevertheless, human rights are not simply a cultural value that only makes sense in some historical context and can theoretically exist as an ideology distinct from political traditions through philosophical contemplation.[50] John Rawls' idea of overlapping consensus and Rainer Forst's principle of justification are the two fundamental components for this strategy. The root of the principle of justification is the philosophical concept of *animal rationale* and Habermasian communicative rationality. Justice in the contestation of human rights can be solved through the construction of society through social discourse, despite no disparate ontological reality is universal as "we expect justification from everyone, implying a principle of generality, and from each other, implying a principle of reciprocity."[51] The principle of justification creates overlapping consensus in the form of normative rather than empirical consensus and, through the justification process,

46 Bielfeldt, "Western versus Islamic," 117.
47 Slaughter, "Hijacking Human Rights," 739.
48 Müller, "Eurocentrism," 282.
49 Müller, "Eurocentrism," 285.
50 Müller, "Eurocentrism," 286; Makua W. Mutua, "The Ideology of Human Rights," *Virginia Journal of International Law* 36 (1996): 629, https://ssrn.com/abstract=1525598; Koskenniemi, "Histories of International Law," 5.
51 Müller, "Eurocentrism," 287.

provides legitimacy and "the rational authority to interfere with other cultures and ideas." [52]

Adopting this method, criticizing Eurocentricity would not discredit the idea of human rights, but would control and mediate the usages of said rights and judge formulations of rights without restraining plurality and diversity. Eventually, this will lead to the destruction of narrative monopolies and raise objections to the "end of history" narratives that welcome the notion that all crucial standards and norms in the human rights framework have been set and simply need to be implemented universally.[53] Professor of international human rights Makuaw Mutua calls this sentiment "the greatest obstacle to the movement to bring about true universalization"[54] along with demonizing the resistors of universal implementation prior to engaging in rational discourse.[55] The human rights society, consisting of international conventions, international courts, and international bodies, provides the framework to put these theories into practice.[56] However, reforms are vital, including the multiculturalization of the human rights corpus, addressing the connection between economic elements and the corpus, the balance between individual and group rights, as well as the diversification of human rights bodies. These changes administer a panacea to the negative aspects of "the paradox of institutionalization,"[57] which include the power relations enabling the Global North (countries and MNCs, or even Western controlled IGOs) to evade responsibility for causing abuse to persons, nature, and states through replications of colonial discourse.[58]

An example are the efforts of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (founded in 1977) that gave the Inuit peoples increased leverage vis-à-vis the institutions that banned the hunting practices necessary for their survival[59] without engaging in discourse with the subjects, thus breaching various layers of the proposed new human rights scheme. Other organizations, such as the Organization of American States and its court, include non-Western epistemologies and conceptions of human rights through the consideration

52 Müller, "Eurocentrism," 284.
53 Gonzales, "Environmental Justice," 194.
54 Mutua, "Ideology of Human," 653.
55 Mutua, "Savages, Victims, and Saviors," 243.
56 Maldonado-Torres, "Coloniality," 126.
57 Gonzales, "Environmental Justice," 194.
58 Gonzales, "Environmental Justice," 194.
59 William H. Meyer, "Indigenous Rights, Global Governance, and State Sovereignty," *Human Rights Review* 13 no. 3 (2012): 339, https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12142-012-0225-3.





of the relationship and importance of Indigenous peoples with land and the environment,[60] which has acted as a barrier to destructive extractivism operating via a *terra nullius* rhetoric.

In conclusion, the Eurocentric genesis and history of human rights presents an example, and not the paradigm *per se*, of the obstacles and learning processes in the human rights debate. Although considering historical aspects and recognizing the pragmatic impacts that these ideas have enabled, a monolithic perception and denouncement of all the components that arose from this school is nevertheless counterproductive and may fall into an empty, politically correct gesture.[61] In the human rights discussion, a step back from the prominent lenses of realism and liberal internationalism is required for success. Human rights do not need to be inherently and unchangeably embedded in a specific cultural power dynamic, just as the universalization of human rights need not be interwoven with imperialistic connotations. While the framework of international institutions is as of yet the strongest option for discussing, establishing, promulgating, and enforcing human rights, negating reform from the Western-liberal emphasis is a condition to reach a more neutral and inclusive medium. Instead, we must embrace critical constructivism adopting normative reasoning and replacing conventional forms of human rights ethics rooted in religion and canonical intertextual metaphysical interpretations.

60 Manuela L. Picq, "Self-Determination as Anti-Extractivism: How Indigenous Resistance Challenges World Politics," In *Restoring Indigenous Self-determination: Theoretical and practical approaches*, ed. Marc Woons, (Bristol, UK: E-International Relations Publishing, 2014), 23.
61 Müller, "Eurocentrism," 279.


Photo: Japanese women looking at the UNDPR during a visit to the UN's interim headquarters in Lake Success in February 1950. (Credit: UN Photo)

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Photo: The Inuit Circumpolar Conference at Sisimiut, Greenland in 1989
(Credit: Inuit Circumpolar Council)





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Photo: A woman takes shelter in a basement with no electricity at Irpin, the outskirts of Kyiv, Ukraine, on March 13, 2022 (by Felipe Dana)