



Risks, Resilience and Interdependency

Developing Countries in the
Age of Uncertainties

Edited by
Guang Yang
Jing Zhang
Xinghan Xiong
Lanyu Liu

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Introduction: Providing Certainties for a World of Uncertainties from Area Studies Perspective

Lanyu Liu

The post-COVID-19 era began in 2023 for countries around the globe. Global development has not experienced the strong rebound expected, and it may even be difficult to return to the pre-pandemic situation. Human society is facing an environment with high uncertainty in terms of politics, economy, security, and climate. The increase in uncertainty makes it more difficult, if not impossible, to predict future global development. Because the familiar rules that operate in the world are undergoing systemic changes, it can be said that we have entered the “volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous (VUCA) era.”¹ In this era, we are increasingly in a state of confusion, and many actions are made by “improvisation.” In response to the growing uncertainties, an increasing number of countries

¹ The “VUCA era” refers to the era of Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity.

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are moving in a conservative direction and adopting national priority policies; such policies are accompanied by the spread of zero-sum thinking, the intensification of unilateralism, the revival of geopolitics, and the rise of bloc politics. The process of globalization is severely hindered, international cooperation in various fields is becoming increasingly difficult, and an increasing number of countries are experiencing sociopolitical unrest. In short, uncertainties have brought more risks to the development of human society.

While uncertainty brings more risks, it also motivates us to look persistently for certainty. A series of initiatives and efforts, including the “Building a Community of Common Destiny” proposed by China, the “Building a More Resilient and Inclusive Global Economy” initiative of the International Monetary Fund, and the “UAE Consensus” adopted at COP28, show not only the inevitability of the globalization process but also its resilience and remind us that to solve the various risks facing human society, we must rely on strength within a country and cooperation among countries. From July 3–5, 2023, a forum surrounding the theme of “Developing Countries in the Age of Uncertainties: Risk, Resilience and Interdependency” was organized by the Institute for International and Area Studies (IIAS) at Tsinghua University in Beijing. From the perspective of area studies, the risks faced by more fragile developing countries in an environment of uncertainty and the resilience and interdependency exhibited in the face of risks were discussed. The discussion is a brave attempt by the IIAS to inject more certainty into the uncertain world.

A total of 131 papers by scholars from various countries were presented in this forum, including 23 papers on Southeast Asian, 23 papers on Latin American, 15 papers on South Asian, 11 papers on the Eurasian region, 25 papers on Sub-Saharan Africa, 19 papers on West Asia and North Africa, and 15 papers on cross-regional global issues. Nearly 52 more papers were presented in this forum than in the previous, second forum. There has been “retaliatory growth” in academic exchanges after the pandemic. After the forum, the editorial group of the IIAS Forum Proceedings selected 10 outstanding papers and compiled them under the title “Risk, Resilience, and Interdependency: Developing Countries in the Age of Uncertainty.” This collection of essays is divided into three parts, namely, “Risk,” “Resilience,” and “Interdependency.” There are three papers in the first part, “Risk,” which discuss the political, economic, or climate risks faced by three different countries. The four

papers in the second part, “Resilience,” analyze different countries’ efforts in coping with uncertainty from a top-down perspective or consider society’s response to uncertainty from a bottom-up perspective. The third part, “Interdependency,” includes three papers that analyze the impacts of competition and interdependence between nations or domestic interest groups on regional and national development, either from the perspective of historical experience or current circumstances.

The three papers in the first part, “Risk,” investigate the resource curse in the African country of Nigeria from 1973 to 1979; the factors obstructing political, economic, and social transformation in Southeast Asian countries after the Cold War; and the social problems caused by the exacerbation of climate change in Thailand and corresponding governance measures.

The paper “The Political and Economic Impact of Nigeria’s Oil Boom (1973–1979),” written by Shujian Wang, a doctoral student at the IIAS of Tsinghua University, analyzes the nearly decade-long international crude oil price increase triggered by the outbreak of the Fourth Middle East War in 1973. The rising oil price led to evidence of the “resource curse” in the internal affairs and economy of Nigeria, an oil-producing country. This paper aims to answer the following questions: What impact did the first large-scale oil rent influx in 1973 have on Nigeria’s domestic politics? In the face of the enormous influx of oil rents, what kind of economic policy did the Nigerian government formulate? What was the result of economic policies driven by oil rents? The authors note that the influx of oil rents in 1973 led to the monopoly of the state’s oil wealth by the senior civil service group headed by President Yakubu Gowon, which not only made the contradictions and conflicts with the bureaucrats public but also exacerbated the tensions within the military groups. The serious dissatisfaction of Muslim officers in the northern part of the country eventually led to a military coup by young Muslim field grade officers in the north in July 1966, which brought down the Gowon regime. This coup d’état completely changed the structure of the military regime in Nigeria, breaking the military hierarchy established in the colonial period. Young military officers from northern Nigeria, represented by Murtala Muhammad, successfully seized national leadership and began to rule. Although the countercoup in February 1976 resulted in the assassination of the new national leader Murtala Mohammad from the northern military bloc, the Supreme Military Council, as the highest decision-making

body in the country, remained firmly controlled by senior Muslim military officials from the north, suggesting that the nationalist ideology in the north had become the mainstream ideology in the country.

Driven by the nationalist ideology of northern Nigeria and enormous oil wealth, the Nigerian government increased its control and intervention in the economy, hoping to quickly achieve the economic goal of national industrialization. From 1975 to 1979, the Nigerian government implemented the third 5-year national development plan, and in 1977, an amendment to the Nigerian Enterprise Promotion Decree was promoted. Subsequently, an enormous public sector came into being. Although oil rents helped distribute capital-intensive industrial projects in the public sector among different interest groups nationwide, the nature of these industrial projects was the “reproduction” of foreign industrial production lines in Nigeria, with the raw materials, machinery and equipment and the management and operation technology being completely dependent on imports, and technology transfer and downstream industrial development were rarely realized through local production. The state-led industrial projects were not successfully turned into productive capital. Instead, they became tools for the military regime to distribute oil rents. Therefore, when oil rents decreased in the 1980s and 1990s, Nigeria’s industrial production rapidly decreased.

The paper “Political Economy Analysis of the Development of Modern States in Southeast Asia” by Shihong Bi, a professor at the Area and Country Research Institute of Yunnan University and a member of the Academic Committee of the IIAS, Tsinghua University, comparatively analyzes the development of modern states in ten Southeast Asian countries from the perspective of the political economy. The author notes that after the 1980s, Southeast Asia, especially Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, became one of the few countries with high economic growth rates in the world and that national policies influenced their rapid economic growth. By establishing an advanced civil service system, actively intervening in economic activities, carrying out public-private consultation, improving infrastructure, actively implementing the policy of introducing foreign investment, and promoting a high concentration of industries, the Singaporean government ultimately achieved economic success. The Malaysian government ensured the country’s political stability by maintaining preferential treatment policies for Malays and, on this basis, encouraged Malay entrepreneurs to invest in domestic demand-oriented enterprises, which narrowed the

income gap and balanced the economic growth of all ethnic groups in the country. Similar to the government in Malaysia, the Indonesian government adopted economic and social policies that catered to indigenous residents. Although the Thai government did not intervene in the domestic economy through government-controlled financial institutions, it actively introduced foreign capital in an attempt to achieve economic growth through import substitution led by private enterprises.

However, the patriarchal social structure, military dictatorship, election manipulation, media and speech control, and exclusion of social organizations that prevailed in Southeast Asian countries severely hindered the political development of the region and had a negative impact on regional economic development. The authors note that authoritarian rule was one of the main causes of the 1997 Southeast Asian financial crisis. Governments had difficulty controlling the degree of intervention in economic activities, which led to many problems, such as low-quality decision-making, bureaucratic corruption, and weak supervision in the financial market. The government-led industrial policy caused extensive rent-seeking activities among enterprises and sacrificed efficient operations, all of which may have contributed to economic crisis. Because authoritarian countries in Southeast Asia usually lack the ability to weather economic crises, economic crises often turn into political crises. With the exception of Singapore, which has successfully crossed the middle-income trap, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines have all fallen into the middle-income trap, and the prospects for industrial upgrading are bleak. The authors believe that oligarchy, corruption, unfair distribution, frequent disasters, and government debt are possible reasons why these countries have been caught in the middle-income trap for a long period of time. The Southeast Asian countries in this situation have developed strong populism. Supporters of populism fight against oligarchy and vested interest groups and pursue economic policies such as welfare expansion and employment protection. Overall, the authoritarian, oligarchical system can no longer meet the needs of Southeast Asian countries in terms of promoting modernization and development; this makes it difficult for politicians to win social support and even arouses strong social dissatisfaction.

The paper “Climate change adaptation implementation and governance in Thailand: Increased resilience and potential conflicts” by Atsamon Limsaku, a researcher at the Thailand Environmental Research and Training Center, analyzes Thailand’s attempts, progress achieved, and

long-term challenges in change adaptation and governance. The paper highlights that Thailand is extremely sensitive to climate change. Thailand has experienced frequent extreme weather events, including heat waves, heavy rain, and storms, in the past few decades. These extreme weather events not only threaten people's lives and property but also cause major damage to the national infrastructure. Thailand has also experienced multiple droughts in the past 50 years, affecting more than 40 million people. As the impact of climate change intensifies, the frequency and intensity of drought are expected to increase, posing challenges to agricultural production and water resource management. Sea level rise poses a threat to coastal communities and cities in Thailand. Saline intrusion and coastal erosion caused by sea level rise threaten local ecosystems, agriculture, and tourism, especially along the coasts of the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea. Extreme climatic events and unpredictable precipitation patterns caused by climate change pose a threat to agricultural production, thereby affecting food security and farmers' livelihoods. In addition, climate change exacerbates the risk of transmission of diseases, including dengue fever, malaria, and other mosquito-borne diseases. Extreme heat may also lead to heatstroke and other heat-related health problems.

To address the climate challenge, the Thai government has formulated the Climate Change Master Plan (CCMP) and National Adaptation Plan (NAP) policies to build resilience and the ability to adapt to the effects of climate change. Despite this, there are some significant problems in the implementation of the policy. The paper highlights that there are significant gaps in the implementation of policies at the local level, which has weakened the policy effect and left grassroots communities and key ecosystems still facing the severe impacts of climate change. Insufficient cross-sectoral coordination has led to a lack of integration and synergistic effects in the implementation of adaptation measures and reduced the overall implementation quality of climate change adaptation strategies. The lack of effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and the lack of sufficient resources and related technical support make it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of policy implementation, identify problems, and make timely adjustment, affecting the ability to adapt to policy adjustments and optimization. Finally, the lack of public participation and the insufficient understanding of the importance of climate change adaptation among the Thai public and all sectors of society has limited the social acceptance and implementation effects of adaptation measures.

The four papers in Part 2, “Resilience,” investigate the education and protection policies of the Mexican government during the pandemic; the roles of the Orthodox Church in nation-building in Ukraine and Belarus; the black women’s movement in South Africa; and the relationship between political culture and social movements in Iran. These findings demonstrate the resilience that top-down state governance and bottom-up social action bring to educational, political, and economic development.

Nifta Lau Ibarias, a postdoctoral researcher at the Center for China and Asia–Pacific Studies at the University of the Pacific in Peru, contributed the paper “Poverty and education in the era of COVID-19: The facts of the education program in southeastern Chiapas, Mexico.” The paper analyzes the difficulties encountered in the implementation of education programs launched by the Mexican government, such as “Aprende en Casa” (Learning at Home) and “Mi Escuela en Casa” (My School at Home), in three regions of Chiapas State in southeastern Mexico and their implications for poverty and education effects. In the course of the study, the author conducted 5 months of field investigations, which included interviews with principals, teachers, and parents, as well as a survey visit to local families. The research shows despite the introduction of education projects such as “Learning at Home” and “School at Home” by the Mexican government, the implementation of these projects in southeastern Chiapas faced major challenges. The main obstacles included family poverty, food and employment (in)security, and the lack of localization and a sustainability perspective in education projects and policies during the pandemic, which resulted in a significant decrease in parent engagement and children’s interest in education. Only 60% of the students were able to complete schoolwork on a regular basis; some teenagers (10–18 years old) even dropped out of school completely to help their families financially.

The pandemic drove unprecedented adjustments in the global education system. The measures adopted by the Mexican government aimed to ensure the continuity of education while protecting the health and safety of students, teachers, and families. After the closure of schools due to the pandemic, the Mexican government responded quickly and launched a distance education project; used television education and other methods to reach poor families lacking internet access to ensure that all children had the opportunity to continue to learn; and implemented an automatic upgrade policy to reduce delays in the studies of students caused by the

pandemic and reduce the psychological pressure on parents. The policy implementation faced challenges such as the unequal distribution of skills and resources, a low level of parent participation, and a disconnection between policy implementation and local reality, especially in the rural areas of southeastern Chiapas. However, the policy ensured the continuity of education, improved the flexibility of education and promoted equality in education to a certain extent. The education policy of the Mexican government during the COVID-19 pandemic supported the resilience of the Mexican education system and other development capabilities. The resilience injected by the Mexican government into education development during the pandemic not only helped overcome the difficulties the pandemic imposed on the Mexican education system but also laid the foundation for the future development and reform of the system.

The paper “Orthodox Church and Nation-Construction in Eurasia: Based on a field study in Ukraine and Belarus” written by You Zhou, a doctoral student at the IAS of Tsinghua University, comparatively analyzes the role of the Orthodox Church in state-building in Ukraine and Belarus. In both Ukraine and Belarus, the Orthodox Church is seen as an important force in the enhancement of national cultural identity. It provides a religious and cultural heritage closely related to the national history and helps strengthen the public’s identification with the national identity. The Orthodox Churches in Ukraine and Belarus both inherited and carried forward their respective historical traditions by recounting and commemorating important religious and historical events, such as the baptism of Grand Duke Vladimir of Ukraine and the commemoration of Belarus’ history of resistance in the Great Patriotic War, to strengthen the historical continuity of the nation. The Orthodox Church has played an active role in maintaining social stability and promoting national unity in these two countries. The church has provided spiritual support for state construction and promoted social harmony, especially in the face of external challenges and domestic crises.

Although the Orthodox Church plays an important role in nation-building in both countries, there are significant differences in the way the Orthodox Church participates in nation-building. By supporting the establishment of the Ukrainian Autonomous Orthodox Church, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church has strengthened its support for national independence and territorial integrity, clearly expressing its rejection of Russian influence and reflecting Ukraine’s willingness to pursue cultural and religious autonomy. In contrast, the Belarusian Orthodox Church is

more inclined to support close ties with Russia, strengthen Belarus' identity as a part of East Slavic civilization, and emphasize its cultural and religious unity with Russia. The politicization of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is reflected mainly in the promotion of national independence and national self-determination, especially against the background of the Russia–Ukraine conflict. The Belarusian Orthodox Church cooperates more closely with state power, and its politicization is more reflected in supporting the current government and its policies to safeguard national unity and stability. The founding of the Ukrainian Autonomous Orthodox Church reflects the relatively independent relationship between the church and the state and emphasizes the role of the church in state independence, while the Belarusian Orthodox Church has a closer relationship with the state and strongly reflects characteristics of the integration of the state and the church. To a large extent, both churches support and publicize the government's policies and positions. In general, religion provides important resilience and support for the development of Ukraine and Belarus in the era of uncertainty, including spiritual comfort, the enhancement of social cohesion, moral and ethical guidance, social services, and dialog and the promotion of reconciliation. Through these roles, the Orthodox Church helps build a more stable, harmonious society with the ability to respond to challenges. The practices of Ukraine and Belarus show that, even in the modern world, religion is still an important guarantee of national development resilience. The paper of "The Resistance and Intersectional Agenda of Black Feminists in the #MustFall Movement in South Africa" written by Zhongyu Wang, a research assistant at Nelson Mandela University, South Africa, analyzes a wave of radical black student uprisings in the higher education field in South Africa in 2015–2016. In the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements, students demanded the decolonization of higher education and voiced the struggle and intersectional agenda of black feminists. By teasing out the origin, development, and internal conflicts of the #Must-Fall movement, especially how black feminists promote the inclusivity of the movement through intersectional practice and how they struggled against patriarchal creation within the movement, the author reveals the significance of fighting colonialism and the complexity and importance of black feminism within the framework of patriarchy. Despite these challenges and conflicts, black feminists played an indispensable role in the student movement in South Africa, promoting an in-depth understanding of and reflection on the intersectional oppression of gender,

race, and class. The authors find that during the #MustFall movement, black South African feminism demonstrated a strong awareness of intersectionality by not only focusing on gender issues but also actively becoming involved in addressing inequality and oppression in terms of race, class, and sexual orientation and promoting the understanding of multiple marginalized experiences. Through this intersectional practice, black South African feminists challenged the limitations of single identity politics and proposed more comprehensive and inclusive struggle strategies and goals. However, while the movement made progress in elevating female voices, black feminists remained marginalized by the dominance of patriarchy in the leadership of #MustFall. In addition to confronting masculine violence, black feminists themselves experienced internal tensions, which led to the rupture of the intersectional alliance and the eventual collapse of the movement.

The South African feminist movement embodies the development resilience of South African society in the face of multiple types of oppression and challenges. This resilience comes not only from resistance against historical injustice but also from the relentless pursuit of justice and equality in a context of multiple cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds. Historical events in South Africa, especially the apartheid system, have left a deep imprint of social, economic, and gender inequalities. By exposing and fighting these inequalities, the feminist movement demonstrated its determination and resilience to seek change in a difficult environment. Through unremitting struggle, South African women achieved legal and policy changes regarding issues such as gender equality and gender-based violence, reflecting the resilience of society in a more just and equal direction. The authors find that the emphasis on intersectional theory and practice and the attention to the intersectional influence of multiple identities, such as gender, race, class, and sexual orientation, illustrate the flexibility of the South African feminist movement in understanding and coping with complex social structures, promoting inclusiveness and building a resilient foundation for broader social change.

The paper “Political Culture and Social Movements in Iran (1979–2022)” written by Lanyu Liu, an assistant professor at the IIAS at Tsinghua University, investigates the formation and evolution of the discourse and protest behavior of five social movements in Iran since 1979 from the perspective of political culture. On this basis, the future direction of Iran’s political development is discussed. The author elaborates the definition of political culture and emphasizes that political culture,

as the set of political cognitions, attitudes, emotions, beliefs, and practices shared by members of society, has a profound effect on the political behavior of social members. The author notes that since 1979, Iran's political culture has experienced five stages of evolution reflecting the themes of idealism regarding the Islamic revolution, economic development, political development, the protection of people's livelihood, and the protection of a free life. In the analysis of specific social movements, the background, causes, and main actions of each social movement and its relationship with the political culture at the time are discussed in depth. For example, the 1999 Iranian university student protests reflected the strong desire of the younger generation for political reforms against a political and cultural background with political development at the core; the "Green Movement" in 2009 sought political reforms through peaceful protests against the same political and cultural background. The occurrence of the "Deymah Movement" in 2017 and the "Abanmah Movement" in 2019 reflected the cumulative dissatisfaction of the Iranian people with the economy and government policies, which was closely related to political culture with the protection of people's livelihood at the core. The "Women, Life, Freedom" movement in 2022 marked the entry of Iran's political culture into a new stage. In this stage, people are more likely to pursue personal freedom and seek to improve their quality of life, which has had an even greater impact on Iran's political system and represents a fundamental challenge.

These political and cultural changes and social movements have had far-reaching positive effects on Iran's democratic transformation. They not only reflect the demand of Iranian society for reform of the political system but also reveal the strong desire of the people for broader political participation and the protection of personal freedom. Although fundamental changes in the political system may not occur in the short term, this type of social challenge can help promote political reform and pave the way for democratization in the long run. In addition, the trend of Iran's political culture toward more openness and inclusiveness has strengthened the basis for social democratic transformation. The process of transformation from revolutionary enthusiasm to institutionalization in Iran's political culture after the Islamic Revolution demonstrates Iran's ability to balance the achievements of the revolution with the establishment of a stable political system. By establishing a political system with religious leaders at the core, Iran has combined revolutionary ideals with state governance, demonstrating the adaptability

and resilience of its political and social structure. After experiencing initial revolutionary idealism, Iran's political culture gradually came to emphasize economic development and social welfare. Especially after the Iran–Iraq War, Iran faced enormous pressure to rebuild its national economy, and its political culture began to emphasize the importance of economic construction and the improvement in people's living standards. This change reflects Iran's flexibility and resilience in responding to social needs and promoting economic development. Since 1997, with the coming to power of the reformist government, Iran's political culture has begun to emphasize the importance of political participation, democracy, and civil society. Although the current reform process faces many challenges and constraints, the current political and cultural changes in Iran reflect the resilience of Iranian society in the pursuit of broader political participation and democratization.

The three papers in Part 4, “Interdependency,” address the interaction between Farghānah and the great powers from the seventh to the ninth centuries, the normalization of relations between Morocco and Israel, and the relationship between the government and companies in Brazil, revealing facets of a world full of uncertainty. Actively seeking and establishing a relationship of cooperation and dependence within the prevailing international and domestic politics is important for national and regional development.

The paper “Farghānah in the Seventh to Ninth Centuries as a Military Vassal of the Great Powers: A Story of Struggling for Survival and Seeking Prosperity” written by Zhidong Zhang, a doctoral student at the Institute of Islam and Middle East Studies at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, traces the historical survival trajectories of the nobility of Farghānah from the seventh to the ninth century and the interaction between Farghānah and the great powers. Located at the heart of Central Asia, the Fergana Valley is surrounded by mountains. Two important rivers, the Naryn River and the Karadaria River, flow through it and endow the region with fertile land and abundant water resources. This geographic environment not only supported the development of agriculture but also made the location a subject of competition among the surrounding powers because of its strategic value. From the seventh to the ninth centuries, Farghānah successively became part of the Western Turkic Khanate (581–742), the Turkic Khaganate (699–766), the Tang Dynasty (680–907), the Tibetan Empire (618–842) and the Abbasid Caliphate (750–1258) until it was annexed by the Samanid Empire (819–999) in the mid-ninth century. The

author finds that, in the competition between great powers for control of Central Asia, owing to its large and warlike population, Farghānah became an important military ally of great powers. By being an ally and vassal of a major power, Farghānah was able to enter the territory and trade of the suzerain state and enjoy economic prosperity. In addition, the paper discusses Farghānah's policy of exchanging military services for trade privileges and the motivations behind it, emphasizing the mutual promotion between the military and trade.

Zhang's paper uses historical experience to show that even in an environment of fierce competition among large countries, small countries can achieve development by using their own advantages to actively create a cooperative and dependent relationship with large countries. Taking advantage of its geographic and resource advantages, the Fergana region became an important military ally in the competition between the surrounding powers for the control of Central Asia. Because of its status as an ally, Farghānah established economic ties with large powers and won important benefits and trading privileges, which not only allowed its products to enter the markets of large countries but also prompted caravans from large countries to pass through Fergana, driving the prosperity of the local market and economy. In the process, the rulers of Farghānah showed political wisdom by constantly seeking to balance among the various powers and using the competition among great powers to strive to achieve their own interests. Whether switching allies to adapt to the changes of great powers or offering military assistance to increase its own bargaining chips in negotiations, Farghānah's policies demonstrated its leaders' profound understanding and utilization of the competition and interdependence among the great powers.

The paper "Multiple Dimensions of the Normalization of Relations between Morocco and Israel," written by Driss Maghraoui, discusses Morocco and Israel's signed agreement to normalize relations, with the facilitation of the United States, on December 10, 2020, and the background, motivations, strategies, and wide-ranging impacts inside and outside the region. The author analyzes the complex considerations behind Morocco's move from multiple perspectives, including the political, economic, security, and cultural perspectives. The normalization agreement between Morocco and Israel is officially regarded by Morocco as a major victory and a decisive turning point in its foreign policy. At the political level, the agreement strengthens Morocco's geostrategic position in North Africa and its economic and military cooperation with Israel,

and it enables the United States to recognize Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara. At the economic level, Morocco expects to receive support from Israel in high-end technology fields, such as military, agriculture, water resources, and renewable energy, which will increase its economic influence and trade potential on the African continent. At the security and military levels, the agreement strengthens Morocco's military and security stance in the region, and Morocco expects to acquire drones and other precision-guided weapons worth approximately US\$1 billion. However, the paper also indicates that the signing of the agreement normalizing relations between Morocco and Israel intensifies the geopolitical competition between Morocco and Algeria.

Overall, against the highly volatile political, security, and social environment in West Asia and North Africa, the normalization of relations between Morocco and Israel has a certain positive impact on the entire Middle East and North Africa. First, this progress is seen as an important step in the promotion of regional peace and stability and conducive to the possible normalization of relations between other Arab countries and Israel. Second, by strengthening economic and security cooperation, the agreement helps improve the economic development and security environment in the region and provides a new impetus and possibility for resolving long-standing conflicts. The normalized relations between Morocco and Israel demonstrate the interdependence of the two countries at multiple levels and not only directly support the political, economic, and security interests of both parties but also have positive impacts on the peace, stability, and development of the whole region. Interestingly, to raise support for normalization among the people, the Moroccan government linked normalization with the country's Jewish historical and cultural heritage.

The paper "Business Lobbying and its Impact on Brazil's Public Policy" written by Marcela Machado, a professor at the Institute of Public Policy at the University of Brasilia, analyzes how, under democratic principles, corporate lobbyists in Brazil used different strategies to achieve their legislative objectives, particularly their new strategy adopted after corporate donations to influence elections were banned. The author conducted semistructured interviews with parliamentarian advisors and lobbyists to analyze the strategies and behavioral changes of companies after the ban on corporate donations, with a particular focus on what elements other than money play a role in the less monetized scenario. The study shows that relations with Parliament have acquired even

greater importance, and in the policy formulation process, in addition to economic capital, symbolic elements, and interpersonal relationships have gained prominence. The findings provide a new perspective and theoretical framework for lobbying studies. The role of Brazilian companies as election fund providers was challenged by law and was eventually banned. In the process, the relationship between business lobbyists and Brazilian federal representatives changed dynamically, moving from a money-centered focus to a greater dependence on symbolic elements. In addition, the authors compare the differences in the handling of election funds between Brazil and the United States and reveal that, when candidates are allowed to set their own campaign funding ceilings, a clear spending plan is lacking, which affects the allocation of funds during the campaign. Strong candidates can use better election marketing strategies to suppress their opponents in the final stage of the campaign.

Machado's study shows that although direct political donations by corporations have been banned by law in recent years, the interdependence between corporations and the government is quite resilient. Enterprises seek other nonmonetary means, such as technical support and information exchange, to maintain their influence over the policy formulation process. The Brazilian government relies on enterprises as the main driving force of economic growth. Therefore, when the government formulates economic policies, it needs to consider how to promote the development of enterprises, including providing tax incentives, fiscal subsidies, and simplified administrative procedures, to attract investment and create employment. Brazilian companies play an important role in fulfilling social responsibilities by participating in environmental protection, education, and social welfare projects. This not only helps enhance the public image of enterprises but also provides a way for the government to achieve social goals. The government and enterprises have formed cooperative relationships in these fields to jointly promote social development. There is a complex interdependent relationship between Brazilian enterprises and the government. Although legal changes have posed new challenges to this interdependent relationship, enterprises and the government have maintained close cooperation and interaction through continuous adaptation and adjustment.

The abovementioned regional and national studies reveal that the impacts of the era of uncertainty on human society are specific and diverse. Owing to differences in national conditions, different countries adopt different plans when dealing with uncertainties. This means that

when we study how to inject certainty into an uncertain world, area studies are necessary. The third “Tsinghua Area Studies Forum” represents a useful attempt of Tsinghua researchers and scholars in global studies to help reduce global development uncertainties from the perspective of area studies. In the contexts of the countries and regions in which they are deeply involved and with various multidisciplinary theoretical perspectives and research methods, the participating scholars analyzed the “basic units” that constitute human society and painted a picture of development full of differences. However, differentiated development prospects do not indicate a lack of bright prospects for the future development of human society because the research of these area studies scholars tells us that, in every country, there are always forces that pursue certainty and cooperation.

Lanyu Liu

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PART I

Risks



On the Profound Impact of Nigeria's Oil Boom on Politics and Economy (1973–1979)

Shujian Wang

In October 1973, international crude oil prices saw a significant increase with the outbreak of the Fourth Middle East War, leading to the first oil crisis. Compared to most Sub-Saharan African countries that experienced severe economic crises during this period, Nigeria, as an emerging oil country, then experienced nearly a decade of industrial development and economic prosperity. Between 1975 and 1979, the growth rate of investment in Nigeria's manufacturing sector remained above 20%, and that in its transportation, communication, and construction sectors exceeded 15%. However, when international crude oil prices plummeted in the early 1980s, Nigeria's economic development suffered a huge blow. Not only did the domestic industrial system fail to act as a buffer mechanism to stabilize the domestic economy, but it instead quickly turned into a financial burden for the government.

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Currently, there are two main understandings in academia regarding the industrial development in Nigeria during the oil boom period in the 1970s. First, some scholars use the “resource curse” theory as an explanatory framework and view industrialization in this period as a waste of resources by the government during the boom cycle, with the government squandering oil wealth in unproductive public sectors and the talent shortage and rampant corruption leading to the low utilization of industrial capacity. Therefore, when the bust cycle occurred, these industrial sectors declined significantly due to the decrease in rent income.¹ However, the “resource curse” theory fails to explain why the government chose to invest a large amount of oil rents not in the industrial sector but rather in other service or financial sectors during the oil boom cycle. Second, some scholars adopt a nationalist perspective and believe that Nigeria, as a new hereditary country, saw indigenous national capital unable to seize the opportunities brought by oil wealth, causing the state to channel large amounts of oil rents into the public sector and eventually creating an unsustainable and corruption-filled industrial sector. When oil rents significantly decreased, this industrial sector fell into trouble due to a lack of productive capital.² However, the nationalist explanatory framework views oil rents as merely external resources, ignoring the structural impact of oil resources on domestic political operations. This study, by retracing the political and economic impacts on Nigeria when it first faced a massive influx of oil rents in 1973, seeks to re-answer the following questions: First, what impact did the large-scale influx of oil rents have on Nigerian politics? Second, what economic policies did the Nigerian government formulate in response to the massive influx of oil rents? Third, what were the outcomes of the economic policies driven by oil rents?

¹ Xavier Sala-i-Martin and Arvind Subramanian, Addressing the natural resource curse: An illustration from Nigeria, *Journal of African Economies* 22, no. 4, 2013; David Bevan, Paul Collier, and Jan Willem Gunning, *The political economy of poverty, equity and growth: Nigeria and Indonesia*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 67.

² Kohli, A. *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

1 THE 1973 OIL CRISIS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OF OIL RESOURCES

On October 6, 1973, the Fourth Middle East War broke out. To oppose the aid Western countries, led by the United States, provided to Israel in the war, the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) imposed three sanctions. First, on October 17, it was decided to raise the price of crude oil to US\$5.12/barrel, an increase of approximately 70%. Second, OAPEC announced a 5% reduction in production, of which Saudi Arabia announced a 10% reduction and a continuous 15% reduction every month starting in November. Lastly, on October 21, an official oil embargo was imposed on the relevant countries. In November 1973, even though the Arab and Israeli sides had signed a ceasefire agreement, OAPEC did not stop the series of measures, including the embargo, production cuts, and price increases. At the end of December 1973, OAPEC announced a further increase in the crude oil price of 128%, which was officially implemented in January 1974. The oil embargo officially ended in March 1974, but the crude oil price did not fall back but remained above US\$11/barrel. Compared with the prewar price of US\$3.0/barrel, the international crude oil price had increased nearly fourfold within half a year (Table 1).

In 1956, Nigeria first discovered commercially producible oil resources in the southeastern region. Afterward, Nigeria's crude oil production increased rapidly, surpassing 300,000 barrels/day in 1965, making it the 13th largest oil-producing country in the world.³ In 1971, Nigeria joined the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and established the Nigerian National Oil Corporation (NNOC), and since then, the government began officially participating in the international crude oil trade. Nigeria did not join the OAPEC oil embargo against Western countries in 1973. Therefore, its crude oil quickly became a sought-after commodity by the United States and other Western countries during this period, bringing huge export revenues to the country. Specifically, Nigeria's crude oil export revenue surged from US\$160 million in September 1973 to US\$770 million in May 1974, an increase of 4.8 times. The increase in oil revenue during this period accounted for approximately

³ Kairn A. Klieman, U.S. Oil Companies, the Nigerian Civil War, and the Origins of Opacity in the Nigerian Oil Industry, *Journal of American History* 99, no. 1, 2012.

Table 1 Changes in the crude oil export prices of OPEC member countries (1971–1974) (unit: USD/barrel)

	<i>January 1, 1971</i>	<i>January 2, 1972</i>	<i>January 1, 1973</i>	<i>January 11, 1973</i>	<i>January 1, 1974</i>
Saudi Arabia	1.80	2.479	2.591	5.119	11.650
Iran	1.79	2.467	2.579	5.341	11.875
Kuwait	1.68	2.373	2.482	4.903	11.545
United Arab Emirates	1.88	2.540	2.654	6.045	11.636
Iraq	1.72	2.451	2.562	5.061	11.672
Qatar	1.93	2.590	2.705	5.834	12.414
Nigeria	2.42	3.176	3.561	8.171	14.690
Libya	2.55	3.386	3.777	9.061	15.768
Indonesia	1.70	2.210	2.260	6.000	10.800
Ecuador	–	–	–	10.000	13.700
Venezuela	2.12	2.990	3.160	7.240	14.080

Data source Vallenilla, L., *Oil, the Making of a New Economic Order: Venezuela Oil and OPEC*: McGraw-Hill, 1975, p. 172

45% of Nigeria's real gross domestic product (GDP) in 1973.⁴ Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings from crude oil exports increased from 612 million naira in 1972 to 5.057 billion naira in 1974, an increase of more than 8 times. The share of crude oil export revenue in the GDP also increased from 8.32% in 1972 to 20.01% in 1974.⁵ Facing the influx of oil rents, Nigeria's balance of payments immediately showed a large surplus. According to estimates, Nigeria had a balance of payments deficit of 80 million naira in 1972 and a surplus of 190 million naira in 1973, and the surplus increased significantly to 1.25 billion naira in 1974 (Table 2).⁶

The establishment of the NNOC promoted the direct participation of the federal government in the international crude oil export trade. However, there were significant disagreements within the government regarding who had the authority to sell "government crude oil" on behalf

⁴ Sayre P. Schatz, *The Nigerian Economy since the Great Oil-Price Increases of 1973–74*, *Africa Today*, 29, no. 3 1982.

⁵ Brian Pinto, *Nigeria during and after the Oil Boom: A Policy Comparison with Indonesia*, *The World Bank Economic Review* 1, no. 3, 1987.

⁶ Brian Pinto, *Nigeria during and after the Oil Boom: A Policy Comparison with Indonesia*, *The World Bank Economic Review* 1, no. 3, 1987.

Table 2 Nigeria's crude oil export data from 1970 to 1980

<i>Year</i>	<i>Crude oil production (million barrels/day)</i>	<i>Crude oil export revenue (million naira)</i>	<i>Total export revenue (million naira)</i>	<i>Crude oil exports as a percentage of total exports (%)</i>
1970	1.083	510	886	57.56
1971	1.531	964	1304	73.93
1972	1.816	1175	1433	82.00
1973	2.057	1935	2319	83.44
1974	2.254	5675	6104	92.97
1975	1.786	4592	4791	95.85
1976	2.077	5895	6322	93.25
1977	2.097	7046	7594	92.78
1978	1.908	6033	6707	90.00
1979	2.301	10,035	10,676	94.00
1980	2.065	13,999	14,640	95.62

Data source IMF, *International Financial Statistics Yearbook 1984*, pp. 454–455

of the federal government. In the first half of 1973, the permanent secretary of the Federal Ministry of Mines and Power (FMMP), Phillip Asiodu, was directly responsible for the government's crude oil sales. In March 1973, the permanent secretary, for the first time, signed a contract on behalf of the federal government with the American independent oil company Tenneco to sell one million tons of crude oil over 3 years at a price of US\$14.904/barrel, averaging 15,000 barrels/day. This crude oil came from the quotas obtained by the government's acquisition of a 35% stake in Shell-BP.⁷ In April 1973, the permanent secretary again signed a 3-year crude oil contract on behalf of the federal government with a German oil company at a price of US\$15.517/barrel. This oil came from the government's equity quotas in the French oil company SAFRAP and the American Phillips Petroleum Company.⁸ Both of these crude oil sales

⁷ Nigerian National Oil Company, Annual Report 1971–1973, Lagos, Nigerian National Oil Company, p. 19.

⁸ See: Nigerian National Oil Company, Annual Report 1971–1973, Lagos, Nigerian National Oil Company, p. 19. The specific contract was that the German oil company Gelsenberg Mineral Oil GMBH obtained a three-year contract, receiving 20,000 barrels/day of crude oil in 1973, 25,000 barrels/day of crude oil in 1974, and 30,000 barrels/day of crude oil in 1975.

contracts were signed privately in a non-public manner, and the specific terms were not disclosed.

The formal operation of the NNOC had an impact on this crude oil sales model, led by the permanent secretary. In April 1973, the NNOC was made independent of the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR), which was responsible for petroleum-related affairs, within the Federal Ministry of Minerals and Power (FMMP), and formally assumed the corporate identity to fully represent the Federal Government of Nigeria in related business activities, including oil exploration, extraction, production, sale, and refining.⁹ This also meant that the NNOC legally had the right to sell crude oil on behalf of the Nigerian government. Because the NNOC was composed mainly of professional and technical personnel, its marketing department preferred to sell crude oil through open bidding in the international market, rather than through Asiodu's choice of private sales. However, since the permanent secretary of the FMMP would automatically serve as the chairperson of the NNOC and since the position of the general manager in charge of the company's daily operations had to be appointed by the board of directors, Asiodu repeatedly delayed the appointment of the general manager after the establishment of the NNOC, and thus he became the *de facto* decision-maker of the company.

In mid-October 1973, the marketing department of the NNOC, without the consent of the FMMP, announced in *Petroleum Intelligence Weekly* that it would accept bids for crude oil procurement by October 19, and the deadline was later extended to November 15 due to the oil embargo.¹⁰ On November 19, the NNOC received a total of 119 bids, more than two-thirds of which were from American companies. Among all the bids, the highest price was US\$16.50/barrel, and the lowest price was US\$5.10/barrel.¹¹ According to the bidding process, the NNOC should have immediately signed a contract with the oil company with the highest bid and officially started exporting on January 1, 1974. However, this contract, which was supposed to be signed, ultimately

⁹ Paul D Collins, *Administration for development in Nigeria: Introduction and readings*, Transaction Publishers, 1980, pp. 88–90.

¹⁰ Paul D Collins, *Administration for development in Nigeria: Introduction and readings*, Transaction Publishers, 1980, pp. 119–120.

¹¹ Terisa Turner, Multinational corporations and the instability of the Nigerian state, *Review of African Political Economy* 3, no. 5, 1976.

was not successfully signed due to Asiodu's obstruction. This batch of government crude oil was repurchased by Shell-BP at the listed price of US\$14.691/barrel due to unsuccessful sales.¹² It is estimated that this incident caused the Nigerian government to lose approximately US\$1 billion in crude oil export revenue.¹³ Asiodu was able to successfully prevent the signing of this contract because the NNOC's crude oil export contracts must be signed by the general manager to take effect, and in the absence of a general manager, Asiodu, as chairman, exercised the relevant rights.

In July 1974, Asiodu established a Crude Oil Sales Committee directly under the FMMP to be responsible for the pricing and sales of government crude oil, further aggravating the dissatisfaction of technocrats within the NNOC.¹⁴ In early 1975, when the crude oil pricing proposal submitted by the NNOC to the FMMP was again rejected, the technocrats of the NNOC finally submitted a memorandum to the Federal Executive Council in March of the same year, requesting the Council to (1) delineate the functions of the NNOC, (2) clarify the power relationship between the FMMP and the NNOC, (3) remove the chairperson of the company, Asiodu, and (4) appoint a general manager. Although the national leader Yakubu Gowon established an investigative committee in late March, no serious investigation was conducted, nor was Asiodu removed from his position as chairperson of the NNOC; only the appointment of a general manager was agreed upon.¹⁵

The 1973 struggle between the NNOC and the FMMP over the right to sell crude oil is generally considered as a concentrated manifestation of the power struggle between the technocrats represented by the NNOC employees and the senior civil servants group represented by Asiodu. Although both technocrats and senior civil servants emphasized the untrustworthiness of local private capital and hoped for direct government cooperation with foreign companies, they differed in the mode

¹² Terisa Turner, Multinational corporations and the instability of the Nigerian state, *Review of African Political Economy* 3, no. 5, 1976.

¹³ Alan Hutchinson, An Economy floating on oil, *African Development*, London, March 1974, p. 27.

¹⁴ Paul D Collins, *Administration for development in Nigeria: Introduction and readings*, Transaction Publishers, 1980, p. 122.

¹⁵ Terisa Turner, Multinational corporations and the instability of the Nigerian state, *Review of African Political Economy* 3, no. 5, 1976.

of cooperation with foreign companies. The senior civil servant group preferred indirect cooperation with foreign-funded enterprises through local intermediaries, while the technocrats desired to directly cooperate with foreign-funded enterprises, bypassing intermediaries who had close relationships with the senior civil servant group. Terisa Turner views Nigerian state officials as “state compradors” and believes that these “state compradors” had established a “triangular relationship” with local merchants and foreign-funded enterprises as early as the colonial period, the core of which was characterized by local intermediaries being the “white gloves” for state officials to receive kickbacks from foreign-funded enterprises. For example, influenced by the intermediaries, state officials were willing to sell oil to certain foreign-funded enterprises at a lower price to obtain kickbacks from them. In fact, between 1974 and 1975, the crude oil price set by the NNOC in accordance with the OPEC pricing system was lowered several times by the FMMP, causing Nigeria’s crude oil selling prices to repeatedly violate OPEC’s single pricing system, with local intermediaries playing an important role in this process.¹⁶

The submission of a memorandum by the NNOC to the Federal Executive Council in March 1975 led to the publicization of the contradictions and conflicts between the technocrats and the senior civil servant group, resulting in increasingly severe division within the military ruling group. As an ethnic minority member from the north-central region, the then-leader Gowon had been elected to power in 1966. His political support came from his successful reconciling of the different interests of the northern, southwestern, and southeastern regions during Nigeria’s severe national division crisis. After the end of the Biafra civil war in 1970, Gowon began postwar reconstruction and selected a group of trusted senior civil servants as permanent secretaries in charge of policy formulation and implementation. The strong position of the senior civil servants’ group during this period aroused dissatisfaction within the military group. In July 1975, upon the recommendation of Asiodu, Gowon held a vote at the Federal Executive Council on the appointment of I.G.T. Ordor, then manager of the Port Harcourt refinery, as the general manager of the NNOC. The vote was not passed due to the objection of northern senior Muslim military officers, represented by Murtala Muhammed. However, Gowon insisted on announcing the appointment.

¹⁶ Terisa Turner, Multinational corporations and the instability of the Nigerian state, *Review of African Political Economy* 3, no. 5, 1976.

This action cause serious dissatisfaction among northern Muslim officers, including Muhammed.

2 REGIME CHANGE DURING THE OIL BOOM

In the mid-1970s, the monopoly of Gowon and his supporters over the country's oil wealth triggered serious discontent within the military group, and his refusal to advance the democratic transition as scheduled led to a severe legitimacy crisis for the military regime. Against this backdrop, the numerically superior northern military group seized power through a coup and successfully took control. Oil rents played a crucial role in promoting this process.

2.1 *The 1975 Coup and the Northern Military Group's Rise to Power*

In the early morning of July 29, 1975, while Gowon was in Uganda attending the Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit, Colonel Joseph Nanven Garba, who was in charge of Gowon's personal security, suddenly announced via radio the overthrow of Gowon's military regime:

*Fellow citizens, I, Colonel Joseph Nanven Garba, after consultation with my colleagues, hereby announce that, in view of the situation in our country over the past few months, the Nigerian Armed Forces have decided to make an adjustment to the leadership of the Federal Military Government. Effective immediately, General Yakubu Gowon is no longer the head of the Federal Military Government and the Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces... Fellow citizens, this is a bloodless operation, and we do not want anyone to lose their lives. Therefore, for your own sake, we warn you to obey the law. Anyone found disturbing public order will be dealt with immediately. We call for your cooperation in future work. Further announcements will be made in due course. Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria!*¹⁷

Faced with the sudden news of the coup, Gowon, who was far away in Uganda, chose to accept the situation and called on everyone to cooperate with the new government to maintain peace and unity in Nigeria. Then,

¹⁷ Moses O Ihonde, *First Call: An Account of the Gowon Years*, Lagos, Diamond Publications Limited, 2004, pp. 19–21.

he left for the University of Warwick in the United Kingdom to pursue a doctoral degree in political science, officially beginning his life in exile.¹⁸

The coup was led primarily by young northern Muslim officers. What they had in common was that they had all directly participated in the military coup of July 1966 but generally did not receive important political appointments in the Gowon's regime due to their relatively low military ranks. These mid-level officers included Joseph Nanven Garba, Ibrahim Babangida, Shehu Yar'Adua, and Ibrahim Taiwo, Abdullahi Mohammed, and Muhammadu Buhari. The northern Muslim officials who had successfully gained control of the military and state apparatus unanimously elected Murtala Muhammed as the new military leader. On July 30, Muhammed delivered a national speech, deliberately emphasizing that the regime under the leadership of Gowon handled national affairs with "a lack of consultation, indecision, lack of discipline, and even disregard," thus completely losing its legitimacy as a "corrective regime" and making the coup inevitable.¹⁹ In response to the intense nationwide debate on the legitimacy of the military regime, Muhammed stressed that the goal of the coup was to restore the image of the military and that measures would be taken to ensure that there would be no more military coups in the future.²⁰ On October 1, 1975, Muhammed promised to achieve democratic transition by October 1, 1979, and announced extensive institutional and administrative reforms, including the reorganization of the state power institutions, the amendment of the Constitution, the creation of new states, the construction of a new capital, and the implementation of a military demobilization plan.²¹

After forming new power institutions, Muhammed embarked on reforms to the economy and the military development, but this triggered political chaos and strong dissatisfaction among pro-Gowon factions,

¹⁸ Moses O Ihonde, *First Call: An Account of the Gowon Years*, Lagos, Diamond Publications Limited, 2004, p. 23; See also: Max Siollun, *Oil, politics and violence: Nigeria's military coup culture (1966–1976)*, New York, Algora Publishing, 2009, p. 181.

¹⁹ Claude S. Phillips, Nigeria's New Political Institutions, 1975–9, *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 18, no. 1 (2008).

²⁰ Leo O. Dare, On Leadership and Military Rule: the Case of Nigeria, Third Annual Conference of the Nigerian Political Science Association, University of Lagos, 22–4 November 1975.

²¹ Claude S. Phillips, Nigeria's New Political Institutions, 1975–9, *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 18, no. 1, 2008.

ultimately leading to his assassination on February 13, 1976. After Muhammed was assassinated, Olusegun Obasanjo, a senior Yoruba military officer from the south, took over as the new national leader and promised to continue leading the Supreme Military Council in implementing Muhammed's unfinished policies.²² To appease the northern Muslim officers represented by Muhammed, Obasanjo made an exception by promoting Lieutenant Colonel Shehu Musa Yar'Adua to the rank of brigadier general and appointing him as Chief of the General Staff, the position previously held by Obasanjo. Overall, the coup in July 1975 completely changed the structure of the military regime in Nigeria, breaking the military hierarchy established in the colonial period, as young northern military officers, represented by Muhammed, successfully seized the national leadership and began to rule. Although the countercoup in February 1976 led to the assassination of Muhammed, the Supreme Military Council, the country's highest decision-making body, remained firmly controlled by northern senior Muslim military officers.

2.2 *The Role of Oil in the 1975 Coup*

Although there is no direct evidence that the conflict between NNOC technocrats and permanent secretary Asiodu between 1973 and 1975 was the direct trigger for the coup, the massive influx of oil rents was an important factor leading to the coup.

In general, the influence of natural resources, such as oil, on politics is discussed from the perspective of their influence on government fiscal revenue and public expenditure. The wealth of natural resources is often directly owned by the government in the form of rents, which reduces the government's reliance on higher-cost income sources, such as taxes, and gives the government the power to freely distribute natural resource rents.²³ Thad Dunning systematically analyzed the political effects of oil resources. He noted that oil resource rents have both authoritarian and democratic effects in a rentier state, but whether oil resources ultimately

²² Claude S. Phillips, Nigeria's New Political Institutions, 1975–9, *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 18, no. 1, 2008.

²³ Hossein Mahdavy, The patterns and problems of economic development in rentier states: the case of Iran, *Studies in the economic history of the Middle East* 428, 1970; Hazem Beblawi, The rentier state in the Arab world, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 4, 1987, pp. 383–398.

promote authoritarianism or democracy depends on two key variables: the first variable is whether the rentier state is a resource-dependent state, and the second variable is whether there is an unevenly developed private sector in the state.

According to Dunning's analysis, the authoritarian effect of natural resources is influenced mainly by the variable of resource dependence, meaning that the greater the state's dependence on resources is, the more incentive the elites have to launch anti-democratic coups; conversely, the lower the state's dependence on resources is, the more the elites are inclined to maintain the status quo. Dunning chose to use the ratio of natural resource rent income to GDP to represent the degree of dependence. While this measurement method can effectively characterize the degree of dependence of a country on natural resources, it has two limitations. First, the standard for whether a country can be considered resource-dependent is subjective, and there is no evidence proving that countries with relatively low rent income ratios are necessarily less dependent on natural resources, as this depends on the domestic economic structure. Second, this characterization is static and unable to show the dynamic process of a country's dependence on oil. In fact, when a country is in a stage of rapid growth in natural resource rent income, its fiscal revenue and disposable wealth multiply, which may lead to more intense power struggles and even trigger undemocratic coups. Nigeria in the 1970s was precisely at this critical juncture. From 1970 to 1975, oil resource rents replaced import and export tariffs as the main source of revenue for the Nigerian government, and Nigeria gradually transformed from a postcolonial state to a state with oil resources. During this period, although Nigeria did not become a "resource-dependent state" as defined by Dunning, its oil rents increased enormously. Between 1973 and 1974, Nigeria's oil rents increased by at least four times, and the increase in oil revenue during this period accounted for approximately 45% of Nigeria's total real GDP in 1973.²⁴ The influx of oil rents both strengthened Gowon's willingness to maintain military rule and incentivized the northern Muslim military officers who supported Muhammed to overthrow Gowon's regime, eventually leading to the coup.

First, the massive influx of oil rents made Gowon more willing and motivated to retain power, which in turn led him to make the decision

²⁴ Sayre P. Schatz, *The Nigerian Economy since the Great Oil-Price Increases of 1973–74*, *Africa Today*, 29, no. 3, 1982.

in 1974 to delay the democratic transition indefinitely, sparking discontent within society and military groups. Since the military regime came to power in 1966, leaders had always claimed that military rule was only temporary and that the military regime was a “corrective regime,” with the core goal of eliminating tribalism and corruption in the political system. However, with the continuous growth of political power and oil wealth, Gowon faced a dilemma: undertaking a democratic transition would result in the rapid disappearance of his existing political support and thereby lead to his downfall, but not proceeding with the democratic transition would break his initial promise upon taking power, threatening the legitimacy of his regime. Eventually, Gowon announced on October 1, 1974, the indefinite postponement of the democratic transition, which not only led to a serious outcry in society but also further deepened rifts within the military.

Secondly, the massive influx of oil rents became a catalyst for ethnic division within the Nigerian military. In dictatorial or authoritarian countries with diverse ethnic groups, ethnic issues are often a significant factor affecting the support base of the rulers. In general, the most stable support for leaders under authoritarian rule comes from their own ethnic group. The smaller their ethnic group is, the greater the leaders’ motivation to allocate more power and economic benefits to it.²⁵ This approach can not only prevent the government from formulating effective economic policies but also weaken the support from other ethnic groups that the leader could win, thus leading to regime change.²⁶ In Nigeria in the early 1970s, the massive influx of oil wealth greatly increased the resources available for distribution by Gowon’s government. Because a large part of Gowon’s government comprised ethnic minorities from the central northern region with backgrounds similar to his, this group of people was able to gain a relatively large proportion of power and wealth, causing dissatisfaction among other ethnic groups, especially the northern Muslim group that had staged the coup in July 1966 to bring Gowon to power.

²⁵ Paul Collier, *The bottom billion: Why the poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it*, Oxford University Press, 2008.

²⁶ J. Craig Jenkins and Augustine J. Kposowa, The Political Origins of African Military Coups: Ethnic Competition, Military Centrality, and the Struggle over the Postcolonial State, *International Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 3, 1992.

Lastly, the widespread corruption resulting from the public expenditure of oil rents not only legitimized the coup but also continuously motivated the opposition within the military to stage a coup. Since the rent income from oil resources was obtained mostly by the government, the distribution of oil wealth was controlled mainly by political leaders. Due to the instability of Gowon's regime during this period, it was often necessary to spend a large amount of oil rent to buy political support. Between 1974 and 1975, many corruption cases within the Nigerian government were exposed, which further eroded the legitimacy of Gowon's regime. The corruption meant that Gowon had failed to establish a "corrective regime" as he had promised; instead, the government had become deeply entangled in tribalism and corruption scandals like the previous First Republic. On the other hand, the disclosure of corruption cases also made the northern mid-level Muslim military officers, who were directly involved in the July 1966 coup, acutely aware of the immense wealth brought by political power. Their dissatisfaction with Gowon's long-term control over power and oil wealth also motivated them to seize power directly through a coup.

3 EXPANSION OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Faced with the massive influx of oil rents, the Muhammed/Obasanjo military regime implemented a series of important development plans and decrees during its tenure in power to promote the development of the public sector, making it quickly surpass the private economy to become the main economic sector of the state. By the time the Muhammed/Obasanjo military regime handed over power to the democratically elected president Shehu Shagari in 1979, the production value, investment ratio, and employment of the public sector had all surpassed those of the private sector, making it the core pillar of the national economy. First, the share of Nigeria's public sector to gross capital formation increased from 25.1% in 1973 to 60.7% in 1979, while the share of the private sector fell from 74.9 to 39.3%.²⁷ Second, in 1979, the investment of the public sector in Nigeria accounted for 55.2% of that year's GDP, while the investment of the private sector accounted for

²⁷ Peter Michael Lewis, *The political economy of public enterprise in Nigeria*, Ph.D. Thesis, Princeton University, 1992, p. 207.

Table 3 Distribution of gross capital formation to the public and private sectors (1973–1980) (unit: million naira)

Year	Public sector		Private sector		Total
	Amount	Percentage	Amount	Percentage	Amount
1973	582.8	25.1	1743.0	74.9	2325.8
1974	858.0	28.5	2151.9	71.5	3009.9
1975	1913.7	39.4	2945.2	60.6	4858.9
1976	3896.1	50.0	3903.5	50.0	7799.6
1977	5247.8	55.0	4301.0	45.0	9548.8
1978	5866.3	55.3	4751.0	44.7	10,617.3
1979	6618.4	60.7	4279.3	39.3	10,897.7
1980	7409.5	57.2	5549.7	42.8	12,959.2

Data source Lewis, PM, *The political economy of public enterprise in Nigeria*. (Ph.D. thesis). Princeton University, 1992, p. 207

only 44.8%.²⁸ Finally, the number of employees in the public sector grew continuously. Although specific data are not available, it is estimated from the data for the period from 1973 to 1975 that the number of civil servants in the federal, state, and local governments and the number of employees in state-owned enterprises, universities, primary and secondary schools, and other official institutions increased by approximately 50,000 annually.²⁹ This subsection focuses on the core economic goals of the Muhammed/Obasanjo military regime during this period and the specific economic policies implemented to achieve these goals (Table 3).

3.1 *Economic Goals of the Northern Military Group*

The northern military group's rise to power changed the political status of the senior civil servant group represented by the permanent secretaries. A large number of permanent secretaries or senior civil servants were dismissed or demoted following the fall of the Gowon regime. In contrast,

²⁸ Peter Michael Lewis, *The political economy of public enterprise in Nigeria*, Ph.D. Thesis, Princeton University, 1992, p. 206; See also Tom Forrest, "The political economy of civil rule and the economic crisis in Nigeria (1979–84)," *Review of African Political Economy* 13, no. 35, 1986.

²⁹ Peter Michael Lewis, *The political economy of public enterprise in Nigeria*, Ph.D. Thesis, Princeton University, 1992, p. 209.

northern Muslim elites, represented by the Kaduna Mafia, began to enter the political arena on a large scale with the support of the northern military group. The Kaduna Mafia originated from the well-known historic city of Kaduna in northern Nigeria. Its core goal was to safeguard the political, economic, and religious interests of the northern region. It was composed of elites from various fields, including politicians, intellectuals, senior government bureaucrats, businessmen, farm owners, and military officers in the north. Many members of the Kaduna Mafia graduated from Katsina College, founded in 1921 by then British Governor Hugh Clifford.³⁰ This college was the first Western-style boarding secondary school established for Muslims in northern Nigeria, renowned for training a large number of politically influential northern elites. Well-known northern political figures and nobles, such as Tafawa Balewa, Yakubu Gowon, Murtala Muhammed, Shehu Shagari, and Shehu Yar'Adua, all attended this school. Although there are no detailed historical records of the founding process of the Kaduna Mafia, available information confirms that it led the military coup in July 1966 and rapidly grew into a significant political force during Gowon's regime.

After isolating the permanent secretaries from policy-making, the northern military group headed by Muhammed recruited a large number of highly educated young technocrats with close ties to the Kaduna Mafia into the Cabinet Office Political Department.³¹ The core difference between these young technocrats and the previous permanent secretaries is that they were younger, had closer ties to academia, and held a more radical northern nationalist perspective, therefore making them more enthusiastic about economic reforms. Although their administrative positions were not high, they could directly communicate with top decision-making bodies through personal connections and sometimes even directly influenced the leaders' decisions. Influenced by these young technocrats, Muhammed's and Obasanjo's governance philosophies clearly leaned toward the Neo-Marxist trend of thought prevalent across the entire African continent during this period, which aimed

³⁰ In 1921, then British Governor-General Hugh Clifford established a boarding school in Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria, originally named Katsina College. It underwent several name changes, becoming Kaduna College, Government College Zaria, and Zaria Secondary School, finally renamed as Barewa College in 1971.

³¹ O'Brien, D. C., Dunn, J., & Rathbone, R. *Contemporary West African States*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. p. 126.

to achieve self-sufficient economic development by strengthening state intervention and regulation of the economy.³²

Against this backdrop, the Muhammed/Obasanjo military regime set two important economic goals, namely, enhancing the government's ability to control and intervene in the economy and rapidly achieving industrial development. First, the economic goal of enhancing the government's control and intervention in the economy was not only a response to the Neo-Marxist trend in that period but also a positive response by the northern military group to the severe imbalance in economic development between the northern and southern regions. For a long time after independence, foreign capital and Yoruba commercial capital, mainly based in the Lagos region, dominated the domestic market. With the large-scale development of oil resources in the southeastern region in the 1960s, the imbalance between the economic shares of northern and southern regions became more severe. Driven by nationalism and the priority of northern interests, the northern elites neither trusted foreign capital nor wanted southern commercial capital to dominate the national economy. Therefore, they chose to support a more active role of the public sector in national economic activities. Second, due to the combined effects of nationalism and the sharp increase in oil export revenues, Nigerians' national self-confidence and pride increased significantly in the mid-to-late 1970s. The successful hosting of the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture in 1977 (FESTAC'77) further convinced Nigeria that it should become a leading country not only in West Africa but also on the African continent. This thinking was reflected in the economic sector with the government's desire to rapidly realize the industrialization of the country.

3.2 *Economic Policies Supported by Oil Rents*

To achieve these two economic goals, the Muhammed/Obasanjo military regime chose to spend a large portion of crude oil export revenues on the implementation of the Third National Development Plan (NDP) (1975–1980) and the amendment to the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree of 1977. The Third NDP attempted to achieve rapid industrialization through the construction of new infrastructure, an increase in the

³² O'Brien, D. C., Dunn, J., & Rathbone, R. *Contemporary West African States*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. p. 126.

supply of public services, and large-scale investment in government industrial projects. The amendment to the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree of 1977 emphasized the government's control and supervision of economic activities through the acquisition of shares in foreign-funded enterprises.

3.2.1 *The Third NDP (1975–1980)*

The Third NDP was issued and officially implemented in March 1975. Although the Gowon military regime that formulated the plan was overthrown in July of the same year, the Muhammed/Obasanjo military regime continued this development plan. Compared with the first two NDPs, the most significant change in the Third NDP was the substantial increase in the amount of investment to 30 billion naira,³³ while the investment amounts in the First and Second NDPs were only 2.2 and 3.0 billion Nigerian pounds, respectively. The core factor leading to this increase was that the influx of oil wealth convinced the government that “during and after the third plan period, there will be no constraints on savings and foreign exchange,”³⁴ thereby necessitating the use of oil revenues to achieve self-reliance as soon as possible. To this end, the Third NDP set out a series of goals, including an increase in per capita income, a more equitable income distribution, a reduction in unemployment, an increase in the high-level labor supply, economic diversification, balanced development, and the realization of localized economic activities.³⁵

Within these goals, the Muhammed/Obasanjo military regime focused on balanced development and industrialization. On the one hand, the military government chose to achieve balanced development by strengthening infrastructure construction and public services in different regions. In addition to supporting public transportation and postal communications, the government focused on sectors that could directly affect the welfare of ordinary citizens, including housing, water supply, healthcare,

³³ The naira is the official currency issued by the Nigerian government in 1973. Before the issuance of the naira, the official currency of Nigeria was the Nigerian pound, which was equivalent to the British pound. During the initial issuance, the exchange rate between the naira and the British pound was 2:1.

³⁴ Nigeria Federal Ministry of Economic Development, Central Planning Office. *Third National Development Plan, 1975–80*, Lagos: Federal Government Printer, 1975, p. 48.

³⁵ Nigeria, Federal Ministry of Economic Development, Central Planning Office. *Third National Development Plan, 1975–80*, Lagos: Federal Government Printer, p. 29.

education, and rural power grid construction.³⁶ In terms of investment proportion, the planned amount of investment in the four sectors of electricity and water supply, transportation and communications, education, and healthcare was 9 billion naira, accounting for 30% of the total investment.³⁷ On the other hand, the military government regarded industrial development as the core means for Nigeria to achieve economic development. In the Third NDP, the amount of investment in the fields of mining and quarrying as well as in manufacturing and handicrafts alone reached 8.3 billion naira, accounting for 27.7% of the total investment.³⁸ In industrial investment, the government often participated in operation and profit distribution by purchasing shares in the private sector, while in the public sector, the government mostly established wholly state-owned enterprises or joint ventures with foreign-funded enterprises. In particular, the government chose to invest and set up factories in strategic industrial sectors, such as steel, cement, oil refining, and automobile assembly, all of which were capital-intensive industrial projects with large investment scales and high technical levels.³⁹ The most famous project was the Ajaokuta Steel Plant project, officially signed with the former Soviet Union in 1979, with a project value of US\$1 billion (620 million naira).⁴⁰ By 1980, 20% of federal revenue was spent on the industrial sector.⁴¹

Whether in public services, such as electric power and communications, or in strategic industrial sectors, such as steel, cement, and automobile assembly, the government preferred industrial projects with large investment scale and high technical levels. These industrial projects were promoted mainly through cooperation between the government and

³⁶ An Olufemi Lewis, Nigeria's third national development plan, 1975–80: An appraisal of objectives and policy frame, *The developing economies* 15, no. 1, 1977.

³⁷ Nigeria, Federal Ministry of Economic Development, Central Planning Office. *Third National Development Plan, 1975–80*, Lagos: Federal Government Printer, 1975, p. 53.

³⁸ Nigeria, Federal Ministry of Economic Development, Central Planning Office. *Third National Development Plan, 1975–80*, Lagos: Federal Government Printer, 1975, p53.

³⁹ Darlington Chikwem Richards, *Military governments and economic development: A case study of Nigeria from 1960 to 2000*, Ph.D. thesis, Sheffield Hallam University, 2001, p. 248.

⁴⁰ Oluwole Olatunji, Causations of failure in megaprojects: A case study of the Ajaokuta Steel Plant project, *Frontiers of Engineering Management* 5, no. 3, 2018.

⁴¹ David Bevan, Paul Collier, and Jan Willem Gunning, *The political economy of poverty, equity and growth: Nigeria and Indonesia*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 61.

foreign-funded enterprises. During the colonial period, foreign-funded enterprises in Nigeria were mainly British. However, after Nigeria gained independence in 1960, and especially after the northern military group came to power in 1975, the federal military government adopted a more aggressive and independent foreign policy, making foreign-funded enterprises more diverse in cooperation. For example, regarding steel investment projects during this period, in 1976, the Nigerian government officially signed a contract with a consortium of German and Austrian companies to invest in the establishment of the Delta Steel Company; in 1979, the government signed a contract with the Tyajz Prom Export (TPE) company of the former Soviet Union to establish the Ajaokuta Steel Company; in the same year, the government signed contracts with a consortium of European and Japanese companies to establish three inland rolling mills in Oshogbo, Jos, and Katsina.⁴² Overall, it is difficult to make a brief summary of the Nigerian government's criteria for selecting foreign-funded companies for cooperation because the bidding for projects was often not public. Nevertheless, the only certainty is that although the vast majority of the industrial projects were 100% owned by the government, due to a severe shortage of local professionals, the government was responsible only for providing funds during the advancement of the projects and had difficulty controlling and supervising the progress and specific operations of the industrial projects (Table 4).

3.2.2 *Amendment to the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree of 1977*

While implementing the Third NDP, the federal military government passed an amendment to the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree in January 1977 to address the issues of excessive capital concentration and the north–south imbalance that had existed since the decree was first promulgated in 1972.⁴³ The core goal of this decree was to localize industries originally controlled by foreign capital; hence, it is often

⁴² Adegbite, O. (2021). The Nigerian Steel Industry: Retrospect and Prospect. In: *Perspectives on Industrial Development in Nigeria. Advances in African Economic, Social and Political Development*. Springer.

⁴³ Ismaila Mohammed, The Nigerian enterprises promotion decrees (1972 and 1977) and indigenization in Nigeria, Ph.D. thesis, University of Warwick, 1985, pp. 135–136.

Table 4 Investment distribution in the Third NDP (unit: million naira)

<i>Department</i>	<i>Public sector investment</i>	<i>Private sector investment</i>	<i>Total investment</i>
Agriculture	1300	1200	2500
Mining and quarrying	1400	1100	2500
Manufacturing and handicrafts	3800	2000	5800
Electricity and water supply	1000	–	1000
Building and construction	–	2700	2700
Wholesale	100	1400	1500
Transportation and Communication	5500	500	6000
General government expenditure	3000	–	3000
Education	1500	–	1500
Healthcare	400	100	500
Others	2000	1000	3000
Total	20,000	10,000	30,000

Data source Nigerian Federal Ministry of Economic Development, Central Planning Office. *Third National Development Plan, 1975–80*, Lagos: Federal Government Printer, 1975, p. 53

referred to as the Indigenization Decree.⁴⁴ After Muhammed came to power, he established a committee on November 17, 1975, to review the implementation of the decree and appointed Oluwole Adeosun as the chairperson of the committee. Most of the committee members had rich government work experience and supported the government in playing a more active role in the economic production and financial fields, but they also had strong suspicion and distrust of local commercial capital.⁴⁵

At the suggestion of Adeosun, the federal government formally promulgated an amendment to the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree in January 1977. Compared to the 1972 version, this amendment made major adjustments in terms of the scope of enterprises covered and

⁴⁴ Regarding the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree, please refer to the following study: Biersteker, T. J., *Multinationals, the State and Control of the Nigerian Economy*, Princeton University Press, 1987.

⁴⁵ Biersteker, T. J., *Multinationals, the State and Control of the Nigerian Economy*, Princeton University Press, 1987, p. 163.

the model of equity sales. First, the amendment readjusted the classification of industries, bringing almost all economic activities in Nigeria within the scope of this decree. The number of industries included in Schedule I, which were open only to local capital, increased from the original 22–40. For the industries included in Schedule II, the original requirement that local capital accounted for no less than 40% was adjusted to no less than 60%, and the number of industries covered increased from 33 to 57. The amendment included all remaining foreign-funded enterprises in the newly created Schedule III, involving a total of 38 industries, and these foreign-funded enterprises were required to sell at least 40% of their shares to local capital. Second, the amendment modified the model for equity sales of enterprises. Article 9 of the amendment stipulated that all foreign-funded enterprises must obtain approval from the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Board (NEPB) or the Capital Issues Commission (CIC) before selling and transferring their equity, while private trading was allowed under the original 1972 decree.⁴⁶ Article 11 of the amendment further stipulated that the equity of enterprises should be as dispersed as much as possible to prevent a few Yoruba capitalists in Lagos from holding a large amount of equity as before. Specifically, the decree required that no individual could hold more than 5% of shares or shares worth more than 50,000 naira, and those who already held more than 5% of shares or shares worth more than 50,000 naira were not allowed to acquire any additional shares. In addition, the decree stipulated that companies listed in Schedules II and III were required to reserve 10% of their shares for employees to emphasize the principles of common participation and equality.⁴⁷ To better distribute equity, the CIC formed an “allotment committee” consisting of representatives from the NEPB, the Nigerian Stock Exchange, and relevant companies. The distribution of equity by state was an important criterion for the CIC’s work. According to relevant rules, all state governments could obtain 1–1.5% of the sold shares depending on the size of the enterprises.⁴⁸

It is worth noting that the implementation of the 1977 amendment also had a profound impact on the Nigeria’s banking industry. Before

⁴⁶ Nigerian Federal Government, *Nigeria Enterprises Promotion Decree 1977*, Article 9.

⁴⁷ Biersteker, T. J., *Multinationals, the State and Control of the Nigerian Economy*, Princeton University Press, 1987, pp. 190–194.

⁴⁸ Biersteker, T. J., *Multinationals, the State and Control of the Nigerian Economy*, Princeton University Press, 1987, pp. 207–208.

the implementation of the amendment, most banks in Nigeria were controlled by foreign capital. In particular, at the time, the three largest foreign banks in Nigeria controlled 84% of the country's deposits and 75% of the loans and handled 85% of international banking transactions.⁴⁹ Since the banking industry was included in Schedule II under the 1977 amendment, all foreign-funded banks were required to sell at least 60% of their shares. To meet the regulatory needs of the banking industry, the federal government chose to participate directly in the localization of the banking industry through equity acquisition, and the Central Bank of Nigeria selected representatives to serve as executive directors in the banks. Faced with this aggressive nationalization policy, some foreign banks, represented by Citibank of the United States, chose to withdraw directly from the Nigerian market, but more foreign banks chose to accept nationalization and localization. As a result, the federal government quickly gained control over the banking and financial industry, and the vast majority of senior management positions in the domestic banking industry were quickly taken over by Nigerians. According to statistics, in 1975, foreign employees made up 9% of the total management of the three largest commercial banks in Nigeria, but this percentage dropped to 1% by 1982.⁵⁰

3.3 *Classification and Characteristics of the Public Sector*

Through the Third NDP and the amendment to the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree of 1977, a large amount of crude oil export revenue went to the public sector. The industrial sector created during this period had three main characteristics: wide coverage, concentration of investment in capital-intensive activities, and extensive cooperation with foreign-funded enterprises.

3.3.1 *Wide Coverage*

Nigeria's public sector had very wide coverage. In terms of the type of business activity, parastatal enterprises can be divided into commercial corporate entities and noncommercial corporate entities in which the

⁴⁹ Biersteker, T. J., *Multinationals, the State and Control of the Nigerian Economy*, Princeton University Press, 1987, p. 60.

⁵⁰ Biersteker, T. J., *Multinationals, the State and Control of the Nigerian Economy*, Princeton University Press, 1987, pp. 233–234.

government held shares. In 1981, a report released by the Presidential Commission on the Parastatal Sector recommended that parastatal enterprises be divided into seven categories, including nonprofit enterprises that relied on government finances and fully commercialized enterprises that were controlled by the government.⁵¹ According to incomplete statistics from the Commission, there were at least 832 parastatal enterprises in Nigeria in the early 1980s, including 287 nonprofit and 545 for-profit enterprises.⁵² The business scope of nonprofit parastatal enterprises included supervision, cultural and sports activities, development planning, research institutions, medical institutions, libraries, and social insurance, while the business scope of for-profit parastatal enterprises included manufacturing, public facilities, transportation and communications, mining, agriculture, finance, shipping, and agricultural product marketing.

In terms of ownership, parastatal enterprises can be divided into those owned by federal governments and those owned by state governments. Under the federal system, parastatal enterprises owned by the federal government and state governments were independent of each other and differed in terms of enterprise size and business scope. Although the number of parastatal enterprises owned by the federal government was significantly less than that owned by state governments, these enterprises were often large and occupied basic and strategic industries, including major industrial projects in electricity, railway, aviation, shipping, ports, telecommunications, fuel, and steel, as well as banking. In contrast, the parastatal enterprises owned by state governments were small, mostly involving medium-sized manufacturing, auxiliary infrastructure, social and economic services, regional agriculture, and regional financial services.

Parastatal enterprises can also be classified by their legal status into statutory corporations, state-owned companies, and limited liability companies. Statutory corporations were the core of Nigeria's public economy. In the early 1980s, there were approximately 50 statutory corporations operated by the federal government, mainly including enterprises with a focus on public services and strategic industries, such

⁵¹ Nigerian Federal Government, *Report of the Presidential Commission on Parastatals*, Lagos, 1981.

⁵² Lewis, P. M. *The political economy of public enterprise in Nigeria*, Ph.D. Thesis, Princeton University, 1992, p. 274.

as the NNOC, the National Electric Power Authority, the Nigerian Railway Corporation, and the Central Bank of Nigeria. The state-owned companies covered a relatively wide range of businesses, mainly general manufacturing, commercial, and agricultural enterprises, and included the Ajaokuta Steel Company, Nigerian Machine Tools, Nigerian Telecommunications, and Nigerian Paper Mills. Most of the remaining parastatal enterprises were limited liability companies, many of which were joint ventures nationalized through the Indigenization Decree, including various joint venture cement companies, automobile assembly companies, and oil companies.

3.3.2 *Concentration on Capital-Intensive Activities*

Government investment in the public sector was concentrated mainly in strategic industrial sectors and infrastructure sectors. Although it is difficult to obtain specific investment data for the public sector after the Third NDP, based on a survey of parastatal enterprises conducted by the military regime of Ibrahim Babangida in 1986, we find that the federal government's shareholding in parastatal enterprises in the early 1980s was concentrated mainly in industrial sectors and infrastructure sectors, such as transportation and communications, accounting for more than 90%.⁵³ In 1985, out of the federal government's investment of 11.431 billion naira in parastatal enterprises, 52 wholly federal government-owned enterprises received 93% of the total investment, among which eight companies, including Nigerian Telecommunications, Nigeria Postal Service, NNOC, Ajaokuta Steel Company, and National Electric Power Authority, received 78% of the total investment.⁵⁴

These investments were all capital-intensive activities, whether in the construction of infrastructure, such as transportation and communications, or in the production of crude oil and steel. The public economy was oriented toward capital-intensive industries because the Nigerian government had a large amount of discretionary fiscal revenue, and the leadership group, especially the young northern nationalist technocrats led by Murtala Muhammed, had a vision of national development in the context of the oil boom. David L. Bevan et al. point out that,

⁵³ Lewis, P. M. *The political economy of public enterprise in Nigeria*, Ph.D. Thesis, Princeton University, 1992, p. 287.

⁵⁴ Lewis, P. M. *The political economy of public enterprise in Nigeria*, Ph.D. Thesis, Princeton University, 1992, p. 288.

[T]he industrial planners revealed preferences (in the 1975 development plan) for “glamorous” industrial activities with a high-technology, real engineering, or high value added component, and they offered fiscal incentives to favor such activities over low-technology projects, light industry, and elementary industries such as textiles and foodstuffs. In part these preferences reflected a notion of what the pattern of activities in a developed economy should look like. To follow that pattern was to become developed. The private sector would do only the “easy” (profitable) activities, leaving the public sector to do the “difficult” (unprofitable) activities.⁵⁵

3.3.3 *Reliance on Cooperation with Foreign-Funded Enterprises*

During the oil boom, the operation of the Nigerian public sector relied heavily on cooperation with foreign-funded enterprises. Since the colonial period, Nigeria’s public investment projects had had a tradition of cooperating with foreign-funded enterprises, especially British enterprises. For example, in crude oil exploration and production, before the discovery of commercially recoverable crude oil, the oil exploration and production in Nigeria were entirely owned by the British enterprise Shell-BP. After independence, Nigeria’s economy continued to be dominated by foreign capital, and the government’s public investment projects, including hydropower stations, roads, and oil refineries, continued to be built jointly by the government and foreign-funded enterprises. The oil boom in the 1970s led to a shift in the cooperation model between the government and foreign-funded enterprises; i.e., industrial projects no longer relied on loans and financing from foreign-funded enterprises but were 100% owned by the government, while foreign-funded enterprises only signed relevant contracts with the government serving as technology and service suppliers (Table 5).

In fact, the government’s preference for capital-intensive industrial projects with large investment scale and high technical levels forced the government to choose to cooperate with foreign-funded enterprises. First, during this period, local private capital was mostly concentrated in commercial trade and small to medium-sized manufacturing industries, lacking the capital scale or technical level to undertake capital-intensive industrial projects. Second, local private capital was controlled mostly by southern entrepreneurs, especially Yoruba entrepreneurs from Lagos, who

⁵⁵ David Bevan, Paul Collier, and Jan Willem Gunning, *The political economy of poverty, equity and growth: Nigeria and Indonesia*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 63–4.

Table 5 Distribution of the federal government of Nigeria's shareholding in parastatal enterprises (unit: million naira)

	< 50%		50-99%		100%		Total	
	Amount	Quantity	Amount	Quantity	Amount	Quantity	Amount	Quantity
Industry	271.1	18	222.7	26	3548	19	4041.8	63
Transportation/ commercial	-	-	-	-	1709	12	1709	12
Communication/ media	n/a	1	-	-	2857	10	2857	11
Midstream and downstream petroleum operations	-	-	18	2	2087	2	2105	4
Energy	-	-	-	-	256.3	1	256.3	1
Banking	48	2	224	10	296	6	568	18
Insurance	11	14	-	-	30	2	41	16
Hotel/travel	-	1	5.9	1	37.6	3	43.5	4
Total	330.1	35	470.6	39	10,820.9	55	11,621.6	129
								100

Data source: Lewis, P.M., *The political economy of public enterprise in Nigeria*, Ph.D. thesis, Princeton University, 1992, p. 287.

were often seen by northern nationalists as symbols of selfishness and corruption, and was thus not favored by the government. Most importantly, Nigeria lacked the necessary professional knowledge and technical talent pool. Since Nigeria's independence, the shortage of professional and technical personnel had been a key limiting factor for domestic economic development in both the public and private sectors. This was particularly evident during the implementation of the Third NDP. Although the government attempted to increase the supply of professional and technical personnel by establishing new universities, this could not solve the short-term talent shortage.⁵⁶ Therefore, even if the government successfully completed the creation of large industrial enterprises, subsequent production and operation still required equipment maintenance and production management support from foreign-funded enterprises.

4 THE WHOLE OPERATION PROCESS OF INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS: AN OIL RENT DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

4.1 *Formation of the Oil Rent Distribution System*

During the rapid expansion of the public sector, industrial projects in Nigeria became part of an oil rent distribution system led by a group of political leaders, with multiple interest groups participating and centered on industrial investment projects. Before the sharp increase in international crude oil prices in 1973, Nigeria's industrialization development model was similar to that of most newly independent African countries south of the Sahara. First, the purchase prices of agricultural products were lowered through the marketing board system created in the colonial period to obtain agricultural surplus. Then, the government redistributed the agricultural surplus to the industrial sector in the form of loans. At the same time, the government formulated protective policies to protect the development of local industries by restricting foreign competitors through import licenses and limiting domestic competitors through foreign exchange quotas and business licenses. Robert H. Bates provides a detailed analysis of this industrialization system in *Markets and States in*

⁵⁶ Nwosu, H. N, Nigerias Third National Development Plan, 1975–80: Major Problems to Implementation. *Africa Today*, 24(4), 1977.

*Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Policies.*⁵⁷ However, the massive influx of oil wealth in 1973 led oil rents to replace agricultural surplus as the capital source for the Nigerian government to promote industrialization, completely changing the path of industrial development in Nigeria.

First, the government became the leader of industrial development. The control of large amounts of oil rents provided the government with the resources to directly participate in the economy, and parastatal enterprises completely replaced foreign-funded enterprises as the leaders of Nigeria's industrial development. In terms of quantity, there were more than 800 parastatal enterprises in Nigeria by the early 1980s, and even if nonprofit parastatal enterprises were excluded, there were still more than 500 for-profit parastatal enterprises. In contrast, among other Sub-Saharan African countries, Tanzania had the largest number of parastatal enterprises, with approximately 400, while other countries generally had fewer than 200. In terms of capital formation, Nigeria's parastatal enterprises accounted for more than 50% of the country's GDP, while in other Sub-Saharan African countries, the proportion was mostly in the range of 10–20%.⁵⁸ It is worth noting that while parastatal enterprises gained dominance of industrial development, domestic private capital was restricted to commerce, small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises, and construction industries. Although foreign capital lost its majority equity position in the industrial sector after two indigenization decrees, it still held control and management rights in many large and medium-sized multinational enterprises and became the main cooperative partner of the government in establishing parastatal enterprises. In fact, almost all parastatal enterprises had one or two foreign-funded enterprises providing technology, machinery and equipment, and management and operation services, while the government participated in the operation of the enterprises only as a regulator and fund provider.

Second, industrial projects became the main target for the distribution of oil rents. Compared with that in the first two NDPs, the investment amount in the Third NDP formulated in 1975 increased by more than 10

⁵⁷ Robert H. Bates, *Markets and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Policies*, Jilin Publishing Group Co., Ltd., 2011.

⁵⁸ John R Nellis, *Public enterprises in sub-Saharan Africa*, Washington, DC: World Bank, 1986, pp. 5–7; 另见Lewis, P. M. *The political economy of public enterprise in Nigeria*, Ph.D. thesis, Princeton University, 1992, p. 275.

times, far exceeding the investment in industrial development during the period when the government relied on the export of primary agricultural products. In fact, with the substantial increase in crude oil export revenues in 1973, the problem facing the Nigerian government quickly shifted from how to increase government revenue to maintain a balanced budget to how to distribute large amounts of oil rents. The government significantly increased domestic wage levels in 1974, but this quickly triggered a series of episodes of economic chaos and social unrest, including severe inflation and commodity shortages. Gowon even made the famous remark in a foreign interview, “Money is not Nigeria’s problem, but how to spend it.”⁵⁹ To prevent triggering economic chaos again, manufacturing, infrastructure construction, public services, and strategic industrial sectors became the core avenues for the government to distribute oil rents. This choice was made not only because investing in industrial sectors fit with the Nigerian political elite’s imagination of the operating logic of developed economies but also because these sectors have the capacity to absorb large amounts of capital. From this perspective, although the substantial increase in investment in the industrial sector aligned with the needs of the Nigerian government for industrial development, it was more an inevitable choice for the government when faced with the need to rapidly distribute oil rents to prevent economic chaos.

Finally, the government had a high degree of autonomy in the selection of industrial investment projects. Before the oil boom, since the investment in industrial development came mainly from the government’s redistribution of the agricultural surplus, the government often faced pressure from various parties regarding the selection and implementation of industrial investment projects and challenges including limited investment scale, the joint venture ownership model, and stringent supervision. However, its vast oil wealth gave the Nigerian government a high degree of autonomy in project selection. The political group did not need to consider the investment costs of projects or worry about the people holding it accountable for the formulation and implementation of the projects. Many studies have demonstrated that for countries with abundant natural resources, the large amount of rental income severely weakens the supervision of government fiscal expenditures, granting the

⁵⁹ Collins Olayinka, At 80 Gowon Explains—‘Nigeria’s Problem Is Not Money, but How to Spend It’, *the Guardian*, 19 October 2014; See also: Bridgette Kasuka, *Prominent African leaders since independence*, Bankole Kamara Taylor, 2012, p. 334.

government more autonomy in fiscal spending, mainly because the emergence of rent income means that the government no longer relies on taxes.⁶⁰ The consequence of this autonomy is that the government prefers to formulate large-scale investment projects regardless of feasibility, and there is a lack of supervision and accountability in the project execution process. For example, for the Ajaokuta Steel Plant project, even though the partnering former Soviet company conducted a feasibility study as required by the government and submitted a detailed report in 1977, the Russian report was not translated and carefully evaluated by the Nigerian government. Instead, the contract was directly signed in 1979 without any protest or objections.⁶¹

It is noteworthy that in this oil rent distribution system there was neither an authoritative leader capable of macroscopic control nor professional technical personnel coordinating the implementation of different industrial investment projects. As a result, the operation of this distribution system relied entirely on decentralized and uncoordinated industrial investment projects rather than a clearly defined goal and overall planning for industrial development. During the oil boom in the 1970s, Nigeria was still deeply influenced by tribalism, which severely affected the attention and control of national leaders over industrialization. Although the northern military group seized power in 1975, its leader, Muhammed, was assassinated by a minority ethnic group in the north-central region less than a year after he took office. National leadership was then assumed by Obasanjo, a Yoruba from southwestern Nigeria. This political environment, characterized by ethnic and regional identity, often led to fragile political support for leaders⁶² that made it difficult for them to use their authority to formulate and implement long-term plans for economic development. Instead, they tended to use distribution as a means to gain political support. At the specific implementation level, there were numerous aspects, such as infrastructure construction, raw material imports, and financing, that needed coordination and adjustment within each project and between different projects. However, the severe

⁶⁰ Collier, P., *The bottom billion: Why the poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it*: Oxford University Press, 2008, Chapter 3.

⁶¹ Gbolahan Alli-Balogun, Soviet Technical Assistance and Nigeria's Steel Complex, *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 26, no. 4, 1988.

⁶² Collier, P., *The bottom billion: Why the poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it*: Oxford University Press, 2008, Chapter 3.

shortage of professional and technical personnel in the public sector and the fragmented power distribution between the federal government and the state governments made it almost impossible to achieve coordinated development among projects.⁶³

4.2 Operation Mode of the Oil Rent Distribution System

In this government-led distribution system with industrial investment projects at the core, oil rents were distributed among different groups in a specific funnel-shaped order. Specifically, through industrial investment projects, Nigeria's oil rent distribution system had four main stages: project approval, construction, operation, and output (Fig. 1).

In the project approval stage, the political leadership group and foreign-funded enterprises were the main beneficiaries of oil rent distribution. Public investment projects were proposed mainly by political officers and senior civil servants in charge of relevant departments of

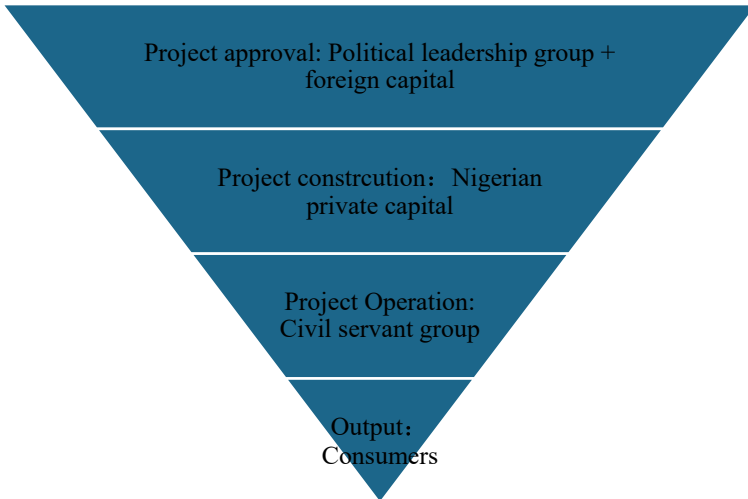


Fig. 1 Oil rent distribution system in the operation of industrial projects

⁶³ Nwosu, H. N., Nigeria's Third National Development Plan, 1975–80: Major Problems to Implementation. *Africa Today*, 24(4), 1977.

the Supreme Military Council and the Federal Executive Council, and the selection of cooperating foreign-funded enterprises was subject to the approval of the Federal Executive Council. In most cases, the selection of foreign-funded enterprises for cooperation was not public, and the government did not have a strong preference for large European and American multinational enterprises but tended to cooperate with foreign-funded enterprises from different countries, including the former Soviet Union, Japan, and India. After selection of the cooperating enterprise, the two parties negotiated and signed contracts regarding the investment scale, technology transfer, operation management, and equity arrangement of the project. As mentioned above, Nigerian government officials preferred to invest in large-scale, high-tech capital-intensive industrial projects, which also aligned with the interests of foreign-funded enterprises, because this meant that the enterprises could not only win larger project contracts but also gain continuous revenue through subsequent machinery and equipment maintenance and operational guidance.

In the construction stage, the main beneficiaries of oil rent distribution were local private enterprises. The development of various industrial projects first required the construction of office buildings and factory plants and the installation and commissioning of machinery and equipment, which promoted the vigorous development of the Nigerian construction industry. In 1977, the construction industry was classified under Schedule II in the second indigenization decree; that is, the equity share of local capital should not be less than 60%, meaning that Nigeria's local private capital began to dominate the domestic construction industry. The large number of industrial investment projects greatly stimulated local construction contractors, resulting in an annual growth rate of 27% in the construction industry during this period, far exceeding the growth rates of 13% for the manufacturing industry and 16.5% for the transportation and communications industry.⁶⁴ In fact, except for the core machinery and equipment provided by cooperating foreign-funded enterprises, all products that could be supplied domestically in Nigeria during the construction process, especially various construction materials, were required to be provided only by Nigerian companies. This emphasis on local content meant that although these public investment projects were

⁶⁴ Peter Olubusola Olayiwola, *Petroleum and Structural Change in A Developing Society: The Case of Nigeria*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Delaware, 1985, p. 344.

led by the government and foreign-funded enterprises, local private enterprises were still able to gain numerous opportunities for participation and obtain many lucrative outsourcing orders.

In the operation stage, public sector employees in charge of the operation of the enterprises received the distributed oil rents. When these industrial projects, with large investment scale and relatively complex production technologies and equipment, were completed and put into operation, the government faced severe shortages of domestic professional and technical personnel. As a result, enterprises were filled with a large number of unqualified technical personnel and administrative staff responsible for simple tasks, and technical and enterprise management relied heavily on foreign employees. In addition to the high cost of foreign employees, the ranks and salary levels of these enterprises' employees referred to the standards of civil servants, causing the administrative and employment costs of the enterprises to be significantly higher than the market level. Ultimately, a relatively high proportion of the government's fiscal allocations were used to pay employee salaries, severely affecting the enterprises' input and investment in actual production.

In the output stage, the prices of goods and services set by the government were often lower than the production costs or market prices, and consumers benefited from this distribution system in the purchase and use process. Although various statistics show that the Nigerian government's rate of return on investment in parastatal enterprises was relatively low, driven by a large number of industrial projects, Nigeria's infrastructure and public services, manufacturing, construction, and strategic industrial sectors all enjoyed average growth rates of 15% or higher.⁶⁵ In terms of basic industries and public services, such as electricity, transportation, ports, healthcare, and education, although urban residents benefited more, there were a large number of free infrastructure and public service projects targeting rural areas, which effectively improved the quality of life of local residents. In strategic industrial sectors, such as oil refining, steel production, and automobile assembly, the government often set sales prices far below market levels. Taking fuel products as an example, the government established a uniform national fuel price in 1975, which was far lower than the international market price at that time.

⁶⁵ Peter Olubusola Olayiwola, *Petroleum and Structural Change in A Developing Society: The Case of Nigeria*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Delaware, 1985, p. 344.

4.3 *Impact of the Oil Rent Distribution Model on Nigeria's Industrialization*

Under the oil rent distribution system, the industrial sector in Nigeria was characterized by high operating costs and low production efficiency, such that oil rents did not turn into productive capital in the industrial sector, promoting growth, but instead shaped parastatal enterprises into tools for the government to distribute oil rents. In the early 1980s, fiscal appropriations to parastatal enterprises accounted for more than 30% of government revenue; in particular, in 1982, the government's fiscal expenditures on 23 parastatal enterprises accounted for 25% of the total fiscal budget.⁶⁶ In contrast to the massive investments, Nigeria's parastatal enterprises had very low investment returns and output. According to a World Bank survey, between 1980 and 1983, the Nigerian government needed to provide an average annual fiscal budget of 1.3 billion naira to 15 major parastatal enterprises (excluding the NNOC) to maintain their operations (Table 6).

The low rate of return on investment in the industrial sector during this period was due to the high operating costs and low production efficiency. The high operating costs were reflected mainly in the dependence of enterprise operations on foreign technical and management employees, imported machinery and equipment, and imported raw materials, which in another sense meant a dependence on foreign exchange, making it difficult for enterprises to utilize local comparative advantages to reduce costs. The low production efficiency was reflected mainly in the fact that the professional knowledge and technical level required for these large-scale, capital-intensive industrial projects exceeded the scope that Nigeria could handle smoothly, leading to errors affecting production during operations management, equipment maintenance, or quality control due to the insufficient technical and management levels of local employees or slow decision-making due to reliance on a small number of foreign technical and management employees. In fact, the high operating costs and low production efficiency reflected the inability of parastatal enterprise projects to operate independently from foreign-funded enterprises.

⁶⁶ A. O. Sanda, Systematic Planning in the Public Sector, *Guardian* (Lagos), August 7, 1986.

Table 6 Net fiscal expenditures of the federal government of Nigeria on 15 parastatal enterprises (1980–1983) (unit: million naira)

	1980	1981	1982	1983
<i>Current account</i>				
Income				
Income tax	128.1	161.6	110.4	81.7
Profit/dividend	0	0	0	0
Expenditure	355.5	NA	711.2	1217.0
Balance	– 227.4	161.6	– 600.8	–
				1137.0
<i>Capital account</i>				
Income				
Loan principal repayment	0	0	0	0
Expenditure	1117.8	903.2	402.4	764.6
Balance	– 1117.8	– 903.2	– 402.4	– 764.6
Net federal expenditure	– 1345.2	– 741.6	– 1003.2	–
				1901.6

Data source World Bank, *Nigerian: Public Enterprise Sector Strategy Paper*, Washington, DC, World Bank, October 30, 1984

Banji Oyelaran-Oyeyinka believes that the essential reason for this phenomenon is that the Nigerian government wrongly selected large-scale, capital-intensive industrial projects based not on detailed feasibility studies but on erroneous assumptions about local human resources and technical levels. As a result, what these industrial sectors achieved was not import substitution in the traditional sense but rather import reproduction.⁶⁷ Import substitution generally refers to the use of domestic technology and related raw materials to produce import-substituting goods, with more emphasis on innovation and local advantages, while import reproduction refers to the complete replication of the production technology and processes of imported goods domestically, focusing more on production scale and technical levels than on technology transfer and

⁶⁷ Banji Oyelaran-Oyeyinka, *From Consumption to Production: the whys and ways out of failed industrialization in Nigeria*, Lagos: Prestige, 2017, p. 19.

learning.⁶⁸ The Nigerian government's preference for large-scale, capital-intensive industrial projects and its strategy of simultaneously cooperating with different foreign-funded enterprises further complicated technology transfer and learning. On the one hand, the larger the enterprise scale and the greater the technical level were, the more difficult it was to transfer and learn technology. On the other hand, the production technologies and machinery and equipment used by different foreign-funded enterprises were often different, and cooperation with multiple foreign-funded enterprises at the same time often made it difficult to achieve a long-term and stable technology learning environment.⁶⁹ In fact, the import reproduction model involved directly transferring foreign enterprises' production lines to the domestic market at an extremely high cost and then relying on imported inputs for local production. This led to a capital- and import-intensive production model in Nigeria's industrial sector, where both capital and imported foreign exchange relied on oil rents, the main revenue source of the Nigerian government.

5 CONCLUSION

With the rapid increase in international crude oil prices, Nigeria experienced an oil boom between 1973 and 1979. The core manifestation was the distribution of oil rents throughout society via a large number of government industrial projects. This boom came to an abrupt end with the violent fluctuations in international crude oil prices in the early 1980s. After the military leader Obasanjo handed over power to the newly elected president Shehu Shagari in 1979, the new democratically elected government continued the economic development strategy of the previous military regime and formulated the Fourth National Development Plan (1981–1985) with larger investment. However, this plan soon faced difficulty in its execution due to the sharp drop in crude oil export revenues. Consequently, not only was it challenging to implement the new industrial investment plans, but it was also difficult for the parastatal

⁶⁸ Mytelka, L., *Ivorian Industry at the Cross-roads, 1992*, in: Stewart, F., Lall, S., Wangwe, S. (eds) *Alternative Development Strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Palgrave Macmillan, London; See also: Banji Oyelaran-Oyeyinka, *From Consumption to Production: the whys and ways out of failed industrialization in Nigeria*, Lagos: Prestige, 2017, p. 20.

⁶⁹ Banji Oyelaran-Oyeyinka, *From Consumption to Production: the whys and ways out of failed industrialization in Nigeria*, Lagos: Prestige, 2017, pp. 22–23.

enterprises that were established during the oil boom to operate normally. This paper does not deny the impact of resource waste or state nature on Nigeria's industrialization during this period but argues that the above understanding fails to reflect the dynamic process and subsequent impacts of the Nigerian military regime's choice to invest large amounts of oil resources into the public sector during the oil boom. In view of this, this paper starts with the massive influx of oil rents into Nigeria in 1973 and focuses on the core driving role of the influx of oil rents and northern nationalism in Nigeria's regime change and subsequent economic development path in the 1970s, aiming to present a dynamic historical picture of industrialization during the oil boom.

The massive influx of oil rents in 1973 made it increasingly difficult for the Gowon military regime to maintain its rule. Not only did the military group rapidly split internally due to the distribution of oil wealth, but the legitimacy of the regime was also seriously questioned due to corruption scandals and the delay in achieving a democratic transition. In July 1975, the Gowon regime was overthrown, and the northern muslim military group and northern young technocrats quickly seized political power in the country. Driven by the northern nationalist ideology and enormous oil wealth, the Muhammed/Obasanjo military regime aimed to strengthen government control and intervention in the economy and rapidly achieve industrialization. Toward these economic goals, the government implemented the Third NDP (1975–1980) between 1975 and 1979 and amended the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree of 1977, creating a large public sector. This public sector had the core characteristics of wide coverage, concentration of investment in capital-intensive activities, and cooperation with foreign-funded enterprises while maintaining sole government ownership. Through capital-intensive industrial projects in the public sector, oil rents were distributed among various interest groups nationwide. In different stages of government industrial projects, such as project approval, construction, operation, and output, the political leadership group, foreign capital, local commercial capital, the civil servant group, and ordinary consumers could all share oil wealth to varying degrees. However, these industrial projects were the “reproduction” of foreign industrial production lines within Nigeria, with raw materials, machinery and equipment, and management and operation technologies relying entirely on imports, and technology transfer and downstream industrial development were rarely achieved through local production. As a result, these capital-intensive industrial projects with

large investment scale and high technology levels did not successfully transform into productive capital but became tools for the military regime to distribute oil rents. Since the industrial projects in this period were essentially part of a distribution system that could not be turned into productive capital, when rents declined, these projects not only struggled to proceed with construction, operation, and production as planned but also became arenas for interest groups to compete for oil rents. This is also the core reason why Nigeria's industrial production shrank rapidly when international oil prices fluctuated sharply or plummeted in the 1980s and 1990s.

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A Political Economy Analysis of Modern State Development in Southeast Asia

Shihong Bi

1 RAISING THE QUESTION

Since the era of globalization began in the twentieth century, regional and country studies have become a “compulsory course” in some countries. Country and area studies, as a typical interdisciplinary discipline, not only involves different theories, but be rich in content with the politics, economy, culture, and society of the target country or area. As one of the important objects and fields of regional and country studies, the study of modern state development in Southeast Asia shows clear polarization: most “scholastic” scholars are discipline-oriented and are accustomed to emphasizing the impact of universal external factors on Southeast Asian countries from regional and external perspectives. However, most “local” scholars tend to emphasize the particularity of the modern state development in Southeast Asia from the internal perspective of Southeast Asian

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countries.¹ Political economy scholars emphasize the organic integration of different concepts, such as the state, institutions, and interest groups, which are the focus of political science, and wages, income, and fiscal impacts, which are the focus of economic analysis, and explore their influence on public policies.² The understanding of the political economy of Southeast Asian countries is abundant, and its interpretations vary widely.

After the economic growth of Southeast Asian countries in the 1980s, Southeast Asia became one of the world's rapidly growing regions, and the focus of relevant research gradually shifted to the field of political economy. In 1993, the World Bank released the report "East Asian Miracle: Economic Growth and Public Policy," which identified four Southeast Asian countries, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, as having rapid economic development.³ These Southeast Asian countries achieved rapid economic growth because their governments rectified the infrastructure required for the efficient operation of the market economy; for example, they supported the stable operation of the macroeconomy, the centralization of human resources, and the efficient and stable operation of the financial system; relaxed restrictions; introduced foreign technology; and promoted agricultural development.

The report indicated that, along with developing strong governance capabilities, the governments of these countries were committed to assisting the people, promoting information exchange and adjusting investment, while selectively intervening in the economy to promote economic growth. Selective intervention here refers to the granting of special treatment ("rents") to some enterprises or areas based on the economic performance standards established by the government. Specifically, there are three main items: obtaining financing based on export performance, restricting the entry of new enterprises on the basis of

¹ Bao, Guangjiang. (2022). Qū yù guó bié yán jiū de guān xì lù jìng: yǐ dōng nán yà yán jiū wéi lì [Relational Approach in Area Studies: A Case Study of Southeast Asia]. *Journal of International Relations*, 58(4), 25.

² Liu, Hong. (2021). Dāng dài xīn jiā pō huá rén shè huì de shàn biàn jí qí dòng lì yǔ tè zhēng- xīn zhèng zhì jīng jì xué de shì yě [Explaining the Dynamics and Characteristics of the Chinese Community in Contemporary Singapore: A New Political Economy Approach]. *Journal of Overseas Chinese History Studies*, 136(4), 10.

³ The World Bank. (1993, p. 10). *The East Asian Miracle: Economic Growth and Public Policy*. Oxford University Press.

equipment investment competition, and increasing the export credit line on the condition of improving international competitiveness.

Although the economic policies of the four countries vary widely, they are extremely political in nature.⁴ As a city-state, on the basis of establishing an advanced civil service system, the Singapore government is actively involved in economic activities and carries out government-civilian consultation. The government improves infrastructure, introduces foreign capital to overcome the unfavorable conditions of the small domestic market, and actively promotes a high degree of industrial concentration. These policies had all been successful. As a multiethnic country, Malaysia's government has realized that the maintenance of a preferential policy for Malays is indispensable for political stability and thus has introduced such a policy to encourage Malay entrepreneurs to actively invest in domestic demand-oriented enterprises. This has narrowed the income gap and achieved relatively balanced economic growth among all ethnic groups. Indonesia, also a multiethnic country, has also adopted economic and social policies to cater to indigenous residents, but its economic and social development has been relatively bumpy. The Thai government has not granted preferential interest rates to specific industries or enterprises through government-controlled financial institutions but has actively introduced foreign capital in an attempt to achieve import substitution-oriented economic growth under the leadership of private enterprises. Family economic theory suggests that government-led industrialization can be successful when the family economy actively responds to the government's call and promotes economic development through industrial diversification.⁵

Similarly, in the 2008 Growth Commission Report, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand were also included among the 13 high-growth economies in the 20th century. If a similar study were conducted in the present, since the 2008 global financial crisis, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, and the Philippines would also almost met the inclusion criteria (Table 1). An average annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 7% means that per capita income doubles at least once every 14 years.

⁴ Ono, Kenichi & Sakurai, Kojiro. (1997). *Higashi Ajia no Kaibatsu Keizaigaku* [Development Economics in East Asia]. Yuhikaku-aruma.

⁵ Suehiro, Akira. (2006). *Famiri Bijinesu Ron-Kobatsu Kogyoka no Ninaite* [The Theory of Family Business—the Bearer of Late Industrialization]. The University of Nagoya Press.

Over the past half century, the per capita income of some of these countries has increased by at least six times, and in some cases, by more than that.⁶

Although Southeast Asian countries were affected by the 1997 Southeast Asian financial crisis and the 2008 global financial crisis, which caused social unrest and regime change in some countries, all of the countries overcame the crises within a short period of time and achieved relatively rapid recovery (Fig. 1). Much related research has been published. Some scholars believe that in addition to the extensive economic growth model of Southeast Asian countries, the government-led economy is a cause of the region's rapid growth, and they seek to understand the moral hazard between enterprises and governments of Southeast Asian countries.⁷ Under the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic since 2020,

Table 1 GDP in Southeast Asia (unit: million US dollars)

Country/ year	2000	2005	2008	2010	2015	2020	2021
Brunei	4315	9528	14,451	12,402	12,943	12,003	13,925
Cambodia	3570	6250	11,073	11,229	18,091	25,960	27,165
Indonesia	150,567	284,790	513,032	708,904	855,020	1,059,146	1,185,777
Laos	1736	2860	5285	6852	14,420	19,037	19,635
Malaysia	90,161	137,971	222,724	247,328	294,810	337,619	372,770
Myanmar	9212	10,989	22,858	42,228	59,795	70,174	72,863
The Philip- pines	74,837	98,757	166,444	200,192	292,508	361,519	393,612
Singapore	91,429	116,639	193,535	227,755	304,096	345,221	394,579
Thailand	122,804	176,207	272,789	319,278	401,764	499,581	505,890
Vietnam	31,319	52,953	90,515	106,531	193,628	271,799	361,962
ASEAN as a whole	579,950	896,945	1,512,707	1,882,700	2,447,076	3,002,060	3,348,177

Source ASEAN Secretariat. (2022, December). Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat Database

⁶ M. Chatib Basri and Hal Hill. (2020). The Southeast Asian Economies in the Age of Discontent. *Asian Economic Policy Review*, 15(2), 189.

⁷ Macintyre, Andrew. (2003). *The Power of Institutions: Political Architecture and Governance*. Cornell University Press; Natasha Hamilton-Hart. (2008) Banking Systems a Decade after the Crisis. in Macintyre, Andrew, Pempel, T.J. and Ravenhill, John (eds.),

Southeast Asian countries are facing many new challenges. Among them, how to redistribute the economic growth dividend to achieve the goal of sustainable economic and social development is worthy of attention. To this end, with regard to the modern state development in Southeast Asia, this paper adopts the perspective of political economy and reviews relevant research by domestic and foreign scholars. After analyzing the authoritarianism, oligarchy, and “rent-seeking” behaviors in Southeast Asia, we analyze the related “middle-income trap” argument and populism and then discuss the role of governments in Southeast Asia in the secondary distribution process.

2 AUTHORITARIANISM, OLIGARCHY, AND "RENT-SEEKING" IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

In recent years, Duterte (former Philippine President), Aung San Suu Kyi (former State Counselor of Myanmar), Min Aung Hlaing (Commander-in-Chief of the Defense Forces of Myanmar), Joko Widodo (Indonesian President), Mahathir (former Prime Minister of Malaysia), and Prayuth Chan-o-cha (former prime minister of Thailand and retired army officer), in addition to Hun Sen (former prime minister of Cambodia),

Crisis as Catalyst: Asia's Dynamic Political Economy. Cornell University Press; Pepinsky, Thomas B. (2015). Political Business and External Vulnerability in Southeast Asia. in Pempel, T.J. and Tunekawa, Keiichi. (eds.), *Two Crises, Different Outcomes: East Asia and Global Finance.* Cornell University Press. Hirata, Jun. (1998). *Kensho Ajia Keizai* [Examination of Asian Economy]. Toyo Keizai Inc.; Suehiro, Akira. (2000). *Kyachiapugata Kogyoka Ron—Ajia Keizai no Kiseki to Tenbo* [Catch-up Industrialization: Asian Economic Trajectory and Prospects]. The University of Nagoya Press; Yoshitomi, Masaru. (2003). *Ajia Keizai no Shinjitsu-Kiseki, Kiki, Seido no Shinka* [Asian Economic Truth: Miracles, Crises, Institutional Evolution]. Toyo Keizai Inc.; Chen, Dezhao. (1997). *Dōng nán yà jīn róng wēi jī de yuán yīn, yǐng xiǎng hé qǐ shì* [The origins, consequences, and ramifications of the financial crisis in Southeast Asia]. *World Economics and Politics*, (12); Pang, Zhongying. (1998). *Dōng nán yà jīn róng wēi jī de chéng yīn, jiào xùn yǔ yǐng xiǎng* [The origins, implications, and impact of the Southeast Asian financial crisis]. *International Studies*, (1); Li, Chenyang. (1999). *Qiǎn xī dōng nán yà jīn róng wēi jī duì miǎn diàn de yǐng xiǎng* [Assessment of the Southeast Asian financial crisis's influence on Myanmar]. *Southeast Asian Studies*, (1); Shen, Hongfang. (2009). *Quán qiú jīng jì shuāi tuì duì dōng nán yà jīng jì de yǐng xiǎng jí yǐng duì* [Impacts of Global Economic Recession on Southeast Asian Economies and the Crisis Responses to Them]. *Southeast Asian Affairs*, (3); Zhang, Lei. (2013). *Hòu jīn róng wēi jī shí dài dōng méng shí guó yǐn jìn wài zī de qíng kuàng jí tè diǎn* [Analysis on the Situation and Characteristics of Foreign Investment Introduction in Ten ASEAN Countries in the Post-Financial Crisis Era]. *Academic Forum*, 36(12).

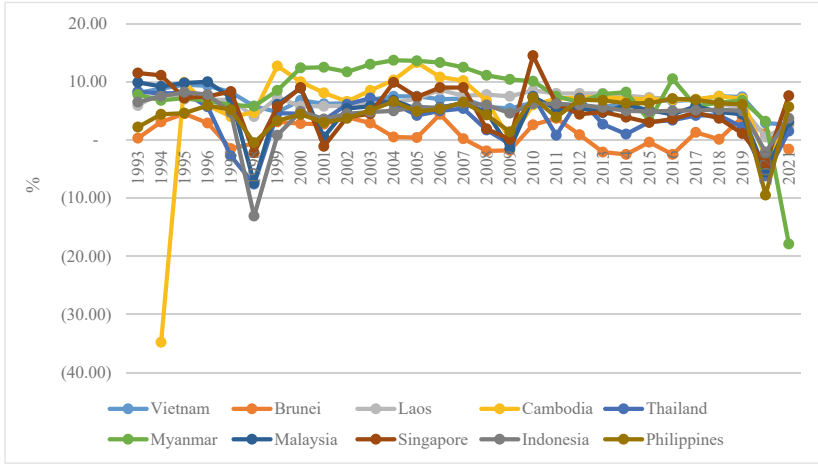


Fig. 1 GDP growth rates in Southeast Asia (1993–2021) (Unit: %). *Source* International Monetary Fund. (2022, April). World Economic Outlook Database

have demonstrated the phenomenon of political leaders possessing clear "personal authority," which has provoked doubts and concerns about the resurgence of authoritarian politics in Southeast Asia.⁸ Authoritarian politics refers to a common political system in developing countries in which civilian bureaucrats or military leaders are in charge. Under this political system, government power is highly concentrated, the middle class and civil society are underdeveloped, and the level of mass political participation is low. If members of the public do participate, their opinions are expressed within the established domains set by the ruling party. Moreover, the government emphasizes economic development and social order and stability to demonstrate its legitimacy.⁹

Under authoritarian regimes, the government allows and even encourages nongovernmental economic activities to varying degrees; this is also

⁸ Zhou, Fangye. (2021). Dōng nán yà zhèng zhì líng xiù “gè rén quán wēi” xiàn xiàng yán jiū- zhèng zhì quán lì jié gòu tiáo zhèng de shì jiào [A Study on the “Personal Authority” Phenomenon of Political Leaders in Southeast Asia: A Perspective of the Adjustment of Political Power Structure]. *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 187(3), 30.

⁹ Mao, Chunhe. (2015). Xīn jiā pō wēi quán zhèng zhì xià de zhì guó zhī dào [The Statecraft of Singapore’s Authoritarianism]. *Future and Development*, 254(1), 21.

considered an important condition for the transition from an authoritative regime to democracy. Political economy research can be divided into narrow sense and broad sense. The narrow sense focuses solely on the role of the state or government in economic growth, the broad sense emphasizes the structure formed by the intertwining of political and economic relations. A typical case is the theory of oligarchy, in which minority groups (political oligarchies) have an overwhelming economic advantage and thus gain important political influence, regardless of whether the political system is authoritarian or democratic. If the elites gain political influence by virtue of their official status, the political oligarchies exercise their political influence to protect their wealth. Richard Robison, Vedi Hadiz, and Jeffrey Winters have discussed the theory of oligarchy in depth.¹⁰

The first oligarchy in Southeast Asia appeared in the Philippines. In the Philippines, after the period of Spanish colonial rule, political oligarchies represented by the landlord class controlled vast land resources. They also owned private armed forces and thus maintained a politically and economically dominant position. A social gap between the rich and the poor gradually became the norm. Under the postindependence capitalist system, the landlord class evolved into a political oligarchy and controlled the state. The lack of progress in the land reform promised when the Philippines gained independence and the inability to transform the import substitution policy into an export-oriented policy after the saturation of the domestic market in the 1960s are both due to the obstruction of political oligarchs.

In Indonesia, it was not until the dictatorship of Suharto, who came to power in 1965, that the political oligarchy was ended. Under the influence of Suharto, the political and economic elites gradually became political oligarchies. During the process of Indonesia's political transformation, the political elites who won the election and the capitalists who provided financial support as political oligarchies gained an overwhelming political and economic advantage, which led to a serious gap between the rich and the poor in Indonesia. Moreover, Suharto used the term "dual function" to enhance the status of the military and restrict the development of party politics in the practice of authoritarian politics, thereby

¹⁰ Robison, Richard and Hadiz, Vedi R. (2003). *Reorganizing Power in Indonesia: The Politics of Oligarchy in an Age of Markets*. Routledge Curzon; Winters, Jeffrey A. (2011). *Oligarchy*. Cambridge University Press.

strengthening the status and influence of political oligarchies.¹¹ In Thailand, the wealth of the king is 7 million times that of ordinary citizens, and the political oligarchs under the king have strong political influence.¹²

Singapore is a country under the rule of law, but the government still has great political influence. Singapore's authoritarian system uses its powerful state apparatus and political resource mobilization ability to rigidly crush turmoil and crises that may arise in the process of political transition, which helps Singapore, a multi-racial, multi-religious, and multi-cultural country, address various complex contradictions and complete its modernization process under a stable order.¹³

In general, the patriarchal social structure of authoritarian rule, military dictatorship, election manipulation, media and speech control, and exclusion of social organizations have greatly hindered the political development of Southeast Asian countries.¹⁴ One of the reasons for the outbreak of the Southeast Asian financial crisis in 1997 was that under the leadership of the powerful government, the degree of government control, intervention, and participation in economic activities was difficult to control and led to a number of problems, such as poor quality of government decision-making, bureaucratic corruption, ineffective regulation of the financial market, and military interference.¹⁵ The government implemented industrial policies to provide “rents” to some industries and enterprises, and enterprises gradually abandoned efficient operations and turned to rent-seeking activities. The government also provided rents to officials' cronies. These are all possible causes of the economic

¹¹ Yu, Chunyang. (2017). Yin dù ní xī yà zhèng zhì zhěng hé de shí jiàn jìn chéng yǔ xiào jì píng xī [An Analysis of the Practical Process and Performance of Indonesian Political Integration]. *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 170(2), 59.

¹² T.F. Rhoden. (2015). Oligarchy in Thailand. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 34(1), 3–25.

¹³ Sun, Jingfeng. (2006). Xīn jiā pō wēi quán tǐ zhì de gòu jiàn yǔ shè huì fā zhǎn chéng běn de jiàng dī [On the Construction of Singapore's Authoritarian System and the Reduction of the Cost of Social Development]. *Journal of Shanxi University (Philosophy and Social Science Edition)*, 29 (1).

¹⁴ Fan, Ruolan. (2015). Dōng méng guó jiā wēi quán tǒng zhì shí qī nǚ xìng zhèng zhì cān yǔ tàn xī [Authoritarianism and Women's Political Participation in ASEAN from the 1960s to the 1990s]. *Journal of Guangxi Minzu University (Philosophy and Social Science Edition)*, 37(2), 115.

¹⁵ Huang, Jinggui. (1999). Dōng nán yà wēi jī de zhèng zhì jīng jì xué fēn xī [The Political economy analysis of Southeast Asian crisis]. *Productivity Research*, (Z1), 141–142.

crisis. In addition, the widespread existence of bank loans distributed to cronies and opaque family business operations cannot be ignored. Because the authoritarian system lacks the ability to weather an economic crisis, an unresolved economic crisis can place the political system in jeopardy, increasing the pressure on the political system and leading to an irreversible political crisis.¹⁶

For many Southeast Asian countries, the 1997 Southeast Asian financial crisis was the worst crisis in the history. After the crisis, some countries embarked on the path of political transformation. And the governments of Southeast Asian countries basically followed the varying degrees route of economic liberalization based on the introduction of foreign capital, trade liberalization and the relaxation of restrictions. They also increased their foreign exchange reserves and strengthened the supervision of inflows and outflows of short-term capital to prevent the recurrence of the financial crisis. As shown in Fig. 1, the economic growth rates of Southeast Asian countries began to rise steadily.

The political transformation of Southeast Asian countries has also made new progress, but the traditional patronage relationships and authoritative personalities have nurtured strong relationships among political bureaucrats, political elites, and local forces. Although there is a solid foundation for the development of the market economy in civil society, these traditional forces remain strong. The combination of nepotism and civil society forces has formed a type of family capitalism unique to the region. On the one hand, this supports new interest groups, and on the other hand, it protects the existing patronage relationship and the patriarchal system, which is contrary to democratic politics. While democracy in Southeast Asian countries has won extensive political acceptance, such countries have also established strong government authority by virtue of their cultural traditions formed throughout history.¹⁷

In some Southeast Asian countries, the persistence of authoritarian politics is closely related to frequent political intervention by the military.

¹⁶ Fu, Jun and Zhang, Zhenyang. (2013). Yin ní yǔ fēi lǜ bīn mǐn zhǔ zhuǎn xíng yuán yīn zhī bǐ jiào yán jiū [A Comparative Study of the Reasons of the Democratization in Indonesia and the Philippines]. *International Forum*, 15(5), 17.

¹⁷ Chang, Shiyin. (2010). Dōng nán yà guó jiā zhèng zhì rèn tóng de zhuǎn zhē yú zhèng zhì jiàn gòu [The Transition and Construction of Political Identity in Southeast Asian Nations]. *Journal of Shandong University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)*, (5), 16.

During the early days of independence, in the period of authoritarian politics and in the period of political transition, the political development of Southeast Asian countries was accompanied by periodic political turmoil, such as military coups. After the establishment of a military regime, the military maintained the stability of state power and the domestic political and economic order for a certain period of time. However, such power was based on nonprocedural politics and violence and did not have the legitimacy of a regime obtained through procedural elections, which hindered the healthy development of national politics.¹⁸ For example, Thailand experienced military authoritarianism, semi-democracy, and democracy mainly because its political transformation became path dependent on a military coup: the country failed to establish a modern bureaucratic system, the ruling elites were divided and struggling with each other, and the democratic support was weak and unstable.¹⁹ In Myanmar, systems supporting military participation in political operations were implemented in the 2008 constitution. For example, the commander-in-chief of the national defense forces can designate military councilors who account for a quarter of the seats in the parliament, and the posts of the ministers of national defense, the interior and the border are held by active military officers. The military has long been able to influence the process of political transition in Myanmar.²⁰

Although the economies of Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand generally developed well before the mid-1990s, the authoritarian regimes and oligarchy in most Southeast Asian countries led to collusion between governments and private enterprises in these countries. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have criticized this. The World Bank also noted the importance of government-civilian cooperation. This kind of cooperation can promote the economic growth of

¹⁸ Sun, Hongwei and Tan, Rong. (2019). Lùn dāng dài dōng nán yà guó jiā jūn rén zhèng zhì de fā zhǎn [On the Development of Military Politics in Contemporary Southeast Asian Countries]. *Comparative Politics Studies*, 17(20), 306.

¹⁹ Liu, Yongzhi and Zhang, Xueyi. (2008). Tàì guó mǐn zhǔ zhèng zhì de fā zhǎn dào lù jí qí chéng yīn [The Development Path of Democratic Politic in Thailand and the Causes for Such Path]. *International Forum*, 10(5), 68.

²⁰ Kudo, Toshihiro. (2015, p. 3). *Posuto Gunsei no Myanma—Kaikaku no Jitsuzo* [Post-Military in Myanmar—a Picture of Reform]. Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization.

each country, but it can also be merely a type of “rent” behavior undertaken by officials, who ignore the potential economic benefits. In this way, enterprises become rent seekers, and rather than seeking to win interfirm competition, they expand their commercial interests through collusion with the government. In Singapore, although cooperative relations also exist between the government and the people, due to the very capable and fair bureaucracy and the heavy government intervention in the economy, the rent-seeking problem seldom occurs.

Scholars also interpret the rent-seeking phenomenon from the perspective of the relationship between clientelism and authoritarian politics. That is, traditional clientelism infiltrates into the political capital of the authoritarian system, which in turn endows clientelism with new connotations and development. One of the internal tensions of clientelism is that the balance of power between the two parties begins to tilt toward the client (capital); that is, in the client–patron relationship, capital acquires large powers, which gradually changes the lower status of capital in the client–patron relationship. The second internal tension of clientelism concerns the changes in the relationship among capital, market, and power. The fusion of capital and power creates the widespread rent-seeking phenomenon.²¹

In Southeast Asian countries, rent-seeking activities have become the norm, and related research is increasing. Mushtaq Khan and Jomo Kwame Sundaram selected the cases of Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines for analysis.²² In Malaysia, the preferential treatment policy for native residents is “rent” in itself. Enterprises that enjoy “rent” with the UMNO party, the political party that has long held power in the Malaysian government, are called “UMNO Putra” (Putra means “children”). In Indonesia, after the government relaxed restrictions in the 1980s, the Suharto family members and their cronies became rent seekers, which aroused widespread concern. With the support of the major conglomerates, they were deeply involved in various commercial activities.

²¹ Fu, Jingliang. (2009). *Shì lùn dōng nán yà bì hù zhǔ yì de xíng chéng yǔ fā zhǎn—yǐ wēi quán tǐ zhì xià de zī běn zhèng zhì wéi shì yù* [On the Cause and Development of Patron-Client in Southeast Asia-From the Perspective of Capital Politics under the Authoritarian Regime]. *Southeast Asian Studies*, 181(4), 27–32.

²² H. Khan, Mushtaq and K.S., Jomo (eds.). (2000). *Rents, Rent-seeking and Economic Development: Theory and Evidence in Asia*. Cambridge University Press.

The rent-seeking problem is most obvious in the Philippines and has become one of the reasons for the country's sluggish economic growth. In the 1960s, the Philippines ranked second in Asia in terms of the economic growth rate, after Japan. However, in the 1970s and 1980s, the Philippines could maintain only a very low economic growth rate. This is because the political oligarchy, which held a dominant position in politics and the economy, monopolized state resources for personal interests. In 1972, Philippine President Marcos implemented martial law to break the oligarchy and establish an authoritarian regime. With the introduction of foreign capital, the Marcos regime began to attempt to implement a state-led, export-oriented growth strategy. Although some political oligarchs were excluded, Marcos' cronies gradually became rent seekers. After the 1980s, people who were dissatisfied with the regime launched large-scale protests, which led to the collapse of Marcos' authoritarian regime in 1986. After achieving political transition, under the leadership of the Fidel Ramos regime, the Philippines began to implement economic liberalization policies, successfully weakened the influence of Marcos' cronies, and finally resumed economic growth.²³

3 THE “MIDDLE-INCOME TRAP” AND POPULISM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

From the perspective of economic growth, although Southeast Asia has achieved success compared with other regions since the global financial crisis in 2008, the persistent authoritarianism, oligarchy, and rent-seeking behavior in most of the countries has led to doubts about whether such an economy can be truly sustainable. A typical example is the “middle-income trap” theory. The World Bank's 2006 East Asia Economic Development Report noted that the “middle-income trap” refers to the fact that few middle-income economies have successfully reached the ranking of high-income countries. These countries have often experienced periods of stagnation of economic growth and been unable to compete with low-income countries in terms of wages or with rich countries in

²³ Yamamoto, Nobuto. (ed.). (2017, p. 163). *Higashi Ajia Chiiki Kenkyu Nyumon 3: Seiji* [Introduction to Southeast Asian Area Studies 3: Politics]. Keio University Press.

the development of cutting-edge technologies.²⁴ Scholars believe that the middle-income trap accompanies the achievement of economic growth through the path of cheap labor and low-cost capital, that is, the obstruction of the path that advantages low costs.²⁵ In Southeast Asia, countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam may fall into the middle-income trap.

The middle-income trap theory basically fits the current trend of political and economic globalization. To escape it, the country must win the competition of economic liberalization and promote sustained economic growth, and the state must implement policies that can promote the realization of the above goals. The economic liberalization that began in the 1980s led to political transformation in the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia. Although these countries institutionally stipulated the decentralization of power, political and economic power remained increasingly concentrated. Critical studies on this phenomenon are gradually emerging.

In general, Singapore has successfully overcome the middle-income trap. In contrast, after becoming middle-income countries, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines had insufficient technological innovation capabilities and could not shift from factor-driven economic growth to innovation-driven economic growth in a timely manner. This made it difficult for them to achieve industrial upgrading and escape the middle-income trap. Whether a country or region can overcome the middle-income trap depends on whether its industrial structure is upgraded. Challenges to overcome include economic factors, such as difficulty in industrial restructuring and upgrading and insufficient innovation capability; social factors, such as the widening gap between the rich and the poor; political unrest; and external factors, such as changes in the international political and economic environment. After Singapore

²⁴ Xu Jingjing and Wan, Lu. (2012). Kuà yuè zhōng děng shōu rù xiàn jǐng de guó jì bǐ jiào [An international comparison across the middle-income trap]. *Co-Operative Economy & Science*, 441(10), 12.

²⁵ Suchiro, Akira. (2014). *Shinko Ajia Kezai Ron- Kyachiappu o Koete* [Emerging Asian Economies: Beyond Catch Up]. Iwanami-Shoten.

became a middle-income country, it successfully overcame the middle-income trap through technological innovation and the transformation of its economic growth mode.²⁶

In effect, the fundamental causes of the middle-income trap in South-east Asian countries are institutional factors. In Malaysia, due to the existence of special interest groups, such as political oligarchies, the country's rigid institutions have offered insufficient motivation for investment and innovation, making it difficult to escape the middle-income trap.²⁷ Although Indonesia entered the ranks of low- and middle-income countries in 2004, after nearly 10 years of rapid growth, its economic growth began to slow. To avoid the middle-income trap, Indonesia shifted from an old model of economic development that relies too much on natural resources to a new model that relies on the promotion of human resources and technological innovation to stimulate economic growth, but the prospects are not optimistic.²⁸ Based on the changes in the East Asian industrial chain and the direction of Thailand's recent industrial policy adjustment, Thailand will face greater obstacles in overcoming the middle-income trap in the future.²⁹ The Philippines fell into the middle-income trap because of four structural factors: political instability, corruption, frequent disasters, and government debt.³⁰

²⁶ Huang, Jiwei and Quan, Yi. (2014). *Dōng méng guó jiā là rù “zhōng děng shōu rù xiàn jǐng” de yuán yīn yǔ jiào xùn* [The Reasons and Lessons of the “Middle-income Trap” in ASEAN Countries]. *Contemporary Economic Management*, 36(7), 92; Jiang, Wenhui. (2016). *Chǎn yè shēng jí, jì shù chuàng xīn yǔ kuà yuè “zhōng děng shōu rù xiàn jǐng”-dōng yà hé dōng nán yà jīng jì tí de jīng yàn yǔ jiào xùn* [Industrial Upgrading, Technical Innovation and Striding over the “Middle Income Trap”-Experiences and Lessons of East Asia and Southeast Asia]. *Asia-pacific Economic Review*, 199(6), 92.

²⁷ Guo, Jiguang. (2012). *Lì yǐ jí tuán, zhì dù jiāng huà yǔ mǎ láí xī yà zhōng děng shōu rù xiàn jǐng* [Special-Interest Group, Institutional Sclerosis and Middle-Income Trap in Malaysia]. *Southeast Asian Studies*, 199(4), 14.

²⁸ Wu, Chongbo and Qian, Shujing. (2017). *yìn dù ní xī yà de zhōng děng shōu rù xiàn jǐng wèn tí fēn xī* [Middle-Income Trap in Indonesia: Possibilities and Solutions]. *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 171(3), 79.

²⁹ Luo, Yifu. (2021). *Dōng yà chǎn yè liàn biàn qiān yǔ kuà yuè “zhōng děng shōu rù xiàn jǐng”- yǐ tài guó de jīng jì fā zhǎn wéi lì* [East Asian Industrial Chains Transformation and Leaping over “Middle-income Trap”-A Case Study of Thailand's Economic Development]. *Southeast Asian Studies*, 250(10), 38.

³⁰ Xiong, Qi. (2017). *Fēi lǚ bīn xiàn rù “zhōng děng shōu rù xiàn jǐng” de yuán yīn tàn xī* [The Causes for The Philippines Being Trapped in “Middle-Income Trap”]. *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 171(3), 94.

If Southeast Asian countries try to overcome the middle-income trap, they must first select and build high-quality economic and social institutions. This is a systematic and complex project that entails a series of difficulties, especially the obstruction of interest groups, which requires administrative simplification. Countries need to decentralize power, reduce unnecessary government intervention, and further release institutional dividends. Second, specialization of the industrial structure needs to be realized, such as the transition to a high value-added manufacturing industry and the transition from manufacturing to the service industry. The government's economic development strategy also needs to change from a factor-input-based strategy to an innovation-driven strategy. Third, countries should actively participate in the international division of labor and international competition and establish an industrial structure with international competitiveness, e.g., by improving the innovation mechanism, strengthening the innovation capability of enterprises, and vigorously developing the modern service industry represented by financial services, commercial trade, information consulting, technology research and development, and the mid-to-high-end manufacturing industry. The last, social construction and economic construction should go hand in hand, and more attention should be given to social construction after countries enter the middle-income stage. The income distribution adjustment mechanism and the social security system should be improved to ensure the basic living needs of the low-income group; the proportion of the middle-income group should be increased; and necessary adjustments should be made to the high-income group. To create favorable social conditions for economic growth, countries should improve the social public service system, appropriately respond to various social emergencies and social conflicts, and maintain social stability.³¹

With the development of globalization, the economic liberalization of Southeast Asian countries is gradually advancing, but the gap between the rich and the poor is widening. Table 2 shows the changes in the Gini coefficient of Southeast Asian countries from 1995 to 2020. Although the number of people in poverty in Southeast Asian countries has been significantly reduced, the gap between the rich and the poor has not yet

³¹ Guo, Jinxing and Hu, Ying. (2016). Diǎn xíng dì qū kuà yuè zhōng děng shōu rù xiàn jǐng de bǐ jiào yán jiū [Comparative Research on the Middle-Income Trap of Typical Regions: Performance, Causes and Enlightenments]. *Asia-pacific Economic Review*, 198(5), 84.

been effectively alleviated. The polarization between the rich and the poor is likely to arouse social class opposition and lead to social unrest, and the intensification of social conflicts can lead to the rapid rise of populist sentiment. This dissatisfaction is evident in the gradually rising populism in Southeast Asian countries.³²

From the moral perspective of the opposition between good and evil, populism is the political rise of benevolent leaders who embody the morality of the people and fight against evil vested interests and political oligarchies. Ideologically, populist groups can be divided into right-wing, left-wing, and centrist groups. They differ in their specific propositions, but they have in common the gradual rise of leaders who listen directly to public opinion and seek to reform political and economic institutions

Table 2 Changes in the Gini coefficient in Southeast Asian Countries

	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Singapore	–	0.39	0.425	–	–	–
Indonesia	0.313 (1996)	0.36	0.343	0.364	0.397	0.373 (2021)
Laos	0.349 (1997)	0.30	0.370	0.354 (2007)	0.360 (2012)	0.388 (2018)
Malaysia	0.485	0.49	0.443	0.439 (2011)	0.411	–
Myanmar	–	–	–	–	0.381	0.307 (2017)
The Philippines	0.429 (1994)	0.49	0.461	0.418 (2009)	0.404	0.378 (2018)
Thailand	0.429 (1996)	0.44	0.432	0.394	0.360	0.350
East Timor	–	–	–	0.278 (2007)	0.287 (2014)	–
Vietnam	0.357 (1993)	0.35	0.370	0.393	0.348 (2014)	0.357 (2018)
Cambodia	0.383 (1994)	0.37	0.450	–	–	–

Note The time in () is the actual survey year; – indicates that data are not available

Source ADB. (1990–2022). *Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific*

³² Yamamoto, Nobuto. (ed.). (2017, pp. 170–171). *Higashi Ajia Chiiki Kenkyu Nyumon 3: Seiji* [Introduction to Southeast Asian Area Studies 3: Politics]. Keio University Press.

or structures that have been victimized by vested interests.³³ When a country is in a state of crisis, populists are more likely to rise. In Southeast Asia, there are two reasons for the birth of populists: a general cause is the development of globalization, and a more direct cause is the 1997 Southeast Asian financial crisis.³⁴ In addition, because the conditions for modern democracy and party elections are not yet fully mature and traditional political forces are still strong, the political elites of all factions are still unfamiliar with and distrust party competition within the system and under the constitutional framework. In contrast, populists believe that the expansion of public welfare, the stimulation of growth, and the protection of employment can be exchanged for direct popular support and legitimacy of rule.

Populism in Southeast Asia covers the various mass political phenomena that are ubiquitous in the region and the elite politics behind them. It takes the following forms. First, it emphasizes the welfare orientation of distributional justice, the protection of “people’s interests” and the pursuit of distribution in social and economic life. Second, it highlights the left-wing dimension of class politics, and emphasizing the “will of the people” and “people’s democracy.” Third, populism involves the strategy based on political competition and the security of existence. By establishing direct and extensive contact with the people, populists can gain legitimacy and support and win the power competition.³⁵

From a national perspective, the Philippines and Thailand present two completely different contexts of democracy. With the rise of the populists Thaksin Shinawatra and Joseph Estrada, the moral economy of electoralism, which was previously hidden at the local level, has appeared “at center stage and directly threatened the elites” in the two countries.³⁶

³³ Otake, Hideo. (2003). *Nihongata Popyurizumu- Seiji he no Kitai to Genmetsu* [Japanese Populism: Expectations and Disillusionment with Politics]. Chuko-Shinsho.

³⁴ Mizuno, Kosuke and Phongpaichit, Pasuk. (eds.). (2009). *Populism in Asia*. NUS Press.

³⁵ Lin, Hong. (2017). Dōng nán yà mín cuì zhǔ yì de xíng tài fēn xī: zào dòng de mín zhǔ [The Restless Democracy: An Analysis of Southeast Asian Populism Patterns]. *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 172(4), 1.

³⁶ Thompson, Mark R. and Long, Yuxi. (2017). Xuǎn jǔ zhǔ yì zhōng de dào yì jīng jì xué: lùn fēi lǚ bīn hé tài guó mín cuì zhǔ yì de xīng qǐ [The Moral Economy of Electoralism and the Rise of Populism in the Philippines and Thailand]. *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 172(4), 11.

Joko Widodo in Indonesia is another populist, and Mahathir Mohamad in Malaysia is sometimes analyzed as a populist.³⁷

Although Thaksin experienced extreme poverty in the countryside, he was born to a wealthy Chinese family. After resigning from the police force, he started to do business and achieved great success. Taking advantage of his economic resources, he formed his own political party and won the majority of the seats in the Parliament for the first time in Thailand. While promoting administrative reforms, Thaksin introduced policies beneficial to low-income groups, such as the Universal Coverage Scheme (also known as the “30-baht scheme”).³⁸ As a result, he successfully won the support of farmers and low-income urban groups. Because he threatened the rights and prestige of the political oligarchs headed by the king, in September 2006, the Thai military staged a coup, and Thaksin was forced to step down and go into exile overseas. While its high prestige among low-income groups enabled the Thaksin faction to win the election again, the political oligarchs used judicial intervention and mass mobilization to force it to resign. Even so, in the 2011 election, the party led by Thaksin’s sister, Yingluck Shinawatra, won again. Thus, in 2014, the Thai military staged another coup, and the political oligarchs regained power for a long time.

Estrada was born in the middle class and was popular for his role in movies as the hero from the bottom. He served as the mayor of San Juan and a member of the Senate and was elected president after the 1997 financial crisis. However, he was a populist without the ability to govern the country and did not succeed in solving the poverty problem. Estrada was impeached by Congress after one and a half years in office and was eventually forced to resign due to corruption scandals. Despite this, he is still perceived to be on the side of the poorer classes. In 2013, he was elected the mayor of Manila and successfully returned to politics.

In contrast with Estrada and Thaksin, Joko himself was born in a poor class. He graduated from a renowned university through hard work

³⁷ Boo Teik Khoo. (2009). The Ends of Populism: Mahathir’s Departure and Thaksin’s Overthrow. in Mizuno, Kozuke and Phongpaichit, Pasuk. (eds.), *Populism in Asia*. NUS Press.

³⁸ Xu, Mingjiang, Zhang, Xinhua and Liang, Wenjie. (2013). Zhōng guó yǐ dōng méng guó jiā yī liáo bǎo zhàng tí xì bǐ jiào yán jiū [Comparative Research on Medical Insurance Systems between China and Association of Southeast Asian Nations]. *Medicine & Philosophy*, 34(12), 67.

and successfully developed and expanded his family's furniture industry. Under the local leader election system implemented in 2005, he was elected as a local city leader. While receiving overseas aid, Joko stepped up direct dialog with residents, including poor people, and used it as a means to promote urban development. This method of direct dialog aroused heated discussion across Indonesia. During his second term as a local leader, he became a mayoral candidate for the capital of Jakarta and was elected. Moreover, in the 2014 presidential election, Joko was elected president. His poor origin and direct dialog with residents, characteristics that set him apart from the political oligarchs, were important reasons for his victory. However, different from his actions as mayor, after becoming president, Joko began to value the introduction of foreign capital to drive economic growth and cooperation with the political oligarchs rather than implementing populist policies that reflect the interests of the poor.³⁹ This governance style ensured the stability of the Joko regime, which differed significantly from the Estrada and Thaksin regimes.

Mahathir advocated a democratic system with Asian characteristics and stressed that "the government has the responsibility to protect the majority of the people." A typical feature of his governance strategy is the use of the power of the ruling party, combined with his own personal prestige, to promote the process of national modernization. Mahathir particularly emphasized the importance of regime construction and political stability. During his administration, he further consolidated the UMNO's leading position in the ruling National Front; he promoted the concept of governance by experts, trained UMNO elites, and resolutely eliminated opposing parties. Mahathir also used laws to restrict opposition parties and ensure the ruling status of the National Front. Mahathir used the ruling coalition, the National Front, to firmly control power, and the executive power was above the judicial and legislative powers. Mahathir even took advantage of the majority status of the National Front in Congress to frequently amend the Constitution and

³⁹ Pan, Yue. (2020). Hé fǎ xìng, gǎi gé yǔ zhēng yì: yìn dù ní xī yà zuǒ kē shí qī de zhèng zhì jīng jì fā zhǎn zhī kùn [Legitimacy, Reformation and Dispute: The Difficulties of Political and Economic Development Under the Jokowi Government in Indonesia]. *Crossroads: Southeast Asian Studies*, 308(6), 87–92.

other laws to facilitate the smooth implementation of the government's orders.⁴⁰

Different from populism, which regards the poor as its political foundation, in Southeast Asia, moral populism has also begun to rise. Such political leaders hold high the banners of anti-corruption and anti-drugs and are committed to promoting national prosperity and strength. Their support base is the urban middle class, who value morality. In the 2014 Indonesian presidential election, Prabowo Subianto, who valued morality, won the support of urban elites but lost to Joko Widodo by a narrow margin. Rodrigo Duterte, who was elected President of the Philippines in 2016, is a typical moral populist political leader. He often made speeches that aroused public opinion. To eliminate drugs, thousands of drug dealers were killed by police and auxiliary police officers. Although this action completely disregarded the rule of law, it managed to win the overwhelming support of urban elites and ordinary citizens, at least in the short term. Although the Philippines' political system has extensive protection measures for democratic institutions and nepotism has a deep social foundation, it is essentially unable to withstand political strongmen. Duterte used the characteristics of a political strongman and the means of guiding populist thoughts to break the social functions of oligarchy and profoundly affected political operations in the Philippines.⁴¹

In Myanmar, the importance of the political transition was artificially magnified, causing the people to show a high degree of political enthusiasm in the short term. The dominance of the "salvation-style" democratic mentality, the superposition of high expectations for democracy and the strong desire to change the status quo became the main reasons for the rise of populism. In addition, due to the low degree of national integration, the clear identities of different social groups based on ethnicity, religion, and region, and the dysfunctional domestic system during the political transition period, populist sentiment was

⁴⁰ Chin, Chong Foh. (2018). Mǎ hā dì èr de zhì guó guān: yī sī lán yǔ yà zhōu jià zhí [Mahathir: An Advocate of Islamization and Asian Value]. *Beijing Cultural Review*, 60(4), 52; Bian, Kewen. (2011). Mǎ hā dì èr hé hé mù sāi wéi ní de zhì guó zhī cè bǐ jiào—jī yú guó jiā yǐn dǎo de xiàn dài huà fā zhǎn de shì jiào [A comparison of Mahathir's and Museveni's governance strategies—based on the perspective of state-led modernization]. *Journal of Guangxi Minzu University (Philosophy and Social Science Edition)*, 33(3), 157–158.

⁴¹ Wu, Jiewei. (2018). Chāo yuè qún dài zhèng zhì zhī lù: "mín cuì zhǔ yì" yǔ dù tè èr tè de "qiáng rén zhèng zhì" ["Beyond" Clan Politics: The Populism and Duterte's "Strongman Politics"]. *Southeast Asian Studies*, 236(5), 1–2.

easily induced and intensified. Political transformation is a long-term and dynamic process that involves twists, turns, and repetitions. The inherent contradictions of democratic politics include the possibility of the emergence and intensification of populism, and the period of political transition is especially vulnerable to the interference of populism. Once public opinion or populism is formed, it possesses certain stability, and it is difficult for the government to completely change people's thinking modes and reverse the direction of public opinion.⁴²

4 SECONDARY DISTRIBUTION POLITICS IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES

As mentioned above, although the economic growth rates of Southeast Asian countries are uneven, the overall economy of Southeast Asia continues to grow. Compared with other developing countries or regions, the poverty rate in Southeast Asian countries is also decreasing rapidly (Table 3). The unemployment rate is also decreasing, the mainstream middle class is growing, and the overall economic development level is improving.⁴³ Nevertheless, while the economies of Southeast Asian countries continue to grow, the gap between the rich and the poor is difficult to eliminate in the short term.

For Southeast Asian countries, how to redistribute the dividends brought about by economic growth and eliminate the gap between the rich and the poor are important political and economic issues. In theory, the promotion of economic and social development, the narrowing of the gap between the rich and the poor, the reduction in imbalances in economic development, and the moderation of inequality through specific measures including economic system reforms and increased investment in education, medical care, housing, and other social services can effectively reduce large-scale social division and political unrest.⁴⁴

⁴² Deng, Yunfei. (2017). mǐn cuì zhǔ yì shì jiǎo xià de miǎn diàn zhèng zhì zhuǎn xíng: jī yú zōng hé tiáo chá shù jù de fēn xī [A Populist View of Myanmar's Democratic Transition: Analysis of Survey Data]. *South Asian Studies*, 119(1), 116, 136.

⁴³ Shiraiishi, Takashi and Phongpaichit, Pasuk. (eds.). (2008). *The Rise of Middle Classes in Southeast Asia*. Kyoto University Press and Trans Pacific Press.

⁴⁴ Li, Wen. (2012). Mǐn zhǔ xuǎn jǔ yǔ shè huì fēn liè- dōng yà mǐn zhǔ zhuǎn xíng guó jiā yǔ dì qū de zhèng zhì yǔ zhèng jú [Democratic Elections and Social Cleavages:

Table 3 Changes in the poverty rate in Southeast Asian countries

<i>Country</i>	<i>1990s</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2020</i>
Cambodia	44.5 (1994)	21.1	17.8 (2019)
Indonesia	54.3 (1990)	13.3	10.1 (2021)
Laos	55.7 (1992)	24.6 (2013)	18.3 (2019)
Malaysia	1.6 (1992)	1.7 (2011)	8.4
Myanmar	–	42.4	24.8 (2017)
The Philippines	33.2 (1991)	25.2 (2012)	23.7 (2021)
Thailand	11.6 (1990)	16.4	6.8
East Timor	–	41.8 (2014)	–
Vietnam	63.8 (1993)	14.2	4.8

Note The poverty rate in the 1990s refers to the proportion of the population with an average daily income or expenditure less than US\$1.25. In 2010 and 2020, it refers to the proportion of the population with an average daily income or expenditure of less than US\$1.9. The date in () is the survey year

Source ADB. (2015, p. 124). *Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2015*; ADB. (2022, p. 54). *Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2022*

In places where electoral politics are practiced, the gap between the rich and the poor is the focus of debate, and populists with a voice can easily exert influence. However, populists believe that the gap between the rich and the poor cannot be eliminated via institutional arrangements, and efforts to do so are unsustainable. From this point of view, it is very important to improve the social security system. After the 1997 Southeast Asian financial crisis, in the face of the ever-growing poor class, Southeast Asian countries continuously improved their social security systems and provided direct economic assistance to the poor. In addition, from a structural perspective, the rate of aging of Southeast Asian societies far exceeds that of developed countries. According to statistics, the proportion of the aging population in Southeast Asian countries in 2019 was 6.86%, which is very close to the United Nations' aging population standard of 7%.⁴⁵ The phenomenon of "aging old before getting rich" has become increasingly prominent, and it has become very important to ensure the living

Democratic Transitions in East Asian States, Regional Politics and Political Outcomes]. *Journal of Contemporary Asia-Pacific Studies*, 182(2), 105–106.

⁴⁵ Korkiattakul, Nuttawat and Lin, Yuanyuan. (2021). Rén kǒu lǎo líng huà duì dōng méng jìn chū kǒu mào yì de yǐng xiǎng [The impact of population aging on ASEAN import and export trade]. *China Circulation Economy*, 2293(25), 37.

standards of the poor. The above changes have undoubtedly had an enormous impact on the government policies of Southeast Asian countries, prompting the gradual transformation of Southeast Asian countries into welfare states.

Sue Guangzhao categorized Southeast Asian countries according to five types of social security systems: annuity system, health insurance, unemployment insurance, elderly welfare and public assistance. The question is to what extent the state, enterprises, individuals, families, and regions can implement such social security systems. Although Southeast Asian countries have begun to implement institutional reforms, there is still a large gap between the ideal state and the actual implementation results. Although the rise of the middle class as the mainstay means that more people bear social security responsibilities, the phenomenon of “getting old before getting rich” has already appeared in many Southeast Asian countries.⁴⁶ If the actual implementation effect of the system cannot be improved, then social security issues can be solved only by individuals. In the process of lifestyle urbanization and personalization, there are still many variables on which families and regions can rely to obtain social security. In addition, for Southeast Asian countries, the most important step currently is to achieve economic growth.

In this regard, some people believe that with the development of postwar modernization and industrialization, social phenomena and social problems, such as the evolution of traditional family structure and functions, urbanization, unemployment, poverty, and elderly care, have also emerged in Southeast Asian countries, resulting in the need to create and improve the modern social security system. The development of the social security systems in Southeast Asian countries, to a certain extent, resulted from the exploration of their own development experience, independent of the experience of the welfare states in Europe and the United States. The countries learned from the social security systems of Europe and the United States and made improvements according to their own characteristics in the process of modernization. Due to differences in

⁴⁶ Suehiro, Akira. (ed.). (2010). *Higashi Ajia Fukushi Shisutemu no Tenbo- 7 Kakok, Chiki no Kigyo Fukushi to Shakai Hosho Seido* [Prospects for the Welfare System in East Asia: Corporate Welfare and Social Security Systems in Seven Countries and Regions]. Minerva-shobo; Suehiro, Akira. (ed.). (2014). *Higashi Ajia no Koyo, Seikatsu Hosho to Aratana Shakai Risuku he no Taio* [Employment, Living Security and Responses to New Social Risks in East Asia]. Institute of Social Science, The University of Tokyo.

political systems, economic systems, economic and social development, historical and cultural traditions, and social values, the social security models in Southeast Asia developed differently. However, they exhibit some common cultural characteristics and development paths that are influenced by social structure, historical and cultural traditions, and social values. Although the concept of the welfare state was first established in Western industrialized countries and then imported to the vast majority of developing countries, the social security systems of Southeast Asian countries are not transplants of the Western system, and their growth processes and system connotations undoubtedly have many inherent logical links with “local” factors, such as political, economic, social, and cultural factors.⁴⁷

The social security systems in Southeast Asian countries have been criticized for failing to prevent those affected by economic crises from falling below the poverty line. The social security systems in Southeast Asian countries are still far from perfect. Countries generally face problems such inefficient government management, lack of information systems and databases, social security fraud and errors, and low efficiency and high costs of handling services. Most workers, poor people, and unemployed people, do not have access to social insurance. The coverage rate of social insurance, such as pensions and medical care, is very low, accounting for only approximately 15% of the labor force. In particular, the unemployment insurance system is insufficient. Therefore, Southeast Asian countries still have a long way to go to truly establish and improve their social security systems. Development remains key, and only a strong economic foundation can support good social development and social security.⁴⁸

Regarding the medical insurance system, Thailand has provided strong financial support and effective medical insurance system design to ensure the long-term sustainability of the universal health coverage system and

⁴⁷ Zhang, Xia. (2009). Dōng nán yà guó jiā shè huì bǎo zhàng zhì dù yán jiū [On the Social Security System of ASEAN Countries]. *Crossroads: Southeast Asian Studies*, 198(4), 27.

⁴⁸ Wu, Chongbo. (2003). dōng nán yà gè guó de shè huì bǎo zhàng zhì dù [Social security systems in Southeast Asian countries]. *China Labor*, (6), 62; Hu, Naijun. (2014). Fā zhǎn zhōng guó jiā shè huì bǎo zhàng fā zhǎn sī suǒ—yǐ zhōng guó, bā xī hé dōng nán yà sì guó wéi lì [Thinking about Social security development in developing countries: A case study of China, Brazil and four Southeast Asian countries]. *China Social Security*, 240(7), 40.

implemented a high-protection universal health coverage system, making it unique among low- and middle-income countries.⁴⁹ However, in Indonesia, the limitations associated with the low level of economic development make it impossible for the government to assume the task of universal health coverage, and the responsibility can only be shared by the state, enterprises, and individuals.⁵⁰

The unemployment security systems in Southeast Asian countries include employment services and vocational skills training, unemployment assistance, unemployment insurance, unemployment benefits, etc., and present unbalanced development, a strong employment orientation but weak security functions, an important role of the apprenticeship system, and severance pay as a type of unemployment benefit. Accordingly, the unemployment security system in Southeast Asia is transitioning from unemployment assistance to unemployment insurance and eventually to a multipillar, employment-oriented unemployment security system with unemployment insurance as the main body and commercial insurance and social assistance as supplements.⁵¹

Regarding the pension system, pension system reform in Southeast Asian countries is facing external challenges, such as an aging trend, intensified global competition and labor market changes, accelerated urbanization, the influence of the macroeconomic situation and capital market volatility. Therefore, an affordable, adequate, and sustainable pension plan for the people can be realized only by maintaining financial stability, promoting economic competition, achieving social equity, and improving operational efficiency.⁵²

⁴⁹ Wang, Chaoqun, Yan, Mingfen and Tao, Lili. (2018). quán mín yī liáo bǎo xiǎn zhì dù jiàn shè: tài guó de jīng yàn yǔ jiào xùn [Towards to Universal Health Insurance System: Experiences and Lessons of Thailand]. *Social Policy Research*, 11(2), 124.

⁵⁰ Wang, Wenjuan and Ren, Ran. (2008). Yin ní yī liáo bǎo xiǎn zhì dù jí duì wǒ guó de jiè jiàn [Health care system in Indonesia and its reference to China]. *Medical Higher Vocational Education and Modern Nursing*, 25(2), 70.

⁵¹ Feng, Yiqiang and Li, Xionghui. (2011). Dōng méng guó jiā shī yè bǎo zhàng zhì dù yán jiū [Study on Unemployment Insurance of ASEAN Countries]. *Crossroads: Southeast Asian Studies*, 224(6), 83.

⁵² Lv, Huangqin, Zhou, Weimin and Che, Sihan. (2016). Dōng yà, Dōng nán yà guó jiā yǎng lǎo jīn tí xī de bǐ jiào yán jiū [Comparative Study of National Pension System Reforms in Eastern and Southeastern Asian Countries]. *Journal of Southwest Jiaotong University (Social Sciences)*, 17(3), 63.

With the establishment of the ASEAN community, an increasing number of workers are choosing to seek cross-border employment within ASEAN countries, which has gradually led to asymmetry and a focus on low- and medium-skilled labor. The ASEAN and ASEAN member countries have made many efforts in the formulation and implementation of social security policies for cross-border employees. However, due to the lack of social security agreements in the ASEAN to coordinate the different social security systems among countries, cross-border employees face the double deletion of social security policies when they cross borders. In this regard, the ASEAN needs to develop sound regionalized social security agreements for cross-border employees. Relevant measures include the establishment of a strong labor mobility system, a conversion system, an implementation mechanism, and a supervision mechanism between the provident fund and social insurance systems.⁵³

Although Southeast Asian countries have adopted various measures to regulate secondary distribution, the effect is not significant. The strengthening of secondary distribution by the governments of Southeast Asian countries can neither reverse the continuously widening gap between the rich and the poor nor meet the growing welfare needs of the people, which may lead to the escalation of populist sentiment. Secondary distribution in Southeast Asian countries is limited because the overlapping functions of the primary distribution and the secondary distribution lead to disorderly interventions, and the unclear public-private boundary of welfare supply leads to inappropriate interventions in the secondary distribution. In addition, the path dependence of the welfare system has solidified the trajectory of secondary distribution, promoting welfare expansion.⁵⁴

⁵³ Wu, Weidong and Wu, Xingsi. (2016). Dōng méng nèi bù kuà guó jiù yè zhě shè huì bǎo zhàng yán jiū [Research on Social Security for transnational workers in ASEAN]. *Social Sciences in Guangxi*, 258(12), 40.

⁵⁴ Ran, Hao. (2019). Fú lì guó jiā pín fù fēn huà de yuán yīn yǔ èr cì fēn pèi tiáo jié de jú xiàn xíng [The Cause of the Rich-poor Inequality and the Limitations of Its Redistribution in Welfare States]. *Teaching and Research*, 494(12), 48.

5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Against the background of the accelerated evolution of major changes and in the process of promoting the modernization and development of Southeast Asian countries, the decision-making mechanism and interest distribution mechanism of the authoritarian era, in which the political oligarchies determined their own destiny, gradually faced difficulties in gaining support. Moreover, the disregard of human rights, the violation of citizens' liberty and dignity, and the brutality and corruption manifested in authoritarian politics aroused increasing social dissatisfaction. Historical lessons and social development gradually led the people of Southeast Asian countries to realize that it is not enough to pin their interests completely on the authorities. The rights of citizens cannot be guaranteed by the rule of man, but only through certain constitutional systems.⁵⁵

Southeast Asia is one of the few regions in the world that has experienced sustained economic growth, and it is also a region with a large gap between the rich and the poor. The modern development of Southeast Asian countries entails important challenges, such as how to promote sustained economic growth and carry out secondary distribution, which are worthy of further study. From the perspective of the political system, Southeast Asia includes socialist countries, democracies, and (semi)authoritarian countries, and most are in the process of political transition. If these factors can be considered to accurately grasp the political and economic conditions of Southeast Asian countries, then this research has global demonstration significance.

From the perspective of resource and labor factors, the modern state development in Southeast Asian countries has not undergone major changes. For example, World Bank data for 2020 show that among Southeast Asian countries, only Singapore and Brunei are high-income countries, Malaysia is very close to the high-income level, Thailand is an upper-middle-income country, and Indonesia has recently become an upper-middle-income country. The other six countries are all lower middle-income countries. Studies indicate that, in general, Southeast Asian countries have benefited from economic globalization and will not

⁵⁵ Chang, Shiyin. (2010). Dōng nán yà guó jiā zhèng zhì rèn tóng de zhuǎn zhē yú zhèng zhì jiàn gòu [The Transition and Construction of Political Identity in Southeast Asian Nations]. *Journal of Shandong University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)*, (5), 12.

develop populism similar to that in Europe and the United States.⁵⁶ A holistic perspective of populism in Southeast Asia supports the exploration of the political similarities and regional characteristics of populism in the region, and the study of moral populism may gradually increase in the future. Of course, to understand populist politics, one cannot simply start from the political strategies of political leaders, but one must also see the corresponding social foundation and how the people at the bottom participate as political actors, adding new impetus to the development of populist politics. Understanding the social foundation of populism and how to eliminate the hotbed for its existence is the crux of the problem.⁵⁷

To avoid the middle-income trap, cushion the impact of “getting old before getting rich,” and reduce the influence of populism, the governments of Southeast Asian countries are adopting various measures to improve secondary distribution to reflect the government’s fairness and justice in promoting sustainable economic and social development. The effectiveness of their efforts deserve close attention. Scholars hold different opinions on whether Southeast Asian countries will truly reform the social security system in a way that is conducive to the realization of secondary distribution and use it to narrow the gap between actuality and the ideal state.

For future research on modern state development in Southeast Asia, in addition to exploring the diversity, differences, and mobility of society, it is necessary to consider the major changes over a century, such as the intensified competition between China and the United States and the escalation of the Ukraine crisis, and interrogate how the evolution of the external environment affects the political, economic, and social development of Southeast Asian countries. In addition to viewing the external environment, we need to further analyze the interaction of political and economic logic in the formulation of government policies and their impact on the societies of Southeast Asian countries. In this regard, with the support of interdisciplinary theory and methodology, further in-depth research on the development of modern Southeast Asian countries

⁵⁶ Zhong, Feiteng. (2020). Xīn guān yì qíng yǔ dōng nán yà jīng jì de U xíng fù sū: yì zhǒng guó jì zhèng zhì jīng jì xué de fēn xī [Covid-19 Pandemic and U-shaped Economic Recovery in Southeast Asia: An International Political Economy Analysis]. *Southeast Asian Studies*, 248(5), 23.

⁵⁷ Cao, Cang. (2018). Fēi lǚ bīn de mǐn cuì zhǔ yì yùn dòng [Populist movements in the Philippines]. *Beijing Cultural Review*, 59(3), 14.

has important theoretical value and practical significance. Scholars need to be problem-oriented, of cross-disciplinary boundaries, and creatively use methods that combine arts and sciences to improve the academic and scientific nature of studies on the development of modern Southeast Asian countries.⁵⁸

In summary, emphasizing multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary innovation practices,⁵⁹ integrating the sciences and humanities,⁶⁰ establishing complementary knowledge production models,⁶¹ and strengthening studies on modern state development in Southeast Asia will not only help solve the problems faced by Southeast Asian countries but also provide solutions for how to deepen the construction of a China-ASEAN community of a shared future and a community of a shared future for mankind. Studies of modern state development in Southeast Asia must incorporate the domestic and international political economy of our era into its structure. This, in turn, requires the introduction of a new set of analytical tools and theoretical frameworks, which is often regarded as a self-contained research field. Interdisciplinary theories and methods, as well as dialog with mainstream academia, can open more opportunities to seek new research breakthroughs and achieve interaction with policies.

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⁵⁸ Ma, Siyan and Li, Chenyang. (2023). Guān yú gòu jiàn zhōng guó tè sè guó bié yán jiū tǐ xì de sī kǎo—yǐ miǎn diàn yán jiū wéi lì [Reflections on Constructing a System of Area Studies with Chinese Characteristics: A Case Study on Myanmar Studies]. *Southeast Asian Studies*, 264(3), 44–45.

⁵⁹ Zhang, Zhenjiang and Zhang, Guiji. (2023). jiàn lì zhōng guó de dōng nán yà xué: wéi shén me, píng shén me, zuò shén me [Establishing China’s Southeast-Asianology: Why, What and How]. *Southeast Asian Studies*, 264(3), 7.

⁶⁰ Liu, Zhiqiang. (2023). Zhōng guó dōng nán yà yǔ yán zhuān yè yǔ dōng nán yà xué de jiàn gòu yǔ fā zhǎn: cóng yǔ yán zhī chí dào xué kē zhī chí [Southeast Asian Language Majors and the Construction and Development of Southeast Asian Studies in China-From Language Support to Subject Support]. *Southeast Asian Studies*, 264(3), 57.

⁶¹ ASEAN Studies Programme, Institute of Studies at Peking University and Zhai, Kun. (2023). Yǐ dōng méng xué wéi xiān háng shì fàn diǎn tuī jìn zhōng guó qū yù guó bié xué fā zhǎn [Taking ASEAN Studies as a Pioneering Initiative for Advancing the Development of Chinese Area Studies as a Discipline]. *Southeast Asian Studies*, 264(3), 30.

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Climate Change Adaptation Implementation and Governance in Thailand: Increased Resilience and Potential Conflicts

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1 INTRODUCTION

Evidence shows that the temperature has risen significantly across Thailand over the past 50 years and will increase at the end of the twenty-first century in the range of 2 °C to more than 4 °C under the Representative Concentration Pathway 4.5 (RCP4.5) and 8.5 (RCP8.5) scenarios [1–2]. Climate change is causing multiple changes in extreme weather events and slow-onset climate events in Thailand [1–6]. By the end of the twenty-first century, heat waves in Thailand will greatly increase by more than 18% and 31% under the RCP6.0 and RCP8.5 projections, respectively [6]. The number of storms entering Thailand in the far future will decrease by 25–40%, but their intensity will increase by 3–9% [1]. There were more than 86 flooding events in Thailand in the past 50 years (1970–2021),

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causing average damage of US\$ 47.5 billion [7]. Studies indicate that the number of people affected annually by severe river flooding could increase to more than 2 million by 2035–2044 and that coastal flooding could affect another 2.4 million people by 2070–2100 [4, 6]. In addition, Thailand has experienced several droughts in the past 50 years, affecting more than 40 million people. Droughts are projected to double by the end of the twenty-first century under RCP6.0 and RCP8.5 [4, 6]. Moreover, a crucial increase at a rate higher than the global average is observed for the sea levels in the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea [1–2]. The sea levels in the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea increased by 2.0–5.7 mm per year during the past 27 years (1993–2019) [2]. Under RCP4.5 and RCP8.5, the future sea level is projected to increase by 80–99 cm by the end of the century [6]. In the worst case of the RCP8.5 projection with a sea level rise of 1.1 m, the affected Bangkok and metropolitan areas will expand from 2520 square kilometers to 6140 square kilometers, causing the population at risk to increase by 7.2 million people (86%) [5].

Based on accumulated evidence and other factors, including heavy dependency on climate-sensitive sectors for livelihoods, long coastlines, and low-lying areas, Thailand is considered highly vulnerable to climate change [8–9]. According to the Global Climate Risk Index (CRI) [10], Thailand was among the top 10 most affected by extreme climate events during 2000–2019. It has also been demonstrated that climate change substantially impacts the Thailand economy, with gross domestic product (GDP) expected to decrease by 19.5% by 2048 if the global temperature rise exceeds 2 °C and if Thailand does not have any robust adaptation measures to reduce the impacts [9]. Therefore, effectively adapting to climate impacts to reduce vulnerability, strengthen resilience and increase adaptive capacity has become increasingly important for Thailand's sustainable socioeconomic development.

Adaptation is a fundamental response measure used to cope with or adjust to the adverse effects of climate change as well as to build resilience [11] and can cover a wide range of approaches, such as ecosystem-based approaches, technical measures, economic measures, or governance and participation measures [11]. The utilization of different forms of knowledge and technology has been recognized by scientists and governments, as their use increase the effectiveness of adaptation and are critical for ethical and sustainable adaptation practices [11–12]. Moreover, climate change governance is important to maintain effective adaptation and

risk management to pursue climate-resilient societies and development [13–14]. Climate change adaptation governance is defined as the “mechanisms, measures and processes of interaction and decision-making among actors involved to steer society toward reducing the risks or adapting to the adverse impacts posed by climate change” [15–16]. Unlike the mitigation governance frame, adaptation has traditionally been viewed as a local context and process that generally involves individual and collective efforts by stakeholders, including local authorities, communities, and stakeholders [13].

In this article, major climate change impacts and key sectors for adaptation interventions are presented based on document analysis. With the polycentric governance framework, how Thailand’s climate change adaptation implementation and governance developed after the Paris Agreement (PA) was adopted were reviewed and highlighted. In addition, potential conflicts arising from climate change impacts and adaptation measures are discussed.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study, the focus was on climate change implementation and governance, mostly involving climate policy, social, and governance dimensions for which evidence is often stored as descriptive language [17]. Therefore, the research methodology used entailed qualitative text analysis of related documents and nonnumerical data [18–20] to explore detailed descriptions regarding major climate change impacts and crucial sectors for adaptation interventions and to understand how Thailand’s climate change adaptation policies were designed and implemented. Qualitative methods are important in climate change science because they not only answer “what” questions but also provide a better interpretation of “why” questions [17, 21]. These approaches can add value and provide insights into “hard” and value-free quantitative approaches [17]. Various documents and nonnumerical data were collected and compiled in a holistic, rich, and nuanced manner, and findings were interpreted and described through careful analysis to obtain clear and reasonable conclusions [22]. A set of related peer-reviewed articles, international and national reports, policies and plans, publicly published meeting documents and relevant information, and data from key governmental agencies were compiled and reviewed. The important content and information were drawn from the CCMP 2015–2050 and Thailand’s NAP as the major national plans

related to climate change adaptation [23–24]. Critical issues presented in the Third National Communication (NC), Thailand Fourth Biennial Update Report (BUR), and Thailand’s 2nd Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) as the latest national reports submitted to the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) [8, 24] were also extracted. Information relevant to climate change impacts and adaptation was obtained from the ASEAN State of Climate Change Report [27]. Moreover, documents and papers related to climate change, the environment, and conflicts were analyzed. The document analysis followed the systematic procedures of Prior [28] and Gill et al. [18] as much as possible, which were designed to examine the domains and extent to which Thailand’s climate change adaptation implementation and governance have developed over time.

The polycentric framework was applied to assess important aspects of Thailand’s climate change adaptation and governance. The term polycentricity has been increasingly applied to climate change issues to exploit co-benefits at multiple scales to incentivize global commons management through climate mitigation and adaptation [29]. The concept of polycentricity offers a descriptive way to understand the horizontal and vertical dimensions of climate change governance and presents a multilevel and polycentric approach to improving the national climate change governance architecture [29–31]. Polycentricity has been increasingly accepted as a useful framework offering flexible solutions for generating effective responses to multiple climate change challenges [29–31]. According to Arriagada et al. [30], the polycentric framework comprises four dimensions: (1) governance levels and corresponding roles; (2) institutional linkages between multiple actors; (3) actors and their roles; and (4) knowledge production to improve efforts to reduce the threat of climate change. When considering these dimensions together, governance modes ranging from state-centric to decentralized and bottom-up governing can be evaluated by considering different aspects of the relationships between state intervention and societal autonomy [30].

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 *Primary Climate Change Impacts and Crucial Sectors for Adaptation Interventions*

The impacts of climate change on Thailand have been highlighted in many documents, including national reports and plans [4, 6, 23–27, 32–33]. These impacts threaten the country’s development prospects, and the socioeconomic and environmental consequences of ongoing climate change have jeopardized the livelihood and well-being of communities. The major impacts are in the sectors related to water resources, agriculture, tourism, health, natural resources, and urban settlement and infrastructure. Some of the critical impacts include negative impacts on agriculture and food production, a decline in freshwater resources, threats to coastal communities and infrastructure due to sea level rise, saline water intrusion and coastal erosion, negative impacts on rural livelihoods largely associated with agriculture and water and natural resources, and negative impacts on human health due to extremely hot weather, the spread of infectious diseases, and deteriorating air quality [6, 24, 27, 32–34]. The major climate hazards include flooding, drought, extremely hot weather, extreme weather events, coastal flooding and erosion, saline water intrusion, seasonal shifts, and changes in rainfall patterns and distributions (Table 1). Climate hazards in Thailand vary by place and can occur simultaneously or coincidentally, leading to increased substantial disruption of society and natural systems due to simultaneous manifestations of compounds and multiple hazards and impacts. The interaction of these climate hazards with preexisting socioeconomic vulnerabilities can cause large consequences that Thailand will face in the future and will undermine decades of development progress.

Table 1 Summary of climate drivers, climate hazards, and critically impacted sectors in Thailand

Climate drivers	Warming trend, rainfall, extreme temperature and rainfall, drying trend, damaging storm, sea level rise, carbon dioxide fertilization
Climate hazards	Flooding, drought, extremely hot weather, extreme weather events, coastal flooding and erosion, saline water intrusion, shift in seasonality, changes in rainfall patterns and distribution
Key impacted sectors	Water resource, agriculture, public health, tourism, natural resources and human settlement

The national reports and plans identify several critical sectors that adaptation interventions can be focused on [23–26]. The sectors are prioritized on the basis of important criteria, including their climate change vulnerability to projected impacts, importance to the national economy and societal well-being, and to an extent, their importance to future development goals, plans, and pathways. Adaptation prioritization generally involves stakeholder consultations that consider the socioeconomic importance of sectors and their vulnerability based on scientific information and future climate change projections. Consequently, the crucial sectors for adaptation interventions are presented as a set with relatively equivalent priority. Water management, agriculture and food security, public health, tourism, natural resource management, and human settlement and security are identified as crucial sectors in the CCMP 2015–2050 and Thailand’s NAP [23–24]. Although the issues of livelihood and poverty caused by climate change are important, it is not considered a separate sector but is integrated into agriculture and food security and human settlement and security. Fisheries, which are an important sector in terms of their economic contribution to overall gross domestic product, are also allocated priority as an integral part of the agriculture and food security sector for climate change adaptation. Tourism is selected as the main sector for adaptation interventions because it has been one of the critical factors of the Thai economy. In 2019, nearly 40 million foreign tourists visited Thailand, which helped generate revenue of approximately 2 trillion Baht (11% of GDP) and employed more than 7 million people (20% of total employment) [35].

3.2 Thailand’s Climate Change Adaptation Implementation and Governance

The major features of Thailand’s climate change adaptation implementation and governance are presented in the context of the polycentric framework in the following subsections.

3.2.1 National and Subnational Governance of Global Climate Agreements

Thailand has increasingly paid attention to global efforts to address climate change and ratified the PA in 2016 [8, 26]. Climate change issues are addressed at the highest policy level under the National Strategy 2018–2037 to ensure long-term continuity of implementation alongside

sustainable development considerations, including poverty eradication [8]. The global climate agreements signed by Thailand provide a strong framework for developing national and subnational governance that promotes climate change adaptation. In 2011, the CCMP 2015–2050 was developed to reflect Thailand’s strategy for climate change mitigation, adaptation, capacity building, and cross-cutting. The CCMP provided the country’s vision to achieve climate-resilient and low-carbon growth that aligns with a sustainable development path by 2050 [23]. To further build adaptive capacity and enhance climate resilience in response to the PA objective, the first NAP was developed during 2015–2018 through a participatory process of extensive stakeholder consultations involving representatives from relevant government agencies, technical experts, academia, civil society, international organizations, private sectors, and vulnerable groups [24]. Several principles, including sufficient economic philosophy, sustainable development, ecosystem/community-based adaptation, local wisdom, good governance, public participation, and gender responsiveness, were accounted for in formulating Thailand’s NAP [24–25]. The NAP highlighted climate impacts, vulnerability, and adaptation gaps and needs and identified adaptation measures covering six priority sectors (Table 2). In 2018, the NAP was more closely consistent with the PA, NDC, National Strategy, Master Plan under National Strategy and National Reform Plan. During 2020–2037, Thailand’s NAP will be periodically monitored, and its implementation progress will be evaluated, revised, and updated, as appropriate. Much progress can be made in integrating climate change adaptation to disaster risk reduction, as climate change has serious implications for natural hazards and their intensity, severity, and duration [27]. In addition, climate change adaptation has been integrated into critical sectoral policies and plans such as the Climate Change Action Plan in Agriculture (2023–2027), Health National Adaptation Plan (HNAP) Phase I (2021–2030), 20-year Water Resource Management Master Plan, and Spatial Plan [25]. The HNAP supports Thailand’s NAP, functioning as a crucial guideline that enables multisectoral partnerships to strengthen and build health resilience from climate change [34]. The HNAP’s objective is to reduce illness, lessen health impacts, and become a center for health and climate change in Asia in terms of climate change-induced health risk management [36]. Climate change adaptation and resilience are important components included in the draft of the country’s first climate change law, which was approved by the National Climate Change Committee (NCCC). This law aims

Table 2 Six priority sectors for adaptation interventions and their objectives identified in Thailand's NAP

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Objective</i>
Water management	Increased water security and reduced losses and damage from water-related disasters
Agriculture and food security	Productivity and food security maintained amidst climate change risks and impacts
Public health	Effective public health systems to manage health risks and impacts from climate change
Tourism	Strengthened capacity toward climate resilience and sustainable tourism
Human settlements and security	Enhanced capacity of individuals, communities, and cities, to adapt to climate change impacts in accordance with local contexts
Natural resources management	Sustainable management of natural resources and biodiversity to respond to climate change impacts

to enhance national climate change implementation and governance to ensure that both mitigation and adaptation targets are met. The status of the climate change laws draft is under a review of regulatory impact assessments, the addition of relevant issues, and public hearing. The draft is expected to be proposed to the Cabinet for consideration this year.

3.2.2 *Institutional Arrangements and Linkages*

Cross-scale institutional arrangements and linkages have steadily developed as an important part of Thailand's climate change governance to fully and effectively implement climate change adaptation at the national and subnational levels. The coordinated effects of all the ministries were adopted as a critical approach. The Department of Climate Change and Environment (DCCE) was established under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) to help Thailand address climate change more effectively. Climate change adaptation is one of the major divisions under this new department to oversee the country's policies, measures, guidelines, and actions related to this issue. The DCCE acts as the National Focal Point of the UNFCCC and is responsible for coordinating multiple stakeholders in the development of coherent national adaptation policies, strategies, and plans (Fig. 1). The NCCC, as the top of the institutional arrangement, was established in 2007 to fulfill Thailand's commitments under the UNFCCC and to define

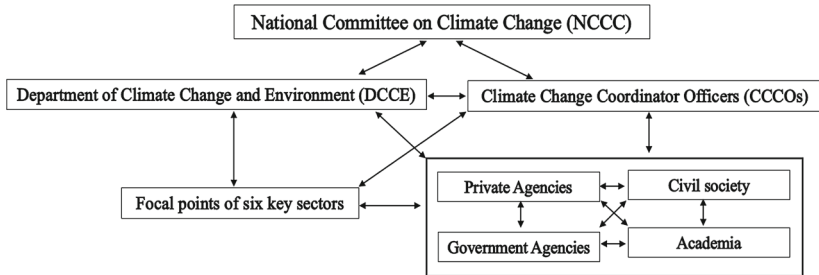


Fig. 1 Structural diagram of the collaboration among agencies and actors on Thailand's climate change adaptation implementation

national climate change adaptation policies, including guidelines and mechanisms for implementation and international collaboration [8]. The NCCC is chaired by the Prime Minister and has members from both the public and private sectors, including experts from relevant agencies. The Climate Change Coordinator Officers (CCCOs) were also established in 2009. The CCCOs consist of senior officers from 30 agencies under 19 ministries and 11 nonministerial governmental agencies who are responsible for communicating and coordinating climate change adaptation-related efforts between their own agencies, the NCCC, and other agencies (Fig. 1) [8, 26]. Horizontal coordination among central agencies is also conducted through CCCOs. However, the mechanisms and channels of line ministries or departments and regional and provincial offices of the Regional Environment Office and Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) are mainly used to vertically coordinate from central governments to provincial and local agencies.

3.2.3 *Actors and Their Roles*

Government agencies, the private sector, civil society, and academia are the four major actors involved in the formulation and development of Thailand's climate change adaptation policies, plans, and projects at the national, subnational, and local levels (Fig. 1) [23–24, 26]. This multi-stakeholder engagement is increasingly recognized as a crucial component of Thailand's climate change adaptation governance. Six governmental agencies were appointed as the focal points of the six crucial sectors identified in the NAP (Table 3). In addition, more than 40 governmental

agencies were identified as critical actors involved in NAP implementation in the six sectors. Multistakeholder consultations are also important participatory processes that occur during the formulation of the CCMP and NAP, highlighting the importance of engaging critical actors in the process of developing national climate change adaptation strategies and plans. Furthermore, civil society has developed diverse informal efforts for adapting to climate change impacts from the bottom-up approach, forming a relevant local element of Thailand's climate change adaptation governance. For example, the Natural Resource and Environmental Protection Volunteers, a large civil society network of the MONRE, participate in numerous climate change adaptation actions at the local and community levels [26]. Moreover, the Thai Working Group for Climate Justice (TCJ), as a civil society network consisting of critical members of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), is important in the policy-making process on Thailand's climate change adaptation to foster fair participation in adapting to climate change impacts by considering climate justice, environmental, and social issues [37]. Some NGOs, such as the Sustainable Development Foundation, Rak Thai Foundation, and Sustainable Agriculture Foundation Thailand, as well as academia and researchers from governmental agencies and universities, have actively conducted action and participatory research as well as capacity building on climate change impacts and adaptation for vulnerable communities [26].

Table 3 Governmental agencies were appointed as focal points of six critical sectors in Thailand's NAP

<i>Governmental agency</i>	<i>Sector</i>
1. Office of the National Water Resources, Office of the Prime Minister	Water management
2. Office of Agricultural Economics, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives	Agriculture and food security
3. Department of Health, Ministry of Public Health	Public health
4. Department of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Sports	Tourism
5. Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment	Natural resources management
6. Department of Public Works and Town and Country Planning, Ministry of Interior	Human settlements and security

3.2.4 *Knowledge Production*

Knowledge production is a holistic approach that combines content and processes from multiple disciplines and actors to generate new ways of understanding [30]. Different types of scientific, bureaucratic, and stakeholder knowledge on climate change impacts, vulnerability, and adaptation have been increasingly introduced by several actors. This consistently generates authoritative knowledge for relevant stakeholders and creates broad perceptions and robust policies that improve climate change adaptation implementation and governance. Thailand's First and Second Assessment Reports on Climate Change (1st and 2nd TARC) were produced in 2010–2011 and 2015–2016 by a group of experts and researchers to provide updated scientific knowledge to relevant stakeholders and the general public on major aspects of climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation in Thailand [1]. Assessment methods of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) were applied to ensure the integrity and robustness of scientific knowledge on the state of climate change impacts, vulnerability, and adaptation in Thailand. This best-available and most updated scientific information can inform critical stakeholders who are involved in policy formulation and decision-making processes to support effective, progressive, and transformative adaptation to the impacts and risks posed by climate change [1]. The Thailand Research Fund (TRF) and National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT), the leading research funding agencies, have continually produced easy-to-understand books and technical reports related to climate change adaptation issues based on research findings and project outcomes [26]. Documents and materials related to climate change impacts, vulnerability, and adaptation in the local context have been created by the Department of Environmental Quality Promotion (DEQP) as part of the activities of Article 6 of the Convention (awareness-rising campaign and public participation) [26]. Bureaucratic and systematic knowledge was produced during the preparation and development of NC, CCMP, NAP, and NDC. This knowledge provides institutional support for present and future climate change adaptation actions and governance. A set of documents derived from the 6-year Risk-based National Adaptation Plan (Risk-NAP) project funded by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) provides knowledge on climate change impacts and risk, adaptation policy planning modalities, collaborative networks, and case studies in Thailand at both the

national and subnational levels [38]. In addition, web-based climate risk information has been developed to support NAP implementation and local adaptation in Thailand as well as to disseminate easy-to-understand information to many stakeholders and the general public [39].

3.3 *Potential Conflicts from Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation Interventions*

Climate change is increasingly recognized as an important contributing factor to conflicts by exacerbating the scarcity of necessary natural resources, such as water, land, and forests, and by triggering mass migration due to extreme weather events [40–42]. A reduction in essential resources means that competition increases, leading to conflict. For example, less precipitation combined with high temperature at the national level can result in conflicts among users/consumers of water [40–42]. Many migrants are likely to burden economic and resource bases in receiving areas, hence promoting contests over scarce resources and social services such as land, food, jobs, health care, and education [43–44]. Furthermore, climate-induced migration can lead to conflicts by aggravating ethnic tensions that arise when migrants and residents belong to different ethnocultural groups, and the arrival of newcomers causes an unstable ethnopolitical balance [43, 45]. Unlike politics and a history of conflict, the effects of climate change are not the major predictors of conflict. However, they are considered “risk/threat multipliers” that intensify conflict patterns and other related societal problems such as poverty, injustice, and social insecurity [40–42]. Available evidence shows that climate-related conflict is more likely to occur in regions where people are vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, where institutions are ineffective and essential services are difficult to obtain [46–47]. This situation is true for Thailand, which is identified as one of the countries with a greater risk of conflict in the climate change context [48]. Thailand has also been a crossroads for migration with Southeast Asia, hosting more than 4 million people, mainly from neighboring countries [49]. The high number of both registered and unregistered migrants in Thailand can have socioeconomic and environmental consequences and increasing pressure on natural resources [49]. Resource-based conflicts have become increasingly apparent in Thailand as a result of changes in the national economy, society, culture, politics, and development, including climate change impacts [50–53]. The

competition for serving basic and economic needs from essential natural resources, unequal rights to access natural resources, and different attitudes and values about using natural resources are the major causes of the conflict that has occurred in Thailand [51, 53]. Water conflicts between upstream and downstream water users and river basins are commonly observed in Thailand, especially during flood and drought periods [51, 53]. Land use-related conflicts between forest encroaching cash-crop farmers, agro-industries, and government agencies have long occurred in western and northern Thailand, leading to large-scale deforestation [52]. Local people in highland areas frequently experience intense problems and conflicts regarding the right to live and use natural resources in protected areas [53–54]. In Western Thailand (Kanchanaburi Province), the government established a national park and forest reserve, making the local communities illegal encroachers on land they had historically managed. For more than 20 years, they were often arrested and had their land confiscated by national park officials, triggering open antagonism and conflict [54]. In addition, long-term civil conflict has occurred in the southernmost provinces of Thailand, causing accelerated migration to Malaysia [55]. Adverse climatic conditions can also result in violent conflicts by hindering economic growth, reducing agricultural production, and triggering food scarcity [56]. During the extreme droughts of 2004, farmers in Songkhla Province in the south had stockpiled rice in their fields in anticipation of future depressed rice outputs [57]. This motivated the Barisan Revolusi Nasional-Coordinate (BRN-C) to conduct raids on rice fields in various parts of the province to capture and control rice fields during drought. These raids were extremely violent and often involved killing, beheading, and beatings, leading to a 90% increase in the number of villagers killed by insurgents during the 2004 droughts [57]. Hence, future anthropogenic-induced climate change is expected to exacerbate the existing natural-based conflicts in Thailand, including other related societal problems such as poverty, injustice, and social insecurity.

Climate adaptation strategies and plans can provide an avenue to reduce the risks of climate-linked conflict. However, adaptation interventions often involve recreating how principal natural resources are used, managed, and governed and may alter the supply of resources, redefine burdens and benefits, and reallocate risks and opportunities [58]. These responses lead to disagreements and conflicts over their allocation or shaping of the relative appeal of using violence to achieve an objective

[40–41]. For example, some adaptation measures can influence land use through flood protection infrastructure and relocation from flooded and/or drought-prone areas and coastal areas [42]. Adaptation interventions are generally cross-sectoral and have inherent multidisciplinary characteristics in which actions in one sector have positive or negative impacts (synergies or trade-offs) on the others. Therefore, the nexus framework has been increasingly used to address such multidimensional linkages to establish integrated and holistic approaches to avoiding conflicting resource utilities when implementing adaptation measures [59–61]. The nexus concept has become widely used in the international development community. The nexus framework is conceived as a way to reconcile potentially conflicting natural resource needs, enhance resource efficiency, capture benefits from integration and coordination, and promote sustainable development [59–61]. It generally considers all the interconnected issues and considers the complex interlinkages among them to understand synergies and trade-offs and to find favorable resolutions. Figure 2 shows an example of the climate change-forest-agriculture-water nexus in the context of Thailand's NAP. Potential conflicts may occur from direct impacts from climate change and trade-offs arising from implementing adaptations. Maladaptive actions can also increase the risk of adverse climate-related outcomes and conflict. However, adaptation options can benefit multiple sectors while avoiding conflict. Examples of such options include early warning systems, reforestation, urban and spatial planning, and land and water management. The adaptation options for each sector of Thailand's NAP should be further assessed through the nexus approach to maximize synergies and reduce trade-offs.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Thailand has made great progress in developing policies and institutional mechanisms to better manage climate change impacts as well as integrating them into sectoral and national development policies and plans. This improvement provides a good environment for the robust implementation of climate change adaptation and disaster risk management under the PA regime. The orientation of Thailand's climate change adaptation governance has been steadily reformulated to move toward a polycentric mode, with diverse instruments formulated, cross-scale institutional arrangements, and multilevel actors. Comprehensive national/subnational systems to monitor, evaluate, and report on the progress of

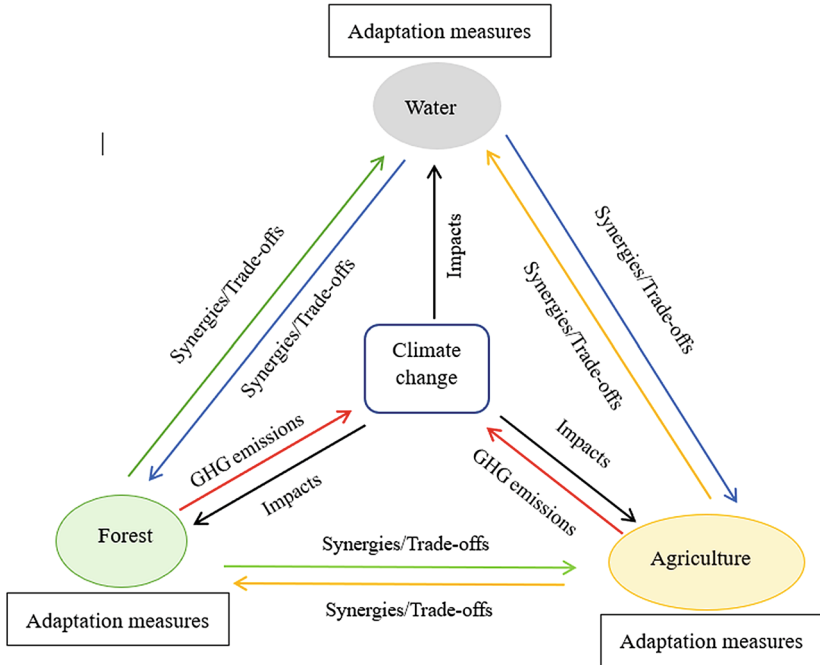


Fig. 2 The nexus of climate change-forest-agriculture-water and potential for conflict

climate change adaptation implementation are also established. The establishment of new departments to oversee Thailand’s policy, plans, and implementation of climate change issues and climate change law drafts are examples of recent developments. As a result, climate change adaptation is becoming more deeply embedded in governmental structures that coincide with the increasing profile of climate actions on national agendas. The CCMP and NAP were developed as national plans to build adaptive capacity and enhance climate resilience. These plans laid out the country’s vision to achieve climate resilience agreeing with a sustainable development path by 2050. Actions under the CCMP and NAP are being undertaken at the subnational and provincial levels. However, further work needs to be done to percolate to the grass-root level. As community-based disaster risk management is well established and implemented, climate change adaptation needs to be synergically implemented at this

level as well. The empowerment of local institutions needs to be rapidly enhanced to provide them with locally appropriate adaptation actions, matched by accelerated capacity strengthening at the local government level. In addition, gaps in the individual and institutional capacities of all relevant stakeholders, including governmental agencies, the private sector, and the general public, remain. The provision of support and cooperation on climate actions are important for achieving adaptation objectives and increasing ambition. To provide more insights into Thailand's climate change adaptation implementation and governance, in-depth analyses based on both qualitative and quantitative approaches, including case studies and explorations of the pros and cons of these mechanisms, are needed.

Conflicts and other related societal problems such as poverty, injustice, and social insecurity in Thailand are expected to intensify and increase due to future climate change, as their impacts often result in constraints and a scarcity of principal natural resources (forest, land, and water) that are essential for serving basic and economic needs. In addition, adaptation interventions in one area/sector positively impact (synergies) or negatively impact (trade-offs or potential conflicts) the others. Moreover, maladaptive actions can increase the risk of adverse climate-related outcomes and conflict. Therefore, adaptation options under Thailand's NAP should be further assessed to maximize synergies and reduce trade-offs. The adaptation options that can benefit multiple sectors while avoiding conflicts, such as early warning systems, reforestation, urban and spatial planning, and land and water management, should be given priority. Although Thailand has been greatly affected by climate change and is prone to conflict, the links between these two phenomena remain understudied compared to those in other regions. The paucity of research limits the ability to identify climate change-conflict linkages. Therefore, an improved empirical and theoretical understanding is needed to help explain the mechanisms that link climate change to violent conflicts in Thailand.

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PART II

Resilience



Poverty and Education in Times of COVID-19: The Implementation of Education Programs in Southeastern Chiapas, Mexico

Nifta Lau Ibarias^{ID}

1 INTRODUCTION

The changes in social and educational life brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic (hereinafter referred to as “the pandemic”) have exposed not only difficulties but also poor levels of policy formulation and implementation at the local level in some developing countries. In addition

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to the different shares of the population with access to information and communication technology (ICT), inattention to variations in the levels of poverty, employment, income, food security, and education lagging across localities has hindered the expected results of the social and educational programs formulated to meet the challenges derived from the COVID-19 pandemic.

This paper aims to address the education policies implemented in Mexico during the pandemic and the socioeconomic and educational realities of rural localities. For this purpose, I collected case study and survey data over 5 months of fieldwork in three localities in south-eastern Chiapas, namely, the municipalities of Tapachula and Cacahoatán and Santo Domingo, which is a village (“*ejido*”) within the municipality of Unión Juárez. Most households do not have a landline; thus, their realities are not represented in the “Survey to Ponder the Impact of COVID-19 on Education” (hereinafter referred to as the “ECOVID-ED survey”) conducted by the *National Institute of Statistics and Geography* (INEGI).

In the localities surveyed, teachers did not rely on the education programs “*Aprende en Casa*” (Learn at home), which is a federal initiative led by the *Secretariat of Public Education* (SEP), or “*Mi Escuela en Casa*” (My School at Home), which is a local initiative led by the *Secretariat of Education in Chiapas* (SECh). Due to their local realities, most teachers (approximately 70%, according to principals) implemented other modes of instruction according to which households would not increase their expenses and more students could be involved. Middle school teachers implemented pedagogical techniques in a manner in which WhatsApp could be used since many students did not have internet or a computer at home. Primary schoolteachers handed out learning materials of their own elaboration in person to parents. However, many primary school parents were not tutoring their children at home. Middle school students were not complying with their schoolwork, and some dropped out.

While the burden of increased income and food insecurity resulting from the pandemic played a major role in the share of students who dropped out completely—especially middle schoolers—an important issue that hampered students’—and parents’—commitment with their education was the SEP’s policy on automatic grade approval regardless of having the necessary knowledge (Agreement 11/03/19). The pandemic hit localities that were already in an inauspicious context not only in terms of poverty, food, and employment insecurity but also in terms of

the “education reality.” Thus, attracting students and preserving their enrollment was already a challenge in some poor and remote locations. Ensuring that some students regularly complied with the schoolwork and had the necessary knowledge for the following grade was also a common challenge in Tapachula city.

In Cacahoatán and Santo Domingo, although households had more trouble securing stable income and food availability, there was at least one adult member in the household who could tutor the children, which was not the case elsewhere. While some argued that they lacked the necessary knowledge (28.5%), a sense of disinterest was often identified in the households surveyed. Parents accepted that their children *did not like to go to school* and entertained the idea that *they would rather help at home*. They would ask their children to help them cultivate their crops, cook, or take care of their siblings. Others who were traders would take their children to their workplaces to help them and learn about their occupation. In Tapachula, parents were more eager to encourage their children to return to school since, due to their occupations, they could not spend time at home tutoring or taking care of them. However, both in the city and villages, educational lag has increased and persists to date.

This paper is organized into six sections. In the following section, I describe the research design and methods employed for the evaluation of the education programs implemented in Mexico and Chiapas during the pandemic. In Sect. 3, I explore the context in which the programs were implemented and their results at the national level. In Sect. 4, I delve into the local education policy in Chiapas and address it with numerous indicators. In Sect. 5, I elaborate on the results of the fieldwork I conducted in southeastern Chiapas and reflect on the challenges according to the “local reality.” The final section concludes the paper.

2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

I adopted a strategy that combined quantitative data from official statistical surveys with qualitative data from in-depth case studies. At the outset, I focused on the nationwide and local education programs implemented in Chiapas during the pandemic, namely, “*Aprende en Casa*” (SEP 2020a) and “*Mi Escuela en Casa*” (SECh 2020). Information for their evaluation was gathered via the ECOVID-ED survey (INEGI

2021a).¹ I compared these results with data from the *SEP* (2019, 2021, 2022a), INEGI (2020a, b, c, 2022), the *State Committee of Statistics and Geography of Chiapas* (CEIEG) (2020a, b, c, d, e), and the *National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy* (CONEVAL) (2020a, b), which reflects poverty, employment, educational lagging, and access to ICT, among other indicators related to Chiapas.

I collected case study data over 5 months of fieldwork (March–August 2022) in the municipalities of Tapachula and Cacahoatán and in Santo Domingo, which is a village (“*ejido*”) within the municipality of Unión Juárez. Focusing on developing a deep understanding of distance learning conditions and everyday household dynamics and the economy, first, I visited primary and middle schools and conducted interviews with principals, teachers, and local education officials. This information was complemented with on-the-ground observations and surveys of heads of household with dependents aged 6–18 years. In Tapachula, where a smaller share of the population lives in poverty relative to the other locations, I surveyed “*colonias populares*” (poor districts). In Cacahoatán and Santo Domingo, I surveyed different “*barrios*” (neighborhoods). Both sets of interviews and surveys were useful for addressing the gaps identified between policy implementation and official data on education from the 2019–2021 period.

3 EDUCATION POLICY IN MEXICO DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

On March 23, 2020, the *SEP* announced the suspension of all physical program delivery in schools, and decreed that classes would resume on April 20 as long as “all conditions [...] by federal sanitary authorities were met” (SEP 2020b). After being repeatedly postponed, the resumption of in-person classes began in October 2021.² In addition, the *SEP* required students to continue with their education at home and implemented a strategy that promoted nationwide televised education to avoid setbacks for students without the internet, namely, “*Aprende en Casa.*” Students

¹ National telephone survey applied to a sample of 5472 households with population members aged 3–29 enrolled in the 2019–2020 and 2020–2021 school years to identify the schooling conditions of 11,080 students. The sample represents 54.3 million people.

² The nation-wide resumption of regular face-to-face classes did not occur until February 2022.

were able to access TV content via the internet or public access channels according to their school grade, ranging from preschool to high school. The program was rapidly implemented, but the length of daily lessons was significantly reduced to 1.5 hours for primary schools and 2.5 hours for middle schools.³

While it is estimated that approximately 91% of households in Mexico have a TV (INEGI 2021b), issues related to the implementation of the program and its performance promptly became apparent. The federal entities where the highest share of households had a TV during the examination period were those in which the poverty level is lower relative to the remainder of the country—i.e., Mexico City, Jalisco, and Coahuila. In states such as Chiapas and Oaxaca, in which three out of every four people live under the poverty line, only 75% of households had a TV, and in many locations, there was no stable signal. Furthermore, TV is not ideal as a medium of instruction. In addition to the evident lack of feedback, many families had more than two children at different school levels at the time, and it was difficult to follow up programming on different TV channels. Hence, while largely discarding TV as a medium of instruction, students, parents, and teachers had to adapt to the available resources (Table 1).

Table 1 Population aged 3–29 according to device used for distance learning

<i>Electronic device^a</i>	<i>Percentage of sample (%)^b</i>	<i>School level^c</i>		
		<i>Primary (%)</i>	<i>Middle (%)</i>	<i>High (%)</i>
Smartphone	65.7	72	70.7	58.8
Laptop	18.2	9.6	15.9	26.5
Desktop	7.2	4	8.2	12.7
Digital TV	5.3	8.8	2.3	0.2
Tablet	3.6	5.6	2.8	1.7

Source Own elaboration from INEGI (2021a)

Notes ^aA total of 47% had to share the source with others in the household, especially primary schoolers (75%)

^bThe population enrolled in the 2019–2020 school year was 33.6 million

^cFor the 2020–2021 school year, more students bought laptops and relied less on TV

³ The program was complemented with free books and other materials handed out by teachers and education authorities. At times, in remote and marginalized communities, learning materials were handed out behind schedule or were incomplete.

Frequently, these individuals had no experience with the use of ICT, and households lacked a computer or tablet. Since the cheapest price of these devices ranges between \$1500 and \$2500 MXN pesos (\$139 USD), those who had access to a smartphone used it as a medium of instruction; however, in rural areas, only 59% had a mobile phone. Another issue was internet availability. In rural areas, due to a lack of coverage or funds, only 48% of the population were internet users (INEGI 2019a). While home internet monthly prices start at approximately \$350 MXN pesos (\$19.5 USD) in cities, the lack of coverage by the main service providers in rural locations allowed small companies to provide the service but at higher prices; many people had to pay an additional \$1200 MXN pesos (\$67 USD) for installation. In 2020, the general daily minimum wage was \$123.22 MXN pesos (\$6.9 USD), although many in rural areas were earning \$80 MXN pesos (\$4.5 USD).

According to ECOVID-ED (INEGI 2021a), with this change in the format of schooling, 53% of households acquired one electronic device, 32.6% purchased internet service and 21% bought study room furniture. Additionally, since “*Aprende en Casa*” allowed only reflection exercises, families had to spend on copies, prints and scans for work assignments. Beyond this direct economic cost to families, distance learning often requires that at least one member of the household is not fully occupied. Most students do not have self-learning skills, especially at young ages. Preschool and primary schoolers had to be closely monitored and tutored by a member in the household (98.8%), usually their mother (80.7%) (Table 2).⁴

Eventually, some students dropped out (2.2%) or did not re-enroll (9.5%). Among those who dropped out, the majority were attending middle or high school (54.2%), and 20% were attending primary school.⁵ The most cited reasons were (a) the difficulty of following through with schoolwork (28%), (b) a household member losing his or her job (23%), (c) the school closed, and (d) a lack of electronic devices or the internet (18%). It is also worth noting that 9% dropped out due to the lack of funds—middle school to undergraduate students—and 7% dropped out to work—high school and undergraduate students. In the 2020–2021

⁴ A significant proportion of middle school students were tutored by their mothers (60.2%) or a female family member (17.1%).

⁵ Chances of no completion were 2.2% higher in private schools.

Table 2 School enrollment of the population aged 3–29 (2019–2021)

<i>School year</i>	<i>Enrollment (million)</i>	<i>Completion (million)</i>	<i>Reasons for no enrollment</i>		
			<i>COVID-19 (million)</i>	<i>Lack of funds (million)</i>	<i>Other (million)</i>
2019–2020 ^a	33.6	32.9	2.3	2.9	16.1
2020–2021 ^b	30.4	30.1	1.4	0.4	1.5

Source Own elaboration from INEGI (2021a)

Notes ^aThe population aged 3–29 is 54.3 million. For the 2019–2020 school year, only 61.8% of the participants were enrolled

^bData accounts for re-enrollment, with a baseline of 33.6 million patients enrolled in 2019–2020

school year, the abovementioned reasons were also the main reasons for not enrolling, which increasingly affected the population aged 13–18.⁶ In addition to the abovementioned economic- and COVID-19-related reasons, 30% of this population group did not enroll because they did not like to go to school.

4 EDUCATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN CHIAPAS

In line with the format of “*Aprende en Casa*,” SECh (2020) launched the “*Mi Escuela en Casa*” microsite. Students from preschool to middle school could access learning materials in Spanish and the four major indigenous languages used in Chiapas.⁷ To access the content, households were required to have an electronic device and internet, TV, or radio.⁸ At the time this program was implemented, 1.1 million people were enrolled in primary and middle school (SEP 2019), accounting for 89.4% of the population aged 6–14 (INEGI 2020a) (Table 3).⁹

⁶ From the 12.6 million teens ages 13–18, 2.5% had to work, 3.3% lacked funds, 5.8% did not enroll due to the pandemic.

⁷ These indigenous languages are Tzeltal (10.1%), Tsotsil (9.6%), Ch’ol (3.8%), and Tojol-ab’al (1.2%).

⁸ The radio was only used as medium of instruction in indigenous languages.

⁹ The national average of this population group that is enrolled in school is 94%. From the group ages 15–24, only 35% are enrolled.

Table 3 The student population in Chiapas by school level/year (2018–2022)

Level	Type	2018–2019		2020–2021		2021–2022	
		Students	Schools	Students	Schools	Students	Schools
All	Total	1,788,114	19,914	1,736,850	20,001	1,718,836	20,039
	Public	1,682,859	18,736	1,654,924	18,853	1,598,692	19,032
	Private	105,255	1178	81,926	1148	120,144	1007
Primary school	Total	788,919	8366	797,498	8328	793,492	8417
	Public	765,221	8180	777,032	8132	773,384	8220
	Private	23,698	186	20,466	196	20,108	197
Middle school	Total	308,130	2372	297,774	2560	292,353	2632
	Public	297,395	2249	287,870	2431	282,432	2498
	Private	10,735	123	9904	129	9921	134

Source Own elaboration from SEP (2019, 2021, 2022a)

The data reflect relative changes in enrollment between the 2018–2019 and 2020–2021 school years. The national average decrease in enrollment considering all education levels was 10%. In Chiapas, in the context of the pandemic, approximately 4% fewer students were enrolled in middle school—both public and private. Concerning primary school, only private institutions experienced a decline (14%). Nonetheless, the number of private schools at both the primary and middle levels increased. In terms of public schools, only the number of primary schools decreased. These relative changes were explained via interviews with heads of household and local education officials. Quotes are in *italics*.

For the 2020–2021 school year, distance learning was still being implemented. On the one hand, *many parents opted to withdraw their children from private schools to enroll them in public schools*, especially at the primary level. They often argued that *private schools were as behind in terms of the use of e-learning platforms and disorganization as public institutions* at that time. Hence, some of them *were not willing to continue making that “extra effort”* to pay for private education. The student population at the middle school level decreased in both private and public schools. In the fieldwork I conducted, some students aged 13–15 years dropped out of school, especially in rural locations, *to help their parents at home or learn about their tradesmen activities*. Regarding students who lived in the city and were attending public schools, very few parents *opted to pause their studies until regular face-to-face classes resumed to avoid further lagging behind in education*.

On the other hand, for the same school year, some public primary schools closed. The local education official explained that to secure funds and the number of personnel hired, public schools require a certain enrollment quota per classroom. Before the pandemic, some public schools in remote and poor locations *often struggled to attract students and preserve their enrollment*. Hence, during the pandemic, some schools were expected to close, but these were mostly those schools that were *already struggling with their attendance and performance levels*. With respect to public middle schools, the stark increase in their number occurred after the government's efforts to push education to higher levels in more remote rural locations. The number of private primary and middle schools also increased throughout the pandemic. Some *saw the opportunity to open private schools* and cater to public school students, promising parents to implement a "mixed mode" early, with the intention that 50% of the students attended in person at least once per week.¹⁰

Nevertheless, the number of students enrolled in all middle schools remained fairly stable, indicating that fewer students were enrolled per institution. The most significant changes in enrollment per institution between the 2018–2019 and 2021–2022 school years are noted for public middle schools (– 14%), private middle schools (– 15%), and private primary schools (– 20%). Only the number of students enrolled per institution in public primary schools remained constant. As such, these fairly similar results in terms of enrollment relative to the number of public and private institutions indicate that conditions remain widely heterogeneous within the education system in Chiapas, which is an issue that many scholars have remarked on (Mérida and Acuña 2020; Pacheco 2010). An important aspect of this heterogeneity is the significant disparities in the share of the population lagging behind in education across the state.¹¹

Education lag has been argued to be related to poverty and its distribution (Gómez et al. 2016; Aguilar et al. 2018). In fact, those locations

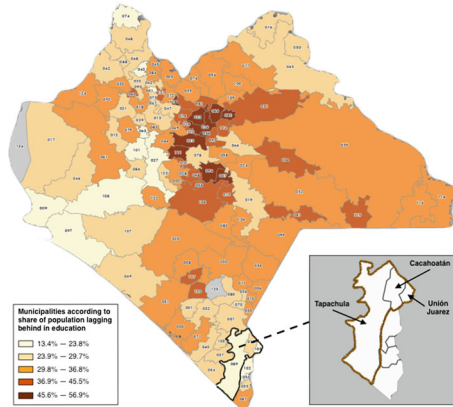
¹⁰ Many private schools in cities offer education ranging from preschool to high school, in contrast to public schools that often offer only one level of education. In small cities, i.e., Cacaohatán, private education is often offered only at the primary level.

¹¹ CONEVAL (2022a) considers that an individual "lags behind in education" if: (a) they are ages 3–21 and do not have compulsory education (primary and middle school) or do not attend to a formal education center; (b) they are age 22 or more, born after 1998 and have not completed middle school; (c) they are age 16 or more, born before 1982 and have not completed primary school; or (d) they are age 16 or more, born between 1982 and 1997 and have not completed middle school.

where poverty runs rampant are usually those with a larger share of the population lagging behind in education (see Figs. 1 and 2). Often, in these locations, *schools are built from poor materials and do not have adequate services, and students must travel long distances*. In 2020, of the total population of Chiapas (5,543,828),¹² 75.5% lived in poverty and 29% lived in extreme poverty (CEIEG 2020b),¹³ ranking first across Mexico in both dimensions. To put these considerations and experience with distance learning in perspective, with 51% of its population living in one of the 20,951 rural localities in the state, approximately 32.7% of the “occupied labor force” (PEAO) is employed in the primary sector (INEGI 2021c).¹⁴ Many do not own arable or cattle land, although they work on farms—which are the property of wealthy landowners—or engage in subsistence agriculture and raise a few animals. The rest commonly engage in trade activities.

People in rural locations rarely leave their villages, *not even to go to hospitals to receive better medical attention or to buy necessities in the nearest cities*, which might be offered at lower prices in the city’s larger stores

Fig. 1 Municipalities by share of the population lagging behind in education (2020). *Source* Own elaboration from CEIEG (2020a)

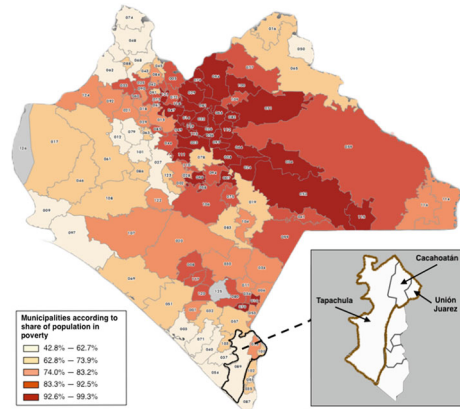


¹² Chiapas is the 8th largest state in Mexico in terms of population.

¹³ The national population average in poverty is 43.9% and that in extreme poverty is 8.5%.

¹⁴ A total of 19.53% of the PEAQ are employed in the secondary sector, while 48% are employed in the tertiary sector. At the national level, 12.17% of the PEAQ works in the primary sector, 25.7% works in the secondary sector, and 61.58% works in the tertiary.

Fig. 2 Municipalities by share of the population living in poverty (2020). *Source* Own elaboration from CEIEG (2020b)



and markets. Commonly, they buy basic goods, i.e., dairy, maize, beans, oil, and hygiene products, at *DICONSA*, which is a chain of rural stores managed by the government to supply certain products at lower prices,¹⁵ especially those considered to be within the “basic food basket” (CBA).¹⁶ As cross-city/village transport fees are relatively high—approximately \$90 MXN pesos (\$5 USD) both ways for a 50-minute trip—considering that some people in rural locations earn as low as \$80 MXN pesos (\$4.5 USD) a day, the few who regularly travel to the city or larger villages do so to sell their farm products or work.

As a great bulk of the people living in rural locations depend on social programs—in addition to their economic activities—for their basic living expenses, these programs’ limitations in reversing poverty in the state should be noted. For instance, in 2016, Chiapas implemented a total of 10 social development programs, of which 8 were related to economic

¹⁵ *DICONSA* is an enterprise with major state participation that belongs to the social development sector. It comprises approximately 26,000 stores and 300 warehouses across the country that supply quality basic and complementary products to poor and extremely poor locations. *DICONSA* seeks that the margin of savings provided to beneficiaries through the price of the *DICONSA* “basic basket” is of at least 15% considering the prices of the “basic basket” in private stores in the local market. The transfer of savings to beneficiaries is via “low prices” and not as direct subsidies.

¹⁶ The CBA contemplates approximately 40 products that supply the minimum nutrients for the sustenance of an adult individual.

welfare, one was related to education, and one was related to the environment (CONEVAL 2020b, c).¹⁷ Nonetheless, there were no interventions related to food security, health, social security, employment, or housing. On this basis, CONEVAL advises that the design and implementation of such programs should be carried out with a “holistic perspective in social rights”—not only in poverty itself—to ensure sustainable change. In effect, conditional cash transfers (CCT), such as “Prospera” (formerly “Progresa” and “Oportunidades”), have had a limited effect on poverty alleviation.¹⁸ In 2008, approximately 77% of the population in Chiapas was living in poverty (3.68 million); by 2018, approximately 76.4% (4.17 million) of the population was living in poverty. Hence, although the share declined by 0.6%, almost half a million more people were in poverty by 2018 (CEIEG 2020b) (Table 4).

Furthermore, employment conditions in the state are poor. Of the population that constitutes the labor force (aged 15+), only approximately half are employed. Three-quarters of these individuals work in “informality” conditions, and approximately half work in “critical conditions.”¹⁹ In 2019, the income of 68.7% of the population was below the value of the “basic food basket” (CBA), which in November 2019 was approximately \$1165 MXN pesos (\$65 USD) in rural locations and \$1544 MXN pesos (\$86 USD) in cities. The adults in the households interviewed often complained about the shortage of some basic goods and the increase in prices during the pandemic. Initially, this situation was exploited by some that sought to *hoard basic products to sell them at higher prices*; however, eventually, certain purchases in large chain stores—and DICONSA—were strictly regulated per family. By December 2021, the cost of the “CBA” had increased to \$1345 MXN pesos (\$75

¹⁷ Five programs were for the elderly (ages 65+) and female population, as 76% of these individuals were living in poverty at the time. However, there were no interventions for people with disability, although 74% of these individuals were living in poverty. Only one program was for children and indigenous people.

¹⁸ In 2016, 5 of the 10 social programs implemented used cash transfers, 1 used in-kind transfers, and 2 used both kinds of transfers.

¹⁹ “Informality” refers to the share of vulnerable PEAO due to the nature of the economic unit they work for, i.e., unregistered microbusinesses and subsistence agriculture. “Critical conditions” refer to the share of PEAO that work 35+ hours per week and earn below the minimum wage or working 48+ hours per week and earn below two minimum wages.

Table 4 Employment in Chiapas (2020–2022)

Years	Population ages 15+	Employed ^a			Unemployed ^b			
		Total (%) ^c	Wage-employee (%)	Informal sector (%)	Informality (%) ⁵	Critical condition (%) ⁵	Lost job (%)	Quit job (%)
2020	3,725,681	2,068,483 (55.5%)	44.9	24.3	73.1	46	–	–
2021	3,885,174	2,063,625 (53.1%)	46.1	26.8	74.2	48.2	51	30
2022	3,944,171	2,104,228 (53.3%)	41.8	26.8	73.8	50.2	57.2	20

Source Own elaboration from INEGI (2020b, 2021c, 2022)

Notes ^aShare from the total “occupied economically active population” (PEAO)

^bShare from the total “economically active population” (PEA) or population of labor

^cShare of the total population aged 15+ that constitutes the labor force

Table 5 Household availability of ICT in Chiapas (2020)

<i>Device/service</i>	<i>Households</i>	<i>Percentage (%)^a</i>
TV	1,039,705	76.9
Mobile phone	944,695	70.1
Radio	736,852	54.5
Internet	292,189	21.6
Laptop/desktop	212,970	15.8
Landline	159,652	11.8

Source Own elaboration from CEIEG (2020a)

Notes ^aTotal number of households is 1,352,023

USD) in rural locations and \$1844 MXN pesos (\$102.5 USD) in cities (CONEVAL 2022b) (Table 5).

The increases in prices *put enormous pressure on households*, which, in their majority, were already challenged by poor employment conditions. Hence, in a context where 52% of the population already suffered from food insecurity (CONEVAL 2020c), when distance learning programs were implemented, *the great majority [of households] lacked electronic devices and home internet [...] and were not in a position to purchase them*. Previously, *poor families did not think of these [...] as “necessities”; they lived day by day, and their main goal was to ensure there was food at the table*. Even when previous government programs delivered digital TVs to families or laptops to students (Secretaría de Bienestar 2015; SSPC 2017), *some sold them afterward* (Proceso 2020). These types of behavior and decision-making processes (Monroy 2016) remained consistent during the pandemic.

5 FIELDWORK IN SOUTHEASTERN CHIAPAS

The locations selected for the fieldwork were the municipalities of **Tapachula** and **Cacahoatán** and **Santo Domingo**, which is a village (“*ejido*”) within the municipality of Unión Juárez. These locations vary

across *CEIEG*'s (2020b) classification according to the share of the population in poverty,²⁰ with food and health insecurity,²¹ and an average income below the poverty line²²; however, they appear similar in terms of education lag. Furthermore, these locations in the “*Socomusco*” region do not face poverty as extreme as that faced by others in other economic regions in the central and eastern parts of the state—which comprise the darker areas in Figs. 1 and 2—²³ where a larger share of the population belongs to indigenous groups; many studies on education and poverty in Chiapas have based their research on these areas. As such, the relationship between poverty and education is less inherent, leading to interesting conclusions concerning the effects of the pandemic on education (Table 6).

In terms of the share of the population employed, the three locations are fairly similar. However, differences arise from the locations' most common economic activities. In **Santo Domingo**, people work in subsistence farming, family-owned grocery stores, or trade. In **Cacahoatán**, people are employed in small stores or sell their goods at the local market; however, people from the periphery work in subsistence farming. In **Tapachula**, which is the second largest economic unit in Chiapas, occupations vary from businessmen or professionals to tradesmen, farmers, and service sector employees.²⁴ Concerning the availability of electronic devices and the internet, there are also certain differences, although the share of households with any of these in the three locations is significantly greater than the state average (see Tables 5, 7).

²⁰ In terms of “poverty,” Cacahoatán ranks in the third level (74–83.2%), Unión Juárez in the fourth (62.8–73.9%), and Tapachula in the fifth (42.8–62.7%).

²¹ Regarding “food insecurity,” Tapachula and Cacahoatán rank in the third level (17.4–25%), and Unión Juárez ranks in the fourth (8.7–17.3%). For “health insecurity,” Tapachula and Cacahoatán rank in the first (47.4%+), and Unión Juárez ranks in the second (38–47.3%).

²² Regarding “income below the poverty line,” Cacahoatan ranks in the third level (77.2–86.1%), Unión Juárez ranks in the fourth (67.2–77.1%), and Tapachula ranks in the fifth (43.1–67.1%).

²³ “*Altos Tsotsil Tseltal*,” “*De los Bosques*,” “*Meseta Comiteco Tojolabal*,” “*Tulijá Tseltal Chol*,” or “*Selva Lacandona*.”

²⁴ People from Cacahoatán and Santo Domingo may seek jobs in Tapachula to improve their opportunities. However, they have to travel every day, as house rents in Tapachula are high, thus spending \$100 MXN pesos (\$5.5 USD) in transport per day.

Table 6 Indicators of surveyed locations (2020)

<i>Location</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Households</i>	<i>Population in poverty</i>	<i>Population lagging behind in education</i>	<i>Population with food insecurity</i>	<i>Population with health insecurity</i>
Tapachula	353,706	96,211	211,623 (59.8%)	81,593 (23%)	77,012 (21.7%)	198,338 (56%)
Cacahoatán	50,112	12,144	39,248 (78.3%)	12,372 (24.6%)	10,434 (20.8%)	31,103 (62%)
Santo Domingo	4334	1124	11,417 ^a (71.3%)	3523 ^a (22%)	2555 ^a (15.9%)	6811 ^a (42.5%)

Source Own elaboration from *DGPA (2022a, b, c)*; CEIEG (2020b)

Notes ^aData available for the municipality of Unión Juárez. The population of Unión Juárez is 16,008

Table 7 Employment and households with electronic devices in the surveyed locations (2020)

Location	Employment		Electronic devices/internet		
	Employed	Unemployed ^a	TV	Computer	Internet
Tapachula	166,216 (73%)	61,620 (27%)	83,780 (87%)	23,536 (25%)	42,375 (44%)
Cacahoatán	22,344 (73%)	8241 (27%)	10,209 (84%)	1678 (14%)	2794 (23%)
Santo Domingo	1690 (68%)	774 (32%)	1035 (92%)	162 (14%)	213 (19%)

Source Own elaboration from CEIEG (2020c, d)

Notes ^aCalculated from subtracting the PEA0 from the population aged 15–64

Furthermore, the share of the indigenous population in these locations is very low. In 2020, the INEGI estimated that only 94 people in **Santo Domingo** belonged to an indigenous group, approximately 2.17% of its population; of this group, 97.8% spoke Spanish, and 11 were children aged 5–14. In **Cacahoatán**, there were 1314 indigenous people, approximately 2.62% of its population; of this group, 98.8% spoke Spanish, and 156 were children aged 5–14. In **Tapachula**, there were 3432 indigenous people, approximately 0.97% of its population; of this group, 96.5% spoke Spanish, and 182 were children aged 5–14 (CEIEG 2020e). The majority of the population belonging to an indigenous group are “*Mam*” (50%).²⁵ Most of this group consists of illegal immigrants from poor villages in Guatemala.²⁶ This population—a great bulk of individual immigrants—migrates to Chiapas looking for employment and generally speaks Spanish. The few “*Mam*” migrant families settle in small villages near the border, i.e., Cacahoatán and Santo Domingo, where they have more opportunities to buy land and build their dwellings.

Concerning children and education, approximately 63,744 children aged 5–14 years lived in **Tapachula**, and 94.8% were enrolled in school—primary or middle—in 2020. In **Cacahoatán**, there were approximately

²⁵ The remaining indigenous population in these locations is comprised as follows. In Tapachula, there are 700 Zapoteco, 85 Mixteco, 83 Tseltal, and 51 Tsotsil. In Cacahoatán, there are 20 Tsotsil and 14 Tseltal. In Unión Juárez, there are 4 Mixteco (Gobierno de México 2022a).

²⁶ The average age of the Guatemalan immigrant population is 35 years; 59% belong to an ethnic group, usually “*Mam*.” They settle in the municipalities of Tapachula, Comalapa, Suchiate, Cacahoatán, and Tuxtla Chico (Gobierno de Chiapas, 2019).

10,449 children aged 5–14 years, and 96.1% were enrolled in school. In **Santo Domingo**, there were approximately 839 children aged 5–14 years, and 95% were enrolled in school (CEIEG 2020e). In **Tapachula**, there were a total of 304 primary schools and 103 middle schools. In **Cacahoatán**, there were 53 primary schools and 20 middle schools, and in **Santo Domingo**, there were only two primary schools and one middle school. Nonetheless, some of these schools were duplicated in the databases because they offer both primary and middle-level education. Similarly, private education was offered in 26 schools in **Tapachula** and only in one school in **Cacahoatán**.

Due to the low share of the indigenous population, the “*Soconusco*” region²⁷ hosts only 3% of the total indigenous schools in Chiapas.²⁸ Nonetheless, importantly, there are some discrepancies between the INEGI data about the share of the indigenous population in the locations surveyed and the SEP data about indigenous schools (see Table 8). This was explained by the local education official. There is a misrepresentation in censuses, as *grandparents or parents often speak the language or are identified as belonging to a group. Classes are generally held in Spanish,*²⁹ and *other children may attend* if there are no other options available. Furthermore, some children *travel every day from their home villages in Guatemala*. Although it was not possible to conduct interviews with indigenous students—following the criteria for sampling households—the interviews with local education officials and school staff provided anecdotal evidence about the experiences of the very few indigenous students they had contact with.

²⁷ The “*Soconusco*” region encompasses Tapachula, Cacahoatán, Unión Juárez, and other 12 municipalities.

²⁸ For the 2021–2022 school year, there were a total of 4853 preschool and primary indigenous schools across Chiapas. Approximately 349,713 students were enrolled (SEP, 2022b). More than 75% of these schools were located in the “*Altos Tsotsil Tzeltal*” (26%), “*De los Bosques*” (8.5%), “*Meseta Comiteco Tojolabal*” (7.8%), “*Tulijá Tzeltal Chol*” (22.5%) or “*Selva Lacandona*” (20.5%) regions.

²⁹ Indigenous education in Chiapas is only offered at the preschool and primary levels in the four major indigenous languages: Tzeltal, Tsotsil, Chol and Tojolabal. The population pertaining to any of these groups in the locations surveyed is exceedingly low.

Table 8 Schools and enrollment in the surveyed locations (2020)

<i>Location</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Number of schools</i>	<i>Number of students</i>	
Tapachula	Primary	Public	282	39,079	
		Private	22	3455	
		Indigenous	41	3692	
		Total	304	42,534	
	Middle	Public	84	16,051	
		Private	19	1861	
Cacahoatán	Primary	Public	52	7005	
		Private	1	130	
		Indigenous	21	1350	
		Total	53	7135	
	Middle	Public	19	2827	
		Private	1	83	
		Total	20	2910	
	Santo Domingo	Primary	Public	2	567
			Private	0	0
			Indigenous	0	0
Total			2	567	
Middle		Public	1	230	
		Private	0	0	
		Total	1	230	

Source Own elaboration from *Gobierno de México* (2022b)

5.1 *Interview Results and Data Collection on Enrollment, Desertion, and Compliance with Schoolwork*

Since the *SEP* and *SECh* data on enrollment and completion did not reflect reality or ground observations, I visited three primary and two middle public schools in Santo Domingo and Cacahoatán to collect both “official” data from archives reported to education authorities and “unofficial” data. I interviewed a total of four principals, five teachers, and two administrative staff members in Santo Domingo and Cacahoatán. The total student population attending these schools during the 2021–2022 school year was 1739. I also interviewed one local education official

who worked as a primary school teacher during the pandemic and supervised Zone 036, corresponding to Tapachula.³⁰ The student population in this zone is 1906 primary schoolers. Quotes by teachers, principals and education authorities are provided in *italics*.

In **Santo Domingo**, there are two primary schools and one middle school, all of which are public.³¹ All students enrolled in the 2019–2020 school year completed their grade. Nonetheless, teachers indicated that the 100% rate of completion reflected in official statistics was because, under *SEP* and SECh instruction, they *could not fail students*. This measure was upheld even though the students were not doing their homework or meeting the basic school-grade requirements for approval. In reality, students' interest and academic performance decreased considerably. *They knew that teachers could not fail them due to the pandemic*, and some parents justified their children's behavior since *they did not have access to the internet or a smartphone to comply with the schoolwork*. This situation was similar in **Cacahoatán**, where one primary school and one middle school were surveyed.³²

The cost of the pandemic was more visible for the 2020–2021 school year. In some schools, enrollment declined; in others, it increased due to the closure or worsening education conditions of neighboring schools. Nonetheless, the “official” enrollment statistics did not change meaningfully. The main issue was with the *SEP* policies implemented during the pandemic, i.e., “Agreement 11/03/19” on the evaluation of learning, accreditation, promotion, regularization, and certification of students in basic education (SEGOB 2019) and subsequent additions, namely, Agreement 26/12/20 and Agreement 11/06/22. Their general disposition was that “the grade recorded cannot be lower than 6” (SEGOB 2022), with 5 or lower meaning grade failure; therefore, the automatic approval of all students was imposed. This policy was implemented until November 2022.

³⁰ This zone includes 7 public primary schools and 4 private primary schools. There is 1 public school in “*cantones*” Soledad y Progreso, Sinaí, La Joya, “*ejido*” La Concordia, the municipality of Mazatán, and 2 in Tapachula City.

³¹ Primary schools “José Vasconcelos” and “Lázaro Cárdenas del Río”; and middle school “Maestro Rafael Ramírez Castañeda”.

³² The schools interviewed were primary school “Chiapas Libre” and middle school “Las Leyes de Reforma”.

Since “enrollment” and “completion” data were not useful for evaluating the results of the distance learning programs and the effects of the pandemic on education, I focused on asking in interviews—and household surveys—“whether students were complying with their schoolwork regularly” and “whether they went back to school when the mixed mode was implemented.” In **Santo Domingo** and **Cacahoatán**, only approximately 60% of the students complied with their schoolwork, and approximately 6% dropped out of school. Moreover, even when the “mixed mode” was implemented, approximately 20% of the students were still not attending in-person classes even though they were still enrolled (Table 9).

In **Tapachula**, enrollment in primary public schools experienced its sharpest decline for the 2021–2022 school year. Interestingly, although Zone 036 encompasses “*ejidos*” and “*cantones*” of the municipality of Tapachula—in addition to Tapachula city—which are distant communities with relatively high levels of poverty, the three schools located in Tapachula city experienced the most significant changes. Among these changes, there was an enrollment decline of 86 students. On the periphery, only one “*cantón*” experienced a significant decline, i.e., 38 students. The local education official, who previously worked as a primary school teacher in two of these Zone 036 “*cantones*,” explained this phenomenon as follows: *In “ejidos” and “cantones,” many students are beneficiaries of the “Benito Juárez Scholarship,” for which the only requisite is being “enrolled” in a public primary or middle school.*³³

Accordingly, during the pandemic, it was common practice for parents to enroll their children; however, this in no sense implied that they were complying with the schoolwork or having regular contact with teachers. Even when the “mixed mode” was implemented, some students remained at home, and this situation persisted. While this situation may be attributed in part to the pandemic, as many did not want to risk their children’s health, the local education official mentioned that even *before the pandemic, some children in distant communities were going to school only 3 months a year*. This coincides with celebrations or the delivery of support packages by authorities. Some parents were eager to enroll their children because the “tutor” would be responsible for managing the grant. On this account, *at times, separated couples battled to be registered*

³³ This consists of one monthly installment of \$875 MXN pesos (\$48 USD) collected by the parent/tutor during a 10-month period.

Table 9 Questionnaire items: teachers/principals

<i>Item</i>	<i>Tapachula</i>		<i>Cacahoatán</i>		<i>Santo Domingo</i>	
	<i>Primary^a</i>		<i>Primary</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>Primary^b</i>	<i>Middle</i>
<i>Enrollment</i>						
2019–2020	1380		452	–	319	238
2020–2021	1413		–	–	329	224
2021–2022	1287		482	496	350	231
<i>Materials for distance learning</i>						
SEP Textbooks	X		X	–	X	–
Manuals of own elaboration	X		X	X	X	X
“Aprende en Casa” TV program	–		–	–	–	–
“Mi Escuela en Casa” microsite	–		–	–	–	–
<i>Medium of instruction</i>						
WhatsApp/FB	X		–	–	–	X
In person ^c	–		X	X	X	–
Zoom/Google Meet	X		–	X	–	–
<i>Academic performance</i>						
During distance learning	Low		Low	Low	Low	Low
Students that complied with schoolwork	60%		60%	70%	50%	60%
Students that dropped out	70		23	50	10	10
<i>Reasons to not comply with schoolwork</i>						
Lack of electronic devices/internet	–		–	X	–	X
Not tutored at home	X		–	–	X	–
Not interested	X		X	X	X	X
<i>Reasons to drop out</i>						
Lack of funds	–		X	X	X	–
To work	–		–	X	–	X
Didn’t want/like to study	X		–	X	X	X
Educational lagging	X		–	–	–	X
A member was infected with COVID-19	–		X	–	–	–

Note ^aEstimates for seven public primary schools in Zone 036 (The schools are “Efraín Antonio Gutiérrez,” “Benito Juárez García,” “Manuel Velasco Suárez,” “Paulino Trejo,” “José María Morelos y Pavón,” “José Valenzuela Rodríguez,” and “Jaime Nunó Roca.”)

^bData for only one school from the two interviewed

^cIn person only to hand out manuals or collect homework

in the school as the “tutor”; however, since there were no thorough checks or balances, these *resources were often misused*.

5.2 Household Survey Results

To determine some explanations for the students’ low academic performance and parents’ alleged disinterest in education during the pandemic, I applied surveys to heads of households with dependents aged 6–18. I surveyed 72 households in Tapachula, 9 in Cacahoatán, and 3 in Santo Domingo, which was proportional to the total number of households in each location. The total population across all households surveyed was 342. The population of children/youths aged 8–18 was 158. The surveys reflected on the household economy and distance learning experience. Quotes by household members are provided in *italics*.

(a) Household Economy During the Pandemic

According to the households surveyed, the average monthly income per occupied member in Santo Domingo was \$2500 MXN pesos (\$138.5 USD); in Cacahoatán, it was \$4000 MXN pesos (\$221.6 USD); and in Tapachula, it was \$6000 MXN pesos (\$332.4 USD). Considering that the average monthly household expenditure on food, utilities and transport is \$4500 MXN pesos (\$249.3 USD) in Tapachula, approximately \$2000 MXN pesos (\$110.8 USD) in Santo Domingo, and \$2800 MXN pesos (\$155.1 USD) in Cacahoatán,³⁴ many households struggled to secure their needs during the pandemic. Furthermore, in the three examined locations, as most occupations required one to be outside, at least three members of 17 households were infected with COVID-19. Since the majority responded that they did not have access to social security or healthcare services (70.2%), COVID-19 infections presumed additional expenses in a context where many had already lost opportunities to provide their services/products.

Only 25% of the households were beneficiaries of at least one type of social program. The most common were the “Pension for Older People” (*“Pensión para el Bienestar de las Personas Adultas*

³⁴ This estimation does not account for other expenses such as medicine, personal hygiene, cleaning products, etc.

Mayores)³⁵ and the “Benito Juárez Scholarship” (“*Beca Universal para el Bienestar Benito Juárez de Educación Básica o Media Superior*”). In **Santo Domingo** and **Cacahoatán**, it was more common that households were beneficiaries of these programs, and frequently, only one adult member in the household was occupied; the other adults, if present, were devoted to chores or caring for the children. However, when the pandemic hit, families noted *that prices increased and some products were not being supplied*—thus, they had to go to the *city*—and *job opportunities were scarce*—some lost their job, work hours, or clients (44%). The majority in Santo Domingo worked as tradesmen (37.5%) or sold what they produced/farmed (25%). In Cacahoatán, the majority were merchants (27.7%) or sales clerks or tradesmen (22.2%). Many families *were scared, [they] didn’t want to fall ill and [they] stayed at home for weeks*, only going out when necessary.

As the lockdown continued and *[they] were running out of savings, [they] had to find other [income] opportunities*. At times that meant selling their crops and farm animals that were otherwise intended for their own subsistence; at others, it meant offering their tradesmen services at lower prices or working more than one job at a time. It is in this context that a larger share of the economically active population started engaging in various [informal] occupations, especially youths. As one interviewee mentioned, *children and youths were not going to school; some were bored or doing nothing at home, so they started asking around to offer their “help,”* i.e., gardening, cleaning, waiting tables, either on their own or motivated by their parents. In other cases, especially in those households where the main income came from trade activities, children would accompany their parents to their workplaces to help.

In **Tapachula**, it was more common that two adult members in the household be employed. These adults often had informal jobs (32.7%) or were merchants (27.1%), especially females. In 44% of the households, at least one member lost income opportunities during the pandemic, especially those that were door-to-door salespeople or worked in nonessential retail. Due to the nature of their occupations, people in Tapachula stayed at home for a shorter

³⁵ This program consists of one bimonthly installment of \$4800 MXN pesos (\$266 USD) for the elderly population aged 65+.

period than did people in Santo Domingo and Cacahoatán. *[They] had to go out to work; but the problem was “who would care for the children at home?”* In families in which both parents worked, it was often the elder child who would care for their siblings; in others, the children would be sent to stay their grandparents during work hours. To an extent, these particular changes in household dynamics during the pandemic translated into the different experiences in the three locations in terms of distance learning.

(b) Distance Learning During the Pandemic

In **Santo Domingo** and **Cacahoatán**, primary schools initially “recommended” that students follow the programming of “*Aprende en Casa*.” However, in addition to some households not having stable TV signals (41.6%), because of the different schedules set according to education level/grade and because some households had more than two children, parents *could not spend much time [individually] tutoring their children* (63.7%). While the majority argued that they were devoting less time to their occupation, household chores or caring for their little children (71.4%), others simply did not have this knowledge (28.5%). A large share of middle school students, despite possessing more developed self-learning skills, did not regularly comply with their schoolwork (71.4%).³⁶ In this group, some *preferred to work or learn about their parents’ occupation* (50%), especially males, and only a few *helped with household chores* (16.6%), especially females. Others simply responded that they *did not like to study* (33.3%).³⁷ These outcomes echoed some of the interviews with teachers and principals, who indicated that a key issue was that some *parents were not interested in motivating their children to study*.

With these drawbacks and noting that *handbooks did not work as intended*, “virtual learning” guided by *SEP* and *SECh* education programs lasted until the end of the 2019–2020 school year. For the following year, many teachers implemented strategies according to their particular reality, i.e., their own manuals, once-a-week meetings with parents, and visits.

³⁶ Approximately 69.2% of the primary school students did comply with their schoolwork.

³⁷ Some students shared more than one reason for not complying with their schoolwork.

Some schools carried out a “mixed mode” of teaching. However, in these few cases, principals had to sternly advocate and negotiate with teachers and parents. Furthermore, at this point, *some students did not want to return to school*. In some cases, parents of primary school students did not allow them to return out of fear of COVID-19 (33.3%). In others, some students who were sent to live with a distant family member or other families to attend school—some were indigenous students from Guatemala—*had returned to their home villages and could not be reached by any means; they disappeared*.³⁸

In Tapachula, according to the local education official, some parents in the periphery—“cantones” and “ejidos”—*showed up at the commencement of the 2020–2021 school year to pick up manuals and textbooks but were never in touch with teachers. They only showed up the following school year to have their children enrolled*. Usually, teachers, at their own discretion, required parents to pick up weekly or monthly materials and to submit assignments in person. However, this was less common in the periphery than in Tapachula city, where parents had more access to internet communication to regularly engage with teachers and other parents *to discuss their concerns* about their children’s academic performance. According to the surveys applied across Tapachula city—where in 93.1% of households children were enrolled in a public school—a larger share of parents attended the school meetings and ensured that their children complied with the schoolwork.³⁹

Approximately 70% of parents acknowledged that their children’s academic performance decreased noticeably. The issue was that some could not accompany or tutor them during school hours; *the parents did not have the time*. Many had two children in different grades/levels; often, both parents were employed or one parent was employed while the other was a door-to-door salesperson. Parents who were engaged in this type of economic activity *had to bring their little children with them*. Most had to rely on grandparents or other family members to care for and help their children with their schoolwork during work hours. Full face-to-face classes were expected to commence for the 2021–2022 school year, but most schools repeatedly postponed such an announcement; in a

³⁸ Teachers estimate this was the case for 30% of the student body in their schools.

³⁹ However, *some parents were doing their children’s homework*. This was also identified among Cahaoatán primary schoolers.

few households (10.3%), parents eventually opted to withdraw their children and enroll them in private institutions or other public schools that were expected to implement these protocols earlier.

However, private institutions also delayed the implementation of face-to-face classes after the commencement of the 2021–2022 school year. This occurred even though the sanitary conditions imposed at the federal level were met and the COVID-19 infection rate in Chiapas was the lowest across Mexico. According to the local education official, despite many parents complaining about the prolongation of “virtual classes,” there were significant differences between public and private institutions in terms of their performance at this point. *Teachers at private institutions were more accountable to parents’ demands and their students’ needs.* Private school principals also had more control of the teaching staff and demanded that they regularly engage with their students and deliver reports on their coursework. Although private teachers could not fail students under SEP and SECh instruction, *there were more repercussions related to students’ performance.* Likewise, by November 2021, while the return to face-to-face classes in public schools was mandatory at a 50% rate of attendance, most private schools carried out a gradual increase in attendance prompters.

For the following school year (2022–2023), private schools increased their registration and tuition fees by approximately 35% (Bautista 2022). The few parents interviewed whose children were enrolled in private institutions complained about these measures but acknowledged that their children *had good academic performance compared to those in public schools.* A local education official indicated that *private schools capitalized precisely on this factor,* especially considering that *many saw their enrollment quota and income significantly reduced during the pandemic.* At the commencement of the 2020–2021 school year, private schools in Tapachula experienced a 30% decline in enrollment (García 2020). Considering the economic crisis caused by the pandemic, some parents opted to enroll their children in public institutions, especially since at this point, *the effects of the pandemic on the household economy were the most difficult.* In addition, *private institutions were as disorganized as public institutions and did not have any experience with “virtual teaching.”*

5.3 *The “Local Reality” and the Aftermath*

Considering the inauspicious context in which the education programs were implemented in the locations surveyed, most households did not have a computer (81%) or home internet (88%). This was especially the case in **Cacahoatán** and **Santo Domingo**, where many did not have smartphones either (66.6%). Accordingly, teachers did not rely on the *SEP* or *SECh* programs “*Aprende en Casa*” and “*Mi Escuela en Casa*.” Understanding the realities of their localities, middle school teachers communicated with students, sent coursework via WhatsApp and posted announcements outside the school. In **Tapachula**, middle school teachers generally relied on online meeting platforms. This was not the case in **Santo Domingo** or for the majority of courses in **Cacahoatán**, where the lack of electronic devices, home internet service, and knowledge of ICT prevented the implementation of real-time virtual lessons.

Based on their account, primary school teachers handed out *SEP* textbooks, manuals (“*cuadernillos*”) and other learning materials of their own elaboration in person to parents. The general agreement was that parents would attend weekly meetings to deliver the activities for grading. In **Tapachula** city, it was more common for parents to be involved in their children’s education at a distance as they could access—and had knowledge of—more channels of internet communication, i.e., WhatsApp, Facebook; they were also held accountable in front of the remaining parents in these online communities/groups. However, on the periphery—in “*cantones*” and “*ejidos*”—the situation was similar to that in Cacahoatán and Santo Domingo, where parents seldom attended in-person meetings, and the prime medium of communication was phone calls.

Regardless, parents in the three locations seldom assisted their children with their coursework. In **Tapachula**, this was due to both parents being employed; hence, many relied on grandparents—or other family members—to care for and help their children with their homework. This was presumed to be a major challenge for grandparents, who *had to learn on the go*. They would help their grandchildren print the assignments and ensure that they did the homework; afterward, they would send it back to professors via WhatsApp. In **Santo Domingo** and **Cacahoatán**, parents were less involved with their children’s education. There was at least one adult member at home during the day—unemployed and not looking for a job—in all the households interviewed, although many argued that they

had other chores to do or did not have the knowledge to assist them. When asked “why their children were not complying with the school-work,” they responded that *it was their [children’s] decision, and if [he or she] doesn’t like to go to school, there is much to do at home [to help]*.

This sense of defeat and apathy was generally shared among principals and teachers. One exception is the primary school surveyed in Cacaohatán, where the principal pushed for implementing a “mixed mode” earlier and even took in children enrolled in other schools. He *had to encourage teachers to commit to these children’s education*, as many did not want to return to in-person classes yet or were unengaged throughout the distance learning period. After all, *they were still being paid as if they were working normal hours*. In the remaining schools surveyed, it seemed that teachers and principals had come to terms with the fact that they could not do much to convince parents and children. Another issue was that even before the pandemic, there was an overall *lack of interest from local education authorities* in engaging with these schools since *[they] are far away*. Commonly, these schools’ infrastructure is poorer than that of schools in **Tapachula** city, where *supervisors pay more often to check on infrastructure needs and performance*.

As with both parents’ and students’ interests, the pandemic also aggravated the already poor education infrastructure present in these schools. Some students had quit school, and many parents were not paying enrollment or administrative fees. Furthermore, of the schools surveyed, many did not receive material support from authorities to facilitate the implementation of distance learning.⁴⁰ The change in the mode of schooling urged teachers and principals to buy their own computers and acquire home internet services, as the schools did not provide these services. Following the complaints of parents who were struggling with their economy, some professors had to pay for prints and other learning materials for students. Even when authorities decreed the implementation of the “mixed mode,” schools had to use their enrollment fees to buy

⁴⁰ Although some were beneficiaries of the “*La Escuela es Nuestra*” program, in which a public school is given funds to implement an infrastructure project according to a parent committee criteria. In the schools surveyed, the funds were used to build sports courts or more bathrooms. Without the principals or teachers’ input, the parents did not use the funds to develop infrastructure or acquire means that facilitated distance learning, i.e., intelligent classrooms, computers, printers, and internet.

antibacterial gel, thermometers, facemasks and other necessities. Some teachers had to buy these products with their own funds.

The burden placed on schools and their staff persists to date. In **Santo Domingo**, the middle school used to have access to the internet for administrative purposes; however, the uncertainty of not collecting fees amidst the pandemic caused it to cancel its internet service. Furthermore, the principal died from COVID-19 during the pandemic. Since then, the *SECh* has not filled this vacancy. This is also the case in other remote locations, where for a variety of reasons, there are vacancies that yet need to be addressed to continue with an ideal implementation of in-person classes. Noting these limitations, teachers and administrative staff *feel that [they] drift aimlessly*, hampering the development of a plan to motivate students and overcome their educational lag.⁴¹ This is considered especially true since before the pandemic, *it was already difficult to motivate some [students] to “come to school,”* and teachers *had to struggle with some parents to be more involved with their children’s education.*

Accordingly, the most notorious issue that principals and teachers complied about was the SEP grading policy. In the three locations, desertion decreased after a “mixed mode” was implemented; however, educational lagging persisted, as students were still “not obliged” to comply with the schoolwork or to attend classes. Currently, in these three locations, *many children in the third or fourth grade cannot read and write.* Teachers have talked many parents into approving of their children’s “revision of grade” so they are not failed in the registry; however, they have repeated the grade. However, *with the revocation of grade, there is no “Benito Juárez Scholarship”;* thus, since parents do not want to affect their children’s eligibility for this social program, they *continue enrolling them despite not having the necessary knowledge.* Consequently, the principals, teachers, and staff interviewed concur that *official statistics do not reflect the reality* in these locations. Only now (2022–2023 school year) is the SEP allowing schools to “withdraw” students who never returned to school.

⁴¹ Now, only 90% of the population ages 12–15 in Santo Domingo is enrolled.

6 CONCLUSION

The changes in social and educational life brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic have undeniably exposed the poor level of policy formulation and implementation at the local level in Mexico. However, concerning education, it is not only the inattention to variation in the share of the population with access to ICT and with poverty, food and employment insecurity across localities that ultimately worsened the “educational reality” in some locations, despite the formulation of educational programs that attempted to meet the pandemic challenges: “*Aprende en Casa*” (Learn at home) and “*Mi Escuela en Casa*” (My School at Home). The *SEP* implemented during the pandemic (Agreement 11/03/19), which required the automatic approval of all students regardless of whether they complied with schoolwork or attended in-person classes when a “mixed mode” was implemented, also reinforced a series of drawbacks that some public schools were already experiencing before the pandemic. This was especially true for those located in periphery and rural locations. This policy was implemented until the 2022–2023 school year.

As most households in the locations surveyed did not have a computer or home internet, and TV was not an ideal medium of instruction, teachers did not rely on *SEP* or *SECh* programs. Understanding the realities of their localities, some teachers elaborated their own manuals and developed a variety of strategies to engage with students. Among middle school teachers, this ranged between relying on online meeting platforms for real-time lessons—especially in the city—and sending coursework via WhatsApp or posting announcements outside the school—in rural locations. Primary schoolteachers handed out *SEP* textbooks, manuals and their own learning materials in person to parents. Parents were required to meet weekly to deliver the assignments, and when it was difficult to contact them, teachers would call them or pay them visits. Some public primary school teachers even paid for copies and other materials for students with their own funds.

Nonetheless, in the locations surveyed, approximately 30% of the students did not comply with the schoolwork. Excuses varied from not having a smartphone or internet to parents not having the time to tutor them and *students simply not liking school*. Parents were nonetheless enthusiastic about continuing to enroll their children even though they did not have the necessary knowledge. This practice became very common

in the periphery and rural locations since, to be eligible for a “*Benito Juárez Scholarship*,” the requirement is to be enrolled in a public school and to have not repeated a grade—regardless of one’s academic record. Due to the *SEP*’s pandemic policy, it was easier to become a scholarship recipient; however, the policy also worsened the educational lag in these locations, as students did not have to comply with the schoolwork, and many parents still do not want to consent to their children’s “revocation of grade.”

In the city, it was more common for parents to be involved in their children’s education at a distance, as they could access more channels of internet communication, and they were held accountable in front of the remaining parents in these online communities/groups. However, they could not tutor them, as often both parents were employed and could not stay at home during school hours. Thus, grandparents or other family members had to help with this task. Due to this household dynamic, parents in the city were more eager for their children to return to in-person classes. In contrast, in the rural locations surveyed, a mix of economic hardship and disinterest caused many parents to entertain the idea of having their children help them out with household chores or their tradesmen activities instead of complying with their schoolwork.

By the time a “mixed mode” was implemented, a sense of apathy was scattered among parents, students, and school staff. Some youths dropped out of school—especially in periphery and rural locations—and many teachers had come to terms because they could not do more to motivate students to “come back to school.” Before the pandemic, courting students in some rural locations was already an arduous task.⁴² Even in the city, public schoolteachers *struggled with some parents being more involved with their children’s education*, who usually put all the responsibility on them. To many, education is a long-term investment, and some families struggle to continue with such tasks when they have food and employment insecurity; however, the pandemic education programs and policies were far from ideal given the education challenges that had long persisted in some locations. Currently, in both the city and the villages surveyed, *there are some third- and fourth-grade primary school students who cannot read and write*, and the majority do not have the necessary

⁴² Some teachers called parents, visited their households, or offered to facilitate the instruction or manner in which learning materials were handed out.

knowledge according to their grade. *Thus, there is still a long way for recovery.*

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Eastern Orthodox Churches and Nation-State Building in Eurasia: A Case Study Based on Fieldwork in Ukraine and Belarus

You Zhou

For a long time, secularization and modernization were regarded as intertwined processes. However, since the 1970s, a global trend of religious revival has challenged the myth of secularization. Modern secularization has not resulted in the privatization of religion or the separation of religion from the public sphere. Instead, we have witnessed desecularization and the emergence of “public religion.”¹ In addition, researchers have noted that the phenomenon of religion entering the public sphere varies around the world, with different countries exhibiting different

¹ Peter L. Berger, Grace Davie and Effie Fokas. *Religious America, Secular Europe? A Theme and Variations*, Commercial Press, 2015.

Casanova, José, *Public religions in the modern world*, University of Chicago press, 1994.

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secularization models.² After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Orthodox churches in Eurasia began to make a strong comeback, characterized by significant politicization. Historically, Orthodox churches have played roles in nation-building and national independence movements in Eurasia. In the post-Soviet era, they have resumed this “mission” and are actively participating in nation-state building projects across various post-Soviet countries.

As one of the three major Christian denominations, Eastern Orthodox Christianity was introduced to the lands of Ukraine and Belarus in the tenth century. The Baptism of Kyivan Rus, presided over by Prince Vladimir in 988, marks the acceptance of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine. Similarly, the establishment of the Archdiocese of Polotsk in 992 signifies the beginning of the Belarusian Orthodox Church. As the primary religious denomination in both countries, the Orthodox Church boasts a substantial number of clergy and believers, a relatively large number of dioceses and parishes, and considerable influence within Ukrainian and Belarusian societies.

Influenced by the theory of the clash of civilizations, Ukraine has often been misunderstood as a country divided between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church. In reality, the Orthodox Church is the largest religious denomination in Ukraine, with its organizational scale and number of believers far surpassing those of Catholicism. While the eastern region of Ukraine is highly industrialized, Orthodox parishes and believers are more densely concentrated in the western part of the country. Ukraine hosts two main branches of Catholicism: the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Catholic Church. Notably, religious conflicts in Ukraine primarily occur within the Orthodox Church itself, rather than between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches.

There are currently two major Orthodox churches in Ukraine, namely, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC MP), which lies under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate or the Russian Orthodox Church; and the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), which was established in 2019 as an autocephalous church, meaning its independency from any denominational and administrative jurisdictions. The Belarusian Orthodox Church (BOC), which is affiliated with the Moscow Patriarchate, is the only legal and recognized Orthodox church in Belarus.

² Martin D, *Religion and power: No logos without mythos*, Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2014.

According to official Ukrainian statistics, as of January 1, 2022, there are a total number of 15,413 Eastern Orthodox parishes in Ukraine. Among them, UOC MP has 6408 parishes with 3842 clergies; OCU owns 8874 parishes with 9111 clergies.³ According to data from the Belarusian Administration for Religious and Ethnic Affairs, on January 1, 2021, the BOC concludes 1714 parishes.⁴ In terms of the number of believers, according to poll data, 75.4% of the population in Ukraine are Eastern Orthodox Christians,⁵ of which OCU's believers account for 34% of the total population, believers from UOC MP account for 13.8%, Greek Catholics account for 8.2%, and Roman Catholics and Protestants account for 0.4% and 0.7%, respectively.⁶ Approximately 44% of the Belarusian population are Orthodox Christians, 7.2% are Catholics, and 4.8% are Protestants.⁷ With the decline in faith in modern society, a large number of local people have been baptized but do not visit churches frequently or follow all the religious rituals as requested. The Orthodox belief is taken as a cultural tradition and diffuses throughout Eurasian society in the form of “ambient faith.”⁸

Eastern Orthodox Christianity enters the field of state power in the result of political instrumentalization. It also plays a role in the current Russia–Ukrainian war. From the perspective of the tradition of church-state relations, the Orthodox Church is considered to have inherited two

³ Державна служба України з етнополітики та свободи совісті, “Звіт про мережу релігійних організацій”, 1 січня 2022, <https://dessa.gov.ua/statistics-rel/>.

⁴ Уполномоченный по делам религий и национальностей, “Информация о конфессиональной ситуации в Республике Беларусь”, <https://belarus21.by/Articles/1439296790>.

⁵ Центр Разумкова, “Конфесійна та церковна належність громадян України”, січень 2020, <http://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/konfesiina-ta-tsekrkovna-nalezhnist-gromadian-ukrainy-sichen-2020r>.

⁶ Центр Разумкова, “Конфесійна та церковна належність громадян України”, січень 2020, <http://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/konfesiina-ta-tsekrkovna-nalezhnist-gromadian-ukrainy-sichen-2020r>.

⁷ Pew Research Center, “Eastern and western Europeans differ on importance of religion views of minorities and key social issues”, 29 October 2018, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2018/10/29/eastern-and-western-europeans-differ-on-importance-of-religion-views-of-minorities-and-key-social-issues/>.

⁸ Wanner C, “An affective atmosphere of religiosity: animated places, public spaces, and the politics of attachment in Ukraine and beyond”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 2020, Vol. 62, No. 1, pp. 68–105.

models from the past. The first one is the “symphony” model in Byzantium, showing the unity between the state and the church and the two fields become inseparable. The second the model of Peter the Great, with the church subordinate to the state as a part of the bureaucratic system. It is undeniable that such phenomenon still exists in Ukraine and Belarus today. From the perspective of contemporary legislation, the politicization of the Orthodox Church has its legislative basis. Although the constitutions and laws of the two countries both stipulate the principles of secularization and the separation of church and state, their current legislations still leave room for church-state cooperation. Orthodox churches in Eurasian countries have signed cooperation agreements with the state and cooperated on this basis. In Belarus, the 2002 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations stipulates that the state may coordinate its relationship with religious organizations by signing agreements with them in accordance with the law. The special status of the Orthodox Church stipulated in this law also opens the door for its politicization. In 2003, the state and the church signed the Agreement on Cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the BOC.

This paper attempts to investigate religious-political issues in Eurasia from the perspective of nationalism, and discusses how the Orthodox Church serves the nation-state building process. This study suggests that the primary functions of the Orthodox Church’s politicization in Ukraine and Belarus are to promote patriotism, provide legitimacy for their civilizational identification and restate official historical memory.

Previous studies have often emphasized Russia, the major power and the most well-known Orthodox Church-dominant country in Eurasia. This focus has led to the neglect of the diversity and rich reality within Eastern Orthodox Christianity across the region. Therefore, this paper shifts the focus to the cases of Ukraine and Belarus, drawing on insights gained through field research to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Eastern Orthodox Christianity in Eurasia.

This paper investigates how the Orthodox Church became the symbol and standard-bearer of patriotism and nationalism in Ukraine and Belarus. Beyond the discourse of religious patriotism and nationalism, it explores how the Orthodox Church is linked with different nation-state building programs, historical memories, and geopolitical concepts in each country. The divergent paths of nation-state building in Ukraine and Belarus have resulted in stark contrasts in the political participation of their respective Orthodox Churches.

In Ukraine, nationalist forces within the Orthodox Church advocate for defending territorial sovereignty and integrating Ukraine into the West during the Russia–Ukraine war, displaying strong anti-Russian sentiments. Since 2014, the Orthodox Church has been one of the battlegrounds for Ukraine’s national independence. Meanwhile, the Belarusian Orthodox Church also exhibits patriotic characteristics but from a completely different geopolitical and identificational perspective. It has pro-Russian overtones and provides legitimacy for Belarus as a member of a unified East Slavic civilization. The BOC reinforces the Belarusian state’s historical memory centered on the Great Patriotic War, which serves as the cornerstone of Belarus’ nation-building program.

1 NATION-STATE BUILDING AND ORTHODOX CHURCHES IN UKRAINE AND BELARUS

Religion has always been considered an important source of nationalism. Compared with Catholicism and Islam, Eastern Orthodox Church possesses stronger nationalistic characteristics. Since the Baptism of Kyivan Rus, Christianity has enlightened East Slavs with faith, writing, education, and art, which then gradually took on a national shade. In contrast to Catholicism being abandoned during the French Revolution, Orthodox churches tend to play a supporting role in the rise of the nationalism and nation-state building. Nationalist characteristics of the churches make it easier for religion to infiltrate politics and become a political tool of the state.

The Eastern Orthodox Church provides a model of Autocephaly or self-government for national churches, which is quite different from the centralized system of Catholicism and the high degree of independence of Protestant organizations. Except from era of the early Byzantine Empire, the Orthodox Church has never been unified by a sole imperial structure or language.⁹ This situation has led to the formation of a series of independent churches surrounding around the sovereign states in the Orthodox community today.

The word “autocephaly” (автокефалия) comes from the Greek language and means “manage by yourself.” An autocephalous church

⁹ John Witte, Michael Bourdeaux. *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: The New War for Souls*. Translated by Liu Ke. China Democracy Legislative Publishing House, p. 52.

is an independent source of power. The head of the church is chosen by its synod instead of being appointed by another church of higher hierarchy. The church can conduct religious activities in its mother tongue and in accordance with the traditions of the country where the church is located. Besides OCU, whose autocephalous position is still disputed, there are 14 such churches worldwide, and they all recognize each other's autocephaly.¹⁰ According to the Diptych (диптих), these churches include Constantinople Orthodox Church, Alexandria Orthodox Church, Antioch Orthodox Church, Jerusalem Orthodox Church, Russian Orthodox Church, Georgian Orthodox Church, Serbian Orthodox Church, Romanian Orthodox Church, Bulgarian Orthodox Church, Cyprus Orthodox Church, Greek Orthodox Church, Albanian Orthodox Church, Polish Orthodox Church, and Orthodox Church of the Czech lands and Slovakia.

The Orthodox churches are often considered nationalist institutions, which can be supportive of the current political regime or opposing it. Sabrina Ramet pointed out that the equating of religious unity with political unity, and later with national identity, is the reason for the emergence of autocephalous churches within the Orthodox Church. Especially with the rise of nationalism in the nineteenth century, it became imperative for a region to have its own church to be entitled to become its own country. This intertwining of religious and national identity underscores the formation of autocephalous churches as a vital step in the nation-building process.¹¹ On the one hand, the Orthodox Church condemns the “schism” inside that undermines the unity and universality of the church; while on the other hand, it has witnessed the continuous emergence of local churches throughout history, which separate from the “mother church” to form autocephalous churches. There are also churches that have not been widely recognized as autocephalous but are actually independent. To conclude, nationalism is a key factor that leads to the politicization of the Orthodox Church, as “the political potential

¹⁰ Kristalina Georgieva. *Culture and Faith: Russian Culture and Orthodoxy*. Huaxia Publishing House 2012, p. 39; Прот. В. Цыпин, *Церковное право*, Москва, 1994, С.160.

¹¹ Ramet, Sabrina P, *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, Duke University Press, 1988, p. 4.

of the Orthodox Church lies in the religious symbols that it shares with the state and national history.”¹²

Although existing studies recognize the inextricable connection between the Orthodox Church and nationalism, they ignore the diversity of the meaning of national identity in Eurasia. Lots of countries in Eurasia cannot be neatly fit into the nation-state template of the European paradigm. Ukraine and Belarus are different types of nation-states and are different from the Russian model, which has been the most discussed model in academia. Therefore, the relationship between the Orthodox Church and national identity is complicated, and there is no universal model for considering the relationship between the church and the nation-state.

Both Ukraine and Belarus are the so-called “borderline” countries, where different cultures and religions converge, unlike Russia, which is one of the centers of the Orthodox Christianity in the world. In Ukraine and Belarus, unlike in Russia, the Orthodox Church is not bundled with a certain nationality. In my fieldwork, Orthodox Christians and the general public often give opposing answers as to whether the Orthodox Church provides a source of national identity. However, the existence of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine and Belarus as a cultural tradition is undeniable. Orthodox churches in the two countries serve the creation of their respective nation-states, and the key political processes of the two countries are also reflected in the realm of Orthodox Church. In contrast, the abovementioned characteristics are not prominent in the two countries in terms of other religions, such as Catholicism and Protestantism. In other words, this paper discusses mainly how politics determines religion but not how religion influences politics.

The completion of the construction of an independent nation-state through the establishment of an autocephalous church is very typical in Ukraine today. Ukraine’s complicated history has long been faced with the division between the Moscow Patriarchate, and the nationalist “separatist faction” that has not been recognized by the Russian Orthodox Church. Before the establishment of the autocephalous church in 2018, the three largest branches of the Orthodox Church were UOC MP, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC KP), and

¹² Растимешина, Т. В. “Религиозный фактор в политике идентичности: тенденции глобализации и нациестроительство в России”, *Вестник Московского государственного областного университета*, 2012, № 4, С. 128–134.

the uncanonical Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC). In 2018, UOC KP, UAOC, and some of the clergy from UOC MP merged to form OCU. The church then has obtained autocephaly granted by Constantinople. At present, the Orthodox Church in Ukraine still sees confrontation between UOC MP and OCU. In view of Ukrainian political and religious elites, Ukraine needs a national church, or, in other words, an autocephalous church, that chooses its own bishops, conducts self-management and uses Ukrainian as ritual language to resist the influence of the Russia-led Moscow Patriarchate. This point of view has gradually become accepted by the public, especially after the Russia–Ukrainian war. Since its independence, Ukraine has experienced swinging domestic and international policies, and since 2014, it has begun to build a nation-state, characteristic of both ethnic and civic nationalism. For achieving this goal, Ukraine tries to eliminate Russian influence in all aspects of its domestic politics, diplomacy, religion, and culture. This strategy requires not only congruence between political and ethnic units but also congruence between religious units and political and ethnic units. President Poroshenko came to power in 2014 and began to push for the establishment of Ukraine’s own independent church. On the eve of the 2019 presidential election, this goal was finally achieved.

As Metropolitan Epiphany, head of the OCU, said, “A strong and unified autocephalous Orthodox Church is the spiritual foundation for the building of an independent Ukrainian state. And without the independent state, there will be no independent church. The two are interdependent.”¹³ President Poroshenko personally attended a series of church ceremonies and once mentioned in a public speech that “the value of having an independent church is equal to the declaration of sovereignty.”¹⁴

Ukraine’s approach aroused an uproar in the international community, with a particularly strong response from Russia. Since the establishment of OCU was achieved with the support of the Constantinople Orthodox Church, the Russian Orthodox Church announced that it cut all ties with

¹³ УНИАН, “Епифаний рассказал, как будет развиваться ПЦУ после выборов”, 11 апреля 2019, <https://www.unian.net/society/10512522-epifaniy-rasskazal-kak-budet-razvivatsya-pcu-posle-vyborov.html>.

¹⁴ УКРІНФОРМ, “Незалежною церквою ми завершимо будівництво держави – Порошенко”, 17 грудня 2018, <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-politics/2602613-nezaleznou-cerkvou-mi-zaversuemo-budivnictvo-derzavi-poroshenko.html>.

Constantinople on October 15, 2018.¹⁵ The Patriarch of Moscow and All-Russia Kirill wrote letters to the Pope and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, accusing Ukrainian authorities of exerting pressure on UOC MP, intervening in the affairs of the Church, and undermining the rights and freedoms of clergy and believers.¹⁶ In his 2018 annual press conference, Russian President Vladimir Putin sternly stated that Ukrainian state interferes in the Church, with the “purpose of further dividing the peoples of Russia and Ukraine,” and satirized Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew for profiting from it and the United States for participating in it.¹⁷ Russian presidential press spokesman Dmitry Peskov warned that Russia protects Russian speakers and the congregations of the Moscow Patriarchate and that Russia will take political and diplomatic measures if extremists try to expel the Ukrainian Orthodox Church under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate.¹⁸ Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov stressed that the United States supported two provocative acts of “the illegal schismatic churches.”¹⁹

During the Russia–Ukrainian war that broke out in 2022, the Orthodox Church became a battlefield parallel to the military front line. OCU once again became the center of patriotism and resistance in Ukraine. With the rise in domestic nationalist sentiment, the church opposes not only Russia but also the existence of the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine. UOC MP was forcibly ordered by powerful departments to leave the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra, where it was originally located. According to the latest poll conducted in June 2023, 85% of the people believe that the state should intervene in the activities of the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine, and 66% believe that the church should be completely

¹⁵ Русская Православная Церковь, “Заявление Священного Синода Русской Православной Церкви в связи с посягательством Константинопольского Патриархата на каноническую территорию Русской Церкви”, 15 октября 2018, <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5283708.html>.

¹⁶ Газета.Ру, “становите Киев: патриарх Кирилл обратился к ООН”, 14 декабря 2018, <https://www.gazeta.ru/social/2018/12/14/12095467.shtml>.

¹⁷ Президент России, “Большая пресс-конференция Владимира Путина”, 20 декабря 2018, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/59455>. 20.12.2018.

¹⁸ Газета.Ру, “Ответ России: автокефалия Украины дошла до Совбеза”, 13 октября 2018, https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2018/10/12_a_12019651.shtml?updated.

¹⁹ РИА Новости, “Провокации раскольников на Украине поддерживает Вашингтон, заявил Лавров”, 12 октября 2018, <https://ria.ru/20181012/1530572937.html?in=t>.

banned.²⁰ At the social and national levels, Ukraine can no longer tolerate the incongruence of religious, ethnic, and national borders.

The national identity of Belarus is different from that of Ukraine. On the eve of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, nationalist movements with ethnocultural overtones also appeared in Belarus, which resorted mainly to the use and promotion of the Belarusian language. At the beginning of Belarus independence, nationalists tried to build a nation-state based on a single Belarusian ethnicity. In the initial stage of establishing its national identity in the 1990s, the country tried to disassociate itself from the history of the Soviet Union, but it never put forward clear anti-Russian and pro-Western views like Ukraine or equated national characteristics with a single religion. In Belarus, the Belarusian Popular Front and other nationalist political parties never achieved a majority in Parliament. Of the 360 seats in the 12th Belarusian Supreme Council (1990–1995), the Popular Front held only 25 seats. Popular Front leader Pazniak did not make it to the second round of the 1994 presidential election.

After Lukashenko came to power, he immediately denied this nation-state model; he rejected the ethnonationalist tendency, moved closer to the East Slavic community model, which was close to Russia, and inherited the national symbols and some political and economic institutional characteristics of the Soviet Union. In terms of the historical narrative, the Belarusian People's Republic (БНР) were rejected as being part of the golden age of Belarus, which was the first nation-state in Belarus' history, and the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union was put at the core of national historical memory. In the 1995 Belarusian referendum, the Russian language was given the same status as the Belarusian language; the decision was made to start economic integration with Russia; the white-red-white flag, the Pogonia national emblem, and the national anthem during the Shushkevich period were abolished. Currently, the abovementioned national flag and national anthem are prohibited in Belarus in the name of illegality. These nationalist symbols are often associated with the Belarusian opposition and appeared in the 2020 Belarusian political crisis and within the Belarusian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, which was officially expelled from Belarus. The school

²⁰ Київський міжнародний інститут соціології, “Якою має бути політика влади щодо Української православної церкви (Московського патріархату)”, 15 червня 2023, <https://kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=1247&page=1>.

textbooks issued in Belarus in the early 1990s were rewritten in the period 1995–1996, stressing the significance of the Great Patriotic War for the glorious national traditions of Belarus and the common development of Belarus and Russia as East Slavic nations.²¹

As a result, the establishment of the Union State of Russia and Belarus in 1995 was also added to the agenda. Day of Unity of the Peoples of Belarus and Russia is celebrated in Belarus every year on April 2. Meanwhile, Lukashenko always refused to drop the sovereignty issue. Therefore, negotiations on the Union State between the two countries have lasted a long time, but the critical step needed has never been taken. This delicate balance between nationalism and East Slavic identity makes Belarus an interesting atypical and historical exception. Since Lukashenko came to power, the basic policy of Belarus has been to emphasize friendship with Russia and the integration of Russia and Belarus while upholding national sovereignty and territorial independence. Neither Belarusian officials nor the BOC uses the concepts advocated by Russia, such as the “Russian world” and “Holy Rus,” and instead uses the term “Eastern Slavs” more and insists that Belarus has its own identity independent of Russia. Lukashenko once explained the special relationship between Belarusians and Russians as follows: “‘Russian world’ does not refer to us (Belarusians)... I myself would say ‘We are Russians (Мы—русские люди).’ This is not to say that we are Russian citizens (россияне). We Russians and Belarusians are all Russians (русские).” He once ridiculed the Russian world as “nonsense,” and even the Russian ambassador to Belarus could not clearly explain what the Russian world is.²²

Many people consider Belarus a “denationalized” country²³; for example, the degree to which people recognize themselves as being Belarusians in Belarus is only 54%, which is far lower than that in Russia (86%) and Poland (94%).²⁴ However, some scholars have suggested that to be precise, the way in which Belarus achieves national mobilization is

²¹ Wilson, Andrew, *Belarus: the last European dictatorship*, Yale University Press, 2021, p. 172.

²² 张严峻. 白俄罗斯民族文化认同的历史流变与现实境遇[J]. 俄罗斯研究, 2018, No. 212(04):138.

²³ Marples D., *Belarus: a denationalized nation*, Routledge, 2013.

²⁴ Pew Research Center, “Eastern and western Europeans differ on importance of religion views of minorities and key social issues”, 29 October

de-ethnic. For example, the country does not emphasize ethnic characteristics such as the Belarusian language and is closer to civic nationalism, emphasizing the common values shared by people rather than blood ties. As stated in an official Belarusian textbook, “The national interests of Belarus are greater than the interests of the Belarusians, and the national interests of Belarus are related to the entire territory of Belarus.”²⁵

Although the BOC has not issued any documents on national identity, the church’s handling of the issue of identity is consistent with the official Belarusian imagination of national identity, navigating between the Russian world and national independence. As BOC spokesman Sergey Lepin said, “We not only support integration, brotherhood, friendship, and Russia’s special role but also support an independent Belarus.”²⁶ Belarusian scholar Sergey Mudrov believes that it is difficult to provide a clear answer to the question of the identity of the BOC through empirical research, but what is certain is that most church members hold a relatively balanced view to make themselves compatible with the different voices of society.²⁷ Some scholars believe that the Belarusian church is in fact a Russian church that has spread the Russian language and culture and greatly hindered the formation of a Belarusian national identity.²⁸ From the viewpoint of this paper, the above statement is not true. In fact, the BOC is subject to both its mother church and the state. The BOC is a wing that is particularly loyal to the Russian Orthodox Church. Its status in the Russian Orthodox Church is not high; it is just a church at the

2018, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2018/10/29/eastern-and-western-europe-ans-differ-on-importance-of-religion-views-of-minorities-and-key-social-issues/>.

²⁵ Leshchenko N., “The national ideology and the basis of the Lukashenka regime in Belarus”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2008, Vol. 60, No. 8, p. 1420; Larissa Titarenko, “Postsoviet Belarus: the transformation of national identity”, *International Studies*, 2011, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 11–21.

²⁶ Официальный портал Белорусской Православной Церкви, “протоиерей Сергей Лепин о БНР, русофобии, политике и русском мире”, 26 апреля 2018, <http://church.by/news/protoierej-sergij-lepin-o-bnr-rusofobii-politike-i-russkom-mire?ysclid=letw3ynaur951376240>.

²⁷ Mudrov S, Zakharov N., “ The internal discussions in the Belarusian orthodox church on identity and policy issues: A contemporary perspective”, *Journal of Religion in Europe*, 2022, Vol. 15, No. 1–4, pp. 20–21.

²⁸ Solik M, Filakovský J, Baar V., “Belarusian and Ukrainian autocephalous orthodox churches and national identity: comparison”, *Political Sciences/Politické Vedy*, 2017, Vol. 20, No. 2.

metropolitan level with a limited degree of autonomy. The BOC is under the stronger control of the Russian Orthodox Church than UOC MP. The selection of leaders of the BOC is often decided through consultation between the Russian religious elite and the Belarusian political elite. In addition, the conservatism of the Orthodox Church itself has caused the church to reject reform and “schism.” Therefore, advocating “unification” is often the mainstream and doctrinally correct voice. Under the influence of national interests and social views, the position of loyalty and anti-separation can only be strengthened. Regarding the issue of the OCU, the BOC is an active opponent and stands with its mother church. In contrast, the Belarusian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, which supports Belarusian nationalism, is in exile abroad and has no legal status in the country. However, when Lukashenko and Putin were at odds in 2010, the issue of church autocephaly was brought to the table. The tension between the political forces in Russia and Belarus involves the Belarusian side seeking more control over its church, even though, in reality, it maintains a delicate balance of power.

From the perspective of the historical narrative, the BOC adopted the historical discourse of the Russian Orthodox Church, with its main point of view being to emphasize the unity of the East Slavic peoples with Moscow as the center of the Orthodox Church, to oppose Catholicism and its integration with the history of the Catholic Church, to oppose nationalism and the tendency to pursue autocephaly within the church, and to oppose cooperation with the Nazi regime in Germany during the Great Patriotic War.²⁹ Regarding language issue, although the Belarusian language is not widely used in the BOC, this church is not considered a Russified Church. At present, the language used in the BOC is mainly Church Slavic. There are 10 parishes, such as St. Peter and Paul’s Cathedral in Minsk, which hold masses in Belarusian from time to time, but no parish uses the Russian language.³⁰ The church has established the Belarus Bible Committee to preside over the translation of the Bible into Belarusian. Former church head Filaret once

²⁹ Официальный портал Белорусской Православной Церкви, “Распространение Христианства и учреждение первых епархий”, <http://church.by/beloruskiy-ekzarhat/rasprostranenie-hristianstva-i-uchrezhdenie-pervyh-eparhij>.

³⁰ Mudrov S, Zakharov N., “The internal discussions in the Belarusian orthodox church on identity and policy issues: A contemporary perspective”, *Journal of Religion in Europe*, 2022, Vol. 15, No. 1–4, pp. 15–16.

stated that if believers demand that religious ceremonies be performed in Belarusian, then people's requests should be granted. Other churches also hold baptisms and wedding ceremonies in Belarusian upon request.³¹ However, the use of Belarusian has not been the mainstream of the BOC, and the church has a conservative attitude toward this approach in general. The conservatism of the Orthodox Church itself often rejects language reforms. Church leaders also express that they should be made aware of any political attempts to implement language reform in the church,³² which is in line with the national attitude toward language issues. Notably, the main languages used by the Catholic Church in Belarus are Belarusian and Polish, and the identity of the Catholic Church is slightly different from that of the Orthodox Church. In summary, the consistency in the construction of identity between the Orthodox churches and various nationalities, as well as the diversity in their relationships with nationalism, indicate the inseparability of the Orthodox Church from the political field.

2 BELARUSIAN ORTHODOX PATRIOTISM AND THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

In Belarus, the Orthodox Church is often combined with military discourse to become a symbol of safeguarding national security, a typical case of which is the Church of All Saints in Minsk (Церковь Всех Святых).³³ In addition to holding religious rituals, this church also acts as a memorial project for the defenders of the fatherland, commemorating the victims who died for the country in the Great Patriotic War of 1812,

³¹ Чарота, I. A., "Церква и беларускі језик", *Јединство православних Словена. Књига прва*, Приредно З.Милошевић. Источно Сарајево, 2006, С. 205–221.

³² Сергей Мудров, "Митрополит Минский Павел: «Мы не вмешиваемся в дела государства, а государство не вмешивается в церковные дела»", 24 июля 2019, <https://pravoslavie.ru/122609.html>.

³³ Saints here refer to the native saints of Belarus. The Russian Orthodox Church established the Day of Belarusian Saints in honor of native Belarusian saints in 1984. In addition, there are a number of churches of All Saints throughout Belarus that honor local saints.

World War I, and the Great Patriotic War.³⁴ The church was funded by the state and preferred by Lukashenko, even more than was the Church of the Holy Spirit (Кафедральный собор Сошествия Святого Духа), the main cathedral of the BOC. The parish priest of the church Fedor Povnyi is an important broker between the BOC and the state and has a close personal relationship with Lukashenko.

The history of the completion of the Church of All Saints is quite meaningful. After the BOC decided to build the church in 1990, the consecration ceremony for the cornerstone of the church was held in Moscow in 1991, during the first visit to Belarus by Moscow Patriarch Alexei II. In 1996, under the rule of President Lukashenko and the head of the BOC Metropolitan Filaret, a sealed capsule with a letter to future generations was placed in the foundation of the church. When the consecration ceremony of the Holy Trinity Church in the church complex was held in 2006, Lukashenko, Alexei II, and Metropolitan Filaret gathered together. The final name of the church, the Memorial Hall of All Saints and the Defenders of the Fatherland, was also decided by Alexei II himself. The first ceremony after the completion of the church occurred on October 2, 2010, the day before the Republic Day of Belarus. The burial ceremony of the remains of the three unknown soldiers was again attended by Lukashenko and Metropolitan Filaret. It is said that these soldiers died in 1812, World War I, and the Great Patriotic War. Since then, the Church of All Saints has held a number of ceremonies and activities with strong political overtones. In 2012, the newly appointed Moscow Patriarch Kirill unveiled a statue of Alexei II for the church. Belarusian heroes and victims from Europe, Afghanistan, and the Trostenez extermination camp in Belarus^{35,36} Yalta, Kursk, and other places were buried in the church crypt. The church has always cooperated

³⁴ Белта, “БГУ продолжает проект “Год народного единства”: студенты посетят храм-памятник в честь Всех святых”, 18 мая 2021, <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-prodolzhaet-proekt-god-narodnogo-edinstva-studenty-posetjat-hram-pamjatnik-v-chest-vseh-svjatyh-441902-2021/>.

³⁵ During World War II, Nazi Germany built a concentration camp in the village of Trostinez, outside Minsk, in the Eastern Governorate, where Jews were intensively transported and murdered. Estimates of the death toll vary from 65,000 to 106,000 people.

³⁶ This refers to the site of the Battle of Kursk in the Great Patriotic War and is known as the Russian “City of Military Honors.” The Battle of Kursk was a key battle for the Soviet Red Army in World War II.

closely with its mother church, the Russian Orthodox Church, linking the two churches and fostering friendship between the two countries.³⁷

I made a special trip to visit this church during my fieldwork in Belarus in 2022. The gorgeous decorations and modern facilities inside the church are astonishing and are rarely seen in churches. The church has multiple functions. It is not only a place of worship for local believers but also a museum for tourists. At the bottom of the Church of the All Saints is an exhibition hall. It provides visitors with an exhibition in large scale on the topic of wars in Belarus. Fedor Povnyi, the priest of the church, told me that since 2022, the church has seen 24,000 visitors and nearly 1000 tour groups. Worshipers were not included in the statistical analysis. In the opinion of Povnyi, the Church of All Saints is a place where Minsk people show their spirituality to guests from afar. Priest Povnyi believes that the purpose of building the memorial hall is to record historical justice, to commemorate every Belarusian who died for the country and the alliance of Belarusians, and to promote the national idea of Belarus.

At the start of the exhibition, the tour guide directed everyone's attention to the ceiling of the hall, where the halo of the church altar was visible. The guide explained that the alter symbolically represents the future, while the history is housed in the basement. Understanding a country's history is crucial for its future. The main focus of the exhibition is the military history of Belarus, showcasing the sacrifices made by martyrs who fought valiantly and gave their lives for their homeland during critical moments of national crisis. The highlight of the tour is the section dedicated to the Great Patriotic War, featuring the most extensive array of designs and exhibits. A central exhibit consists of soil samples from the graves of Belarusian heroes. These samples, collected from around the world, are encased in transparent glass capsules and displayed throughout the exhibition hall. This portion of the display is still a work in progress, with new soil specimens being gathered and scheduled to be added to the lower level of the church. During the exhibition, the tour guide invited visitors to light candles for these martyrs, following Orthodox tradition as a way to pay their respects and offer condolences.

The exhibition's theme, while not overtly religious, is focused on recounting historical memory to help build a contemporary Belarusian

³⁷ Белта, “Досье: Всехвятская церковь: духовный мемориал на перекрестке времени”, 14 октября 2018, <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/dose-vsehsvjatskaja-tserkov-duhovnyj-memorial-na-perekrestke-vremeni-321528-2018/>.

state. This narrative begins with the expulsion of the Mongol-Tatars during the Kyivan Rus period, continues through the Patriotic War of 1812 against Napoleon's forces, and culminates with the victory over the Nazis and fascism in the Soviet Union. In this context, religion serves as a vessel for preserving and conveying national historical memory. Icons, monuments, and religious ceremonies are employed to symbolize heritage and remembrance. Notably, individual exhibits, such as the Military Medal of Honor awarded to priests in the Soviet Union, underscore the church's patriotic role.

According to Priest Povnyi, the initiative to build the memorial hall came from the church itself. When I inquired about the church's motivation behind constructing such a unique church and designing exhibits like the clay specimens from the martyrs' tombs, he explained that the Orthodox Church has a long-standing tradition of honoring the deceased. This tradition is rooted in the Christian concepts of death and resurrection. The soil collected from battlefield sites and cemeteries, both within Belarus and abroad, represents the ashes of the departed. For the church, praying for a martyr not only commemorates their physical remains but also anticipates their resurrection as an eternal soul. The clay specimens serve as tangible witnesses to history, offering insights that go beyond what history books can provide. This approach enables people to grasp their national identity in a broader, diachronic context, transcending the immediate population and territorial boundaries. By embodying the eternal souls of its martyrs, a nation encompasses not just its current people but also a broader, historically diverse community.

Additionally, the commemoration of the dead aligns with the Christian principle of "love your neighbor." Throughout its thousand-year history, the Russian Orthodox Church has consistently sought divine assistance in defending the homeland. As Priest Povnyi emphasized, the BOC adeptly integrates its religious canon and teachings with Belarusian patriotism and nation-building efforts. The core of the exhibition in the memorial hall is the Great Patriotic War. The Great Patriotic War is the core symbol of Belarus's historical memory and nation-state construction. In every city in Belarus, there are monuments to the Great Patriotic War. Victory Day on May 9 is one of the most important national holidays in Belarus. After Lukashenko faced crisis in the presidential election in 2020, he began to reemphasize the nation-state building. Lukashenko signed a presidential decree designating 2021 as the year of national unification, 2022 as the year of historical memory, and 2023 as the year of peace and unity.

Regardless of what name is adopted, its core is always the Great Patriotic War.

Drawing from dualistic Christian morality, Fedor Povnyi described the Great Patriotic War as a “sacred war, a struggle between good and evil, life and death, light and darkness.” Despite the challenges faced by the Orthodox Church during the Soviet era, the religious spirit remained a vital source of patriotism. According to the priest, when the “Satan-like” fascists attacked, the deeply ingrained religious spirit and spiritual strength passed down through generations began to play a crucial role. Many of those who fought were born before the Great Revolution, had been inspired by the deeds of saints, and drew strength from their faith, making sacrifices for their beliefs. They found courage in their faith, understanding that their sacrifices were essential for the survival of their people and the loyalty to their homeland.

The priest emphasized that patriotism is an absolute and inherent value, given by God, and thus beyond personal choice. He also articulated a unified identity view among the East Slavs, linking faith and nationality. He regarded Russians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians as interconnected by deep faith, asserting that a Russian who betrays God, truth, the people, and noble spirit ceases to be truly Russian. For him, the church’s role in commemorating the Great Patriotic War goes beyond mere remembrance; it is a means of upholding national justice and addressing the needs of the people.³⁸

The Church of All Saints is part of a broader trend of patriotic church buildings currently under construction across Belarus, not only in the capital, Minsk, but also in regional cities. On the eve of Victory Day in 2023, I had the opportunity to visit Alexander Chyokov, the head of cooperation between the Belarusian Orthodox Diocese of Borisov and the Belarusian armed forces, as well as the parish priest of the Alexander Nevsky Church in Maryina Gorka. The BOC, continuing the tradition of the Russian Orthodox Church, venerates Alexander Nevsky as a protector of soldiers. Prince Alexander of Novgorod is renowned for his leadership in defending Rus against the Mongol-Tatars and the Catholic West. Notably, he achieved victory in the Battle of the Neva River against the Swedes in 1240 and liberated Pskov from the Germans in the Battle of Ice on Lake Peipus in 1242. He was canonized by the Russian Orthodox

³⁸ This is based on an interview with Fedor Povnyi in Minsk on May 16, 2023.

Church in 1547. During the Great Patriotic War, Stalin established the Military Honor Medal of Alexander Nevsky, further cementing his status as a symbol of military valor and political leadership. The church's reverence for Alexander Nevsky, both as a military commander and a political leader, carries significant patriotic connotations. In my field research, interviewees frequently referenced Alexander Nevsky to illustrate the deep historical roots of the cooperation between the church and the state, emphasizing the long-standing connection between religious and national identity.

In 1963, the city of Maryina Gorka became home to the 5th Special Forces Brigade of the Soviet Armed Forces, which was later inherited by the Belarusian Armed Forces as its premier elite unit. In response, in 1993, Alexander Chyokov spearheaded the establishment of the Alexander Nevsky Church, dedicated to military honor. Since its completion, the church has maintained a structured and institutionalized cooperation with the military for over 30 years. This collaboration has been comprehensive, with priests organizing daily activities for soldiers, offering religion-related courses in military academies, and conducting prayers for the armed forces. This involvement extends beyond the Ministry of National Defense to include border guards and personnel from the Ministry of Emergencies. Within the Borisov diocese, approximately 20 priests are engaged in military affairs. In eastern Belarus, where the majority of soldiers are Orthodox Christians, the main clergy providing religious services are also from the BOC.

Despite its small size, Maryina Gorka exudes a distinct military honor due to its role as the base for the Special Forces Brigade. At the town's center stands the Great Patriotic War Monument, topped with a red star. Nearby, the green space dedicated to public leisure and recreation is named the Heroes of the Great Patriotic War Memorial Forest. Belarus is home to approximately 9000 monuments commemorating the Great Patriotic War. The Alexander Nevsky Church, one of the town's prominent buildings, serves as a vibrant public space for worship and community gatherings. Located adjacent to the Special Forces Brigade, the church features a monument dedicated to the citizens of Maryina Gorka who lost their lives in both the Great Patriotic War and the Afghan War. The monument includes a statue of St. George (Святой Георгий Победоносец), the patron saint of soldiers in Christian tradition, highlighting the church's deep connection to military honor and remembrance.

During my visit, Priest Alexander Chyokov personally guided me through the Alexander Nevsky Church, which plays a unique and significant role in the town. In his sermon that day, he recalled the local heroes who had passed away and spoke about a surviving resident of the town, now nearly 90 years old, who had lived through the Great Patriotic War. The priest, who maintains a deep friendship with this World War II veteran, visits him regularly and expressed that God would bless him. The Great Patriotic War is a shared memory for all Belarusians. Despite the dwindling number of surviving veterans, personal stories about the experiences of their elders remain prevalent. These stories include accounts of those who joined the Red Army and the partisans, endured the siege of Leningrad, or suffered in concentration camps. As previously discussed in the interview with Priest Povnyi, the Christian concept of “love thy neighbor” provides a compelling framework for understanding the role of the Alexander Nevsky Church. In a small place like Maryina Gorka, where close personal relationships are the norm, the experiences of those around you and your own relatives during significant historical events become intertwined with collective national memory. This integration of personal and local memories into the broader nation-state narrative fosters a deep sense of both personal and national affection. Consequently, the historical memory of the Great Patriotic War, influenced by religious principles, is continually reinforced through everyday interpersonal interactions and rituals, strengthening the bond between individual experiences and national identity.

Alexander Chyokov explained that the church’s cooperation with the military aims to foster soldiers’ patriotism and patience, offer spiritual support, help them maintain mental well-being, and support their efforts to defend peace and protect their homes and fellow citizens. With the onset of the Russia–Ukrainian war, there has been growing concern about Belarus potentially being drawn into the war. In this context, he asserts that a strong army is essential for deterring adversaries, and the church plays a role in strengthening the army by providing spiritual support. Regarding the current geopolitical situation, the church and the military rely on official sources and adhere to official instructions. Priest Alexander’s assessment of the Russia–Ukrainian war aligns with that of Belarusian officials. Specifically, he regarded the drone attack on the Kremlin in early May 2023 as a terrorist act by Ukraine against Russian territory.

On Victory Day, May 9, a prayer ceremony was held in the parishes to commemorate the victims of the Great Patriotic War. It is important to note that Victory Day is a national holiday, not a religious one. When I asked why the church celebrated a nonreligious festival, the response was rooted in Orthodox patriotism, similar to the sentiments expressed by Priest Fedor Povnyi. Since the first day of the Great Patriotic War, the church has called on society to defend the country, raise funds for the army, build tanks and military aircraft, and pray for both the military and the people. With one-third of Belarusians having died in this war, it is clear that this event impacted the entire nation. The church has never been a bystander in times of war. Therefore, no distinction should be made between a church holiday and a national holiday, and the church should indeed commemorate this occasion.³⁹

The relationship between the Orthodox Church and nation-state building is also evident in the field of education. In 1994, the Church and the Ministry of Education were the first to sign a cooperation agreement, long before similar agreements with other state agencies. This initiative laid the foundation for state-church cooperation during the Lukashenko era and was a pioneering measure considering the history of the Soviet Union. To date, the two parties have signed six cooperation projects. The promotion of patriotism is explicitly stated as a goal in the cooperation agreement between the BOC and the Belarusian Ministry of Education. Notably, Priest Povnyi, who led the Ministry of Cooperation between the BOC and secular educational institutions, played a crucial role in these efforts. Under his leadership, the elective course “Spiritual Culture and Patriotism” was introduced for 5th or 6th graders. Additionally, he organized the creation of textbooks and teaching materials, developed a comprehensive set of teaching methods, and initiated teacher training programs.

Priest Sviatoslav Rogelsky, the director of the Saints Cyril and Methodius Christian Education Center—a social organization affiliated with the BOC—plays a key role in promoting the Orthodox Church within the field of education. He explained that the country places great importance on the popular concept of “Christian patriotism” (Христианский патриотизм). When asked about the meaning of “Christian patriotism,” he provided a doctrinal explanation: although humans

³⁹ This is according to my interview in Maryina Gorka, Belarus, on May 7, 2023.

are created in the image of God, they possess free will, and it is up to each individual to choose the kind of person they become. To make better choices and become better people, we should love everything that God has bestowed upon us, including our own country. Priest Rogelsky also emphasized that historical memory is inherently short and limited. If patriotic education relies solely on historical events, it risks being forgotten over time. For example, while the older generation still understands the significance of the Great Patriotic War, the younger generation lacks this direct connection. Therefore, there is a need for a more powerful and enduring carrier of patriotism that transcends specific historical events, which he believes is found in religion.⁴⁰

It is worth mentioning that whether in the field of historical memory, military affairs, or education, the Orthodox Church consistently employs the term “spiritual and moral values” (духовно-нравственные ценности) in its cooperation with the state. Whether it is recording and displaying national history, providing psychological support for soldiers, or participating in secular education, the goal of the church is to impart “spiritual strength” (духовная сила). This concept aligns with the Christian emphasis on spirit over matter and its dualistic moral values.

Russian priest Evgeniy Shestun elaborates on the concept of “spiritual and moral values” in his monograph. He explains that, from a secular perspective, life is seen as mortal and finite, confined to a specific time and lifespan. In contrast, the Orthodox Church views human existence from the perspective of eternity. Therefore, people are responsible not only for themselves but also for the preservation of national history and culture. Secularism views the spiritual world at the psychological level, often replacing spirit with heart, whereas the Orthodox Church believes that human development should not rely solely on psychological training. Instead, spiritual growth should be fostered through the development of intelligence, will, and emotion. Regarding morality, good and evil are relative in the secular realm but absolute in the religious realm. In the context of the Orthodox Church’s role in fostering patriotism and building the nation-state, “spiritual and moral power” plays a crucial role. According to religious philosophy, a nation exists as an immortal spirit that transcends the history experienced by individuals. Cultivating patriotism involves passing on this spiritual power. The absolute concepts

⁴⁰ This is according to my interview with Priest Rogelsky in the city of Minsk on May 31, 2023.

of justice and morality entail defending the nation and the country and upholding traditional values.⁴¹

3 THE UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCHES IN EUROMAIDAN

During my field research in Ukraine, I observed that the role of the St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery in Kyiv (Михайловский Златоверхий монастирь) mirrors that of the Church of All Saints in Belarus. Originally constructed in the early twelfth century, the monastery was destroyed during the Soviet period. However, in the early 1990s, UOC KP initiated a fundraising campaign for its reconstruction, which received support from President Kuchma. The unrecognized Kyiv Patriarch Filaret, President Kuchma, the Prime Minister, and the mayor of Kyiv all attended the church's inauguration ceremony in 1998. St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery subsequently became one of the main churches of the UOC KP. After the OCU declared its independence, it became the cathedral of the church and one of the leading Orthodox centers in Ukraine.

Similar to the situation in Belarus, St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery embodies the integration of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church with patriotic discourse. However, this patriotic discourse in Ukraine is distinctly nationalist and anti-Russian. Ukraine views Russia as an adversary to the Ukrainian nation-state, both historically and in contemporary times. The narrative emphasizes that Ukraine has not only faced the formidable Russian regime in the past but is also threatened by it today. Ukraine underscores the sacrifices made by heroes who defended the nation, portraying their actions with the sanctity of martyrdom. Consequently, Ukraine believes that persecuted individuals and heroes should be under the protection of the Holy Lord.

I conducted fieldwork in Ukraine during 2019–2020. At that time, many traces of the Revolution of Dignity remained in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, and the Russia–Ukraine war had not yet escalated. The entire courtyard wall on the right-hand side of the St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery is used as the Memorial Wall of the Defenders of Ukraine. Portraits of Ukrainian soldiers who died in Eastern Ukraine are displayed

⁴¹ Евгений Шестун. Православная педагогика. Азбука воспитания, 2022.

along the entire wall. This memorial wall is a joint project between the UOC KP and the National Museum of Military History of Ukraine. Its construction began in 2014 following the outbreak of Euromaidan. Initially, the memorial wall was erected in the Andrei Church of Kyiv Patriarchate. Due to the increasing number of victims, it was moved to the St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery with the approval of Patriarch Filaret. Photographs of the deceased cover one wall after another.

After the founding of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in 2018–2019, it inherited the legacy of UOC KP, including this memorial wall in the monastery. By 2020, more than 4300 victims were recorded on the memorial wall. Metropolitan Epiphany, head of OCU, unveiled the new memorial wall and presided over the prayer ceremony. As Metropolitan Epiphany said, “We believe that one day we will no longer have to hang pictures of new Ukrainian soldiers on the walls. What we can do is to do our best to preserve the memory of the great victim.” His characterization of the Russia-Ukrainian war aligns with that of the aforementioned Ukrainian official. At that time, how to define the war in Eastern Ukraine was a contentious issue between Russia and Ukraine, as well as within Ukraine itself. Both Russia and some Ukrainians considered the events in Eastern Ukraine to be a Ukrainian civil war and did not recognize it as a war between two countries.

St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery is located in the center of the old city of Kyiv, facing the Sophia Church Square. With the construction of the memorial wall, this monastery has become a frequent venue for various public ceremonies, particularly the memorial service for the Battle of Ilovaisk (Бої за Іловайськ) held each August. In August 2014, 386 Ukrainian soldiers lost their lives in the deadliest battle in Eastern Ukraine. In 2019, President Zelensky officially designated August 29 as the Defender of Fatherland Day to commemorate this event.

On Independence Day (August 24) and Defender of Fatherland Day (August 29), national leaders, including the president, lay flowers at the memorial wall. Each August 29, Metropolitan Epiphanius also presides over a commemorative prayer ceremony.⁴²

⁴² Православна церква України, “Предстоятель звершив панахиду за душами загиблих за Незалежність України”, 29 Серпня 2019, <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/vsi-novyny/predstoyatel-zvershyv-panahydu-za-dushamy-zagyblyh-za-nezalezhnist-ukrayiny/>.

Православна церква України, “Панахида в День пам'яті захисників України, які загинули в боротьбі за незалежність, суверенітет і територіальну цілісність”,

There are major differences in the historical memories of the Soviet Union between Belarus and Ukraine. In Belarus, monuments to the Great Patriotic War are ubiquitous, reflecting a connection to Soviet history. In contrast, Ukraine rejects its historical ties to the Soviet Union. Former President Poroshenko introduced a “de-Sovietization” policy, which outlawed symbols associated with the Soviet Union, changed all street names related to the Soviet era, tore down monuments, and banned the activities of the Ukrainian Communist Party.

The ways in which Ukraine celebrated Victory Day have evolved. In 2023, President Zelensky announced that, in accordance with Western tradition, May 8 would be celebrated as the Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation, and May 9 would be observed as Europe Day. The Great Famine of 1932–1933, also known as the Holodomor, is a significant part of Ukrainian national collective memory. Outside St. Michael’s Golden-Domed Monastery, on St. Michael’s Square, stands the Monument to the Victims of the Ukrainian Great Famine. On the Memorial Day of the Victims of the Great Famine, which is observed on the fourth Saturday in November each year, citizens come to express their condolences, placing candles and flowers at the monument. Over the years, Metropolitan Epiphany has presided over the prayer ceremony at the Memorial Hall for the Victims of the Great Famine in Kyiv.⁴³

Orthodox churches in Ukraine also actively participated in the Euro-maidan, which gave them a distinctive role as a “public religion.” Euromaidan is a political event with multiple dimensions. It is not only a protest against president Yanukovich in Ukraine but also has an international relations dimension due to Yanukovich’s pro-Russia policy and Crimea’s annexation by Russia. At that time, UOC KP, to which the St. Michael’s Golden-Domed Monastery belonged, was an active participant in the Revolution of Dignity. The monastery provided logistical

29 Серпня 2020, <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/vsi-novyny/panahyda-v-den-den-pam-yati-zahysnykiv-ukrayiny-yaki-zagynuly-v-borotbi-za-nezalezhnist-suverenitet-i-terytorialnustisnist/>.

⁴³ Православна церква України, “Митрополит Епіфаній очолив Панахиду за жертвами Голодоморів та взяв участь у заходах зі вшанування пам’яті загиблих”, 23 Листопада 2019, <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/vsi-novyny/mytropolyt-epifanij-ocholyv-panahydu-za-zhertvamy-golodomoriv-ta-vzyav-uchast-u-zahodah-zi-vshanuvannya-pam-yati-zagynulyblyh/>. Православна церква України, “Митрополит Епіфаній очолив Панахиду за жертвами Голодоморів”, 28 Листопада 2020, <https://www.pomisna.info/uk/vsi-novyny/mytropolyt-epifanij-ocholyv-panahydu-za-zhertvamy-golodomoriv/>.

support for the protests and medical assistance to the injured. Many clergymen went to the front lines of the conflict to pray for the protesters. The Ukrainian nationalism, anti-Russian, and pro-Western stance held by UOC KP was later inherited by OCU.

This involvement underscores the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's deep integration into the sociopolitical fabric of Ukraine, positioning it as a significant actor in national and public affairs. During my field research in Ukraine in 2020, I interviewed Priest Ivan Sidor, who is currently the head of the Educational Publishing Office of OCU. At the time of the Ukrainian crisis in 2013, he was a graduate student at the Kyiv Orthodox Theological Academy, a bell ringer in its choir, and lived in the student dormitory of St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery.

According to Priest Ivan, on December 11, 2013, a night after Yanukovich mobilized the Golden Eagle special forces affiliated with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, he received six or seven phone calls from believers asking him to ring the bell of St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery to protect the protesters in Independence Square. In the Orthodox Church, bells are significant sacred objects and their ringing is part of religious ceremonies. Traditionally in Ancient Russia, bells were used for warning, calling assemblies, summoning people to battle, and declaring victories. Priest Ivan complied with the believers' request. He later became known as the "bell ringer of Euromaidan," with his actions reported by numerous media outlets. The church bell, a set of musical instruments played by pulling a rope connected to it, can cause wear and tear on one's hands. Media reports exaggerated the situation, claiming that Priest Ivan was bleeding from his hands due to ringing the bell.

As a result, Priest Ivan Sidor began to attract significant attention in both religious and political circles. Subsequently, he accompanied Metropolitan Epiphany to Istanbul to receive the official decree (tomos) from the Patriarch of Constantinople, which granted autocephaly to OCU. During this visit, he was greeted by President Poroshenko. While Priest Ivan's act of ringing the bell may have initially been motivated by his political beliefs, it gained strong symbolic significance in both historical and contemporary contexts. This is why he garnered attention from various parties. The symbolic importance of his actions extends to St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery and reflects the broader Ukrainian Orthodox nationalist sentiment during the Revolution of Dignity.

The support for the Square Revolution by nationalists, along with their stance on issues related to Eastern Ukraine and historical memory, reinforced patriotism and anti-Russian sentiments. These sentiments eventually fueled demands for the church's independence and spiritual freedom from Russia. In this context, St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery exemplifies Orthodox patriotic characteristics distinct from those of the All Saints Monastery in Belarus.

In summary, in both Ukraine and Belarus, one of the significant goals of the politicization of the Orthodox Church is to support the construction of national identity and promote patriotism. This is reflected in the church's involvement in the construction of patriotic monuments, its cooperation with the military and the Ministry of Education, and its stance on political events. However, due to the different nation-state building programs in the two countries, their Orthodox churches exhibit very different political characteristics.

OCU serves as a religious symbol of Ukraine's national independence and carries strong overtones of secession from Russia. By supporting Euromaidan, backing the state's stance in the Russia–Ukraine war, and preserving Ukraine's historical memory of the Great Famine, the church has legitimized Ukraine's religious and national independence.

In contrast, Belarus has adopted a weaker nationalist nation-state building program. While it emphasizes its independence from Russia, it also identifies with East Slavic civilization. As a branch of the Russian Orthodox Church, the BOC remains subordinate to the Russian Orthodox Church and the state. This situation reflects the characteristics of identification in Belarus. The historical narrative of the BOC continues to use the same historical memory symbols as Russia, emphasizing the historical unity of the East Slavic nation. Simultaneously, the church upholds the core position of the Great Patriotic War in national historical memory and provides doctrinal legitimacy to the nation-state building of Belarus.


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Black Feminists' Resistance and the Intersectional Agenda in the #MustFall Movements in South Africa

Zhongyu Wang 

The #RhodesMustFall¹ (#RMF) movement was sparked in early March 2015 at the University of Cape Town (UCT), when a Black student threw feces on the statue of the British colonizer Cecil John Rhodes that was located prominently on campus. This was followed by a group of Black students protesting for the removal of the statue, as it symbolized colonial

¹ A hashtag (#) followed by a phrase without space is a social media language rule that connects various posts on the same topic across the platform. This technique was used intensively in the #MustFall movements.

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violence against Black people and incomplete transformation into the new democracy of post-apartheid South Africa (Ahmed 2019; Ndelu et al. 2017).

As indicated in the #RMF mission statement, the removal of the Rhodes statue marked an entry point rather than an end to Black students' resistance, with this initial protest leading to a myriad of student demands for decolonizing the university mobilized through disruptive tactics and activities during 2015–2016 (RMF 2015; Ndelu 2017). Through subsequent protest actions spreading across the country, with #FeesMustFall (#FMF) being the most influential one, the politics of “Fallism” emerged through a wave of decolonization struggles that collectively challenged the “white supremacist capitalist hetero-patriarchal systems” (p. 62) of higher education in South Africa (Malebye 2021). To ensure language consistency, I use the terms “#MustFall” movements or “Fallist” movement to denote a series of resistance incidents that occurred under the banners of #RMF and #FMF centered around UCT from March 2015 to March 2016. The rationale for choosing this focus and the usage of these terms will be specified in the background analysis section.

As a decolonization project aiming to confront “institutionalized racism and patriarchy” (RMF 2015, p. 1), the Fallist movement set itself apart from the earlier Black liberation movements by embedding intersectionality in its intellectual foundations and action guidelines. This intersectionality provided student activists with a powerful tool to articulate Black pain with a reference to multiple forms of oppression beyond merely Blackness (RMF 2015). In particular, Black feminists² made great contributions to ensuring an intersectional movement, leading an effort for internal disobedience against Black heterosexual maleness within the movement, which brought gender and sexuality issues to the center (Ahmed 2019; Ndelu et al. 2017). Feminist resistance also contributed to the tensions and conflicts around gender and sexuality, ultimately leading to the demise of the Fallist movement (Malebye 2021; Ndelu 2017), as explained in this paper.

² While Black feminists, in a general sense, refers to feminists whose racial identity is Black or who are self-identified racially as Black, this term applied to this paper's context specifically indicates Black feminists in South Africa who were engaged either in the #MustFall protests or in the scholarly discussions stemming from the #MustFall movements.

Regarding the controversy surrounding Black feminists' resistance and the significance of their intersectional activism, my paper draws on existing scholarship to shed light on the following research question: what role did Black feminists play in the #MustFall movements in South Africa from 2015 to 2016?

Guided by this research question, I reviewed the literature thematically and organized my discussion into two main sections: a background analysis of the #MustFall movements from 2015 to 2016 and a critical reflection on Black feminists' experience and their intersectional praxis in the #MustFall movements. After presenting the methodological design, I introduce the #MustFall movements in the historical context of student activism in South Africa, with a detailed analysis of its decolonial framework rooted in students' demands, the Fallism discourse that emerged from the movement processes and power dynamics, and the violent consequence that highlighted the significance of gendered struggles within the Fallists. In the section on women's resistance, I explore the progress and contribution that Black feminists made in the #MustFall movements, as well as the frictions and violence in which they were involved. Focusing on intersectionality, I seek to complicate the understanding of Black feminists' role by examining their struggles *for* an intersectional alliance and their struggles *with* the gendered performance of intersectional activism in the #MustFall context. Before drawing a conclusion, I synthesize the findings with attention to how they are linked up to answer the research question and inform future research on Black feminists' resistance.

1 METHODOLOGY, LIMITATIONS, AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This paper is a literature review that draws on both the scholarly and gray literature on related themes, without involving first-hand empirical data collection or analysis. Therefore, in this methodology section, I present the sources of literature, the rationale for adopting them, the limitations and delimitations of my research, and a visualization method for my syntheses.

To unpack the scholarly insights into the #MustFall movements and Black feminists, my paper delves into scholarship at the intersection of the key topics, including decolonization in South African universities, women's resistance in South Africa, feminism and intersectionality in

social movement studies, and emergent feminist perspectives, especially Black radical feminism.

I began my research from various social science databases³ and open-access journals in the comparative international education field.⁴ As a result, the scholarship includes key texts on the #MustFall movements by authors from around the world, such as Ahmed's (2019) ethnographic study of the Fallist movement, Daniel's (2021b) intersectional analysis of the #RMF movement, Keet et al.'s (2021) philosophical discussion on the #MustFall event, and Crenshaw's (1989) pioneering work on intersectionality and Black feminism, among others.

The citations uncovered in the initial literature review led me to a more concentrated pool of scholarship on the #MustFall movements in the context of South Africa. Specifically, I identified a body of literature by Black feminist activists who have led or participated in the protest actions of my focus.⁵ This allowed me to adopt a decolonial approach to my research on Black women's struggles in the Fallist movement by centering on the lived experience and personal reflections of these women themselves.

Additionally, I have incorporated information from multiple types of gray literature, including the mission statement of the #MustFall movements, news articles, online opinion pieces, and social media posts by the student activists during the #MustFall movements.

However, this constitutes a limitation of my study insofar as some of the online sources are no longer accessible since several years have passed since the dissipation of the #MustFall movement in South Africa. In particular, social media content, such as the #RMF Facebook page set up by the student Fallists at UCT, no longer exists. I have been able to cite some social media posts of the #RMF student activists, as they were quoted and thus preserved in scholarly sources. I am also aware of the limitations of my positionality as a researcher. While I identify as a radical feminist of color, being a non-black person who is not from

³ Some examples are Columbia Universities Library (CLIO), Gottesman Library at Teachers College, Google Scholar, etc.

⁴ Some examples include Current Issues in Comparative Education (CICE), Comparative Education Review (CER), Comparative Education, etc.

⁵ An example of this is the special issue of *Agenda*, a South African journal focusing on gender and feminism, entitled "Feminisms and Women's Resistance within Contemporary African Student Movement".

South Africa may have influenced my selection of information and my understanding of South African Black feminists' experience in the #Must-Fall movements. To reduce the effect of my bias, I adopted an analytical lens in the literature review to discuss Black women's struggles from an external perspective in preparation for future empirical research on this topic.

The delimitations of my research are also worth noting. Although gender studies from an intersectional perspective often address both women and gender minority groups, I intentionally focused my literature review on Black women's resistance in the #MustFall movements and the engagement of Black feminism in the conceptual development of intersectionality. The concept of Black feminists in this paper includes heterosexual, queer, and trans women, as the inclusivity of the #MustFall movements entails, but due to practical considerations of the scope of this work, sexuality is not addressed in my discussions about Black feminists. Another delimitation is that I treat the #MustFall movements as a project of student resistance, although the movements involved a "collective of students, workers and staff" (p. 1), as stated in the leading document (RMF 2015). On the one hand, the student activists who initiated the #MustFall movements mobilized other actors across the campus and led the protest actions. On the other hand, it is a deliberate choice of the study focus, for the purpose of contributing to the study area of student activism specifically.

To assist with the thematic discussions and facilitate a thorough understanding of the key concepts, I visualize my findings from each section of the literature review, as presented in Fig. 1 *Overview of the #Must-Fall Movements in South Africa (2015–2016)* and in Fig. 2 *Reviewing the #MustFall Movements from a Gender Perspective*. Furthermore, the contrast between the two visuals shows how different the #MustFall movements look like when a gender lens is applied, which enhances the rationale for specifically addressing Black feminists' resistance in ongoing reflections on the #MustFall movements.

2 BACKGROUND ANALYSIS: THE RISE AND FALL OF THE #MUSTFALL MOVEMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Since the #RMF movement and its variants have spread across the higher education sector of South Africa and around the world, this section focuses on the #MustFall stories at UCT from March 2015

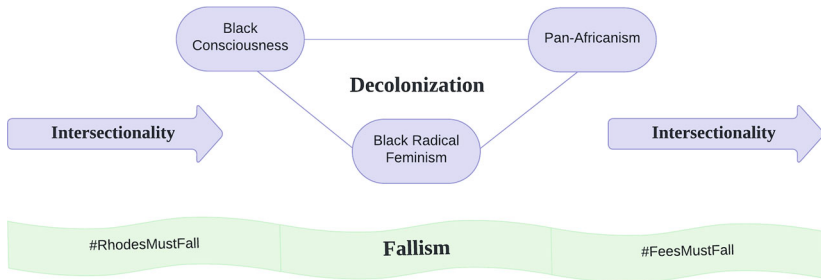


Fig. 1 Overview of the #MustFall Movements in South Africa (2015–2016). *Note* Based on the key results of the background analysis in this section

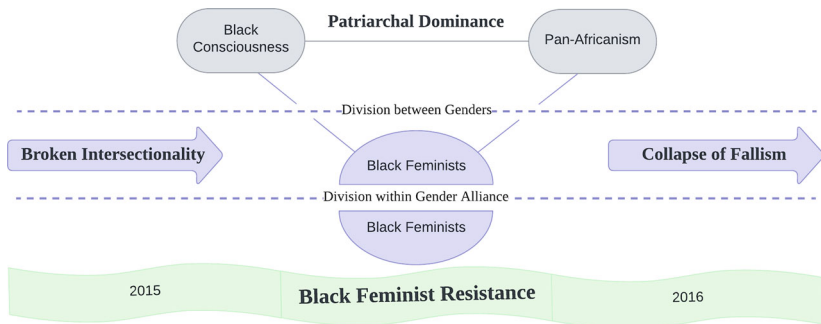


Fig. 2 Reviewing the #MustFall movements from a gender perspective. *Note* Based on the key findings from the critical reflection in this section

to March 2016 as a key episode catalyzing this international historical phenomenon. Within this specific time frame, I use the term #MustFall movements to conceptually capture #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall, which chronologically took place over the original year yet also interconnected at a turning point of the movement on the organizing level.

In this section, I situate the #MustFall movements in the historical context of Black student movements in South Africa that relentlessly challenged colonialism and coloniality mirrored across higher education and society, including the coloniality of gender. I analyze the demands of student activists through the decolonial framework, in which Black

feminism was included as a key component to ensure intersectional mobilization. To present the processes of the #MustFall movements, I draw on an emergent discourse of Fallism that reflects both a collective of the #MustFall activists and their evolving politics, with tensions arising particularly around gender-related intersectional agendas. I outline the background analysis in Fig. 1 with a narrative summary toward the end of this section to facilitate a contrast with Fig. 2, which presents the same outline of the #MustFall but through a gender lens.

2.1 *Historical Background: University Student Movements in South Africa*

As a new wave of the decolonial movement, the #MustFall protests played out in line with the earlier liberation struggles in South Africa that articulated grievances against the state (Daniel 2021b; Larmer 2010). Social movement studies have revealed the disillusionment of the Black majority with the transformation aspirations of the new democratic government, which gave rise to civil protest actions across public life in post-apartheid South Africa (Alexander and Pfaffe 2014). Among these collective struggles in South Africa, student activism has been widely recognized as a strategic alliance and one of the most critical forces for social change (Reddy 2004). With colonial remnants persisting in post-apartheid times, there has been a resurgence of student resistance, such as the #MustFall uprisings, which scholars have analyzed as a renewed mechanism of social accountability that continues to push for radical transformation, especially in the higher education sector (Muswede 2017).⁶

Some scholars have more specifically situated the #MustFall protests in the long history of Black student resistance against the institutional and infrastructural spaces in South African universities that are shaped by the colonial legacy in this country (Ahmed 2019; Ndelu 2017). Marked by the political transition in 1994, the education-related social movements in South Africa are categorized into two historical periods: the apartheid struggles centered on the Soweto uprisings in 1976 and

⁶ According to Keet et al. (2021), transformation includes the conceptualization of “equity and redress, democratisation, development, quality, effectiveness and efficiency, academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and public accountability” (p. 102), since the release of the White Paper on Higher Education and Training of 1997 (Department of Education 1997).

the post-apartheid student activism that began with the demand for equal access to education and developed into the #MustFall protests calling for decolonized education (Hefferman and Nieftagodien 2016). By comparing the 1976 Soweto student movement and the #MustFall protests, current literature has not only demonstrated how the recent one is linked to and different from the historical one, but also identified the significant development that the Fallist student activists have made, such as increasing women's visibility in the dominant narratives, which provides new areas of examination for future research (Ahmed 2019; Swartz et al. 2016; Naidoo 2016).

Despite the subsequent expansion of the #MustFall movements nationwide and globally, most empirical studies have focused on the context of UCT, primarily because this university was the origin and epicenter of the #MustFall uprisings. Additionally, UCT is an exemplary case due to its history of confronting racial oppression through the relentless mobilization of university-wide resistance (Ndelu 2017). By 2015, when the #MustFall movements started, Black students had become the majority of the overall enrollment in most South African universities. However, White students at UCT still constituted the top-ranking demographic group, accounting for 35.8% of the total enrollment, even though only 8% of the South African population was White at that time (Daniel 2021a; Ndelu 2017). Concerned with the persistence of racialized inequalities, UCT black students had been active in organizing resistance actions, such as the Mamdani Affair in 2002, which triggered a debate on the university curriculum, and the "We Say Enough!" mass demonstration in 2013, which addressed violent crimes in society at large (Ndelu 2017).

In fact, the role of universities has been interrogated as a critical part of the scholarly conversation about the #MustFall movements and student activism in South Africa. In line with Ndelu's (2017) analysis of UCT, Daniel (2021a) argued that the university plays an ambivalent role, both as a target of criticism and action through student activism and as a site of transformative learning and reflection for student activists. Muswede (2017) reaffirmed that the demand for decolonizing universities is one of the most significant components of the social transformation package in post-apartheid South Africa because of the significance of a quality higher education sector free from colonial legacy that student activists are seeking to achieve. Moreover, through an empirical examination of the #RMF movement at UCT, Ahmed (2019) revealed the paradoxical nature of universities as both empowering socioeconomic marginalized

students with liberatory knowledge and skills, yet dehumanizing them due to the oppressive architecture of physical and intellectual spaces, such as the Rhodes statue and the knowledge production system that mirrors the same whiteness. This proposition added a layer of nuance to understanding student demands in the Fallist movement, specifically in contrast to the earlier Black liberation struggles, which will be further discussed in the next section.

2.2 *The Decolonial Framework: Conceptualizing the #MustFall Demands*

Consistent with the general theme of social movements in post-apartheid South Africa, the #RMF movement was derived from UCT students' growing disillusionment with the government's failing promise of a multi-cultural rainbow nation two decades after the end of apartheid, which led to their agitated action and associated demands (Chikane 2018; Ndelu 2017). The grievances of the #MustFall activists were framed as "Black pain" in the #RMF mission statement, foregrounding the dehumanized experience of Black people and other racially oppressed people of color, as an intentional departure from the ambiguity of the conventional liberation discourse (RMF 2015; Ndelu 2017).

To address "Black pain," student activists called for the decolonization of higher education spaces, as a competing ideology against the transformation rhetoric in the political agenda of the university and the state (RMF 2015; Ahmed 2019; Ndelu 2017). Although not all scholarship has addressed the tension between decolonization and transformation, this ideological shift marked another radical departure from the past and an enhanced articulation of Black struggles instead of a color-blind transformation for all South Africans (Ahmed 2019; Keet et al. 2017).

With a variety of specific demands from the Black students and other marginalized groups of students at UCT, decolonization was referenced as the overarching framework of the #MustFall movements to imagine an alternative future that the student activists collectively demanded (Daniel and Miller 2022). Based on the long-term goals expressed in the #RMF mission statement, Daniel and Miller (2022) conceptualized the students' demands as three "decolonial imaginaries." First, decolonization was imagined as a replacement for Western-centered knowledge production, with a renewed knowledge system that prioritizes African experiences through processes such as decentering the curriculum (Garuba 2015).

The second decolonial imaginary was aimed at breaking down the institutional hierarchies in academia that determine whose knowledge is valuable and calling for a recognition of the experiences of historically silenced groups, including Black women and queer students (Daniel and Miller 2022; Gamedze 2020). Last, by answering why decolonized knowledge matters, #MustFall activists demanded re-imagining the role of universities as “a microcosm of society” that reflects the needs of the wider communities and concerns itself with contextual issues, such as systematic racism, in South Africa and across the continent (Daniel and Miller 2022, p. 14).

From a historical perspective, the #MustFall student uprisings were considered to be a fourth phase of decolonization movements in Africa (Daniel and Miller 2022).⁷ According to Ndelu (2017), the #MustFall movements can be analyzed dynamically as a historical moment of the long-standing struggles for decolonization in South Africa. Some of the movements’ decolonial demands were taken over from the past resistance of university students, such as ending outsourcing and changing admissions policy (Muswede 2017; Ndelu 2017). Some concerns were in line with the ongoing advocacy in South Africa’s higher education sector, such as that for curriculum reform and free education (Daniel 2021a; Ndelu 2017). Additionally, some demands emerged from the particular processes of the #MustFall movements, primarily the radical feminist demands for disrupting patriarchy that this literature review is focused on (Malebye 2021; Ndelu 2017).

In his commentary on the “decolonial paradigm of Fallism,” Ngcaweni (2016) noted that the effective application of decolonial scholars’ thinking made the #MustFall student activists distinctive from their predecessors. In fact, the decolonial framework of the #MustFall movements is underpinned by three key pillars, namely Black consciousness, Pan-Africanism, and Black radical feminism, with intensive reference to Black scholars correspondingly, such as Frantz Fanon, Steve Biko, and Kimberlé Crenshaw (Ahmed 2019; Daniel and Miller 2022). The #RMF mission statement explicitly addressed Black consciousness and intersectionality as part of Black radical feminism, whereas Pan-Africanism was later adopted in other key documents of the movement (Ahmed 2019).

⁷ It was preceded by the anti-colonial liberation movements of the 1950s, the post-colonial evolution of university-state relationship in the 1970s, and the decolonial challenge to the neo-liberalization of education of the 1980s (Daniel and Miller 2022).

According to Ahmed's (2019) analysis, these three pillars of the decolonial framework reflected the acts of epistemic disobedience whereby the #MustFall student activists were engaged to counter the dominant Western thought and ideology (Mignolo 2009). At the same time, by adopting intersectionality, Black radical feminists brought in a unique layer of epistemic disobedience, targeting internally the patriarchal dominance of Black consciousness and Pan-Africanism (Ahmed 2019). The conceptualization of the #MustFall movement agenda shows that decolonization, as the guiding framework, not only ensured that Black feminists' demands were recognized as part of the student resistance, but also complicated the resistance of Black feminists specifically, given the ideological conflicts under the decolonial umbrella.

2.3 *Fallism and Its Aftermath: An Uneven Pathway to Decolonizing the University*

In the process of demanding decolonization, the notion of Fallism emerged from both the discourse and the practices of the #MustFall movement at UCT and spread over South Africa and later globally with the expansion of the Fallist movement (Ahmed 2019; Ngcaweni 2016). This concept was first invented by the #RMF student activists for their social media campaign, who used related languages, such as #Fallist, to identify themselves within the #RMF movement (Ahmed 2019). As a philosophical concept, Fallism indicated a call for all colonial injustices to fall and for the dignity of Black people to be reclaimed (Ahmed 2019; Malebye 2021). On the basis of Mignolo and Walsh's (2018) decolonial thinking, Ahmed (2019) formulated Fallism as a decolonial option of the marginalized that challenged the coloniality of knowledge across university spaces on one hand and, on the other hand, revealed the coloniality of being human in relation to Black pain.

In the context of student resistance, Chikane (2018) proposed that Fallism was an ideological conceptualization of the #MustFall politics that originated from the political tensions at the intersection of Black consciousness, Pan-Africanism, and Black radical feminism, the three pillars of the decolonial framework of the movement. With an emphasis on individual experiences, Ngcaweni (2016) described Fallism as a decolonial paradigm that did not entail an all-encompassing definition, but rather coalesced the Fallist activists for the common purpose of decolonizing identities, knowledge production, and power dynamics. Despite

its disruptive potential, Fallism was built on unity across various sites of struggles, where the Fallists were enabled to define their own demands, actions, and priorities (Ngcaweni 2016). The diversity and individuality of Fallists were further reflected in the key processes of the #MustFall movements,⁸ albeit with ongoing contestation that Fallist politics predicted (Ahmed 2019).

By virtue of its descriptive value, I argue that Fallism provides a common thread that links the protesting activities in the name of #MustFall, which inspires a reflection on how the Fallist movement evolved from #RMF to #FMF. According to Ndelu's (2017) comparison of these two major phases, various changes that shaped the trajectory of the Fallist movement were taking place; these included a shifting focus of demands, varied composition of personnel, and reduced ideological diversity, among others. Notably, most areas of development from #RMF to #FMF involved the marginalization of the minority groups of Fallists, which threw into question the inclusivity that Fallism should bear otherwise. For example, with the increasingly structured organization of the movement, the initial leadership of the #RMF period, in which feminists had been visibly included, was gradually replaced by the #FMF leadership later dominated by heterosexual male activists (Ndelu 2017).

Although the Fallist movement was a significant step toward decolonized higher education, it ended up with significant outcomes of violence that have drawn more scholarly attention than positive changes achieved. There are intensive analyses of the destructive consequences of the Fallist movement, specifically the physical violence that disrupted university administration and teaching activities, damaged infrastructure and facilities on campuses, and jeopardized institutional viability to a large extent (Malebye 2021; Muswede 2017; Ndelu 2017). On the one hand, student activists justified their violent tactics using Fanon's (1963) arguments that decolonization is inevitably a violent process and a project of disorder, in which the order of the status quo will be restructured. On the other hand, not every student activist agreed with the use of violence, which resulted in deep fractures among activists according to class, gender, sexuality, and ideological stances (Ndelu 2017). Moreover, the violent form

⁸ The five key moments that epitomized the nuance of Fallism: (1) occupation and renaming the "Azania House"; (2) the #EndOutSourcing campaign; (3) transition to the #FeesMustFall movement; (4) the #Shackville protests; (5) the Trans Capture of the mainstream #RMF exhibition (Ahmed 2019; Ndelu 2017).

of engagement in the #MustFall movements not only perpetuated militarized masculinities, but also involved Black feminists in the brutality leading to the fall of Fallism (Xaba 2017).

In summary, Fig. 1 presents an overview of the background analysis of the #MustFall movements. Decolonization, located in the center, was the overarching framework of the #MustFall movements that guided the collective activism represented by different areas of radical demands, including Black radical feminism. The intersectional approach was adopted to drive the #MustFall mobilization, primarily supported by Black feminists for coalition building. The notion of Fallism characterized the uneven processes in which the movement evolved from #RMF to #FMF, involving the shifting role of Black feminists.

3 CRITICAL REFLECTION: BLACK FEMINISTS AND A BROKEN INTERSECTIONALITY IN THE #MUSTFALL MOVEMENTS

As a Black radical feminist and one of the founding members of #RMF, Ramaru (2017) noted that the #MustFall movements told the story of Black feminists and gender minority students. Based on the significance of gender issues identified in Fallist movement studies, this section delves into the lived experience of Black feminists and their struggles *for* and *with* the intersectional agenda, by drawing upon their narratives, perspectives, and scholarship proliferating since the 2015–2016 student protests.

In contrast to the general outline in Fig. 1, reflecting on the #MustFall movements through a gender lens helps foreground Black feminist resistance throughout the process of the Fallist movement, as shown in Fig. 2. The driving force of intersectionality turned out to be a broken promise of unity for the movement agenda, resulting in the gender divisions illustrated by the dotted lines. I unpack the complexity revealed in Fig. 2 by critically reflecting on Black feminists' role in the #MustFall movements, leading to a multidimensional answer to this research question.

In line with the historical view of the last section, I first look into the progress that women activists have made across the waves of university student uprisings in South Africa. Then, I discuss Black feminists' contributions to the ideological development, strategic organization, and coalitional building of the Fallist movement, with special attention to

their engagement with the intersectional approach. This is followed by a reflection on Black feminists' struggles against a backdrop of gender cleavages and masculinized violence that continued to evolve with one year of protesting. The last part addresses the unresolved conflicts between genders and those within Black feminists toward the end of the intersectional activism project.

3.1 Black Feminist Progress in the History of South African Student Movements

As Shange (2017) suggested in her historical discussion of women's movements, women-led resistance had occurred in the history of student activism in South Africa, but the recognition of women's role and their particular contribution was a new step achieved in the Fallist movement. Feminists' participation distinguished the #MustFall protests from the previous student movements, not only because they contributed to a renewed climate in the university spaces, but also for the changes they made to the nature of Black resistance in South Africa (Ndelu et al. 2017).

Based on the personal accounts of various Black feminists, Mazibuko (2020) highlighted the progress they have made in the Fallist movement, by comparing it with women's resistance during apartheid times. She noted that politically mobilized women's movements under the apartheid regime failed to differentiate the liberation of women from the national liberation agenda, while implicitly excluding women's struggles from the public sector by addressing gender issues in private life only, such as sexism and misogyny at home (Mazibuko 2020). By centering women's role in the #MustFall movements, Black feminists challenged the private-public binary that has historically impeded women's liberation (Mazibuko 2020). Furthermore, by revealing the hetero-patriarchal nature of anti-apartheid struggles, the #MustFall generation of Black feminists problematized the long-standing assumption that gender inequalities can be genuinely addressed without being reproduced simultaneously within the student movement (Dlakavu 2017; Mazibuko 2020).

According to Ramaru (2017), Black women had been the supporters and nurturers of the movements historically, but been removed from active participants in deciding the agenda for women's liberation. In contrast, in the #RMF movement, Black feminists broke the pattern of erasure and silencing, as they joined the leadership and achieved considerable representation during the formation of the movement; for example,

two of the three inaugural spokespeople at UCT were female (Ahmed 2019; Ramaru 2017). Alongside their gender minority allies, Black feminists continued to engage in organizing protests, claiming spaces, and shaping Fallism politics, thus making themselves a revolutionary addition to the decolonial discourse and praxis (Ramaru 2017).

By analyzing the masculinization of student uprisings, Malebye (2021) pointed out the major success of Fallist feminists in making the underlying patriarchy and gendered violence visible in the #MustFall movements, thus pushing for radical change. Meanwhile, through their increasing visibility, Fallist feminists foregrounded their request to challenge the “cisheteronormative patriarchy” on university campuses and across public life, as the remarkable progress from the earlier decolonial struggles centered on anti-racism only (Ndelu et al. 2017, p. 3). Moreover, moving beyond the “single-issue struggle” of conventional student movements, women activists in the Fallist movement sought to build their feminist identity by drawing effective linkages between the experience of being a woman and other experiences of marginalization, which led them to adopt intersectionality as a feminist praxis of decolonization (Mazibuko 2020; Ramaru 2017, p. 91).

3.2 *Intersectional Praxis and Its Significance to Black Feminists in the #MustFall Movements*

As a theoretical framework, intersectionality was originally derived from the lived experience of women of color, developed by women scholars of color, and recognized as one of the most important contributions of feminist scholarship to social science studies (McCall 2005). In addition to the theoretical capacity to analyze power and identity, intersectionality is also a political intervention that has been widely embedded in collective actions for social change, especially in women’s resistance worldwide (Al-Faham et al. 2019; Laperrière and Lépinard 2016; Fisher et al. 2017). In the #MustFall student protests, for example, intersectionality was applied as a transformative intervention for higher education in South Africa and a critical “imaginary” that supported Black feminists in problematizing reality and pursuing an alternative future (Daniel and Miller 2022).

In light of the #RMF mission statement, the movement emerged in response to racism at UCT, yet evolved into an intersectional movement that recognized experiences of oppression beyond race, concerning

gender, sexuality, health, class, and other social categories (RMF 2015).⁹ According to Daniel's (2021b) typology, intersectionality was a collective action frame that articulated the Fallists' demand for including all the oppressed. However, intersectionality took up the Fallist narratives mainly among Black radical feminists who were working hard to lobby for the inclusion of intersectionality in the movement (Ahmed 2019; Gouws 2017). In most of the research on the #MustFall protests, intersectionality has been treated as a core component of Black radical feminism that distinguished the Fallist movement from earlier student activism in South Africa (Ahmed 2019; Khan 2017; Malebye 2021; Daniel and Miller 2022).

Built on the overarching action frame, intersectionality was performed as an intersectional activism, aiming to break the hetero-normative structures within the #MustFall movements and beyond (Daniel 2021b). As a Black feminist and decolonial scholar, Malebye (2021) argued that intersectionality was the tenet of the contextualized feminism in the #MustFall movement, which highlighted the systematic violence that made some identities disproportionately susceptible to exclusion and affected knowledge production in South African universities. According to Daniel and Miller's (2022) qualitative research on the #RMF movement, intersectionality became an important tool for feminist activists to challenge the patriarchal society and the university climate, as well as to confront hierarchies within the movement. In line with this finding, Ahmed (2019) noted that, supported by intersectionality, Black radical feminists targeted their "epistemic disobedience" mainly internally toward the Fallist movement, much more than the extent to which they were acting against the institutional and societal levels.

3.3 *Black Feminists' Approach to Intersectional Activism in the #MustFall Movements*

Built on intersectionality, women activists in the #MustFall movements developed their own conceptual framework and identified themselves as Black radical feminists, which marked "a process of double delinking"

⁹ As indicated in the #RMF mission statement, intersectionality brought in an expanded definition of *Blackness*, by taking into consideration race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability, among other factors that define the experience of oppression and privilege beyond the central tenet of *Black pain* (RMF 2015).

both from the Western-dominant mechanism of knowledge production as part of the collective struggle of all the Fallists and from the patriarchal culture that exclusively served some of the Fallists, especially those who aligned with Black consciousness to mainstream themselves (Ahmed 2019, p. 136). As one of the pillars of the decolonial agenda, Black radical feminism played a key role in maintaining the Fallist movement as an intersectional project, through its dynamic engagement with Black consciousness and Pan-Africanism threads of discourse (Ahmed 2019). The Fallist mission was officially stated as “to end institutionalized racism and patriarchy at UCT” and the “broader dynamics of a racist and patriarchal society” in their inaugural document, with the contribution that Black radical feminists made to associating feminist demands with the anti-racism ideology that had historically dominated the Black liberation movements (RMF 2015, p. 1).

Reflecting on her activism experience as a womxn,¹⁰ Mazibuko (2020) argued that being involved in the #MustFall movements allowed her to truly start “living a feminist life,” in which feminism was concerned with patriarchy at the intersection of various forms of oppression that colonial history had shaped, such as epistemic violence that prioritized some while silencing others in knowledge production processes. Drawing upon Spivak’s (1988) idea of epistemic violence, Malebye (2021) analyzed the violent nature of patriarchy in close relation to racism, capitalism, classism, hetero-normativity, and other hidden ideologies that sustained epistemological injustice in the university, but also facilitated collaboration among the marginalized groups of students across the university.

This intersectional solidarity has been widely addressed in the Black feminist literature in different ways. Through her experience of participating in the Fallist movement, Dlakavu (2017) challenged the individualized representation of women’s struggles over media coverage, while highlighting how Black women from different backgrounds affirmed each other to build unity for their collective political agenda as a critical force to drive the progress made through the #MustFall protests. According

¹⁰ Based on their lived reality, Black radical feminists often describe themselves as womxn, “a more inclusive term than woman or women” (p. 96) that recognizes various sites of feminist struggles, like “racism, sexism, transphobia, patriarchy” (p. 96), as informed by the intersectional way of thinking in the #MustFall movements (Ramaru 2017).

to Mazibuko's (2020) reflection, inspired by intersectionality, Black feminists took advantage of their various experiences of being oppressed for the common purpose of disrupting the oppressive system. She further suggested that Black feminists went beyond the analytical power of intersectionality and applied it as a "methodological choice" to developing multiple types of strategic interventions, in a collective attempt to break down the binary understandings of the world that traditionally underpinned student activism (Mazibuko 2020).

More specifically, Ramaru (2017) presented a series of examples of how Black feminists united across a multiplicity of decolonial needs in the key events of the Fallist movement, albeit leading to unresolved tensions. While the Rhodes statue was generally seen as a symbol of colonial legacies that had to be torn down, Black feminists further interpreted it as the "White supremacist capitalist patriarchy" to challenge the limited understanding of decolonization and include various interest groups in the effort (Ramaru 2017, p. 91). During the Azania House occupation, for example, Black feminists took the lead in arguing for alternative learning spaces, where Black students and scholars came together to share their knowledge and thinking that have been neglected by the Eurocentric knowledge system of the university (Daniel 2021a; Ramaru 2017).¹¹ In response to gender issues being rejected by a group of male Fallists, Black feminists reinforced their intersectional commitment by setting up an Intersectionality Audit Committee (IAC), which brought together diverse groups of student activists who were marginalized in different ways (Ahmed 2019).

Nevertheless, the IAC was disbanded due to ongoing frictions between genders within and beyond the committee (Ahmed 2019; Ramaru 2017). Ndelu (2017) recalled that tensions within the IAC rendered Black feminists a faction against the rest of the Fallists, although no further documentation of the IAC and its demise could be found in scholarship due to its short life. These challenges were further reflected in the formation of the Trans Collective that divorced from the cis-gendered feminism, which questioned the intersectional intention of Black feminist allies and triggered more conflicts within the movement (Ndelu et al. 2017; Ramaru 2017).

¹¹ Some examples are lectures, seminars and reading groups on the topics of decoloniality, critical race theory, Black feminism, femininities and masculinities, queerness, etc., as the alternative of the existing knowledge system (Daniel 2021a; Ramaru 2017).

3.4 *Black Feminist Struggle, Patriarchal Dominance, and Gender Cleavages*

Intersectionality is also used as an analytical tool by activist scholars, whose work shows that gender became the most intense point of conflict within the #MustFall movements (Ahmed 2019; Daniel 2021b). In fact, divisions grew between the intersectional coalition of feminist and queer activists who allied against patriarchy and heterosexual cis-gender male activists who were seen as the antithesis of the feminist-queer alliance (Khan 2017; Ndelu et al. 2017). According to personal narratives from the Fallist movement, it played out into “a caricature of identity politics,” in which everyone competed for the “authority to speak,” but no one ended up having it (Ahmed 2019, p. 207).

As the #MustFall movements became a competition for power and space, decolonization was reduced to a political agenda that prioritized the interest of male-centered Blackness while undermining the influence of Black feminism on the Fallist mainstream (Ndelu 2017; Ramaru 2017). Despite their increased visibility and improved strategies, Black feminists were still subject to marginalization and exclusion, especially when they were gaining momentum to threaten the dominance of patriarchal politics that insisted on racial discourse being the primary focus of the decolonial project (Andrews 2020). According to Ramaru’s (2017) experience in co-developing the #RMF’s founding document, the proposal to incorporate Black radical feminism as a pillar of the movement raised a great deal of discomfort and resistance from part of the leadership, who believed gender issues to be a distraction rather than a guiding principle. The intersectional agenda, despite being supported by Black feminists, was disputed by patriarchal leadership as an unAfrican and Western ideology that should be abandoned from the movement (Ramaru 2017).

Although Black feminists pushed hard to keep intersectionality a legitimate underpinning of the Fallist movement, it failed to translate into practices that truly addressed gender inclusion (Andrews 2020; Ramaru 2017). Some intersectional analyses of the #MustFall movements have attributed the gender frictions to the inconsistent interpretations of intersectionality across different groups of student activists, which further led to competing strategies within the Fallist movement (Ahmed 2019; Daniel 2021b). According to feminist critics, male Fallists exploited intersectional ideology through strategic alliances with their Black feminist comrades, only to establish their ownership of the movement and enhance

their patriarchal privileges (Xaba 2017). According to a Facebook post by the #RMF protesters, the increasingly patriarchy-centered leadership of the movement often claimed gender inclusivity but delayed in taking actions to address feminist concerns (Andrews 2020).

Under the guise of inclusiveness in gender representation, Black feminists' accounts revealed that women were exhausted by the logistical work behind the scenes, in contrast to their initial engagement in the #RMF leadership, whereas Black men occupied both media narratives and public memory through their monopoly of the more prominent positions in the movement (Ahmed 2019; Malebye 2021). According to Dlakavu's (2017) documentation of the gender division of labor, women's work was largely stereotyped as providing meals to movement personnel, while men dominated visible spaces merely through their physical advantages, such as louder voices in leading songs and public speaking. She further elaborated that women activists were often devoted to sustaining the movement either on the frontline or backstage, yet the problem turned out to be a lack of recognition or respect that they deserved for their contributions (Dlakavu 2017). This observation was echoed by Ndlovu (2017), a Black feminist who articulated the refusal of women's bodies being "constructed in less capable ways" (p. 72).

The marginalization of Black women aggravated into hostility against them with the movement's transition from #RMF to #FME, due to changes in protest demand, personnel composition, leadership structure, dominant ideology, and the masculinization of violence (Ndelu 2017; Ramaru 2017). Ironically, in this Black resistance event, Black men utilized the oppressive ways of thinking and doing from which they suffered, to commit oppression to women and gender minority groups (Shange 2017). As a result, feminist and queer activists not only had to confront police brutality as the male activists did, but also struggled with gender-based violence perpetrated by their male fellow comrades, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, and rape culture that lingered on the university campus (Mazibuko 2020; Ramaru 2017). The gender-based frictions raised public awareness during the #FME protests, which Lujabe (2016) called "the struggle within the struggle." In his news article with this title, Lujabe (2016) recorded the voices of feminist and queer activists who accused male colleagues of engaging in both physical violence and nonphysical aggression, such as verbal abuse, sexual derision, and the silencing and erasing of their voices in the movement.

In light of the reality of feminist struggles, the Fallist movement remained a space replete with hegemonic hyper-masculinities, which fostered the militarization of masculinized violence (Mazibuko 2020; Xaba 2017). While police and armed security practiced “paramilitary, warlike masculinities” to suppress student insurgence, male students responded to this suppression in various ways, such as burning, vandalizing, and using body barricades to communicate the courage and resistance of “manhood” (Ndelu 2017, pp. 78–79). In contrast, Black feminists strove to promote non-militarized strategies, such as task teams, educational workshops, and the naked protest,¹² to disrupt violence between student activists and the armed police, which were largely sidelined by the overwhelming violent powers within the movement (Dlakvu 2017). During the naked protest, for example, women’s bodies were ridiculed publicly, whereas the same nudity is taken for granted when it serves men’s gaze and consumption (Shange 2017). Due to women’s resistance against patriarchy, feminism became a swear word that heterosexual male activists used to despise women protesters and defend themselves in a misogynistic way (Dlakvu 2017). As a feminist student protester expressed in the interview, hyper-masculinity had historically shaped the violent environment of the university and continued to shape violent encounters during the #MustFall period, which eventually ruptured the movement (Ndelu 2017).

3.5 *Unresolved Conflicts and an Open-Ended Future for Black Feminism*

According to feminist activists’ experience, such as that of Ndelu et al. (2017), intersectionality not only offered them a chance to be allied, but also ended up setting the movement apart to seek different strategies against colonial violence and other emerging issues. As indicated by Lugones’ (2014) critique of intersectionality, the patriarchal changes of the #MustFall movements left Black radical feminists to a dilemma of whether to remain part of the movement by subordinating their gender

¹² A gender-diverse group of Black feminists protested by using their naked bodies to disrupt an exhibition that commemorated the #MustFall movements while excluding the gender minority activists, which marked the internal ruptures and the subsequent dissipation of the movement in South Africa in March 2016 (Ahmed 2019; Ndelu 2017).

identity to their Blackness or to pursue an alternative path for the integrity of their own resistance.

With the cleavages enlarging between the patriarchy-oriented sections and those who resisted, some feminist and queer activists were forced to leave the movement or chose to leave the ongoing violence (Khan 2017). According to the narratives of the Black feminists who had to quit during the #FEMF conflicts, it seemed easier to remain quiet and less visible than to be exposed to patriarchal judgment (Dlakavu 2017). In the meantime, many Black feminists continued their struggle to keep gender and sexuality issues on the table through innovative forms of activism (Dlakavu 2017; Ndelu et al. 2017). For example, based on their renewed understanding of intersectionality, some Black feminists developed gender-sensitive expressions of discontent on social media to demand an intersectional decolonization (Daniel 2021b). Moreover, new branches of the #MustFall movements were organized under feminist banners, such as #PatriarchyMustFall and #RapeMustFall, to confront the gender-based bias, discrimination, and violence inflicted on them (Daniel 2021b; Ndelu et al. 2017). The nude protests across multiple campuses were another example of feminist resistance that not only aimed to stop the immediate violence in the movement, but also sent a message to refute the colonial construction of African women's bodies as sexual, shameful, and uncivilized (Jimlongo 2018; Ndlovu 2017).

However, the collective feminist resistance was not without internal tensions. The collective agency and efforts of Black feminists were undergoing a process of individualization (Dlakavu 2017; Ndelu et al. 2017). Media reports often featured individual feminists and attributed collective labor to the selected representative instead of addressing the diversity of feminist actions and their solidarity (Dlakavu 2017; Ndelu et al. 2017). In addition to representation, the feminist collective was substantially divided by the different political affiliations of Black women activists and their competing agendas against a broader political background (Dlakavu 2017). Moreover, despite being discussed as a feminist contribution by the gender-diverse group of activists, the Trans Collective's protest, known as "trans capture," also fundamentally shook the Black feminist alliance and cast doubt on the limited application of intersectionality by the Black feminists in the Fallist movement (Ndelu 2017). The fracturing intersectional coalition accelerated the collapse of the #MustFall movements, but also informs future research to investigate hierarchy within Black feminists, which may elucidate the shifting role of Black feminists

in the #MustFall movements without assuming the egalitarianism of their experience in the collective resistance.

With the ongoing experience of marginalization and division, even Black feminists themselves were losing faith in the emancipatory potential of the intersectional approach that underpinned their activism yet led to a fractured coalition (Ahmed 2019; Daniel 2021b). The capacity of the intersectional framework has been widely contested not only among student activists who were disillusioned by the intersectional agenda of the #MustFall movements, but also in scholarly conversations. Theorists have sought to qualify the expectation for intersectionality, reaffirming its analytical power for academic inquiry, which does not necessarily guarantee critical praxis or transformation of inequality (Al-Faham et al. 2019). However, I argue that the unresolved conflicts toward the end of the #MustFall movements offered an open-ended future for Black feminism, as the open-endedness of intersectionality allows space for critiques and inspires Black feminists to investigate new questions to complicate the understanding of intersectional social movements (Davis 2008). Criticism of intersectionality should not mark a departure from the approach, but rather open up possibilities for Black feminists to interrogate the coloniality of gender in various contexts (Lugones 2014; Velez 2019). More implications for future research will be discussed in the next section.

3.6 Findings and Discussion: Intersectional Coalition or Gendered Frictions

Reviewing the scholarly work on the #MustFall movements and Black feminists' resistance is an intellectual journey to explore the “thinking, doing, and being” of Black feminists at the intersection of racial and patriarchal oppressions across higher education spaces in post-apartheid South Africa. In this section, I synthesize the key takeaways from the thematic discussion to learn how they shed light on future empirical research on the #MustFall movements and the ongoing resistance of Black women in South African universities.

The general analysis of the #MustFall movements at UCT has presented a background picture for my study on women's resistance in this historical event, but also helped affirm the significance of gender-based discussion in the scholarship of the #MustFall movements. In the common thread of decolonization struggles, the #MustFall student movements were nevertheless distinguished from the previous Black student

resistance in South Africa in various ways, such as shifting demands, the political environment, communication on social media, and evolving ideologies. Among these changes, the ideological development of Black feminists in the #MustFall movements has been one of the most remarkable, which has drawn scholarly attention to the changing role of women in student movements in South Africa. The multiplicity of student demands was conceptualized in the overarching framework of decolonization, underpinned by three pillars, namely Black consciousness, Pan-Africanism, and Black radical feminism. This ideological mapping of the movement demands prepared a basis for later analysis of the fractures between Black radical feminists and patriarchy-dominant leadership supported by the other two pillars. Moreover, through a discussion about how the notion of Fallism emerged from the #MustFall processes, I have identified the key transition from #RMF to #FME, which marked various areas of marginalization taking place within the movement, such as the dwindling feminist leadership alongside the loss of their intersectional agenda. Despite the progressive conceptualization of Fallism, it was an incomplete project of student activism in practice, giving rise to violent confrontations, which women activists suffered from but also contributed to.

In light of the historical progress and internal tensions both centered on gender that organically emerged from the #MustFall studies, I continued to explore the complexity of Black feminists' experience in the #MustFall movements by looking into the empirical stories told by women themselves and by critically reflecting on their intersectional praxis. There are a few key findings from the women-centered analysis of the #MustFall movements in this section. Compared to historical women's struggles under liberation politics, Black feminists in the #MustFall movements achieved a substantial increase in their visibility, particularly in the initial leadership. Their resistance in the #MustFall movements pioneered an experiment of intersectionality in student activism mobilization, in which it worked as a collective action frame and an innovative practice of inclusivity. By revealing and seeking to disrupt the hidden reproduction of patriarchy, Black feminists made critical contributions to centering the intersectional approach within the Fallist agenda, in an attempt to bring together Black women from different sites of struggle for intersectional solidarity against various forms of colonial oppression that they experience on campuses and in society. However, the unity did not last long, as Black feminists were sidelined by the competing parties

dominated by heterosexual male Fallists, who saw feminist discourse as a “derailing tactic” while appropriating intersectionality for their political interests. In the increasingly hostile environment, Black feminists organized resistance against masculinized violence, but also fueled the conflicts at the crossroads of gender and sexuality, which cast doubt on the intersectional approach to #MustFall mobilization. The lingering question would be what caused the gap between the inclusivity that intersectionality promises on the #MustFall movements’ agenda and the continued exclusion of women Fallists that intersectional praxis has led to.

While intersectionality was strategized for coalition building in the #MustFall protests, the fractured ending of collective resistance raised a critical issue of “coalition with whom,” which remains to be addressed by continued investigations into the #MustFall case and a broader range of social movement studies that seek an international coalition among women of color against colonial oppression. Future feminist studies on #MustFall movements could draw upon the intellectual development of intersectionality in other Global South contexts to address the coloniality of gender and race in the particular dynamics of post-apartheid South Africa, instead of uncritically applying intersectionality as its western-rooted version. With criticism of intersectionality going on in recent feminist conversations worldwide, future feminist research on the #MustFall movements could contribute unique stories of women Fallists to enriching the understanding of intersectionality and centering feminist voices from the Global South in the scholarly debate.

4 CONCLUSION

As Keet et al. (2021) suggested, the #MustFall movements have opened up the possibility of transforming the higher education landscape and the social order in post-apartheid South Africa. From a feminist perspective, the #MustFall movements not only offered the possibility for Black feminist activists to continue confronting the patriarchal legacy in South African universities, but also foregrounded the challenges for Black feminist scholars to tap into the transformative power of an intersectional approach by contextualizing its application in South Africa or the African continent.

In conclusion, the literature review illuminates the paradoxical role that Black feminists have played in the #MustFall movements in South

Africa. On the one hand, Black feminists have made significant contributions to making the invisible visible. In contrast to the historical erasure of women's voices from the liberation movements in South Africa, the #MustFall generation of Black feminists, as an integral part of the decolonial endeavor, increased their visibility in initiating, conceptualizing, mobilizing, strategizing processes of this new wave of university student uprisings. They also made visible the patriarchal oppression underlying the shared anti-racism agenda and collectively confronted it through intersectional alliances among diverse groups of Black women activists. On the other hand, although Black feminists pushed hard on the central tenet of intersectionality, gender-based marginalization and exclusion persisted as a result of power competition for the dominance of Fallism politics. To counter hegemonic masculinities, Black feminists' resistance inevitably involved violent confrontations and generated new frictions with their intersectional allies, which eventually led to the collapse of the Fallist movement.

In line with the paradox of Black feminists' role in the Fallist movement, their engagement with intersectionality was also contradictory at different stages of the movement. At the beginning, intersectionality empowered Black women to facilitate an inclusive environment by redefining Blackness at the intersection of race, gender, sexuality, and other potential sites of coloniality, which distinguished the #MustFall movements from the uni-dimensional resistance in previous anti-racism student movements. As the power dynamics kept changing, however, the gendered strategizing of intersectionality diverted Black feminists' resistance inward against the patriarchal appropriation of the decolonial agenda, which segmented the Fallist unity that the intersectional approach promised to build otherwise.

Despite an ongoing debate on intersectional praxis in the #MustFall scholarship, the current literature has not yet offered an answer to what caused the gap between the promising framework of intersectionality and its failure to achieve the coalitional agenda. According to the two "divisions" identified from the gender-based review of the #MustFall studies (see Fig. 2), I propose that social movement studies investigate this lingering question by further examining tensions between genders and tensions within the feminist collective. Regarding the conflicts between Black feminists and patriarchal leadership, it is worth exploring the influence of gender on their ways of strategizing intersectionality for social change purposes, particularly by focusing on the gendered performance of

violence in protest actions. Furthermore, empirical insights are needed to shed light on the hierarchy and marginalization reproduced among Black feminist activists that might have undermined their stamina to maintain an intersectional alliance despite the continued struggle.

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Iranian Political Culture and Social Movements (1979–2022)

Lanyu Liu

I INTRODUCTION

Since the founding of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979, the following five social movements in Iran have affected the political development process in the country: the Iranian student protests (July 1999); the Iranian Green Movement (June 2009–February 2012); the Iranian October Movement (December 2017–January 2018); the Iranian August Movement (November 2019–January 2020); and the Iranian Women, Life, Freedom Movement (September 2022–September 2023). These five social movements have their own political goals, and their movement discourses and protest behaviors are significantly different. Regarding the Green Movement and the August Movement, the political goal of the former is to ensure free and fair elections within the system, with its representative slogan being “Where is my vote?” and the main protestant behavior being peaceful protests by wearing green accessories, while the political goals of the latter are outside the system, have slogans with clear antisystem characteristics, and exhibit protest behaviors that are obviously violent, such as attacking the police, committing arson, and vandalizing public facilities.

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There are two theoretical perspectives from which to analyze the formation and evolution of social movements, namely, the state-centered perspective and the society-centered perspective. From the state-centered perspective, the rise and evolution of social movements are a response to state behavior, with the main emphasis being on the influence of national political change, government policies, and responses to social movements.¹ According to the society-centered perspective, social movements are not only a response to state behavior but also the product of conflicts and dissatisfaction within society. The formation and evolution of social movements depend on the actions of social movement participants, such as those related to organizational structure and mobilization methods. The political system and ideology of the Islamic Republic of Iran have remained stable since the constitutional amendment in 1989, and the level of tolerance for social movements outside the system has always been low. In addition, due to the lack of effective opposition in Iran and the high degree of atomization of social dissident groups, social movements often lack a leadership core and effective organization. Since Iran has not shown significant changes in national politics to social movement leadership and organization since 1989, why are there differences among the five social movements in terms of movement discourses and protest behaviors? What is driving this evolution? This work attempts to answer these questions.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing studies on social movements after the Islamic Revolution in Iran can be divided into the following two types: case studies and multi-case presentations. Among the studies of social movements in Iran after 1979, the case studies of the 2009 Iranian Green Movement account for the majority, mainly because the 2009 Green Movement is the largest and longest-lasting movement for democratization since the founding of the Islamic Republic of Iran and is even seen as a “color revolution”

¹ The state-centered perspective: (French) Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, Beijing: Commercial Press, 2013; (US) Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, Shanghai People's Press, 2007. The society-centered perspective: Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970*, University of Chicago Press, 2010.

that could destabilize the regime.² The research on the Green Movement covers the causes, movement goals, mobilization methods, leadership structure, international variables, and their influences on Iran's future political development.³ However, basically all studies take a state-centered perspective. Existing studies basically believe that the Green Movement is a response to election fraud,⁴ decreased economic performance,⁵ and political closure⁶ and factional rivalry.⁷ Other studies include those on the 1999 Iranian student protests and the 2009 Green Movement and consider these two movements a part of the democratization and liberalization movement in Iran.

Although some case studies on social movements in Iran after 1979 are sufficient, the following four limitations exist. First, the research on the five social movements is seriously unbalanced, being too focused on the 2009 Green Movement. Second, a comparison among individual cases, especially the focus on differences, is lacking, and these social movements are rightfully viewed as part of the process of democratization and liberalization in Iran. Third, the analytical logic of the state-centered perspective does not match reality. National political and economic governance problems have existed for a long time in Iran. According to the state-centered perspective, social movements should be highly similar

² Kurzman, Charles, "The Arab Spring: Ideals of the Iranian Green Movement, Methods of the Iranian Revolution." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44, no. 1 (2012): 162–65.

³ Navid Pourmokhtari, *Iran's Green Movement: Everyday Resistance, Political Constataion and Social Mobilization*, Rutledge, 2023; Arash Reisinezhad. The Iranian Green Movement: Fragmented Collective Action and Fragile Collective Identity. *Iranian Studies*. 2015, Vol. 48, No. 2:193–222; Mehran Kamravan, "The 2009 Presidential Election in Iran: Political, Social, and Economic Consequences." *Middle East Journal*, vol. 64, no. 4, 2010, pp. 545–566; Charles Kurzman. "The Iranian Green Movement," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 21, no. 4, 2010, pp. 133–147.

⁴ Ali Mohammadi and Kaveh Ehsani, "The 2009 Iranian Presidential Elections: The Emergence of a Green Movement," *Middle East Report*, no. 252, 2009, pp. 8–14.

⁵ Ali Khamenei, "The Supreme Leader's Response to Friday's Presidential Election Results," June 19, 2009, <https://www.leader.ir/en/content/8025>.

⁶ Abbas Milani, "The Making of Iran's Green Movement," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2010, pp. 61–75.

⁷ Djavad Salehi-Isfahani, "Why Did Iranians Go Green in 2009? Some Simple Economics of a Political Movement," The Brookings Institution, 2010, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/why-did-iranians-go-green-in-2009-some-simple-economics-of-a-political-movement/>.

in response to state actions. However, the reality is that the discourses and protest behaviors of these five large-scale social movements in Iran are not completely consistent, and significant differences exist among these movements. Fourth, the direct fusion of social movements may be state behavior, but the root cause is the accumulation of collective resentment against some specific phenomena, and the accumulation of collective resentment is linked to the dominant political culture of the period in which it occurs.

3 POLITICAL CULTURE AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

It is generally considered that any social behavior is a cultural behavior. Culture not only exists in the human mind but also includes all aspects of human life,⁸ and culture is the basis of human behavior and the repository of human behavior methods⁹; therefore, culture is critical to social actions, including social movements. The literal meaning of political culture is culture related to politics in society. However, according to the postmodern concept of relational power, culture is a representation of all social relations; since some social relations are power relations, all culture is political,¹⁰ and thus, political culture is social culture. Political culture plays a key role in shaping ideology, discourse, political goals, and symbolic actions in social movements. Political culture can be considered the framework within which individuals and groups interpret their political environment, make decisions, and take political actions, which means that even in the absence of material incentives or economic determinants, political culture can shape the conception of political goals, the strategies adopted to achieve these goals, and the forms of political participation that are considered legitimate or effective.

Political culture exhibits both stability and dynamics. Stability means that political culture, as a durable structure, evolves slowly over time, thus ensuring the continuity of political behavior and institutions.

⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, Cali.: Sandford University Press, 1990; Marshall Sahlins, *Culture and Practical Reason*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976.

⁹ Dingxin Zhao: *Social and Political Movements*, Social Sciences Academic Press (China), 2012 edition, p. 232.

¹⁰ Shengli Xie, Licai Wu: *From Political Culture to Cultural Politics - A Study of the Changing Relationship between Culture and Politics in Different State Formations*, Journal of Yunnan Administrative College, 2019, 3: 97.

However, special variables, such as the occurrence of transformational events and the influence of charismatic leaders, can also change political culture. In addition, in the era of information globalization, the introduction of external concepts can also trigger rapid changes in political culture. Considering that the political culture can influence political behavior independently of material conditions and that political culture exhibits stable and dynamic characteristics, the political culture perspective is more useful than are the state-centered perspective and the society-centered perspective in understanding the similarities and differences in the discourses and protest behaviors of the five social movements in Iran since 1979.

4 ANALYSIS PERSPECTIVE

Dingxin Zhao proposed the below six propositions regarding the effect mechanism of political culture on social movements based on organizational capabilities and the nature of the state of different social movements.

- (1) The greater the role played by social movement organizations in a movement is, the greater the likelihood of participants in the social movement regarding the cultural form repository as a tool kit and creatively using culture to achieve the expected effects.
- (2) When a social movement is poorly organized, it is often not the words and actions of movement activists that determine the development of a movement but rather some basic patterns of interpretation based on a social culture that are prevalent in the minds of the general public.
- (3) When the spontaneity of a social movement is strong, the dominant culture in society can play a decisive role in the development of the social movement; when a social movement is well organized, the movement can choose its own development strategy, somewhat free from the role of traditional culture.
- (4) In a state of change, social movement participants are more likely to flexibly use existing culture or even create new cultural factors, while in a stable state, social movement participants often base their behaviors on those cultural factors with which they are familiar or even on their instinctive habits.

- (5) In a democratic state, social movement participants are more likely to use a cultural repository as a tool kit for the creative use of cultural texts.
- (6) In an authoritarian state with strong repressive power, even if a social movement has been very good organized, it often tends to inherit and perpetuate the political culture of the authoritarian state in terms of organizing principles and action strategies.¹¹

The nature of the Iranian state has undergone many changes since 1979. Before the death of Imam Khomeini in June 1989, due to the existence of charismatic authority and the state of emergency during the war, the nature of the Iranian state was characterized by a high degree of centralization and weak democratic politics. From August 1989 to August 2005, Iran experienced “construction” and “reform” governments in power, the trend of democratic politics was strengthened, and the authoritarian system was suppressed. From August 2005 to August 2013, Iran experienced a period of the rule of the neoconservative populist government, the authoritarian nature of the political system was redeveloped, and democracy was strongly suppressed. From August 2013 to August 2021, under the moderate Rouhani government, democratic politics were gradually revitalized, and friction with the authoritarian system continued. From August 2021 to the present, under the neotraditional conservative government of Raisi, the authoritarian nature of Iran’s political system has once again dominated. In contrast to the frequent changes in the nature of the state, the five major social movements that have emerged since 1979 have shown consistent spontaneity in terms of organization and lack of effective organizational strength and leadership cores.

Based on the six propositions put forward by Dingxin Zhao and the spontaneity characteristics of the social movements in Iran since 1979, political culture has played a more decisive role in the development of social movements in Iran than it had in years past. Under these circumstances, political culture may either play a decisive role in the form of the abovementioned text or play a role in the form of habits and routines. The difference between the two is that in the text form, social movement

¹¹ Dingxin Zhao: *Social and Political Movements*, Social Sciences Academic Press (China), 2012 edition, pp. 223–32.

participants know what they are doing and why they are doing it, while in the form of habits and routines, the actions of movement participation are almost instinctive responses. Of course, considering that democracy experienced periods of revival, the fact that in the social movements that emerged in these periods, social movement participants using political culture as a form repository cannot be ruled out.

In summary, when analyzing the influence of political culture on social movements since 1979, this paper focuses on the determining role of the texts of political culture in the formation and evolution of social movement discourses, political goals, and symbolic behaviors. When analyzing political cultural texts, this work focuses mainly on the texts in political culture that describe the legitimacy of political rule.

5 POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CHANGES IN IRAN SINCE 1979

Since the founding of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979, according to the textual description of the legitimacy of political rule, Iran's political culture has experienced five stages, namely, the Islamic Revolution (February 1979–June 1989), the economic development stage (July 1989–April 1997), the political development stage (May 1997–May 2018), the livelihood security stage (January 2017–August 2022), and the free-living stage (September 2022–the present). Given the gradual change in political culture, the abovementioned time periods do not denote the exact emergence and disappearance time of each political culture but rather the time when one culture significantly replaces the former political culture as the mainstream political culture.

From February 1979 to June 1989, the mainstream political culture in Iranian society believed that the implementation of the ideal of the Islamic Revolution was the most important basis for the legitimacy of national political rule. There are two main reasons for the emergence of a political culture dominated by the ideal of the Islamic Revolution during this period of time. First, during this period, there was a charismatic leader, Khomeini, in Iran. Most of the people unconditionally accepted and practiced Khomeini's political ideology without thinking or out of fear, and Khomeini's political philosophy (or political ideology) was the Islamic Revolution. Second, the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War in September 1980 fostered the continued enthusiasm for the Islamic Revolution in Iran. In theory, it is difficult for any nascent revolutionary regime to maintain the radical revolutionary state of society for a long

time, and the state is bound to return to a normal and rational state. However, due to the outbreak of the Iran–Iraq War, revolutionary passion in society was continued owing to the nationalist enthusiasm of resisting aggression and defending the country.

The ideal of the Islamic Revolution dominates the textual descriptions of political culture, and resisting the invasion of Eastern and Western ideologies and upholding the belief in Islam¹² are seen as the basis for the legitimacy of political rule. Judging from Khomeini’s explanation of the mainstream political slogan at the time, “neither the East nor the West,” the mainstream ideological discourse and goal of Iranian society at that time were to eliminate the control of external powers and strive for the all-round independence of Iran and the entire Islamic world. Khomeini noted that “neither the East nor the West” was the basic slogan of the Islamic Revolution in a hungry and oppressed world; Muslims in Islamic countries and the world should not depend on Europe and the United States in the West or on the Soviet Union in the East, the western military bases should be dismantled, and their soldiers should be deported.¹³ Only under the anti-Western and reactionary ideology was the Islamic Republic of Iran able to Islamize the Iranian society because Islam was perceived by the population as an all-powerful model of defense against Western political, military, ideological, and economic aggression.

From July 1989 to April 1997, the mainstream political culture in Iranian society believed that economic development was the most important basis for the legitimacy of national political rule and that “production,” “social welfare,” “investment attraction,” “economic restructuring,” and “economic growth” became the dominant social discourse at the time. During this period, political culture changed from having ideology at the core to having economic development at the core. First, the fatigue and economic losses caused by the Iran–Iraq War severely weakened public support for the Islamic Revolution ideology, and people expected politics to meet their needs for a better life.¹⁴ Second, after the death of Khomeini and the end of the Iran–Iraq

12 خادم شیرازی، «اصول دیدگاه‌های سیاسی، اقتصاد و فرهنگ حضرت امام خمینی (ره)»، به‌تال امام خمینی، ۱۸ دی ۱۳۹۶.

13 صحیفه امام خمینی (جلد ۲۰)، «موسسه تنظیم و نشر آثار امام خمینی (ره)»، ص ۳۱۹.

14 صحیفه امام خمینی (جلد ۲۰)، «موسسه تنظیم و نشر آثار امام خمینی (ره)»، ص ۳۱۹.

15 Suzanne Maloney, *Iran’s political economy since the revolution*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015, p.488.

War, the excessive revolutionary enthusiasm could not be sustained. Coupled with the transformation of leaders from charismatic authorities to authoritative bureaucrats, the state's political and economic pragmatism gradually replaced revolutionary enthusiasm.¹⁵ Third, the death of Khomeini and the end of the Iran–Iraq War meant the loss of the previous source of legitimacy for the Islamic Republic of Iran regime, and the regime had no choice but to find new sources of legitimacy and establish new contracts with the people, with the main need of the people at that time being to rebuild the economy.¹⁶

In political and cultural texts with economic development at the core, the growth of material wealth through economic construction has become the basis of regime legitimacy, and the authority of this narrative has even been strengthened through religious blessings. For example, at the Friday gathering on December 9, 1989, Rafsanjani said, “When referring to the life of the fourth Imam Ali, his bravery, contentment, erudition, temperance, and filial piety are often mentioned, but the importance he attached to economic affairs, such as agricultural production and civil engineering design, is seldom mentioned. Imam Ali was never prepared to spend his life without labor. In contrast, he supported any valuable form of labor. He treated agriculture and civil engineering as economic activities, including land development, canal digging, and plowing... As the head of the national administration, I believe that we must devote all our human and economic resources to rebuild our nation.”¹⁷ Under the influence of political culture with economic development at the core, consumerism began to spread rapidly in society. During this period, the public's awareness of consumerism became increasingly positive, as even traditional religious families achieved reconciliation with consumerism, and their attitudes toward consumerism did not differ significantly from those of nonreligious families.¹⁸

From May 1997 to May 2018, the mainstream political culture in Iranian society believed that political development was the most

¹⁵ Said Amir Arjomand, *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 56–71.

¹⁶ Ray Takeyh, *Guardians of the revolution: Iran and the world in the age of the Ayatollahs*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 111–178.

¹⁷ [Iran] *The Information*, December 9, 1989, p. 6.

¹⁸ Abbas Kazemi, *The Everyday in Post- Revolutionary Society*, Tehran: Farhang-e Javid Publication, 2016, p.141.

important basis of the legitimacy of the country's political rule and that "political participation," "democracy," "civil society," "accountability," "anticorruption," "transparency in governance," "pluralism," "redistribution," "social justice," and "détente with the world" became the mainstream social discourses during this period. The main reason for the emergence of a political culture with political development at the core in this period was the rise of the Iranian middle class. In the first 10 years after the Islamic Revolution, the size of the middle class shrank rapidly due to the influence of revolutionary unrest and the Iran–Iraq War, and by 1988, the middle class accounted for only 15% of the total population. During the Rafsanjani period, as the focus of government work shifted to economic construction and neoliberal structural adjustments were implemented in the field of economics, the economic situation significantly improved compared to that in the wartime period. Therefore, the size of Iran's middle class expanded again, with the Iranian middle-class labor force reaching 14,571,572 people in 1996.¹⁹

The rise of the middle class has brought about the rapid expansion of higher education and a substantial rise in the literacy rate. In 1986, Iran's population aged 20 years and older included 21,778,791 individuals, and 2.7% of the people in the country had received different levels of higher vocational or university education. By 1996, this proportion had increased to 5.14%, and the population aged 20 years and older increased to 29,214,396 people.²⁰ Due to the enhanced higher education popularity and literacy rate, the number of groups in society who were dissatisfied with the political status quo also increased. For example, socially influential intellectuals were opposed to the interference of the clerical power, the monopoly of the State, and the corruption that comes with it and advocated for the concepts of freedom and democracy, transparency in governance, and the rule of the State by experts. The reason for this was precisely that the political development text became the dominant text of political culture in this period in which reformist leader Khatami, who advocated for freedom, democracy, and the rule of law, was elected

¹⁹ Mohammad Reza Farzanegan etc., "Middle Class in Iran: Oil Rent, Modernization, and Political Development," Working Paper, 2017, pp. 9–10, available at: file:///Users/sohrab/Downloads/56-2017_farzanegan.pdf.

²⁰ Mohammad Reza Farzanegan etc., "Middle Class in Iran: Oil Rent, Modernization, and Political Development," Working Paper, 2017, pp. 9–10, available at: file:///Users/sohrab/Downloads/56-2017_farzanegan.pdf.

president on May 23, 1997, with 61.9% of all votes.²¹ This situation is why a large number of middle-class people boycotted the election in 2005; why the Green Movement broke out in 2019; and the reason for the high-vote victory of Rouhani, who advocated for democracy, the rule of law, economic development, and the ideals of foreign relation relaxation, in the 2013 presidential election.

From January 2017 to August 2022, the mainstream political culture in Iranian society believed that the protection of people's livelihood was the most important basis of the legitimacy of the country's political rule and that "stable prices," the "eradication of poverty," the "reduction in inflation," the "reduction in the exchange rate," and the "stoppage of foreign aid" became the mainstream political discourse at the time. There are three main reasons for the emergence of a political culture centered on people's livelihood protection during this period. First, after Trump became the US president in January 2017, a severe economic crisis emerged in Iran. After Trump took office, confidence in Iran and in the outside world in the future economic development of Iran declined significantly, the Iranian currency began to depreciate notably, and foreign investment stagnated. After the United States unilaterally withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal in May 2018 and exerted maximum economic and security pressure on Iran, together with the impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, Iran was faced with a severe economic crisis, and people's livelihoods greatly deteriorated.²² Under these circumstances, the public urgently hoped that the economic situation would not continue to deteriorate. Second, after seeing the failure of the Rouhani government's political reforms, the middle class became politically indifferent, and their attention returned to their daily lives. Third, during this period, Iranian society was permeated with worries about potential wars, and people were afraid that Iran fall into the same situation as those of Syria, Iraq, and Yemen and be involved in a protracted civil war. Amid this widespread worry, the public's expectations for the government's political reforms and economic development weakened, and self-help became a popular concept.

From September 2022 to the present, the mainstream political culture in Iranian society has believed that the protection of a free life is the

²¹ 1997 Presidential Election, Iran Data Portal, <http://irandataportal.syr.edu/1997-presidential-election>.

²² "Poverty & Equity Brief: Islamic Republic of Iran," World Bank Group, April 2023.

most important basis for the legitimacy of national political rule and that “freedom” and “women's rights” have become the mainstream political discourse. On September 14, 2022, a 22-year-old Kurdish girl, Mahsa Amini, was arrested for violating the Islamic dress code and died on September 16. This incident triggered a rapid transformation of Iran’s political culture, and the protection of women’s rights, the protection of civil liberties, and the overthrow of the autocratic system became mainstream social discourses. In this political and cultural shift, teenagers have played an important role.²³ In addition, the political participation of teenagers can win broader social sympathy, facilitating the repoliticization of the middle class, which was previously trapped in a situation of political apathy. At present, the vast majority of Iranian teenagers aged 15–20 years are born in cities and grow up with the internet, and many of them are even born into more enlightened middle-class families. Due to the internet and urban education, these teenagers have been made aware of multiple values and multiple identities since childhood; thus, they pursue freedom, individuality, and self, i.e., the concept of free living.

6 IMPACT OF POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CHANGES IN IRAN ON SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

(1) 1999 Iranian Student Protests

On July 7, 1999, the reformist newspaper *Peace Daily* was banned by the Islamic Revolutionary Court for 5 years for publishing a confidential report on the Ministry of Intelligence and State Security. On that same day, the conservative-dominated Parliament approved the passage of a stricter news law, according to which the press crimes related to national security, previously tried by the Press Court, will be tried by the conservative-controlled Revolutionary Court. To express their dissatisfaction with the ban on *Peace Daily*, university students in Tehran who supported the reformists gathered in the dormitory area of University of

²³ Haleh Esfandiari, “The Tenacity of Young Iranians in the Protest Movement,” The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, November 29, 2022, <https://www.washington-institute.org/policy-analysis/tenacity-young-iranians-protest-movement>.

Tehran that night to protest the court's decision and called for the protection of freedom of the press.²⁴ On July 9, to quell the student protests, the conservative organization Ansar-e Hezbollah, with the support of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the police, attacked the dormitory area of the University of Tehran. A total of 1500 students were arrested, hundreds more were injured, and many died. However, the violent acts of the conservatives did not deter the students. In contrast, these acts aroused greater anger among people. In the next 6 days, more than 10,000 students in Tehran and other cities took to the streets to protest, which spread to at least eight cities, including Tabriz, Isfahan, Hamadan, and Yazd. The demonstrators attacked the offices and intelligence departments of conservative newspapers *Kayhan* and *Islamic Republican*, chanting slogans insulting Ansar-e Hezbollah and militia organizations.²⁵ The July 9 student protest was the most serious and long-lasting citizen riot since the 1979 revolution. Some people believe that the student protest was the beginning of the end of the Islamic Republic and dealt a serious blow to the political rule of the regime.²⁶

The dominant discourse of this social movement revolved around the protection of freedom of the press, that is, freedom of speech. The political goal of these students was to achieve a greater degree of political reform, that is, to achieve the dominance of the republican system. Under the leadership of this discourse, these protests were mainly peaceful demonstrations. However, under the government's repression, this social movement became violent, and the discourse began to take on antisystem and antileadership characteristics. This social movement was, to a large extent, influenced by the prevailing political culture, with political development at the core. First, this social movement was under the cultural influence of political development, with college students staging a protest over the closure of a reformist newspaper because they believed that freedom of speech was legal and reasonable; second, under the cultural influence of political development, the purpose of these protests

²⁴ Mehrdad Mashayekhi, "The Revival of the Student Movement in Post-Revolutionary Iran," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 2001, p. 284.

²⁵ Elton Daniel: *The History of Iran*, Oriental Publishing Center, 2016 edition, p. 245.

²⁶ Ali Akbar Mahdi, "The Student Movement in the Islamic Republic of Iran," *Journal of Iranian Research and Analysis*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 1999, <http://go.owu.edu/~aamahdi/students.htm>.

was to force the religious authority to withdraw its ruling that placed a ban on *Peace Daily* rather than to oppose the entire political system because they believed in the gradualist reform concept; third, under the influence of the political development culture, the initial choice of these students was peaceful demonstration rather than violent protest.

(2) Green Movement

After the announcement of the results of the 10th presidential election, Mousavi and Karoubi questioned the election results. Moussaoui issued a statement on June 13, calling the election results “shocking,” pointing out the obvious fraud that took place on election day, stressing that “the public wants to know which officials are behind this enormous farce” and insisting that he would not “not give in to this dangerous staging.”²⁷ Immediately afterward, Karoubi issued a statement calling the election results “ridiculous and surprising” and saying that he would not remain silent “in the face of clumsy election manipulation.”²⁸ At the same time, large-scale violent clashes broke out between Mousavi and Ahmadinejad supporters in front of the interior ministry and in other places in Tehran. Thousands of Mousavi supporters took to the streets to protest, chanting about getting their votes back, and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reported that this was “the worst unrest in Tehran in the past 10 years.”²⁹ The police controlled by the conservatives adopted a tough response to the protesters, and riot police and plainclothes police officers violently beat the protesters.

The initial goal of Green Movement participants was to annul the election results and hold new elections. The protesters showed a mature political stance at the beginning, chanting “Where are our votes?” The goal of their protest was still within the system rather than seeking to change the entire political system. The entire protest was also a legal protest. The initiators of the protest applied to the Ministry of the Interior many times for a demonstration permit, but they were ultimately not

²⁷ *Mousavi: I will not give in to this dangerous staging*, BBC Persian, June 13, 2009, http://www.bbc.com/persian/iran/2009/06/090613_ka_ir88_mosavi.shtml.

²⁸ *Karroubi: The election results are ridiculous and surprising*, BBC Persian, June 3, 2009, http://www.bbc.com/persian/iran/2009/06/090613_ka_ir88_abtahi.shtml.

²⁹ *Unrest after the announcement of election results*, BBC Persian, June 13, 2009, http://www.bbc.com/persian/iran/2009/06/090613_ba-ir88-iran-clashes.shtml.

approved. After being suppressed by the state, this social movement began to exhibit radicalization, and a large number of antisystem slogans appeared. The Green Movement initially presented mature political aspirations, and its rational protest discourse and intra-institutional resistance methods were influenced by the dominant political culture at the time, with political development at the core. The main participants in the Green Movement were middle-class individuals in Iran, who had a higher level of education, who rejected violence, and who pursued the protection of their rights according to the law.

(3) October Movement

From December 28, 2017, to January 3, 2018, street protests took place in Iran for 7 days, a period referred to as the “October Protest” because it coincided with the month of October in the Iranian calendar (October 7–14, 1396, in the Iranian calendar). This sudden mass incident started in Mashhad. According to the investigation results released by Iranian Minister of the Interior Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli the demonstrations spread over two nights to approximately 100 cities across the country, with acts of violence, including the destruction of private or public property, arson, and the smashing of windows by protesters in 42 cities, resulting in the injury of approximately 900 law enforcement officers and the arrest of 5000 people. According to statistics from the surveillance records in the streets and alleys, the number of people who participated in this protest and demonstration was approximately 100,000, while the actual number of participants was closer to 40,000–45,000 people.³⁰ Compared with the previous two social movements, the October Movement did not have a single overall political goal. The protesters spoke on a variety of issues, including being against the political system, against the leader, against foreign aid, and being against corruption. On the whole, the October Movement was more like a movement to vent anger than a traditional social movement. The reason why the October Movement exhibited these characteristics was highly related to the dominant political culture when this social movement broke out, that is, the culture of protecting people’s livelihoods. Most participants

³⁰ *Interior Minister: In our investigation, we did not find the organization of the protest in January, even in Mashhad*, www.khabaronline.ir, 12 March 2018, <https://www.khabaronline.ir/detail/761669/Politics/government>.

of the October Movement were residents of remote areas of Iran, whose basic lives were severely affected by the economic crisis. As a result, the evaluation of government legitimacy was severely affected by the culture of protecting people's livelihoods. These protestors believed that when the regime fails to protect people's livelihood, it loses its legitimacy and, therefore, that the regime itself and everything it does are wrong. As a result, slogans and demands targeting different aspects of the regime emerged.

(4) August Movement

On November 15, 2019 (August in the Iranian calendar), the Iranian government announced that the price of gasoline would increase by 50–200%. The move triggered nationwide social protests across Iran, which lasted until January 2020 and was considered the most violent social movement after the Islamic Revolution in Iran. It is said that 1500 protestors died during this movement and that more than 200,000 people were arrested.³¹ The participants in this movement were mainly in the lower- and middle-income groups around large cities and urban residents in smaller counties, who were usually considered the mass base of religious rights.

Like the October Movement, the discourse and goals of the August Movement still showed diversity, the protest methods were highly violent, and there was a large amount of damage to public facilities. Therefore, the August Movement was still a protest movement during which the protestors could vent their anger. The characteristics of the August Movement were also influenced by the political culture of protecting people's livelihoods. The difference between this movement and the October Movement is as follows: in the October Movement, the government failed to control price increases because of incompetence, and thus, the people were angry at the government's incompetence under the political culture of protecting people's livelihoods, while in the August Movement, the government took the initiative to raise the price of gasoline (that is, the government took the initiative to aggravate

³¹ "Special Report: Iran's leader ordered crackdown on unrest—'Do whatever it takes to end it'," Reuters, December 23, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-protests-specialreport/special-report-irans-leader-ordered-crackdown-on-unrest-do-whatever-it-takes-to-end-it-idUSKBN1YR0QR>.

the deterioration of people's livelihoods), a move that was detestable to the people who were influenced by the political culture of protecting people's livelihoods. As a result, there was a greater scale of vandalism against government property and facilities during the August Movement than during other social movements in Iran.

(5) Women, Life, Freedom Movement

On September 14, 2022, a 22-year-old Kurdish girl, Mahsa Amini, was arrested by morality police for not wearing a standard headscarf. After being sent to the morality police station, she was taken to the hospital and died on the 16th. Although it was officially said that she died of a stroke and heart attack, the majority of people believed that the cause of death was beatings by the police. After Amini's death, a nationwide, high-intensity, long-lasting social movement broke out in Iran.³² The Iranian domestic and international communities named this social movement the Women, Life, Freedom Movement because “Women, Life, Freedom” is the goal, banner slogan, and representative slogan of this social movement.³³ Although this social movement is still in progress, thus far, it can be considered the largest, longest, and most defiant anti-system social movement since the founding of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979.

The political goal of the Women, Life, Freedom Movement is to fight for the right of citizens to live a normal life and to choose the life they want. In other words, citizens are to be their own masters and masters of the country and be free from interference by any external force, that is, individual freedom in all its dimensions, and not only freedom of political expression, as was sought by the 1999 Iranian student protests. The political culture that safeguards freedom clearly plays a decisive role in

³² “Social movement” is the academic definition of this collective action, while in media reports, this collective action is often referred as “demonstration,” “protest,” “social protest movement,” “uprising,” or even “revolution.”

³³ Some protesters feel that the slogan is too focused on women and cultural values, downplaying the participation of men and the level of dissatisfaction of the population with material life and, thus, have added the phrase “Men, Motherland, and Prosperity” (Mard-Mihan-Abad) to the slogan. A number of protesters oppose this action because it may materialize the goals of the movement, which can diminish the desire to fight if the economic situation improves in the future. These protesters therefore want the goals and slogans of the revolution to remain at the level of cultural values.

the political goals, discourse, and actions of this movement. The political culture of protecting freedom believes that the responsibility of the government is to protect the freedom and the right to a normal life of citizens. Once the government fails to provide what is asked, citizens can make their own choices regardless of government laws and regulations. If the government prevents citizens from making a choice, then citizens can actively fight against such action. Formally, under the influence of this political culture, a large number of active attacks on the controlling police have emerged during this movement, whereas in previous social movements, protestors were often passively attacked by the controlling police.

7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on the characteristics of the nature of the state and the organizational capability of social movements in Iran since 1979, this work analyzes the formation of the discourses, political goals, and symbolic behaviors of five major social movements that took place in the Islamic Republic of Iran from the textual perspective of political and cultural theory. Iran's political culture has gone through five stages since 1979, namely, the stage in which the people believed that the state's adherence to and implementation of the Islamic Revolution concept were the sources of legitimacy for the political rule, the stage in which the people believed that the promotion of economic development by the state was the source of legitimacy for the political rule, the stage in which the state's promotion of political development was considered the source of legitimacy for the political rule, the stage in which people believed that the protection of people's livelihood was the source of legitimacy for the state governance, and the stage in which people believed that the protection of free life was the source of legitimacy for the state governance.

The five social movements in Iran mentioned in the work occurred in the latter three stages; the 1999 Iranian student protests and the Green Movement occurred in the third political culture stage; the October Movement and the August Movement occurred in the fourth political culture stage; and the Women, Life, Freedom Movement occurred in the fifth political culture stage. Because these movements occurred at different political culture stages, their political goals, discourses, and actions exhibited both similarities and differences. For the two social movements that occurred in the third political culture stage, the political goal was

political reform within the system, the political discourses were concrete and mature, and the actions were initially peaceful protests within the system. For the two movements in the fourth stage, the political goals were diverse, ranging from seeking the cessation of foreign aid to regime change; moreover, the discourse was very radical and simple, the actions were venting in nature, and attacks on state public property were frequent. For the social movements in the fifth stage, the political goals were relatively unified, seeking fundamental institutional reforms. The slogans were unified, but the level of abstraction was high; most actions were active; and protestors often attacked police officers when they encountered police control.

Based on the free life-oriented political culture in Iran at the present stage, if the Islamic Republic of Iran wants to achieve long-term stability, then it must meet people's needs for a free life to a certain extent. Free life has at least the following three meanings. First, living a free life means that the government needs to reduce the level of intervention of religious revolution and ideology at the society level. Second, living a free life means that the government needs to improve the material living standards of the people. Third, the freedom among individuals to choose the life they want means that the government needs to open more channels for political participation. If the Iranian government tries to fully meet people's needs for a free life, then Iran's future political system will develop in a more secular, populist, and open direction. However, at this stage, the Iranian government is obviously willing to meet people's needs only in terms of material living standards. However, doing so cannot resolve the antagonism between Iranian society and the state. In contrast, improving people's living standards will exacerbate the contradiction between Iranian society and the state, because once the people can lead a life free from material worries, they will naturally seek to live more freely and freely choose their own lives. Under these circumstances, Iran's future political development will enter a long cycle of social movement.

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PART III

Interdependency



Farghānah Between the Sixth and Ninth Centuries CE as a Military Vassal of the Big Powers

Zhidong Zhang 

1 INTRODUCTION

Fergana is a geographical region located in the heart of Central Asia.¹ This valley is surrounded by the Chatkal Range in the north, the Fergana Range in the east, and the Alai Range in the south. Two major rivers, the Naryn and Kara Darya, flow through the valley. The Naryn River originates from the Tianshan Mountains and flows westward into Fergana, while the Kara Darya flows in a northwest direction and converges with the Naryn River near Namangan, eventually forming the Syr Darya, the second largest river in Central Asia.² The presence of these two rivers

¹ Starr 2011, xii. For the English term Fergana, its Sogdian form is *βrγ'n* and Arabic form Farghāna. In this article, Fergana is used for the sake of convenience, while Farghāna remains in quotations of Arabic texts.

² Barthold 1928, 155; Le Strange 1930, 476–7; Bulatova 1972, 3.

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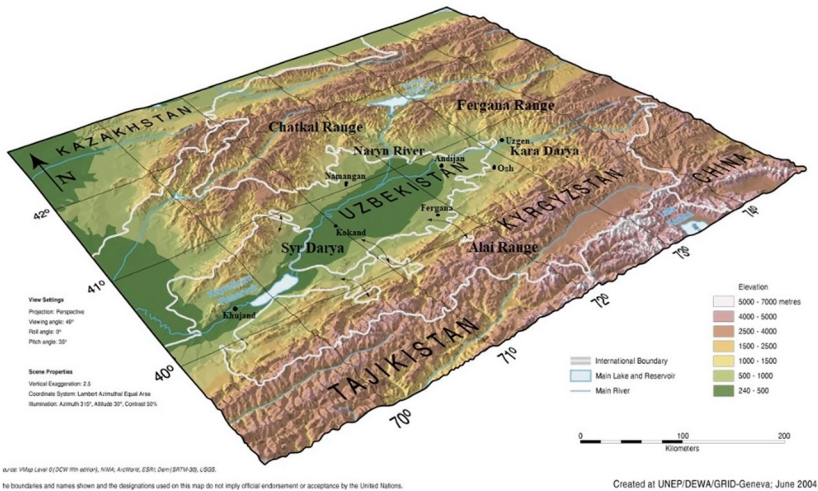


Fig. 1 Fergana valley, adapted from the *Three Dimensional View of the Fergana Valley Region* (<https://mapsontheweb.zoom-maps.com/post/187416834250/the-fergana-valley-region-uzbekistan-owns-the>)

renders the valley fertile, resulting in extensive cultivation and a dense population.

Currently, the Fergana valley is divided between three countries, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan, with several important cities within its bounds. These cities are Andijan, Namangan, Fergana, and Kokand, which are located in Uzbekistan; Osh, which is located in Kyrgyzstan; and Khujand, which is located in Tajikistan. The majority of the population comprises Turkic-speaking peoples—the Uzbeks and Kyrgyzs—along with the Tajiks, who speak Tajik, a variant of Persian (Fig. 1).³

Between the sixth and ninth centuries, the Fergana valley differed significantly from today in terms of demography, linguistics, and politics. During the centuries under discussion, Fergana resembled the Sogdian

³ Starr 2011, ix, xii.

principalities in terms of religion and culture.⁴ However, as noted by Étienne de la Vaissière, it was also distinct from them.⁵

During the early medieval centuries, the most important cities in Fergana were largely the same as those in the present day. According to medieval Muslim geographers, the most prominent city during this period was Axsikent, which was Fergana's capital since the late eighth century, near modern-day Namangan.⁶ The old capital was Kāsān 渴塞城, located to the north of Axsikent.⁷ Other important cities were Uzkand and Osh in the east, Andijan and Kokand in the center, Qubā next to modern Ferghana in the south, and Khujand in the western extreme.⁸ Additionally, medieval Muslim geographers document that the villages in this region were large and prosperous.⁹

The political picture of Fergana in these centuries is not clear. Around mid-sixth century, when the Turks subjugated Central Asia, Fergana became a vassal of the Turks. In 628, Xuanzang reports that the region was in a state of political fragmentation and was divided into city-states:

自數十年無大君長，酋豪力競不相賓伏，依川据險畫野分都。¹⁰

For the last several decades there has been no sovereign ruler in the country; the chieftains compete with one another for power and no one yields to the others. They have delimited the boundaries of their districts by

⁴ Duan Chengshi 段成式 (d. 863) provides religious information about Khujand in the late seventh century. According to Duan (1981, vol. 10, 99), the people of Khujand worshipped a god whose temple was located approximately 10 km to the north of the Syr Darya. This shows that Khujand, as Sogdian city-states, had a patron god. Another cultural similarity is that the king of Fergana bore the title *ikhshīd* as the king of Samarkand (Bosworth and Clauson 1999, 6; al-Ṭabarī 1967, 476; English, vol. XXIII 1989, 195).

⁵ De la Vaissière 2007, 26. The Buddhist pilgrim Xuanzang 玄奘 (2000, vol. 1, 72; English 1996, 23), who visited Central Asia in 628, reports that the language of Fergana was distinguished from Sogdian. However, according to Xuanzang, Fergana was part of Sogdiana, which extended from Sūyāb in the north to Kish in the south. See also Marshak 1999.

⁶ The inhabitants relocated to Namangan after a destructive earthquake in 1620.

⁷ AL-Ya'qūbī, 2001/2, 125; English 2018, 130.

⁸ Barthold 1928, 156–65; Le Strange 1930, 477–80; Marshak & Negmatov 1996, 276–7; Xu 2001, 19–23.

⁹ Ibn Ḥawqal 1872, 394–5; English 1800, 271.

¹⁰ Xuanzang 2000, vol. 1, 84.

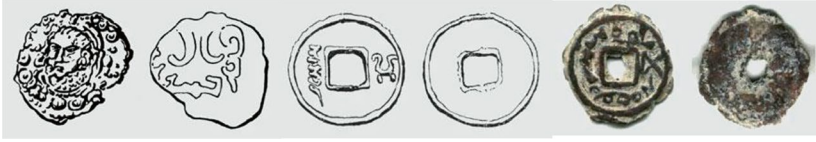


Fig. 2 Qubā coin (left), khāgān coin (middle), and *twtwk* coin (right) (<http://www.sogdcoins.narod.ru/english/ferghana/coins.html>)

rivers and precipitous mountains.¹¹ However, Fergana seems had a nominal common ruler known as the *ikhshīd*, he did not wield centralized power.¹² The local rulers, referred to as *dihqāns*, were not governors appointed by the *ikhshīd* but hereditary rulers who enjoyed significant autonomy.¹³

Around 628, the Turks invaded and occupied Kāsān. Subsequently, the *ikhshīd* relocated his court to Humen 呼悶城,¹⁴ a town located to the south of the Syr Darya. Scholars have attempted to identify Humen.¹⁵ I agree with Babayarov and Asanov in identifying it as Qubā.¹⁶

This identification is mainly based on the historical episode of the Umayyad (661–750) governor of Khurāsān, Naṣr b. Sayyār, who subjugated Qubā in 739. Upon entering the citadel, Naṣr conversed with the ruler's mother, who claimed to have personally seen Qutayba b. Muslim (d. 715), the Umayyad governor of Khurāsān between 705 and 715 and the most renowned conqueror of Central Asia, and even discussed the six elements of kingship,¹⁷ indicating that she hailed from a long-standing royal family, most likely the *ikhshīd* family.

Numismatic evidence is far from conclusive. According to Smirnova, the bronze coin found in Qubā significantly differs from the khāgān and *twtwk* coins. The Qubā coin has a ruler portrait in the obverse and a lyre-shaped sign on the reverse, while the khāgān and *twtwk* coins have

¹¹ Xuanzang, English translation by Li Rongxi 1996, 23.

¹² Saidov, Anarbaev, and Goriyacheva 2011, 10.

¹³ *Hudūd al-'Ālam* (1983, 112; English 1937, 116) for the title *dihqān*. For a scholarly study of *dihqān*, see Jürgen 2013, 1–34; Babayarov & Asanov 2020, 260, 267.

¹⁴ The *Xin Tangshu* 1995, vol. 221b, 6250.

¹⁵ For different identifications, see Xu 2001, 21.

¹⁶ Babayarov & Asanov 2020, 257–9.

¹⁷ Al-Ṭabarī 1967, vol. 7, 177–8; English, vol. XXVI 1989, 31–5.

square holes in the center, indicating Chinese influence.¹⁸ However, the coins from Qubā are more complex, because three coins with square holes were discovered.¹⁹ Babayarov suggested that the Qubā coins without square holes were likely minted in the first half of the seventh century, while the Chinese-styled coins were minted after the Chinese conquest in the late 640 s.²⁰ However, the Chinese-styled coins may have been imported instead of minted locally because of their small number (Fig. 2).

The status of the dual polity lasted in Fergana for more than a century.²¹ In letter A-14 of the Mount Mugh archive, which was unearthed in the Upper Zarafshān valley in 1932, king of Fergana (*βry'nk MLK'*) and *twtwk* of Fergana (*βry'nk twttq*) are mentioned in lines 9–11.²² Frantz Grenet and Étienne de la Vassière suggest that the *twtwk* was Türgesh (699–766) representative and an intermediary between the Türgesh and the Sogdians.²³ However, it is reasonable to argue that the *twtwk*, who minted coins, was an independent ruler, while the king of Fergana refers to the *ikhshīd*. When the Korean monk Huichao 惠超 visited Fergana on his way to China in 727, he reports that there were two kings in Fergana: “the king to the south of the river [Syr Darya] was a vassal of the Arabs; the king to the north of the river was controlled by the Turks 河南一王屬大, 河北一王屬突厥所管.”²⁴ According to the *Xin tangshu*,²⁵ the Turkic ruler in 739 was Arslan Tarkhan 阿悉爛達幹. However, because his relation to the previous *twtwk* is unknown, it is not certain that there was a Turkic polity in Fergana.

Two archaeologists, Marshak and Negmatov, suggested that Arslan Tarkhan unified the entire valley and put an end to the dual polity in

¹⁸ Smirnova 1981, 24, 58–9, 336, 338, 341–2, 485. As for the lyre-shaped sign, Fedorov (2016, 185–200) argues that it is the *tamgha* of a ram horn.

¹⁹ Bulatova 1972, 49.

²⁰ Babayarov 2018, 162–3.

²¹ Babayarov (2018, 157) suggests that the local Iranian polity was submissive to the Turkic polity.

²² Grenet & de la Vaissière 2002, 159–70. The *twtwk*, originally from Chinese, was a title for Turkic official.

²³ Grenet & de la Vaissière 2002, 159–70.

²⁴ Huichao 2000, 130–1; English 1984, 54. For a scholarly study, see Bernshtam 1951, 23; Xu 2001, 23–4.

²⁵ The *Zizhi tongjian* 1964, vol. 214, 6838.

739.²⁶ This suggestion, however, should be considered with caution. The Arab historian Ibn al-'Athīr (d. 1233) reports in his *Complete History* (*al-Kāmil fī-Tārīkh*) that the conflict between the *ikhshīd* polity and Shāsh sparked the greater conflict between the 'Abbāsids and Tang in 751.²⁷ If the report is to be trusted, the *ikhshīd* polity survived at least until 750. The Turkic polity was conquered by the Samanids only in the 860 s.²⁸

Given the sporadic nature of available sources, both historical and numismatic, we do not know much about the internal politics of Fergana. It is not even possible to compile an unbroken list of the rulers.²⁹ Nevertheless, the available sources provide rich information about Fergana's military alliances and conflicts with the big powers—the Western Turkic Khaganate (552–657), Türgesh Khaganate, Tang China (618–907), Tibetan empire (618–842), and Arab Umayyad and 'Abbāsīd Caliphates (750–1258). Consequently, historians are in a better position to study Fergana's interactions with the big powers, particularly in terms of its experiences with war and peace.

Fergana has been mentioned in various studies, such as Hamilton Gibb and Muhammad Shaban's research on the Arab conquests of Central Asia,³⁰ Christopher Beckwith and Wang Xiaofu's monographs on the competition for hegemony in Central Asia between the Tibetan, Tang, and Muslim empires,³¹ and Matthew Gordon and Étienne de la Vaissière's studies on the development of the *māmlūk* institution during the early ninth century in the 'Abbāsīd heartland.³² Despite its inclusion in these studies, no research has comprehensively analyzed Fergana's interactions with the big powers throughout these centuries.

In this study, I first trace Fergana's military alliances with the big powers and compare it with the neighboring principalities: its northwestern neighbor Shāsh and southeastern neighbor Ushrūsanah, and then proceed to address two central questions: first, whether Fergana voluntarily

²⁶ Marshak & Negmatov 1996, 275.

²⁷ Ibn al-'Athīr, v. 5 1987, 90–1.

²⁸ Barthold 1928, 209–12; Bosworth 1999.

²⁹ For a list of the known rulers, see Smirnova 1981, 428–30.

³⁰ Gibb 1923; Shaban 1970.

³¹ Beckwith 1987; Wang 2009.

³² Gordon 2001; de la Vaissière 2007.

became a military ally of the big powers; second, what motivated the principality to serve the big powers as a military ally.

This study combines written sources, numismatic information, and archaeological discoveries. The historical sources utilized in this study are diverse and multilingual. Chinese sources provide contemporaneous information about Fergana, while Muslim sources in both Arabic and Persian, albeit being Islamic centered and generally not earlier than the tenth century, offer the most extensive records related to the topic. As supplementary sources, the few Sogdian, Old Tibetan, and Old Turkic sources are methodologically significant and provide perspectives from the Sogdians, Tibetans, and Turks. Finally, local rulers speak through the coins, and archaeology plays a major role to understand Fergana's social and economic life.

2 AN ACTIVE MILITARY ALLY OF THE BIG POWERS

In this section, I will examine relevant reports in historical sources to present a chronological account of how Fergana served as a military ally to the big powers during the sixth and ninth centuries. The primary objective is to determine whether Fergana did so actively and voluntarily.

The Western Turkic Khaganate was the first major power that emerged during the centuries under discussion. When the Turks expanded “westwards as far as the Iron Gate (*kirü tāmīr qapıyqa tāgi*)” in the mid-sixth century,³³ the Sogdian principalities submitted to them.³⁴ Although no sources report on Fergana's submission to the Turks, it is safe to assume that the region, which was closer to the Turks than the Sogdian principalities, submitted as well.

According to Muslim sources, Fergana was not only a Western Turkic vassal; its forces also accompanied the Turks in their military campaigns. When the Arabs attacked the Sasanian Empire (224–651), the last Sasanian monarch Yazdegerd III (r. 632–651) fled to Khurāsān in the late 640s and requested reinforcements from the Western Turks. The Arab historian al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) reports that the khāgān responded to Yazdegerd's request, “led the Turks, gathered the people of Farghānah

³³ Tekin 1968, 232, 263.

³⁴ After the Turks and the Sasanians allied and toppled the Hephthalite Empire (440s–560), the Oxus became the border between the two with Transoxania under the rule of the Turks (Litvinsky 1996, 143–4; Kurbanov 2010, 186–90; Haug 2019, 64–5).

and Sughd, and marched out with them (*fa-'aqbala fī al-Turk wa-ḥašara 'ahl Farghāna wa-al-Ṣughd thumma ḥaraja bihim*).³⁵ The specific khāgān mentioned in this context can be identified as Duolu Khāgān 咄陸可汗, who lost support among the Western Turkic tribes in 642 and “fled to Persia in the fifth month (between June 8 and July 7) of the twenty first year of Zhenguan reign era (647) 貞觀二十一年五月, 奔於波斯.”³⁶

In the second half of the seventh century, both the Umayyad Caliphate and Tang China expanded significantly in Central Asia. It is noteworthy, however, that no Arab military force managed to penetrate as far as Fergana before the 710 s, while the Tang Empire emerged as the dominant power in the region after defeating the Western Turks in 657.³⁷ As a result, Fergana acknowledged this shift in power and became a vassal polity of the Tang.³⁸

The Tang suzerainty turned out to be more symbolic than real. Moreover, the Tang authority was challenged by Tuizi 倭子 in the 700 s. According to the *Old Tibetan Annals*, a Tibetan source discovered in Dunhuang in the early twentieth century, Tong Yabghu Khāgān (*ton.ya.bgo: kha.gan*) was present in the Tibetan court in 694/5 and 699/700. With the Tibetan support, he returned to Turkestan (*Dru.gu.yul*) in 700/1.³⁹ For this Tong Yabghu Khāgān, both Christopher Beckwith and Wang Xiaofu identify him as Tuizi.⁴⁰ The alliance of Tuizi and the Tibetans shook the Tang suzerainty in Fergana. In 706 or 707, Guo Qianguan 郭虔瓘, a Tang general, and his Western Turkic ally Mochuo Zhongjie 默啜忠節 “failed to collect a single piece of armor and a single horse when levying the Fergana troops 入拔汗那發兵, 不能得

³⁵ Al-Ṭabarī 1967, vol. 4, 168–9; English, vol. XIV, 1994, 56; Bal’ami 1874, vo. 3, 508. Al-Ṭabarī (1967, vol. 4, 173; English, vol. XIV, 1994, 62) even reports that Yazdegerd reached agreement with the khāgān to allow his family to take refuge in Fergana. If so, this is another piece of evidence that confirms Fergana was a vassal of the Western Turks. However, a study of Yazdegerd’s itinerary suggests that the report is not credible. It is noteworthy that the Arabic word *al-Sughd* (دغسلا) refers to Samarkand instead of Sogdiana.

³⁶ The *Cefu yuangui*, Wang & Yang, 1994, vol. 995, 11,686.

³⁷ The *Jiu Tangshu*, 1995, vol. 194b, 5187; *Xin Tangshu* 1995, vol. 215b, 6063. For studies see Skaff 2012, 60–3.

³⁸ The *Zizhi tongjian*, 1964, vol. 200, 6317.

³⁹ Dotson, 2009, 98, 100–1.

⁴⁰ Beckwith 1987, 62; Wang 2009, 107.

片甲匹馬。”⁴¹ Notably, in 707, “the Turks, accompanied by the Sogdians and people of Farghāna (*al-Turk ma‘abum al-Sughd wa-‘ahl Farghāna*)” confronted the Arabs in the Bukhara oasis.⁴² Al-Ṭabarī reports that the commander of the Turks was a son of the Chinese emperor’s sister (*ibn ‘uht malik al-Šin*).⁴³ Narshakhī (d. 959), the author of the Bukhara local history *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, also reports on this nephew of the Chinese emperor (*khāhar zāde-ye faghfur Āin*), and further clarifies that this sizeable army of the Turks was from Turkestan.⁴⁴ Beckwith’s identification that this commander of the Turks was also Tuizi seems to be convincing.⁴⁵

Tuizi died soon after 707.⁴⁶ The contest for supremacy over Fergana between the Tang and Tibetan Empires continued into the 710 s. Soon the Arabs joined this “Great Game” as well.⁴⁷ Qutayba b. Muslim launched military expeditions into Fergana and conquered Khujand and Kāsān in 713 and 715.⁴⁸ The *Zizhi tongjian* reports that the Arabs and Tibetans deposed the previous ruler and “jointly put A-liao-da on the

⁴¹ The *Zizhi tongjian*, 1964, vol. 209, 6627. Guo’s epitaph reports that he conquered sixteen towns of Fergana (Wang & Yang 2020, 111). This must be a euphemistic reference to this raiding campaign (Feng & Yang 2019, 169). For a chronological discussion of the events, see Beckwith (1987, 71–2).

⁴² Al-Ṭabarī 1967, vol. 6, 436; English, vol. XXIII, 1990, 143.

⁴³ Al-Ṭabarī 1967, vol. 6, 437; English, vol. XXIII, 1990, 143–4. See Stark (2018, 378–83) for a discussion of Qutayba’s campaign in this year.

⁴⁴ Narshakhī 1984, 63–4; English 1954, 45–7. The number of the Turkic troops was forty thousand according to Narshakhī and two hundred thousand according to al-Ṭabarī. Narshakhī’s number seems more reasonable. Persian term *Turkestān* (ترکستان) literally means the land of the Turks and refers to the regions of the Western Turks, the center of which was Sūyāb.

⁴⁵ Beckwith 1987, 72–3.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1987, 73.

⁴⁷ Great Game, *Большая игра* in Russian, refers to the competition for control of Central Asia between the British and Russian empires during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

⁴⁸ Qutayba conquered Khujand and Kāsān in 713. See al-Ṭabarī 1967, 483–4, English, vol. XXIII, 1990, 204–6; Bal’ami 1874, vol. 4, 183–4; Khalifa ibn Khayyāt 1976/7, 306, English, 2015, 179. As for the campaign in 715, see Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfī 1991, vol. 7, 164–5, 168; al-Ṭabarī 1967, vol. 6, 500, English, vol. XXIII, 1990, 224; Bal’ami 1874, vol. 4, 202. Al-Balādhurī (1988, 405, 407; English, 1924, vol. 2, 186–7, 190) also reports on Qutayba’s campaign in Fergana without clarifying its year. For a scholarly study, see Gibb 1923, 48–9, 51–4.

throne 共立阿了達為王。” Then the Tang general Zhang Xiaosong 張孝嵩 led a successful campaign that thwarted the efforts of the Arabs and Tibetans.⁴⁹

Despite Zhang's victory for the Tang, the hegemony of Central Asia changed hands. In 716, Suluk 蘇錄 became khāgān of the Türgesh Khaganate, and managed to unify and stabilize his tribes.⁵⁰ When the Türgesh gained influence, Fergana submitted to this new power. According to al-Ṭabarī, when the Sogdians rebelled against the Arabs and feared retribution, they fled to Fergana seeking refuge since the region was not under Arab suzerainty.⁵¹ During these two decades, Fergana was a military ally of the Türgesh in various campaigns against the Arabs, including the Battle of the Day of Thirst in 724, the siege of Kamarjah to the west to Samarkand in 728/9, the Battle of the Defile in 731,⁵² and others.

When Suluk lost the backing of his tribes, the Türgesh was embroiled in a power struggle and internal conflict since the late 730 s. Consequently, Fergana became a vassal of the Tang. Between 680 and 732, Fergana did not dispatch a single tribute-paying embassy to the Tang court but sent twenty-one such missions between 732 and 762. Xu argues convincingly that this demonstrates that Fergana “served the Tang diligently 事唐最謹” during these decades.⁵³ As for the *ikhshīd*'s polity in the south, it experienced both internal and external difficulties in the 730 s.⁵⁴ Naṣr b. Sayyār led a military campaign to into the

⁴⁹ The *Zizhi tongjian* 1964, vol. 211, 6713. For scholarly studies, see Beckwith 1987, 80–3 and Xu 2001, 25–6; Wang 2009, 140–4. For A-liao-da, see Beckwith 1987, 211–2.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1987, 84–6.

⁵¹ Al-Ṭabarī 1967, vol. 6, 621–2; English, vol. XXIV, 1989, 169–71. Unlike al-Ṭabarī, who reports that Fergana was out of the conflict between the Arabs and the rebelling Sogdians, Bal'ami (1874, vol. 4, 269) states that Fergana fought the Arabs. For scholarly studies of the rebellion of the Sogdians against the Arabs, see Gibb 1923, 60–4; Wellhausen 1927, 452–3; Bernshtam 1951, 25–6.

⁵² Al-Ṭabarī 1967, vol. 7, 33, 58, 72; English, vol. XXV, 1989, 14–5, 63, 73. For scholarly studies, see Wellhausen 1927, 454–5, 459–61; Gibb 1923, 65–6, 70–1, 73–5; Shaban 1970, 138–41.

⁵³ Xu 2001, 26. The quotation is from the *Xin Tangshu*, 1995, volume 221b, 6250.

⁵⁴ Saidov, Anarbaev, and Goriyacheva 2011, 9–10.

ikhshīd's territories in 739 and forced the polity to shift its vassalship from the Türgesh to the Arabs.⁵⁵

In 739, the Turkic polity participated in a Tang military campaign against Tuhuoxian 吐火仙, Suluk's son and successor.⁵⁶ Although the Fergana troops suffered a crushing defeat together with the Tang army in Talas in 751,⁵⁷ it remained loyal to the Tang. In 756, when the An Lushan Rebellion broke out, the Tang "levied the Fergana troops...to accompany the Anxi army for reinforcements 又發拔汗那軍...使從安西兵入援" to fight the rebels in the heartland of China.⁵⁸

After the Tang's retreat from Central Asia following the An Lushan rebellion, Fergana submitted to the 'Abbāsids after two decades of independence. According to the Arab historian and geographer al-Ya'qūbī (d. 897/8), the 'Abbāsīd governor of Khurasan "Aḥmad b. Asad set out for Farghānah, seizing territory as far as Kāsān, the seat of the local dynasty (*wa-ḥaraja 'Aḥmad ibn 'Asad 'ila Farghāna fa-fataḥa ḥata waṣala 'ila Kāsān wa-biya al-madīna 'alatī yanziluha al-malik*)" during the Caliph al-Mahdi's (r. 775–785) reign.⁵⁹

According to the Arab historian al-Balādhurī (d. 892), this region caught the attention of the 'Abbāsīd ruler al-Ma'mūn (r. 813–833), who stayed for a long time in Khurāsān as governor and later as caliph. His army fought with Samarkand, Ushrūsanah and Fergana. Appreciating the military prowess of these three polities, "he would write to them, inviting them to become converts to Islam and subjects of the caliph, and

⁵⁵ According to al-Ṭabarī (1967, vol. 7, 175; English, vol. XXVI 1989, 28, 31–5), in the same year that Arslan Tarkhan assisted the Tang army in defeating the Türgesh, Naṣr b. Sayyār raided and subjugated Qubā in southern Fergana and took thirty thousand inhabitants as captives. Clearly, Naṣr followed the updates of the Türgesh after Suluk's death and knew that Arslan Tarkhan was fighting in the Talas valley. This intelligence emboldened him to launch the campaign into southern Fergana in 739. For scholarly studies, see Bernshtam 1951, 26.

⁵⁶ The *Zizhi tongjian*, 1964, vol. 214, 6838. For scholarly studies, see Bernshtam 1951, 25.

⁵⁷ The *Jiu tangshu*, 1995, vol. 109, 3298–9; *Xin tangshu*, 1995, vol. 138, 4616. For a scholarly study of the battle of Talas, see Beckwith 1987, 136–40; Karev 2015, 62–78.

⁵⁸ The *Zizhi tongjian*, 1964, vol. 218, 6998.

⁵⁹ al-Ya'qūbī, volume 2, 2010, 340; English, volume 3, 2018, 1138. For a scholarly study, see Barthold 1928, 201–2.

even making them desire to do so (*yukātibubum bi-'al-du'ā' 'ila al-'is-lam wa-al-tā'a wa-al-targhīb fihimā*).⁶⁰

The troops from Fergana played a significant role between the 810–830 s in the so-called *mamlūk* institution.⁶¹ They were even more numerous than the Turks in the immediate years following Samarra's construction in 836.⁶² According to al-Ya'qūbī, the Caliph al-Mu'taṣim bi'llāh (r. 833–842) “kept the land-grants for the Turks separate from those of all other people...only people from Farghānah would be their neighbors (*wa-'afraad qaṭā'i' al-Atrāk 'an qaṭā'i' al-nās jamī'an...wa-lā yujāwirubum 'ila al-Farāghana*).”⁶³ This indicates that the caliph highly valued the Fergana troops for their military quality. Only al-Afshīn's downfall led the 'Abbāsids to question the loyalty of the Central Asian troops. Gradually, the Turks dominated the 'Abbāsid military.⁶⁴

Although no sources shed light on the sixth century, the above historical survey shows that Fergana, especially the Turkic polity, engaged heavily in military activities during the seventh and ninth centuries. This becomes more obvious in comparison to Shāsh and Ushrūsanah. Shāsh also participated in battles, sent troops as reinforcements to Samarkand in 712 at the request of its king Ghurāk,⁶⁵ and fought the Arabs in the Battle of Thirst, the Battle of the Defile and the Battle of Kharīstān.⁶⁶ Its conflict with Fergana led to the Battle of Talas. The troops of Ushrūsanah fought alongside Suluk in 737 in the Battle of Kharīstān,⁶⁷

⁶⁰ Al-Balādhurī 1988, 414; English, vol. 2, 1924, 203. For scholarly studies, see Barthold 1928, 202; Kennedy 2001, 134; Gordon 2001, 32–3.

⁶¹ Ayalon 1975, 44–58; Gordon 2001; Amitai 2006, 40–78.

⁶² Kennedy 2001, 127; Gordon 2001, 37.

⁶³ Al-Ya'qūbī, 1860, 32; English, 2018, 93.

⁶⁴ Since Fergana was a Turkic principality, its troops had Turkic soldiers, although it is impossible to know the percentage. However, they entered the Islamic heartland under the leadership of the Fergana ruler, while the Turks were purchased.

⁶⁵ Al-Ṭabarī 1967, vol. 6, 473; English, vol. XXIII, 1990, 190–1.

⁶⁶ Al-Ṭabarī 1967, vol. 7, 33, 72, 122; English, vol. XXV, 1989, 15, 73, 145. Kharīstān was a town in modern northern Afghanistan.

⁶⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, 1967, vol. 7, 122; English, vol. XXV, 1989, 145. However, another passage of al-Ṭabarī (1967, vol. 7, 125; English, vol. XXV 1989, 148) reports that the ruler of Ushrūsanah welcomed Suluk when he returned from the battle and passed his realm instead of accompanying the khāgān in the campaign. Blankinship discusses two contradicting texts and suggests that Ushrūsanah did not participate the battle. It is clear that Fergana was not campaigning with the Türgesh. Perhaps this polity had broken from the Türgesh and defected to the Tang.

and switched sides in 739 as a military ally of Naṣr ibn Sayyār.⁶⁸ Fergana, particularly the Turkic polity, was militarily much more active during the centuries under discussion.

In summary, Fergana played an active role as a military ally to the big powers between the seventh and ninth centuries and most probably in the sixth century as well. In comparison to its neighbors Shāsh and Ushrūsanah, Fergana's engagement level is particularly impressive. While vassals were at times obliged to participate in military campaigns launched by their suzerains, it is apparent that Fergana responded to such calls more proactively than required. This is most clear in the Tang case. As Bernshtam argues, Fergana's dependence on the Tang Empire was predominantly nominal rather than factual.⁶⁹ It voluntarily served the Tang as a military ally. Its stable policy of actively and voluntarily serving as a military ally to the big powers raises an important question: why did Fergana adopt such a policy during these centuries?

3 MILITARY SERVICE IN EXCHANGE FOR TRADING PRIVILEGES

This section will address the question raised at the end of the previous section: why did Fergana formulate and follow a policy to serve as an active military ally of the big powers during the sixth and ninth centuries? This question is approached in two parts. First, I argue that Fergana's military prowess was highly appreciated by the big powers, which led to its role as a military ally. Second, I argue that Fergana's practice of serving the big powers as a military ally ultimately served its own interests.

The military prowess of Fergana is based on several factors. First, this fertile valley supported a large and warlike population. The *Xin tangshu* reports on the duel in Fergana on the first day of the year as follows:

每元日，(拔汗那)王及首領判二朋，朋出一人被甲鬥，衆以瓦石相之，有死者止，以下歲善惡。⁷⁰

On every New Year's Day, the king and nobles are divided into two groups. Each group selects one armored man to fight. The crowd pelt

⁶⁸ Al-Ṭabarī 1967, vol. 7, 174, 176–7; English, vol. XXVI 1989, 26, 31.

⁶⁹ Bernshtam 1951, 25.

⁷⁰ The *Xin tangshu* 1995, vol. 221b, 6250. For the military institutions and warlike cultures of Transoxania, see de la Vaissière 2007, 59–88.

them with tiles and stones until one of them is killed. In addition to its warlike people, the production of high-quality horses in Fergana gave the region a strategic advantage since horses were an important military resource in the medieval times. The renowned Chinese diplomat Zhang Qian 張騫, who visited Fergana in 129 BCE, reported that “the region [Fergana] has many fine horses which sweat blood; their forebears are supposed to have been foaled from heavenly horses 多善馬，馬汗血，其先天馬子也。”⁷¹ Additionally, the Persian source *Hudūd al-‘Ālam* records that Fergana produced horses.⁷²

Third, the flourishing of the crucible steel industry in Fergana since around the end of the eighth century in Axsikent and Pap (a town located approximately 10 km to the west of Axsikent), undoubtedly contributed to the significant military role of Fergana in the ‘Abbāsīd heartland in the first decades of the ninth century.⁷³

The fourth factor that contributed to the military might of Fergana, especially the Turkic polity, was its close relationship with the Turks in the steppes. Because Fergana was close to the Turks, it had more frequent and extensive interactions with the Turks than the Sogdians did.⁷⁴ The migration of Turkic warriors and rulers to Fergana, albeit in a limited number,⁷⁵ means that the troops in Fergana were a hybrid of locals and Turks. This exposure and interaction with the Turks naturally enhanced the military capacities of the Fergana troops.⁷⁶

In summary, Fergana could mobilize a sizable army of high-quality warriors. They were appreciated even by the distant Byzantine empire, which enlisted the Fergana people (*Φαργάνοι*) as mercenaries around the mid-ninth century.⁷⁷

We now come to the second part of the question: how military service benefited Fergana itself. There were likely multiple motives for the principality to fight for its suzerains. As expected, soldiers were paid and received a share of the spoils when military campaigns proved successful.

⁷¹ The *Shiji* 1997, vol. 123, 3160; English, 1993, 233.

⁷² The *Hudūd al-‘Ālam* 1983, 111–2; English, 1937, 116.

⁷³ Feuerbach 2002, 129–142.

⁷⁴ Brykina 1982, 144–5.

⁷⁵ Stark 2007, 307–334.

⁷⁶ For the superior military quality of the nomadic Turks, see Kennedy 2001, 123, 141.

⁷⁷ Golden 2004, 283.

The material gains from military campaigns could be substantial. In 707, the Fergana troops, together with the Turks and Samarkand army, “were hired (*be mizd gerefteh būdand*)” to fight Qutayba in Bukhara.⁷⁸ In 739, after defeating the Türgesh khāgān Tuhuoxian, the Tang “gathered the scattered people which numbered tens of thousands and gave them to the king of Fergana 悉收散發之民數萬以與拔汗那王.”⁷⁹ In addition, the Tang rewarded Arslan Tarkhan by granting him titles and marrying him with a princess:

冊拜奉化王。天寶三載，改其國號寧遠，帝以外家姓賜其王曰竇，又封宗室女為和義公主降之。⁸⁰

[Emperor Xuanzong唐玄宗 (r. 712–756)] conferred [upon Arslan Tarkhan, the king of Fergana] Prince of Fenghua. In the third year of Tianbao reign era (744), it [Fergana] was renamed as Ningyuan. The emperor granted its king the surname Dou, which was the maternal surname of the Tang imperial clan, and married him with an imperial lady Princess Heyi. Finally, the Fergana troops were willing to fight the rebels in China, because Emperor Suzong唐肅宗 (r. 756–762) “promised rich rewards 許以厚賞.”⁸¹

Brykina argues that the region’s military specialization stimulated its development of trade.⁸² With regard to the relationship between military and trade, I suggest that one of the rewards that Fergana received from the big powers was trade. On the one hand, these powers probably encouraged long-distance caravans to travel along the routes through Fergana instead of other routes, such as those through Shāsh. On the other hand, the traders and diplomats from Fergana could travel to and trade in territories of the big powers.⁸³

It is reasonable to argue that trading privileges were highly valued by Fergana between the sixth and ninth centuries, when trade and migration along the Silk Road flourished. There are two main reasons to

⁷⁸ Narshakhī 1984, 64; English, 1954, 45.

⁷⁹ The *Zizhi tongjian* 1964, vol. 214, 6838.

⁸⁰ The *Xin tangshu* 1995, vol. 221b, 6250.

⁸¹ The *Zizhi tongjian* 1964, vol. 218, 6998.

⁸² Brykina 1982, 159.

⁸³ The merchants from Fergana travelled, such as into the Bukhara oasis (Barthold 1928, 98). Given the available historical and archaeological sources, the engagement of Fergana traders in long-distance trading remains to be explored.

support this argument. First, Fergana was strategically located for trading; it connected the Sogdian principalities in the south, the Eurasian steppes in the north and China in the east.⁸⁴ Second, this fertile region was rich not only in agricultural products but also in minerals, such as gold, silver, turquoise, naphtha, bitumen, and stone-coal,⁸⁵ and industrial products such as crucible steel. Trade was of the upmost importance for the principality. Its rulers and elites were expected to take measures to facilitate and encourage trade.

Between the sixth and mid-eighth centuries, trade, especially with the Tarim Basin, flourished. In 1959, a hoard, including 947 Sasanian and Arabo-Sasanian silver coins and 13 gold bars were found in Wuqia 烏恰, Xinjiang. The hoard was found on a route connecting Fergana in the west and Kashgar in the east, and was most likely left by a caravan traveling along this route.⁸⁶ Because of the An Lushan rebellion (755–763), Tang retreated from Central Asia. The ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate became Fergana’s suzerain and naturally its trading partner. As Feuerbach argues, the large amounts of crucible steel manufactured in Fergana since the late eighth century were intended primarily for trade instead of local consumption.⁸⁷ The crucible steel produced in Fergana would be circulated in the ‘Abbāsīd territories.

Regarding the evidence of trade and its prosperity between the sixth and ninth centuries, textual evidence from medieval Muslim geographers is sporadic. The main evidence is archaeological sources. According to Marshak and Negmatov, the material culture in Fergana experienced prosperity from the sixth to the eighth centuries.⁸⁸ Brykina argues that the major reason for this prosperity was trade.⁸⁹

Large settlements formed in the valley beginning in the sixth century.⁹⁰ Khujand, located on trading routes, experienced rapid growth

⁸⁴ Le Strange, 488–9; Bulatova 1972, 6. According to Chen (1944, 90), the route from Fergana Valley to Kashgar was the most important trade route connecting China and Central Asia.

⁸⁵ Le Strange 1930, 488; Marshak & Negmatov 1996, 275; de la Vaissière 2005, 301–2; Saidov, Anarbaev, and Goriyacheva 2011, 18.

⁸⁶ Li, 1959, 482–3; Wang 2004, 35.

⁸⁷ Feuerbach 2002, 131, 134–5.

⁸⁸ Marshak & Negmatov 1996, 278.

⁸⁹ Brykina 1982, 143, 155–6.

⁹⁰ Bulatova 1972, 10–11.

beginning in the sixth century.⁹¹ Despite Tang's withdrawal from Central Asia, trade continued to prosper in Fergana. Its capital was moved from Kāsān close to the Tianshan Mountains to Axsikent at the end of the eighth century.⁹² Since Axsikent, located close to the converging point of Naryn and Kara Darya rivers, was an important trade station, this move was clearly to promote trade.⁹³ Qubā grew to the size of Axsikent (*wa-yali 'Aḥsikath fi al-kubr Qubā*) up to the early tenth century. Even Osh, a city in the eastern extreme of Fergana, was of the same size as Qubā (*wa-yali Qubā fi al-kubr Amš*).⁹⁴ Additionally, the burial artifacts from two sites in Pap show that this small town had extensive and distant links to international trade network as well.⁹⁵

It seems that the Turks promoted trade in Fergana. As Étienne de la Vaissière observes, the nomadic rulers were interested to promote trade.⁹⁶ Notably, trade started to develop and flourish in the region in the sixth century, when the region came under the influence sphere of the Turks. After the Turks invaded and established a polity in the valley in the first half of the seventh century, they cooperated with traders. The traders, including predominantly Sogdians and some locals, served the Turkic elites as trading agents.⁹⁷

As for the traders as a social class, they had high social status and increasing political influences during these centuries.⁹⁸ It is intriguing to link the trading prosperity in Fergana to the *nāf* institution, an oligarchic and self-governed civic community that existed in the Sogdian

⁹¹ Marshak & Negmatov 1996, 276–7.

⁹² Kāsān was primarily located and built for fortification (Bernshtam 1951, 23; Saidov, Anarbaev, and Goriyacheva 2011, 10).

⁹³ Bernshtam 1951, 27; Saidov, Anarbaev, and Goriyacheva 2011, 14–5, 17.

⁹⁴ Ibn Ḥawqal 1872, 394; English, 1800, 270–1. Al-Muqaddasī (1906, 272) even claims that Qubā was larger than Axsikent.

⁹⁵ Anarbaev & Matbabaev 1993/94, 223–47.

⁹⁶ De la Vaissière 2005, 109.

⁹⁷ According to Liu (1984, 85–8), the Sogdian traders served Chinese as trading agents since the sixth century. Liu also argues that the *ortoq* institution 鞑脱 during the Mongol period, namely the partnership between the political elites and traders, was a continuation of the same phenomenon in the previous centuries. It is reasonable to argue that the Sogdians served the Turkic elites as trading agents as well.

⁹⁸ De la Vaissière (2005, 162–4) for the social status of the Sogdian merchants.

principalities whose members included the elite traders.⁹⁹ Did the *nāf* institution exist in Fergana and contribute to its trade prosperity? Given the lack of relevant sources, it is still impossible to answer this question.

4 CONCLUSIONS

During the sixth and ninth centuries, Fergana, especially the northern Turkic polity, served actively as a military ally of the big powers. First, the fertile valley, with its dense population, warlike culture, and exposure to the Turks, was a coveted land for the big powers to call for military reinforcements. The military prowess of Fergana was fueled by its high-quality horses and locally produced crucible steel weapons.

The elite of Fergana formulated a stable policy of exchanging military service for trading privileges. In international trade, the region both attempted to attract caravans traveling along the routes within its territories to increase taxation and export surplus agricultural products, precious metals, precious stones, crucible steel, and others.

However, this exchange was not always straightforward, and military service was not always pleasant. At times, two or three big powers competed for hegemony. Victories such as that over the Türgesh in 739 were richly rewarded, but bitter losses, such as the Tang army's reckless raid in 706 and heavy loss of lives in 751, were also endured. In other cases, the campaigns turned out to be tediously long and without result.

Despite these challenges, the military service paid off as trade flourished and brought prosperity to the valley. Urban centers such as Khujand, Axsikent, Qubā, and Osh grew rapidly. One point to be clarified in further research is migration. Did the Fergana traders also travel to distant lands like their Sogdian counterparts? Another topic for future research is the relationship between Fergana and other Central Asian principalities, such as Shāsh, which controlled another trade route connecting Sogdiana and Tang in the east.

⁹⁹ Shenkar (2020, 357–88) for his study of the civic communities in Sogdian city-states.

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The Multiple Layers of Morocco's Normalization with Israel

Driss Maghraoui

1 INTRODUCTION

On December 10, 2020, Morocco signed an agreement brokered by the United States to normalize its relations with Israel.¹ The agreement gave new dynamics to the diplomatic relations between the two countries because they had in fact entertained cordial relations prior to the signing on this date. The Kingdom presented the agreement as a vehicle for strengthening its geostrategic position in North Africa and its economic and military collaboration with Israel. More importantly, state officials considered the recognition by the United States of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara in the framework of this agreement as a “decisive turning point” in Morocco’s foreign policy. To package the deal to Moroccans, the state used different legitimation strategies. The monarchy used its constitutional powers to legitimize its decision. The

¹ Jakes, Lara, Isabel Kershner, Aida Alami, and David M. Halbfinger, “Morocco Joins List of Arab Nations to Begin Normalizing Relations with Israel,” *New York Times*, December 10, 2020.

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government, led by the Justice and Development Party (PJD), a party known for its long-anchored political rejection of all forms of normalization with Israel, endorsed the state's choice and declared that it had to follow the king's supreme instructions. We argue that an important aspect of the normalization process was the instrumentalization of Moroccan Jewish heritage and social networks. We observe the different "layers" of Morocco's normalization with Israel that go beyond local national interests into broader issues that involve the Middle East and North Africa and US policies in the region. Morocco's normalization process with Israel has different layers that have both local and international political, economic, and geopolitical implications. With Western Sahara in mind, Morocco seeks to strengthen its military power and establish its economic geostrategic and security basis through its partnership with Israel. Moreover, Morocco is expected to acquire approximately \$1 billion in drones and other precision-guided weapons. Therefore, we observe both the rationale and different strategies that the Moroccan state has used to legitimize its decision. We raise a set of interrelated questions: How has the Moroccan state constructed the rationale behind normalization with Israel? Who were the individual players? What are the economic dimensions of normalization as presented by both parties? How does the Western Sahara issue fit into this diplomatic move? What is the security dimension of the normalization deal? Finally, how does Algeria view the deal? Situating Morocco's normalization with Israel within the broader context of the Abraham accords is an important start.

2 THE BROADER CONTEXT OF THE ABRAHAM ACCORDS

President Trump used Morocco's inclusion in the Abraham accords to capitalize on his image as a "peace broker" in the Middle East and that his administration had fostered, as he declared on Twitter, "a massive breakthrough" for Middle East peace. Therefore, Morocco's normalization with Israel should be situated within the broader context of the Middle East and North Africa region in relation to the so-called Abraham Accords. Importantly, the reference to Abraham has gradually become part of the pragmatic invention of the concept of Abrahamic religions, understood as part of how Christianity, Islam, and Judaism share common geological origins and common ethical principles. This culturalist construction of the accords as if they are about religion

clearly displaces the issue from politics, Palestinian rights, and right-wing Zionism to a different field of culture that is not essentially relevant.

The Abraham accords did indeed constitute a major turn in the relationship between Israel and some key states in the Muslim world. Within 4 months, from August to December 2020, Bahrain, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates, and Sudan engaged in diplomatic negotiations to normalize their relations with Israel. But to put the accords into the historical context of this collective Arab move toward open normalization with Israel, it is worth remarking that this was by no means part of a completely new policy. Denis Ross, who was a key negotiator in the Oslo and Arab–Israeli agreement under the Clinton administration, revealed that “I set up a number of discreet meetings between Israeli officials and their Gulf state counterparts in the 1990s” and that “most of the bilateral meetings involved security cooperation and built on intelligence contacts that Mossad has established over time, but the scope of these private discussions were clearly expanded.”²

It is revealing that of all of the foreign policy orientations that the Biden administration had to reverse from the Trump era, Jr. the Abraham accords were fully endorsed. In his address to the United Nations Security Council on the Middle East, Ambassador Richard Mills, representative of the US mission to the United Nations, made it clear that the United States will continue to promote further normalization processes. The Biden administration wanted to first capitalize on these accords because they naturally served US interests and could serve as catalysts for peace and political stability and a threshold for the expansion of trade, economic cooperation, and integration in the Middle East. By providing political, economic, and technical support for the Abraham Accords, the United States wanted to further establish itself at the center of the Middle East as a major geostrategic player. If we consider the North African subregion, Morocco and Tunisia to a certain extent have been America’s security partners in North Africa. In parallel, this concept applies to the states in which Europeans play a major role in supporting their forces and security.³

² Denis Ross, “The Abrahams Accords and the Changing Shape of the Middle East,” Policy Analysis, June 21, 2022. See at [The Abraham Accords and the Changing Shape of the Middle East | The Washington Institute](#).

³ Report Title: *The Changing Security Dynamics of the MENA Region* Report Author(s): Anthony H. Cordesman and Grace Hwang Published by: Center for Strategic

3 INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF JEWISH HERITAGE

One of the important strategies of normalization with Israel has been the instrumentalization of Jewish history and memory in the context of Moroccan history and cultural heritage. Although no objective or organic relationship exists between the historical presence of Jews in Morocco and Morocco's foreign policy of normalization with Israel, the discourse about Jewish historical memory was heavily emphasized.

Whether on TV, social media, or news outlets, a series of programs and articles accentuated the discourse about the history of Moroccan Jews and their heritage in conjunction with the move toward normalization with Israel. Some uncritical journalists were quick to pick up the official state narrative and evoke Morocco normalization with Israel as having “deep historical, cultural, religious, and even personal roots. A special bond unites the two countries, resting partly on the Moroccan Jewish community,” and that “the heritage of the country's Jewish minority forms the backdrop for relations with Israel is more than mere rhetoric.”⁴ Hence, normalization with the Zionist state was inappropriately and artificially associated with Moroccan Jewish memory and heritage.

Before the more active move toward normalization with Israel, the Moroccan state indeed made significant efforts to maintain its network with Moroccan Jews in different parts of the world, attract them as potential allies for various strategic foreign policy goals, and make the country emotionally attractive to them. The state mobilized the long-established Jewish heritage and the political, social, and religious networks associated with that heritage to garner support at the international level. The ritual of *hilloulot* (“pilgrimages”) to the burial sites of the tsaddikim (revered saints) has been an important facet of maintaining the link with Moroccan Jews.⁵ The preservation of Jewish cultural heritage is in harmony with the Moroccan state's foreign policy interest that is related to several issues, such as financial support, sustainable development projects, or Morocco's central cause, which relates to the Sahara. In many ways, the late

and International Studies (CSIS) (2021) Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep30031.3>.

⁴ Mohamed Chatou, “Understanding Moroccan “Normalization” with Israel, *Policy Analysis (/policy-analysis)/Fikra Forum*, Jan 5, 2021.

⁵ Hanane Sekkat, “Jewish Tourism in Morocco,” *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe*, Autumn 2019, Vol. 52, No. 2 (Autumn 2019), pp. 156–164.

King Hassan II was the initiator and strategist of placing the Moroccan Jews as an important social cornerstone of his foreign policy agendas, especially because they are found in key states, such as Israel, the United States, Western Europe, and North and Latin America. The revival of the *billoulot* came under the auspices of different government institutions, departments, and agencies and was later approved by the Ministry of the Interior.

The role of the Moroccan Jewish community overseas is important in Saharan affairs, which has historically required consistent economic and military support. Moroccan diplomacy chose to push ahead its role as a mediator between the Arabs and Israel. Via the networks of the Moroccan Jews abroad, the Moroccan state managed to play an important role as a mediator in the peace talks between Sadat's Egypt and Israel in 1977, in the Israeli–Palestinian dialog as a prelude to the Oslo Accords in 1993, and in the overall Jewish–Muslim dialog or “dialog of civilizations.”

In 2010, the Moroccan state engaged in a policy to rehabilitate Jewish memory and heritage that involved cemeteries and synagogues, including the opening of a Jewish Museum unique to the MENA region. In the context of the inauguration of the museum, the Moroccan monarch stated that the “time has come to make sure the Moroccan community abroad gets the accompaniment it needs, to create the right conditions and to provide the means for our fellow citizens abroad to give their best and thus contribute to their country's development,” to establish a “lasting structural connection with Moroccan experts and talents abroad.”⁶ These talents constitute what is called the individual level of analysis regarding Morocco's normalization with Israel.

4 NORMALIZATION AND THE ROLE OF KEY INDIVIDUAL PLAYERS

In international relations parlance, the individual level of analysis typically concentrates on the place and role of specific social and political actors that influence foreign policy decisions. For objective reasons, this is very much the case in Morocco's normalization process with Israel. The strategic proximity of Moroccan Jews to political power within Morocco

⁶ Safaa Kasraoui, Morocco Inaugurates Museum Dedicated to Jewish History in Tangier, Aug. 21, 2022. At Morocco Inaugurates Museum Dedicated to Jewish History in Tangier (moroccoworldnews.com).

or the considerable community of nearly one million Israelis with a Moroccan background made some of them key actors in the normalization process. Many of the Moroccan Israelis have occupied key positions in the Israeli state. That at least ten ministers of Benjamin Netanyahu's government had a Moroccan background is significant. Also significant is that Israelis with a Moroccan background have a long history of voting behavior in favor of the right-wing party in Israel.⁷ Not by coincidence, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was quick to state that "there have been strong ties between Morocco and the Jewish people throughout the entire modern era" and that this should be conducive to "a very warm peace." Therefore, for different economic and political reasons, the Moroccan Jews were clearly favorable for the revival of diplomatic relations and further economic collaboration between Morocco and Israel. At a very practical level, normalization has further facilitated tourism and the arrival of Moroccan Jews back to Morocco through the creation of direct flights from Israel to Morocco.

As stated above, the Moroccan state has been pragmatic about mobilizing Moroccan Jews for diplomatic and military support. For instance, Hassan II has relied on Jewish advisors with political and economic connections at the international level. The Moroccan dynasties have historically integrated Jewish advisors as an integral part of the state.⁸ As succinctly put by one scholar, "we see the establishment in Morocco (perhaps to an even greater degree than in any other Islamic country) of a Jewish courtier elite that served as advisors, diplomatic emissaries and business agents of the successive dynasties that ruled Morocco: the Marīnids, the Waṭṭāsīd, the Saʿdīs and the ʿAlawīs (who rule to this day). Incidentally, André Azoulay is today one of King Muhammad VI's closest advisors, as he had been for Hassan II. Before Azoulay, that role had been filled by David Amar, who was also the Chief Executive Officer of Omnium Nord-Africain (ONA), the royal family's holding company."⁹ The list of this Jewish elite includes others such as Robert Assaraf, who

⁷ For a historical background, see for example Maurice M. Roumani, "The Sephardi Factor in Israeli Politics," *Middle East Journal*, Summer, 1988, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer, 1988), pp. 423–435.

⁸ See for example Nicole S. Serfaty, *Les courtisans juifs des sultans marocains: Hommes politique et hauts dignitaires, XIIIe—XVIIIe siècles*, Paris: Editions Bouchène, 1999.

⁹ Norman A. Stillman, "Moroccan Jews in Modern Times," *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe*, Autumn 2019, Vol. 52, No. 2 (Autumn 2019), pp. 7–17.

started his journey in the Ministry of the Interior and became the General Director of the ONA Group. At the international level, he co-founded the *Union Mondiale du Judaïsme Marocain* and was vice-president of Marianne, the influential French magazine.

Another key actor is Serge Berdugo, who is a lawyer and has the prestigious title of ambassador at large to King Mohammed VI. Berdugo was the Minister of Tourism between 1993 and 1995 and is currently President of the Council of Jewish Communities of Morocco. More importantly, in the normalization process, Berdugo played an important role in establishing the network of the Jewish community with a Moroccan background and was a key player in the Middle East peace process. At the individual level, we can situate the role of Jared Kushner, who was literally the architect of Morocco's normalization process with Israel. Kushner has an incidentally close spiritual association with Jewish orthodox theology inspired by Moroccan Judaism. In a recent ethnographic work, we are interestingly confronted with how "a modern Jewish New Yorker like Kushner believes in modern Jewish Orthodox theology and at the same time supports Jewish mystics such as David Pinto, a descendant of Rabbi Haim Pinto of Essaouira, Morocco, in return for their blessings."¹⁰

5 THE ECONOMIC LAYER OF NORMALIZATION

Normalization between Morocco and Israel can be interpreted as a trade-off that enhances Israel's position among its Arab neighbors, whereas the Moroccan state could use this opportunity to achieve its interest politically and at the geostrategic level. However, an important facet of Morocco's normalization with Israel is its economic nature. Of course, arguing that the Moroccan state started its economic relations with Israel just following the normalization accords in December 2020 would be inaccurate. According to prenormalization Israeli reports, Morocco was among the top four African nations that engaged in trade exports with Israel

¹⁰ Aomar Boum, "A Moroccan Kabbalist in the White House: Understanding the Relationship between Jared Kushner and Moroccan Jewish Mysticism," *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society* n.s. 22, no. 3 (Spring/Summer 2017): 146–157.

and was the ninth in terms of exports that reached \$149 million between 2014 and 2017.¹¹

Therefore, Morocco has had various development needs, which explains the more recent orientation toward what is now typically known as “*diplomatie économique*”¹² in Moroccan foreign policy circles, which are also part of the layers that explain the energized relationship with Israel. Development necessity, in addition to the long-term objectives of Israeli businesses to grow beyond their domestic market, has made collaboration attractive to both countries. A clear focus of the late March 2022 Negev Summit, which involved the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, Israel, and the United States, was related to issues that are economic in nature. These economic issues revolved around the challenges associated with the COVID-19 crisis, water shortages, climate crises, and energy and food security. Following the Negev meeting, the Moroccan Foreign Minister, Nasser Bourita, stated that “We must build a dynamic according to concrete steps that the people feel and which contributes to improving the life of the world and to opening up promising prospects for the youth and the peoples of our region.”¹³

From the Moroccan perspective, the pursuit of economic interest is theoretically conducive to greater social and political stability, and the expansion of economic ties between Morocco and Israel needs to manifest itself in more concrete ways for both countries. Otherwise, political and diplomatic relations are indissociable for the overall purpose of normalization and the search for peace. For the Moroccan foreign minister, “Regional dynamism is very important, as is regional stability in order to strengthen peace between Israel and Palestine, and Morocco has played a pioneering role in the Middle East peace process, and today it is also ready to help give new impetus to this dynamic.”¹⁴ Since the revival of the relationship between Morocco and Israel in December 2020, economic

¹¹ See Sebastian Shehadi, “The open secret of Israeli-Moroccan business is growing,” November 8th, 2018 at <https://www.middleeasteye.net/users/sebastian-shehadi>.

¹² Mohammed Elkhaldi, “La diplomatie économique marocaine et question décisionnelle,” *Journal of the Geopolitics and Geostrategic Intelligence*, Vol. 3, No^o2, pp. 4–23 Nov 2020. ISSN 2605-6496.

¹³ Quoted in Negev Summit: MFA Nasser Bourita Calls for Tangible Peace Dynamic Opening up Promising Prospects for Middle East Peoples | Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates (diplomatie.ma).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

exchange has increased significantly. According to statistics from the Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel, Israel's exports to Morocco increased from \$3.9 million in 2019 to \$30 million in 2021. In addition, the Israel Export Institute has estimated that the potential for annual exports from Israel to Morocco is \$250 million.¹⁵ If Morocco benefits economically from its relations with Israel, economic exchange clearly favors Israel. Imports to Morocco from Israel relate to advanced technology, especially military, agricultural, water, and renewable energy. According to the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Morocco's potential exports can reach \$130 million, and the use of Israeli technology and knowledge can enhance the country's potential for trade with African countries. Similarly, if Israel strengthens its economic relations with Morocco, it could have more opportunities to expand its African market. Indeed, Morocco has been able to establish new financial networks and business infrastructure in Sub-Saharan Africa in the Francophone countries of Western and Central Africa.¹⁶

Moroccan and Israeli business leaders were quick to meet in Israel and Morocco at different conferences attended by leaders of the business and industrial sectors from both countries. For example, in May 2022, Israeli executives came to Casablanca and were joined by Moroccan government ministers and business leaders under the umbrella of Andre Azoulay, the senior royal adviser. The Israelis side included technology companies, water conservation, the health sector, and sustainable energy. The Moroccan Minister of Digital Transformation, Ghita Mezzour, stated that "Our goal is to build a startup ecosystem," and "we're looking at Israel's expertise in how to build the components and how to make them interact."¹⁷ The diplomatic logic concerning how normalization from a business contributes to peace was echoed in the address by Israeli President Isaac Herzog, who said that business collaboration will "promote progress and peace throughout the Middle East, Africa and beyond." On

¹⁵ Morr Link, "A Gateway to Africa? Economic Opportunities in Israel-Morocco," *Relations Institute for National Security Studies* (2022) URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep42563> Accessed: 19-04-2023.

¹⁶ See "Maroc-Afrique : Les échanges commerciaux en chiffres, " *Maroc diplomatique*, 24 mai 2021.

¹⁷ Quoted in Israeli CEOs fly to Casablanca to offer Morocco a dose of startup culture—The Circuit.

his part, Azoulay evoked how normalization with Arab countries needs to include the Palestinians.

6 NORMALIZATION AND MILITARIZATION: THE WESTERN SAHARA AT THE CORE

In many ways, Morocco's foreign policy revolves around the Western Sahara conflict and the subsequent security matters that this conflict entails. Morocco's normalization with Israel is yet another important pragmatic move to gain further ground vis-à-vis Algeria. From the Moroccan perspective, one of the major prizes resulting from the agreement with Israel was the American recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over the disputed Western Sahara in a critical moment of Moroccan-Algerian diplomatic relations.¹⁸ Years after the U.N. had brokered a ceasefire in 1991 that called for a referendum on independence for Western Sahara, Morocco launched a military operation in an area patrolled by U.N. peacekeepers following provocations from the pro-independence Polisario Front. As a result, the Polisario Front declared war and threatened a full-blown military conflict.¹⁹ As a key player in Morocco's normalization with Israel, Mr. Kushner was straightforward about the recognition of Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara: "This is an issue that's been out there for a long time, and quite frankly, there's just been no progress on a resolution," but more emphatically, "For the United States, the autonomy plan under Moroccan sovereignty is the only realistic choice for a just, lasting and acceptable solution to resolve the Sahara conflict."²⁰ Following the deal, the agreement was that the United States diplomatic mission to Morocco would open a consulate in the southern Moroccan city of Dakhla.

Of all US administrations, the most powerful statement in favor of the Moroccan position in relation to Western Sahara came from Donald

¹⁸ See "The Israel-Morocco Peace Deal Is Roiling Western Sahara," *The Economist*, December 16, 2020. As of January 13, 2021: <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2020/12/16/the-israel-morocco-peace-deal-is-roiling-western-sahara>.

¹⁹ Abdi Latif Dahir, "Morocco Launches Military Operation in Western Sahar Buffer Zone," *New York Times*, November 13th, 2020. See at Morocco Launches Military Operation in Western Sahara Buffer Zone—The New York Times ([nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com)).

²⁰ See Khalil Rachdi, Jared Kushner: "Pour le Sahara, l'autonomie sous souveraineté marocaine est l'unique choix réaliste" | le360.ma.

Trump. On December 10, 2020, he unambiguously stated that the “United States affirms, as stated by previous Administrations, its support for Morocco’s autonomy proposal as the only basis for a just and lasting solution to the dispute over the Western Sahara territory. Therefore, as of today, the United States recognizes Moroccan sovereignty over the entire Western Sahara territory and reaffirms its support for Morocco’s serious, credible, and realistic autonomy proposal as the only basis for a just and lasting solution to the dispute over the Western Sahara territory.”²¹

However, more important to the Moroccan side was the damaging position vis-à-vis the Algerian state because the Trump December 2020 declaration also stated that the “United States believes that an independent Sahrawi State is not a realistic option for resolving the conflict and that genuine autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty is the only feasible solution.”²² At least in the specific historical context of the Trump era, Morocco managed to resituate the issue of Western Sahara within a trilateral relationship that put Morocco in a more comfortable diplomatic situation side to side with the United States and Israel, a situation that has the potential to strengthen Morocco’s regional position not only vis-à-vis Algeria but also in North Africa and through its relationship with the European Union. Soon after the United States recognized the Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara, the Moroccan Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita stated that the “European Union should leave its ‘comfort zone’ and back Rabat’s offer of Western Saharan autonomy within the Moroccan state.”²³ Just before finishing his presidency, Trump proposed selling as much as \$1 billion in arms to Morocco.²⁴ These weapons included MQ-9 Reaper drones along with laser-guided munitions that have the potential to give Morocco significant military leverage in the Western Sahara conflict.

Morocco has strategically made major efforts to develop its military security forces to face Algerian geopolitical challenges via Polisario rebels in the southern parts of the country. In November 2020, the Polizario reignited the Western Sahara conflict by declaring war on Morocco and

²¹ See the US proclamation signed by Trump on December 10, 2020 at Proclamation on Recognizing The Sovereignty Of The Kingdom Of Morocco Over The Western Sahara—The White House (archives.gov).

²² Ibid.

²³ See Analysis: Morocco’s tougher stance emboldened by U.S. Sahara move | Reuters.

²⁴ See U.S. Proposes \$1 Billion Arms Sale to Morocco After Israel Deal—Bloomberg.

engaging in periodic firing that continued until March 2021. These recent developments spurred a further military and security cooperation between Israel and Morocco. Therefore, the two countries signed a very important agreement that constituted the basis for security collaboration, intelligence, and arms sales.²⁵ In November 2021, a memorandum of understanding between Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz and the Moroccan counterpart Abdellatif Loudiyi was signed as part of a solid sign of normalization and of the first open visit by an Israeli defense minister. In a statement, the Israeli Defense Minister made it clear that the agreement was “very significant and will allow us to exchange ideas, enter joint projects and enable Israeli military exports here.” The symbolism surrounding his visit was also evident when Gantz met with the Moroccan military chief of staff in a ceremonial show that included color guard Moroccan soldiers in red tunics and gold epaulets.

Again, we need to put this military coordination in historical perspective and note that Israel and Morocco have had a long history of security and diplomatic cooperation. According to the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, Mossad has long been present in Morocco.²⁶ Following the Six-Day War, Israel sold to Morocco its surplus French arms made up of tanks and artillery, and Israeli military advisers were instrumental in combatting the separatist Polisario Front in Western Sahara. Therefore, with the same pragmatic logics of Moroccan foreign policy and following the more recent normalization process, Morocco started to acquire new weapon systems from Israel, and these weapons varied from drones to cyber weapons.²⁷ Hence, Morocco bought three Air Herons in 2014 made by Israel Aerospace Industries for \$50 million. The Heron has the capacity to stay in the air for 45 h and reach an altitude of 35,000 feet. According to the Times of Israel, “the deal was for Heron 1, which is equipped with sensors,” enabling “complex intelligence gathering, monitoring, patrolling and identifying targets and conduct of missions over differing terrain.”²⁸ In addition to Heron 1, there were, according to the

²⁵ See Morocco, Israel sign first-ever defense agreement in Rabat | News | Al Jazeera.

²⁶ See Assassination, Bribes and Smuggling Jews: Inside the Israeli Mossad’s Long Secret Alliance With Morocco—Israel News—Haaretz.com.

²⁷ Oded Yaron, “Israeli Arms Exports to Morocco: From Pegasus to Kamikaze Drones” Haaretz, 19.07.2022 | 09:00.

²⁸ See Morocco’s military said to receive 3 Israeli reconnaissance drones | The Times of Israel.

same journal, Air to ground Harops, Barak MX missile defense systems, and the 9-millimeter version of the Tavor (X95) weapons. Even though objected to by Moroccan authorities, Amnesty International, Citizen Lab, and Forbidden Stories, Israel apparently also sold Cyberware Pegasus.²⁹

According to Haaretz, Morocco seems to be one of the MENA clients that was attempting to deal with QuaDream, an Israeli spyware company, as well as the NSO Group (known for its spyware Pegasus), which were competitors within Israel's market for cyber weapons makers. With the blessing of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and following the normalization logic of what he called "cyber diplomacy," the NSO Group was more successful at attracting autocratic regimes such as Morocco. Importantly, the NSO Group was being investigated because its clients, many of whom fall within authoritarian regimes in the MENA, were using Pegasus to spy on activists and journalists. According to Haaretz, "five different sources familiar with the Israeli spyware industry say the firm [QuaDream], which has long tested regulators, decided to shut down after failing to get authorization to sell its spyware to new clients (including Morocco)."³⁰ Here, again, the context of normalization with Morocco seems to have been a factor in facilitating the deal. As stated by Haaretz, "the largest of the deals was with Morocco." "Talks reportedly began in August 2021. The kingdom, which normalized ties with Israel as part of the Abraham Accords, has long been said to be a client of NSO."³¹

7 THE ALGERIAN REACTION

The diplomatic conflicts between Algeria and Morocco have a long history that has evolved since the 1963 Sand War³² and has further metamorphosed with the Sahara issue since 1975 and Algerian support for the Polisario front. Many observers have historically viewed the relationship

²⁹ France Increasingly Suspects Morocco Used NSO Spyware Against It, *Le Monde* Reports—Europe—Haaretz.com.

³⁰ Israel Torpedoed Morocco Spyware Deal—and NSO Competitor QuaDream Shut Down—National Security and Cyber—Haaretz.com 5/23/23, 8:48 AM.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Alf Andrew Heggoy, "Colonial Origins of the Algerian-Moroccan Border Conflict of October 1963, *African Studies Review*, Apr., 1970, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Apr., 1970), pp. 17–22.

between Algeria and Morocco as typically unstable and mainly informed by rivalry for geostrategic power. Any effort of integration within the so-called Union of the Maghreb proved to be a failure mainly because of this historical rivalry.³³ However, the inability to resolve the Sahara conflict has been at the center of these conflictual relations, especially because Morocco has always viewed the Polisario as a creation of Algeria, a state that has contested Morocco at the International Court of Justice, in the United Nations, and in the African Union.

Therefore, normalization with Israel has further exacerbated these historically based conflictual relations and the geostrategic competition for power. In August 2020, even before Morocco announced its normalization with Israel, key Algerian political actors and civil society organizations strongly condemned the UAE-Israeli normalization deal. The Islamist leaning party Freedom and Justice called it a “betrayal” and a “crime” vis-à-vis the Palestinians, whereas the National Liberation Front referred to it as “treason” and a “stab in the back.” Not yet clear is whether the increased Israeli sales of border control technologies and more sophisticated military build-up has the potential to embroil the region in a new conflict; however, the gradual shift in the military balance in Morocco’s favor has not been very well taken by Algerian officials and the military institution.

In August 2021, Algeria officially broke off diplomatic relations with Morocco when its foreign minister referred to what he called “a series of alleged hostile acts” culminating in Morocco’s normalization with Israel. According to Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamara, “Algeria has decided to break diplomatic relations with Morocco.” The official Algerian statement referred to the “massive and systematic acts of espionage” by Morocco and evoked allegations that the Moroccan state’s security services had used the Pegasus spyware developed by the Israeli NSO Group against its Algerian officials and citizenry. Quoting Lamamar, the Algerian news agency also stated that “Morocco has turned its territory into a platform allowing foreign powers to speak with hostility about Algeria,” while affirming that Minister Yair Lapid made “senseless accusations and veiled threats” during a visit to Morocco when he declared that he “worries about the role played by Algeria in the region.” Lapid indeed stated that his concerns were based on fears that Algeria was “getting close

³³ Jude Uwakwe Eke and Kelechi Johnmary Ani, “Africa and the Challenges of Regional Integration,” *Journal of African Union Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (April 2017), pp. 63–80.

to Iran” and referred to “the campaign it waged against the admission of Israel as an observer member of the African Union.” In many ways, the Algerian state found itself to be more defensive and viewed Morocco’s normalization with Israel as an attempt to destabilize his country.³⁴ Prime Minister Abdelaziz Djerad literally said “when we tell citizens there are operations overseas targeting the stability of the country” and complained that Morocco has “a desire to bring the Israeli and Zionist entity to our borders.”

The official Algerian statements followed a previous declaration by Algerian President Abdelmajid Tebboune, who informed his High Security Council that the “incessant hostile acts perpetrated by Morocco have meant the need for a revision in relations between the two countries and the intensification of security checks.” Morocco reacted by denying any acts of espionage and through a statement of Foreign Minister Nasser Boureta, who stated that the country “regrets” the Algerian decision that is viewed as “completely unjustified” and that “Morocco categorically rejects the fallacious, even absurd, pretexts underlying it.” From an economic perspective, the Algerian state announced in August 2021 that the contract for the Maghreb-Europe gas pipeline (GME), which runs through Morocco, would not be renewed after October 2021.

The reaction of the Algerian state is more likely to intensify as evolving military relations between Morocco and Israel have manifested themselves in significant ways. General Aviv Kochavi, the Israeli Army’s Chief of Staff, made an official visit to Morocco on July 19, 2022. Kochavi was officially greeted by Moroccan army officers, confirming the close military and security collaborations that followed the signing of a security pact during the November 2021 visit to Morocco by the Israeli Security Minister Benny Gantz. The Moroccan counterpart, Abdellatif Loudiyi, was present in the signing of the pact.³⁵ Reflecting what one analyst has called “diplomatic opportunism,”³⁶ Morocco clearly has strategic interests and goals to bolster defense ties with Israel, a reality that is essentially perceived as threatening to the Algerian state.

³⁴ See Normalisation Maroc-Israël : Alger dénonce « l’arrivée de l’entité sioniste » à ses frontières | Middle East Eye édition française.

³⁵ See In Landmark Morocco Visit, Gantz Inks Defense Pact That Paves the Way for Arms Sales—Israel News—Haaretz.com.

³⁶ Pierre Hazan, «De L’opportunisme en diplomatie», *Le Monde Diplomatique*, p. 3, septembre, 2023.

8 CONCLUSION

It will take time to see the long-term effects of the normalization process between Morocco and Israel. Distinguishing between short-term gains for the Moroccan state and long-term outcomes is important. Morocco has gained in the short term, in terms of not only acquiring new weapons and military technologies but also resituating itself and the Maghreb region at the Sub-African continent level. The economic gains from Morocco's normalization with Israel are yet to manifest themselves in more concrete ways, and questions will remain in relation to how mainstream Moroccans will ultimately benefit from all of this. From Moroccan official discourse, the core of the move toward normalization with Israel is solving the thorny issue of the Moroccan Sahara; however, thus far, we have not seen any significant breakthroughs in terms of finding a long-term solution to the conflict, especially if we consider that it ultimately has to be resolved in the context of the United Nations. On the other hand, the Abrahams Accords in general and the Moroccan move toward normalization with Israel are typically presented as a strategy to solve the Palestinian question. However, from this perspective, we did not observe any positive signs. In contrast, the emergence of a right-wing state in Israel is not only complicating the situation but also is making the Arab states, which have normalized their relations with Israel, not only lose significant moral ground but also reflect an image of the Arab world as increasingly deeply divided and vulnerable. How will Algeria ultimately react in the long term, and is this situation leading to further instability? This is an open question. However, we are witnessing further militarization on the part of both Morocco and Algeria, a reality that makes the potential for renewed military conflict over the Sahara a strong possibility, if not directly between the two states then at least via the Algerian support for the Polisario.

More recently, the Moroccan position vis-à-vis normalization with Israel became slightly more complicated following the October 7, 2023, acts of resistance by Hamas on Israeli military posts and settler communities. The Israeli military action and the catastrophic invasion of Gaza, along with the subsequent killing of more than 9000 civilians, the majority of whom were women and children, resulted in a major demonstration in Rabat on October 15, followed by a series of other demonstrations throughout Morocco in solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza. The subsequent and continuous demonstrations in major cities in Morocco are

a clear sign of the disparity that exists between the Moroccan people and their state regarding normalizing relations with Israel. Local civil society actors, the Islamist organization of *al Adl wa al-Ihssan*, the Islamist Justice and Development Part, left-wing political actors and mainstream Moroccans and other groups, such as the Moroccan Front in Support of Palestine and Against Normalization, a coalition of several parties, unions and associations, have all strongly condemned Israeli military actions.

Although the Moroccan state has continuously provided Palestinians with financial, food and medical support, it gradually appears that it is losing major moral ground regarding the Palestinian question. The chants, signs, and most famous slogans of the marches (“the people want to overthrow normalization” and “the people want the criminalization of normalization”) are all clear signs that the Moroccan state is pursuing policies that can threaten its political legitimacy in the long term. Although there is no major change or policy reversal regarding the normalization process with Israel, there are some signs of dissatisfaction with the violent disproportionate Israeli reactions and killing of Palestinian civilians. On Tuesday October 17, the Moroccan Foreign Ministry issued a statement indicating that the “Kingdom of Morocco strongly condemns the bombing by Israeli forces of the ‘*al Maamadani*’ hospital in the Gaza Strip, which left hundreds of dead and injured... [and] reiterates its call for civilians to be protected by all parties and not to be targeted.”³⁷ The official discourse of the Moroccan state seems to have taken a middle ground position, condemning violence on both sides without evoking thus far that doing so might jeopardize the normalization process in any way. Echoing the language of the United Nations, Morocco “underlines the urgency of uniting the efforts of the international community to put an end, as quickly as possible, to the hostilities, respect international humanitarian law and work to prevent the region from falling into further escalation and new tensions.”³⁸ How long the Moroccan state will carve out a middle ground position without necessarily revoking the normalization process will depend on the outcomes of the Israeli invasion of Gaza and the subsequent regional dynamics

³⁷ See Communiqué | Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, de la Coopération Africaine et des Marocains Résidant à l’Etranger (diplomatie.ma).

³⁸ Ibid.

resulting from this invasion. It is increasingly evident that Israel disregards international law and is in glaring violation of basic human rights, as it seems to be engaging in what human rights institutions have started to call acts of genocide. Does the Moroccan state want to be associated and normalize with a state that is responsible for what has been recently called by a senior UN official as the “Gaza Genocide”?³⁹ The Moroccan state and its inner circles of power must answer this question, face the long-term consequences of its middle ground diplomatic position and ultimately be judged by history.

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³⁹ UN official who denounced Gaza “genocide” had been under review after Israel lobby complaint | United Nations | The Guardian.

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Corporate Lobbying and Its Influence on Public Policy in Brazil

Marcela Machado 

1 INTRODUCTION

Studies on lobbying are increasingly gaining force on the international scene under the premise of putting into play the democratic principle of equality among citizens in relation to their participation in politics. The interference of private and corporatist interests in government agendas and the mechanisms used to influence public policies have become increasingly sensitive topics for contemporary political science.

The act of influencing a public decision, mediated by private or class interests, is far from being exhausted in the Brazilian political science debate. Although works of great relevance exist, the research agenda,

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even if extensive, remains incipient regarding the conditions of influence defended by Sabato (1985), Evans (1988), and Figueiredo Filho (2009): when the interest group, in addition to making campaign contributions, also lobbies. Although widely mentioned and often understood in a pejorative manner, lobbying has not yet become a robust academic object from the Brazilian perspective (VIANNA 1994), even more so under the current scenario in which it is no longer possible to measure lobbying actions through corporate campaign financing in view of its legal prohibition.

In Brazil, after twenty years under the influence of corporate donations, the participation of legal entities as campaign funders was challenged by the Federal Supreme Court (STF), and the challenge culminated in the prohibition of large donors from the electoral process. The decision, expressed through the Direct Action of Unconstitutionality (ADI) 4.650 in September 2015 and, subsequently, by Law no. 13.165, 2015, declared the unconstitutionality of the legal provisions that authorized financial contributions from legal entities to electoral campaigns.

In the United States, efforts to regulate the cost of campaigns date back to the end of the nineteenth century. Legislation sets a ceiling on campaign spending by candidates to make the contest as fair as possible. In Brazil, candidates are allowed to set their own spending ceiling in advance and inform the Superior Electoral Court (TSE) when registering their candidacy. However, this artifice is subverted: once the previously stipulated amount is exceeded, the candidate is fined. To avoid the risk of paying a fine equivalent to four times the amount exceeded, candidates' ceilings must be set by the party leadership to amounts well above what they intend to spend.

In addition to allowing candidates to escape the fine, this type of attitude also demonstrates something that becomes very clear when we look at electoral disputes in Brazil: there is no clear spending plan, which is also an indicator that campaign spending money is not fixed and that the candidate can spend and receive any amount at any time during the campaign. Therefore, the contest becomes even more discrepant, and the candidate can act according to the circumstances that occur during the campaign. Those who have more cash on hand are able to, for example, use better electoral marketing strategies to suppress their opponent in the final stretch of the campaign.

Unlike countries such as the United States, for which the collection is unified, in Brazil, the transfer of money, the result of electoral financing,

is made directly by the funder to the party or candidate. It is up to the funder to render accounts to the TSE of everything that was raised and spent. The TSE also asks service providers, such as advertising companies and printers, about the contracts signed with parties or candidates. However, unlike accounts, the contracts are not made publicly available (MANCUSO; SPECK 2011). According to the aforementioned electoral legislation, candidates can render accounts individually and via the financial committee, which is responsible for all of the logistics of fundraising and spending.

Although Brazil's redemocratization in the 1990s increased the capacity of groups to influence public decision-making, few academic studies exist on this subject. Mancuso (2004) and Santos (2014) are pioneers in the study of the influence of the business community on decision-making in the National Congress, whether through direct representation, via parliamentary fronts, or as an external influence group organized and cohesive with public policy makers regarding interests.

In addition to candidates needing money to mobilize their supporters at election time and thus receive votes, private funders also have interests in parliamentarians to either gain privileged access to the parliamentarian or influence votes in Congress. In this way, a kind of mutual dependency is created between financiers and the financed (CLAWSON 1998). From this perspective, campaign financing is understood as a competitive market for obtaining particularistic benefits in public policies. However, the campaign financing process is much more flexible and uncertain than a market transaction. In addition to the recurring problem of corruption, the greatest concern that this dynamic raises is the creation of a complex system of interactions, which results in the creation of a network of obligations between funders and finances.

Given this change in the rules of the game, it is interesting to analyze the behavior of parliamentarians after the regulation that prohibited the financial participation of large donors in electoral campaigns. Similarly, it is important to construct the object of study based on the narratives of lobbyists and parliamentary advisors on how the exercise of their profession has changed over time and, especially, after this stricter campaign financing regulation.

To understand the difference in the access of entities, parliamentarians' screening strategies must be analyzing. Since the present approach is based on interviews with lobbyists and parliamentary advisors, the objective of this article is to understand the different action strategies

of these groups and the possible disparities between them from the narratives of these two categories of actors. In addition to money, what elements gained relevance in congressional relations between lobbyists and congresspeople?

To this end, thirty-four (34) semistructured interviews were conducted with parliamentary advisors and lobbyists affiliated with different entities that operate in the House of Representatives to explore the impact of possible lobbying regulations, campaign financing, and changes in legislation on the behavior of parliamentarians and how this change affected the actions of lobbyists in Brazil. The main objective of this article is to explore and describe the strategies that these actors have adopted, given the prohibition of electoral donations from legal entities, to guarantee access to parliamentarians; these strategies are characterized in this article as high-intensity tasks, i.e., those that demand more of the lobbyist's working time for execution.

This paper is structured as follows. Section 2 explores the literature on lobbying from a comparative perspective to situate the case study in this paper within the problematic context of the research object and justify the constant choice to use the term "lobby." Sect. 3 explores the importance of the interview as a research technique, thus justifying its use in this study as opposed to other databases commonly used in studies of this nature. Then, in Sect. 4, lobbying is characterized as a high-intensity task whose nuances sometimes cannot be captured purely through data analysis, reinforcing the importance of the personal accounts of the actors interviewed for this study.

In the conclusions, we present the main findings from the point of view of the guiding question of this article and they indicate that lobbying is permeated by symbolic relations. The success of lobbyists in their endeavors with parliamentarians necessarily depends on the maintenance of these relationships and their constant presence in decision-making.

2 LOBBYING STUDIES FROM A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE: LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of lobbying represents a consolidated theme in the United States and other countries, such as Canada, Germany, and the European Union—pioneers in the regulation of lobbying (CHARI et al. 2010). The study of lobbying in Brazil is far from being consolidated. In the Brazilian

literature, historiographic compendiums on electoral legislation or anecdotal facts reported by journalistic media (FIGUEIREDO FILHO 2009) that usually portray a tarnished image of lobbying as synonymous with corruption.

Few studies attempt to understand and systematically and methodologically explore how interest groups influence the decisions of the Brazilian National Congress. When the campaign financing variable enters the analysis, although they are coinciding agendas, access to data and their reliability and verifiability are still problems. In the words of Vianna (1994), “in spite of being frequently mentioned, lobbying has not yet reached the status of an academic object, occupying a rare place in the ponderations of specialists.”

Therefore, when we evaluate the studies in the bibliography, interestingly, the terms lobby, pressure group, and interest group are not used in an equal manner. Rather, they are given a new definition by different authors or treated as synonyms. For this, the scope of each term must be defined, which presents tenuous differences even though each term part of the same thematic framework.

Interest groups account for “all interactions through which individuals and private groups without governmental authority seek to influence policy, together with the interactions of government officials who influence the decision-making process and who clearly go beyond the direct use of their authority” (LINDBLOM 1981). In contrast, pressure groups—unlike political parties that act similarly—do not aim to achieve power but defend their views and the changes favorable to their interests. In addition, they do not aim to change government structures since their objectives must be in line with the government’s agenda (FARHAT 2007).

Lobbying is framed as a subset of pressure groups and can be characterized as a more direct effort via personal contact to influence public policy makers. According to Santos (2007), lobbying is exercised by “pressure groups that use power resources to seek influence” and is characterized as “the defense of interests with members of the public power that make decisions” (MANCUSO; GOZETTO 2011), an effort to influence the process of formulating public policies (BAUMGARTNER; LEECH 1998) and an activity designed to affect government actions (NOWNES 2006).

Although lobbying is not restricted to companies and corporate entities, “the numerous opportunities for gains offered by state action

continue to attract the interest of large businessmen and executives” (CARAZZA 2018), in addition to providing financial resources for political mobilization.

Drutman (2015) reveal that large companies, in addition to participating in trade associations that pursue corporate interests, maintain their in-house lobbyists to address the most sensitive issues. Therefore, for the author corporate associations deal with issues pertaining to the agenda setting of the industry, whereas in-house lobbyists and consulting firms (lobbying companies) are concerned with the development of public policies by parliamentarians.

Although not present in the classification of the aforementioned authors, the recent phenomenon of revolving door lobbying in Brazilian politics can be classified as lobbying by political elites. Largely studied by the literature dedicated to the US Congress, revolving door lobbying works similarly to a revolving door: it entices individuals in political positions and government officials or politicians to become lobbyists, especially when they are not reelected (LAPIRA; THOMAS 2017). This alternation between public and private positions is not yet widely explored in the literature on lobbying in Brazil, although a public and growing fact is that politicians are at the heads of political consulting firms operating in Brasilia.

Although studies exist on Brazil that attempt to answer the classic questions in the literature on lobbying worldwide, they often face the difficulty of accessing lobbyists, as Santos et al. (2017) report. In Brazil—perhaps due to the lack of regulation—there is no registry of or the obligation to register the people who lobby in Brasilia, as exists in the United States. An artifice that has been used as an alternative to the lack of a lobbyist catalog is the registry of the First Secretariat of the Chamber of Deputies, a body that makes up the steering committee.

Among its various attributes, the First Secretariat is responsible for accrediting the representatives of the higher-class entities, employees and employers, professional autarchies, and other nationwide institutions of civil society, in addition to the parliamentary assistants of the Ministries and entities of the indirect federal administration. In other words, the Chamber of Deputies registers representatives of interest groups to give them easier access to the House premises and, thus, act with federal deputies.

A survey of the list of registered representatives between December 2018 and November 2019, which included information gathered from

the internet of public registries, institutional virtual sites and social networks, revealed, as shown in Table 1, that approximately 24% (twenty-four percent) of the registered representatives have no link with the company that appears in the registry of the First Secretariat. In other words, the institution that enables him to have an access badge to the Chamber of Deputies is not the same one for which he speaks or acts as a lobbyist.

For “Institution linked to the registered one,” the institution is part of another institution that has a link with the registered entity. For example, this is the case in which the registered person is employed in the association of a certain segment but is registered by the institute or union of the segment. These facts can be attributed to the limited number of representatives registered per institution,¹ which also explains why the majority of representatives hold high-level positions in the institutions they represent.

The data that are truly intriguing and justify, in part, the choice of semistructured interviews as the technique for collecting information in this study are the number of representatives of private companies and, especially, of consulting and law firms that act as lobbyists in the Chamber of Deputies, theoretically representing the interest of an entity for which they provide services.

Table 1 Origin of class entity representatives registered with the First Secretariat of the Chamber of Deputies (November 2019)

	<i>Number of registrations</i>	<i>%</i>
Registered institution	304	76.7%
Institution linked to the originally registered	34	8.5%
Private company	9	2.2%
Consulting or law firm	36	9%
Information not found	13	3.2%
Total	396	100%

Source Elaborated by the author based on data made available by the First Secretariat of the Chamber of Deputies

¹ Article 259, §1 of the Internal Rules of the House of Representatives (RICD) expressly mentions the number of accredited members per agency only in relation to Ministries. However, in practice, the limitation extends to the other entities mentioned in the head of the article.

Although they represent almost 12% (twelve percent) of the total of those registered, the fact that owners and partners of consulting and law firms that provide consulting services appear in the register is significant: the client portfolios of these actors are vast. Thus, although the badge presents the lobbyist as representing a specific entity, he is actually acting for several interests other than the one listed in his registration. For the purposes of transparency, as required by the activity, this can be treated as a neuralgic point regarding the question of the real representation of interests within the Chamber of Deputies: who is speaking and for which interests.

3 THE CHOICE OF METHOD: SEMISTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

According to Gil (1999), the use of interviews as a research technique is one of the most widely used techniques in the social sciences. In addition to being a tool for obtaining data, the interview is a form of social interaction in which one party seeks to collect data, namely, the researcher-interviewer, and the other party, the interviewee, presents himself or herself as an essential source of information (GIL 1999).

The interview method is characterized as a flexible form of data collection. Unlike work in which information is collected objectively via questionnaires, the interview allows face-to-face contact with the source of information, thus making it possible to capture the nuances of interviewee's perceptions of the world and social lives through their narrative.

The interview is a research technique that allows for the collection of information about what the interviewees "know, believe, expect, feel or desire, intend to do, do or have done, as well as their explanations or reasons for the above" (SELLTIZ et al. 1967 apud GIL 1999). At the same time, as the interview enables the exploration of these aspects as information, it must consider that it is dealing with "feelings, personal affections, weaknesses" and that "each of those surveyed is part of a singularity" (BONI; QUARESMA 2005).

Semistructured interviews were chosen for this study because this technique combines open and closed questions, allowing the interviewee to discuss the proposed topic or the question asked.

Regarding interviews with elites, their ability to generate a large volume of information means that the interviewer needs to take care

regarding problems of validity (MANHEIM et al. 2018), whose answers reflect an erroneous description of the reality observed and the reliability of the answers, i.e., whether the same technique, applied repeatedly to the same object, produces the same result in all applications (BERRY 2002).

To anticipate and mitigate the problems described, a few steps needed to be followed, as in Nownes (2002). According to the author, the pitfalls that can arise from interviews with elites can be circumvented through the six stages described below.

Before conducting the interviews, the interviewer must prepare in advance (JOHNSON et al. 2016), i.e., gather and study a variety of information about the interviewees and their professional careers. Preparing in advance enables the interviewer to conduct the interview more effectively: addressing information in the interview that could be found publicly elsewhere can be avoided, thus helping the interviewer select their approach to each question or topic to avoid topics that could be particularly sensitive to the interviewee and to demonstrate to the interviewee the interviewer's level of interest in that topic.

Before selecting the interviewees, a survey was carried out on the degree of relevance of the interviewees' institutions in Brasília's political scene. In a way, being in Brasília to conduct this type of interview puts the researcher in a privileged position since most large corporations, organizations, and entities have offices in the federal capital, thus facilitating access to their representatives in the National Congress.

The second stage involves formulating the script of the questions to be explored in the interview. Interestingly, the script drawn up does not go straight to the point of what you want to investigate, especially regarding a sensitive and controversial subject, such as the issue of money in congressional relations between lobbyists and parliamentarians. To put interviewees at ease and not make it seem as if they are being asked to compromise themselves or their organizations, introducing investigative questions into the script is necessary (BERRY 2002). Such questions are especially useful in a scenario in which the interviewee has no prior access to the interview script and only knows about the general topic being asked about.

Interview scripts are generally composed of a limited number of open questions. According to Berry (2002), open questions allow interviewees to tell the interviewer what is relevant and what is important rather than being constrained by the interviewer's preconceived notions of what is important.

In the interviews conducted for this study, two initial questions were introduced to the interviewees: What is the area of activity of the organization to which you are linked, and what is your function within the organization? The first question helped categorize the interviewee's entity in an alternative way since categorizing entities according to the description provided in their names or on their websites for confidentiality purposes could compromise the confidentiality of the interviewees. The descriptions of the positions held by the interviewees is fundamental to understanding their duties within their scope of action—beyond a simple job description (consultant, analyst, among others). These descriptions also help gauge the hierarchical level occupied by interviewees within their institutions, namely, the degree of freedom of action they have based on their duties within the organization to which they are linked.

The fifth stage justifies the choice of interviewees. According to Nownes (2002), interviewing several different lobbyists, i.e., having access to multiple sources, allows the researcher to test the answers of each respondent by comparing them with the other answers to verify their veracity or similarity. The interviews themselves are the source from which it is possible to check the information. Although the number of respondents in this study is small compared to the possible number of actors who act as lobbyists in Brasília, the sample is representative enough to enable this cross-checking of information. To ensure that all interviews are conducted without generating noise on the part of the interviewer, the sixth stage entails the advice that all interviews be conducted by a single interviewer—the researcher himself, as was carried out in this study.

Because of the type of problem that occurred from using registers made by the First Secretariat, we decided to use a new source, the list “Lobbyists and Advisors of the Esplanade,” organized collaboratively by the lobbyists who work in Brasília. The list, comprising 80 (eighty)² lobbyists and advisors to deputies and senators, contains information such as name, entity, function, and contacts, such as telephone number, cell phone number, and email address, which made it possible to contact the professionals to invite them to participate in the interviews for this study. After all, “the best way to gain a clear understanding of lobbying was to go directly to the source—to speak with lobbyists themselves” (NOWNES 2006). Therefore, this case is fitting as a typical case study focused on

² The figure references the data on the listing as of August 2019. No representatives of diffuse interest groups were listed at that time.

Brazil that is relevant for understanding the relationships of the actors involved in scenarios of lower monetization (GERRING 2008).

As the list itself is composed, in addition to parliamentary advisors, largely of lobbyists linked to different entities representing various segments, we attempted to contact half of those listed, which were lobbyists and parliamentary advisors, configuring it as a nonprobabilistic selection through purposeful sampling (MERRIAM; TISDEL 2016). Of the 40 (forty) contacted via WhatsApp, 34 (thirty-four) agreed to grant interviews. A total of 9 (nine) listed parliamentary advisors were also contacted, and 7 (seven) agreed to grant interviews.³ This option was made precisely to make it possible to contrast the argument of the lobbyists with that of the advisors—usually the ones who receive the lobbyists—when they seek out congresspeople to address a demand. Of the 34 (thirty-four) interviews carried out, 30 (thirty) were used effectively. The interviews were conducted during September and October 2019.

The analysis of the narratives was based on 26 (twenty-six) interviews conducted with lobbyists and 4 (four) with parliamentary advisors, numbers that correspond to the interviews that could be used in this study. The development of the exploratory and descriptive analysis, was intended to gauge, in accordance with the guiding questions of the interview script and within the selected sample, the impressions of the parliamentary advisors and, especially, of the lobbyists about the high-intensity work they developed in the House of Representatives. Of particular interest was the congressional relationship of these two actors before and after the prohibition of the participation of legal entities in financing election campaigns.

The interview script included questions about the professional profiles of the interviewees; procedural questions about the decision to act with parliamentarians; the identification of who or which arena to act with

³ The criteria for not using certain interviews, in the case of lobbyists, included that they did not fit the expected profile (carrying out high-intensity activities with parliamentarians in the Chamber of Deputies), they were restricted to doing back-office work or whose presence in the Chamber's premises was merely protocol, and they prepared reports on committee meetings or public hearings. In the case of parliamentary advisors, the criterion was their fear of talking about the theme, causing them to deviate from the guiding question or refuse to talk about what they were asked, thus making their narratives unproductive.

and the receptiveness of lobbyists in the offices of federal deputies; questions about the research theme, which touches on the weight of economic capital in the relationships between lobbyists and parliamentarians; the impact of the ban on campaign financing via companies in these relationships; and questions about the new currencies of exchange that may arise in this less monetized scenario. Therefore, the questions were merely guiding questions that allowed the interviewees to freely develop their narratives about the themes mentioned.

As part of the protocol for respondent confidentiality, the informed consent form for participation in the interview and the agreement to have the interview recorded were presented before the interviews began. The consent of the interviewees was collected through their oral agreements by recording their voices and identifying them through specific coding. The recording allowed for subsequent transcription, enabling textual analysis of the narratives.

According to Nownes (2006), interviewing several different players, i.e., having access to multiple sources, enables the researcher to test each respondent's answer by comparing it with the other answers to verify their veracity or similarity. Therefore, interviews are configured as a source of verification. Although the number of respondents in this study is small compared to the possible number of actors who act as lobbyists and parliamentary advisors in Brasilia, the sample is sufficiently representative to enable this check by cross-checking information since the universe selected is, within its amplitude, diverse in terms of the representation of different segments.

For confidentiality reasons, more specific information, such as the name of the company and the name of the interviewee, was omitted to preserve the confidentiality of the respondents who agreed to be interviewed under these conditions. To eliminate any identifying traces of the interviewees that might link them to their narratives, we chose to characterize them as "interviewees" without making gender distinctions.

The interviewed lobbyists were classified into four (4) major groups, as summarized in Table 2: Association/Union, Confederation, Private Company and Law Firm/Consultancy. In the case of law or consulting firms, the majority agenda corresponds to the agendas with which the interviewee deals personally within the institution based on the information provided in the interviews. Parliamentary assistants, given that the generality of their classification is already sufficient for the purposes of this study, are classified only as such.

Table 2 Classification of the entity with which the interviewee is linked (interviews used)

	<i>Number of interviewees</i>
Association/trade union	04
Confederation	06
Private company	05
Law/consulting firm	11
Parliamentary assessor ship	04
Total	30

Source Authors

4 ANALYZING THE INTERVIEWS: LOBBYING AS A HIGH-INTENSITY TASK

Lobbying, in itself, is an activity that demands, in addition to human capital, time and expertise. Not by chance, entities from the most diverse segments have been engaged in hiring companies that provide political consulting services or in the formation of internal teams to act as spokespersons for corporate interests with political agents.

To answer the questions about lobbying strategies in a scenario in which large donors no longer play an active role, it is first necessary to understand elementary questions about how these actors act within decision-making arenas. Specifically, the focus of this article is on the role of lobbyists in the Legislative Branch, more specifically, with Federal Deputies, although some of the interviewees also work in the Executive Branch.

Several entities have representatives in the House of Representatives, and they defend several agendas. The interviews revealed that the need for action is designed depending on the relevance of the agenda and the demand to be requested. An integral and relevant part of this decision is the back-office work—the monitoring, research, and information gathering work about a given proposition that gives the lobbyist information before going into the field.

The incentives to act differ depending on the entity to which the lobbyist is linked. Those interviewed who work in legislative consulting and who are not owners or partners referred to themselves as being on the “shop floor” and work more on legislative monitoring of the subjects of interest to the clients who hire them. They even become specialists in these subjects. Among the interviewees, it is common for them to work on two or more themes at the same time. The size of the demand imposed

is understandable: sometimes, the work of lobbyists in consulting firms is to act only when asked to do so by the client or to accompany the client to a meeting with the parliamentarian to make the introduction and act as his or her business card. In some situations, it is up to the lobbyist to only provide pertinent information for clients to act on their own. In such cases, there is training that instructs the client how to act.

On the other hand, respondents who work in companies and class entities, such as associations, confederations, and unions, have greater freedom of action. Since they act on behalf of the very institution they work for, they can be spokespersons for the interests of the entity, that is, speak and make decisions on its behalf. For example, the area of activity of a certain association or confederation may be self-intuitive by its name. However, several issues might surround the badge behind the entity's name that are equally sensitive and could damage the sector if not addressed. Depending on the type of damage or benefits that a particular proposition may generate, the strategy on when to start acting, in which arena to act, and with whom to act is mapped out. Identifying the opportunity to act has to do with insights since the rules of the decision-making arenas point the lobbyist to the possible places where he can act.

Next, we detail the five categories of analysis selected for this study, and illustrate them with transcriptions of the narratives that reflect recurring arguments among the interviewed actors: (1) arenas of activity, (2) access and influence, (3) new versus old lobby, (4) the old lobby: money and deference, and (5) the new lobby and bargaining strategies. Therefore, the recovery of specific narratives to illustrate the cases is not configured as evidence of a single interview. All of these categories are part of the analysis proposed in this article, which illustrates the *modus operandi* of lobbying in different scenarios and cannot be understood as isolated discussions.

4.1 *The Arenas of Activity*

Several official instances exist of legislative deliberation and play a relevant informational role: committees and their presidency, the Plenary, the Executive Board, the College of Leaders, the Presidency of the House, the First Secretariat, and even the legislative consultancy. Some are more difficult for the "shop floor" lobby to penetrate, such as having access to the president of the House of Representatives or to the real-time results of the meeting of the College of Leaders.

In this way, committees are treated as relevant arenas of action within the legislature (SANTOS 2019) and understood as more permissive to lobbyists' access to federal deputies, as summarized in the narrative of a parliamentary advisor:

In addition, it is in this limbo where the lobbyists are trying to convince a parliamentarian. However, it is difficult because the interpersonal relations of the parliamentarians, in general, are an obstacle for lobbyists because, for example, if you are on a committee, you need to remove a project from the agenda. Only then do you go to a congressman to ask him to withdraw it, to present a request to remove the project from the agenda. However, the guy is a friend of the author of the project. The guy is a friend of the rapporteur, or the guy has a good relationship with the committee. Each committee creates its own corporate universe. Therefore, the lobby ends up being a little weakened in this sense because you have to keep asking some deputy to request to see a project. Asking for someone's project to be looked at is a political weariness with the other person, with the other parliamentarian. In addition, in the commissions, you have a distribution, not ideological, but political, less fierce (INTERVIEWEE 19, PARLIAMENTARY ADVISOR).

Therefore, what can be called "informal arenas" exist within the premises of the Chamber of Deputies. In other words, these are unlikely places for interactions between lobbyists and parliamentarians, but they appeared in most of the interviews as arenas of interaction that lobbyists have easy access to: the corridors of the committees, the Green Room of the Chamber of Deputies, and, consequently, the relaxed "Coffee Break" area. Although the offices are also accessible to those on the Chamber's premises, it is the least likely place to meet the parliamentarian if a meeting is not scheduled in advance. Lobbyists are aware that congresspeople's time is scarce. Therefore, every occasion becomes an opportunity to interact with the congressperson to intervene in the middle of a committee meeting, provide technical or informational support, attempt to schedule a subsequent meeting, or even introduce themselves and exchange contacts with the congressman or his staff.

The dealings with the parliamentary advisors of the deputies are a relevant issue raised in the interviews. In the interpretation of the lobbyists, the parliamentary advisor is the filter for the cabinet: he or she is the one who decides on the demands to take or not take to the knowledge and deliberation of the congressperson. Therefore, of utmost importance is maintaining a cordial relationship with this type of actor, especially if

the lobbyist's demands coincide with the parliamentary agenda. In this case, an ongoing relationship with the parliamentarian, who has previously met some of the lobbyist's demands, is of the utmost importance: if the parliamentarian has helped once, he or she may be able to help on another occasion.

However, in exchange for what does a parliamentarian decide to act according to the orientations of a particular segment? Bauer et al. (2007) provide a more general analysis of parliamentary behavior. For the authors, the parliamentarian determines what he wants to hear and how he will position himself regarding the demands brought to him: he cannot react equally to all of them.

According to the parliamentary advisors interviewed, the demands taken to parliamentarians are quite diffuse. Often, the deputy does not have a direct relationship with the issue; that is, it is not on his or her radar screen, or he or she simply does not have the expertise to address it. The expertise factor can be gauged through his or her legislative activity, such as production, reporting, speeches, and the composition of thematic committees, as well as the unofficial pronouncements published by the press and via personal social networks. The latter vehicles of communication, which have become increasingly important in the national political scene, allow the lobbyist to know how the congressperson thinks about a certain theme.

Similarly, the lack of expertise of the parliamentarian in addressing issues that he or she does not master can be remedied depending on the type of solution the lobbyist demands from the parliamentarian. The *modus operandi* of the lobby under study, since it addresses organized entities, is to provide the parliamentarian with technical information on a subject to either awaken his or her interest in the subject or change his or her understanding of a given theme.

Moreover, the attitudes of a parliamentarian largely control the messages that are sent to him or her since they often excessively determine the electorate's image of him or her. One implication of the fact that the parliamentarian sets his or her own agenda and listens selectively is that he or she can be relatively free, not someone co-opted by interest groups or political parties:

We do this midway between the political preferences of the parliamentarian, the demands that come in, and what kind of thing he is going to act or not because his time is scarce. Sometimes he is on five committees at the same time, which are happening at the same time. Therefore, it is a

tradeoff. If I choose that he is going to mess with a food industry bill in committee A, it means that he is not in committee C messing with something that could be more interesting politically for him (INTERVIEWEE 15, PARLIAMENTARY ADVISOR).

Unanimously, the reports of the parliamentary aides interviewed corroborate what the literature on legislative behavior has been observing throughout the legislatures: no matter how strong the parliamentarian's "mandate flag," the local demands are always prioritized by the office regardless of their nature since parliamentarians depend on their local groups to obtain votes and other advantages and fostering these groups with the benefits they are able to provide as legislators (AMES, PEREIRA; RENNÓ 2011). The highlighted excerpt from the narrative of Interviewee 14 elucidates this dynamic:

The point is because we are a company from [CITY NAME], even though we have nothing to do with Brazil nuts, we deal with the industry very little, but because we are from [CITY NAME], yesterday we were already in contact with the Ministry of Economy asking for urgency in this matter because it is a state matter, so we already have a natural good will because it is a vote. Everything that is a vote, we try to attract to ourselves. You will never say no to people from the state. [...] However, everything that is a vote you try to receive. Therefore, the dynamic of the state is much more comprehensive than Brazil, you know? The more useful that person is to you electorally, the more urgent you are to work. This is often demonstrated by the deputy's commitment to the issue (INTERVIEWEE 14, PARLIAMENTARY ADVISOR).

The characterization of face-to-face lobbying as a high-intensity task can be attributed to the fact that despite the apparent ease of access that a lobbyist may have, depending on the arena in which he or she decides to approach the parliamentarian, it is an activity that is highly dependent on the openness that the parliamentarian is willing to have to a particular demand beyond the localist ones. Here, openness is also interpreted as access, a subject addressed below.

4.2 *Access and Influence*

Despite the apparent differences in the influence that lobbyists may have over members of Congress due to the various agendas behind their demands, they act, in general, driven by a single impulse: to act with the

government to ensure that public policies are aligned with the interests of their companies or clients.

A factor that can be a substantial differential for the success of lobbying is the resources available to lobbyists to act with members of parliament. If an entity has more resources, it is capable of hiring more lobbyists; of structuring a technical team specialized in legislation; of maintaining an office in Brasília, if it is based outside the capital; of mobilizing in various ways, which may involve civil society in favor of a common cause that affects both; and promoting events and dinners or even financing parliamentary fronts. Lobbyists representing large corporations have more advantages than those representing other interest groups, mainly due to the economic impact of their activities on the economy. In the words of Interviewee 08, “[...] especially if you are from the financial sector. The financial sector opens many doors.”

Being in Brasilia is also a strong advantage in terms of access. The possibility of having lobbyists constantly inside the National Congress and technical teams monitor congressional activities in real time means that companies, associations and confederations are always close when a decision is about to be made, which facilitates situations in which the timing of action is a determining factor. The dynamics of the National Congress, in view of the interviewed lobbyists, can only be understood when they experience them on a daily basis.

Living in the Chamber teaches lobbyists much more than the internal regulations themselves: it allows them to understand how power relations are waged in the commissions; get to know the people who are truly responsible for the progress of the demands; make themselves known because of their constant presence in this environment; learn which tools can be used at each moment of the legislative process; and, most importantly, learn who to talk to and, above all, who not to talk to. The excerpt below summarizes the detachment from formal rules:

A lot of this “it’s the house of agreement” stuff, that’s it. The rule holds until there is an agreement that says it doesn’t. And that’s the way it works. In addition, those agreements are not necessarily unseemly. It’s just because they’re not going to let a mega-important issue go wrong [...] (INTERVIEWEE 30, LOBBYIST).

4.3 *The New and Old Lobbies*

Interpersonal relationships are undoubtedly crucial when the variables lobbyist and parliamentarian are at play. However, a fine line exists between what is the fruit of human relations and what is a mere professional relationship. This distinction is even more relevant when comparing the modus operandi of what the interviewed lobbyists call the “new lobby” and the “old lobby,” indicating the positional differences between the “shop floor” and the sector leaders.

Since this theme involves various nuances of the relationship between lobbyists and parliamentarians, it is necessary to interpret it within the multifaceted scope in which this relationship develops. The complexity of addressing each of the aspects is because this relationship is not linear or direct. In other words, the variables that impact the relationship between lobbyists and parliamentarians should not be approached as a strictly followed script but rather as different factors that may or may not be intervening depending on the situation in which access is needed.

New and old antagonisms can be understood under two headings. The first refers to new lobbying strategies in a scenario in which the integrity of parliamentarians is at stake due to corruption scandals and illicit practices arising from the relationship between money and politics. The second refers to the profile of the actors involved, considering their length of professional experience. Interestingly, professional performance in these cases does not always involve political expertise. The account of Interviewee 22 manages to synthesize the pros and cons of both aspects:

For example, what is the difference between me, a government relations professional who tends to specialize in the technique, and the president of the association, who is a union member, has no idea, doesn't understand the legislative process, doesn't understand daily life, is a union member, but is in the same meeting as me defending the same plea. So, what is the difference? Is the know-how the difference? Is the difference in specialization? Because hard, hard, both are doing the same thing. They are both trying to convince the decision-maker of what they believe in. But I am a government relations professional. He is the president of an association. Is he a lobbyist? Is he not a lobbyist? I don't know. I know he has much more access than me because he is the vote (INTERVIEWEE 22, LOBBYIST).

The interviewed lobbyists fit into what we categorize here as high-intensity lobbying. The intensity of the tasks undertaken can be divided

depending on the actor at stake: whether it is the new lobbyist belonging to the “shop floor” of the entity or the old lobbyist, namely, the consulting partner, the president of the association, confederation, or union, or the CEO of the company. This second actor is characterized as a politically symbolic figure despite not always having knowledge of how the legislative *modus operandi* works, a task incumbent on the “shop floor” of his institution.

The things that matter, they are not solved with information. And that’s from my point of view. You usually solve with information what you don’t have interests big enough to stop. That is what is known as “nobody cares.” Nobody cares enough to put the block on the street. Then, you succeed. Then, the work on the factory floor works. That is when I think it gives the impression, for people who are on the factory floor like me, that they are solving something. But, every time the project is large enough to mess with large enough interests, the shop floor stops. We keep doing exactly the same thing, but it is not up to us to decide (INTERVIEWEE 30, LOBBYIST).

Because law firms or consulting firms deal with different clients and, consequently, different interests, the demand for work is not always accompanied by the reasons the client is interested in that theme. In these cases, the work of the “shop floor” is much more specialized: the client has to deal with the most varied aspects of a possible theme that may affect the company precisely because he does not know its specific interests. It is, above all, an intelligence task.

4.4 *The Old Lobby: Money and Deference*

The fact that they have been active in Brasília for longer than the actors of the new lobby means that, consequently, the oldest lobbyists in terms of time of activity are better known in the political arena. These are also the actors who were active in the scenario in which campaign financing by companies was a relevant variable in the relationship between lobbyists and parliamentarians, although not the only determinant (MACHADO 2016).

Several exchanges can take place in congressional relations, which are not always executed in an illicit or sham manner. In the interviewees’ narratives, three modalities exist that are referred to recurrently as bargaining: moral bargaining, vote bargaining, and money bargaining. The moral bargain consists of convincing the parliamentarian that,

depending on his position on a proposition, he may harm a certain class and, consequently, his image with the population. The vote bargain occurs when the parliamentarian has direct relations with a certain agenda or class, which is his electoral base, and the maintenance of the loyalty of this electorate is fostered through his legislative performance in favor of the agendas of that segment. The money bargain, as intuitive as it may be, can be explored at two points: before and after the prohibition of campaign financing by companies.

To gauge the impact that campaign financing has had on congressional relations, the interviewees were asked the following questions: Did the end of corporate campaign financing impact lobbyists' relationships with members of Congress? How much of the lobbyist's work was tied to funding? Did the decision to ban corporate-sourced campaign financing eliminate the influence of economic capital in these relationships? In the postban scenario, what is the weight of economic capital in the relationships between lobbyists and parliamentarians?

When faced with these questions, it is possible to note that some entities officially cannot donate to electoral campaigns, as is the case for unions. Interestingly, the analysis also considered interviewees' previous professional lives as lobbyists, in addition to their experiences in their current positions. The employment rotation of the interviewees is a positive point: most had already moved among consulting firms, private companies, and trade associations. Talking about such a sensitive issue without possibly compromising the image of their institution would be a disincentive to answer. Therefore, the interviewee was free to narrate his impressions and experiences in the field in a more general manner.

The account of Interviewee 05, who dealt directly with large companies, is quite illustrative of the fluidity of the relationships involving money and parliamentarians:

I am very skeptical about this because I think that it is not only the money that the company takes out of its pocket and puts there in the campaign, even more so now that the CNPJ donation is over. There are also indirect relationships. For example, there are many companies that work with tenders. There are many companies that can favor... the favoring is not only with raw money. There is favoritism in different ways, you know? (INTERVIEWEE 05, LOBBYIST).

It is necessary to resume the narrative on the issue of the old and new lobbies, now with an understanding the dichotomy from the perspective of the new ways of lobbying without the direct presence of funding.

4.5 *The New Lobby and Bargaining Methods*

An analysis of the narrative of the lobbyists shows several currencies of exchange in the relationship between lobbyists and parliamentarians. The same strategy used to determine the agendas that are defended by the congressperson, as well as his position, is used to literally determine what the congressperson likes and his affinities. The new lobby bases its bargaining on this basis. Importantly, here, the bargain is not understood as illicit conduct but rather as something that has been achieved on the basis of the conviction and agreement of the party with whom it is negotiating.

Three factors carry considerable weight in this scenario: the name of the entity through which one speaks and, consequently, the strength of this name; the hierarchical level of the representative of the entity with which one speaks; and the type of information with which one provides the parliamentarian. Even if a “shop floor” lobbyist is qualified to speak for the company, his or her strategy is based on the logic of “saliva, sweat and shoes” (INTERVIEWEE 13). He or she needs to be well informed about the preferences of the parliamentarian, about his or her legislative agenda and, above all, about how to provide exact, precise, and succinct information to convince the parliamentarian to enable him or her, based on the material provided, to carry out his or her action. Here, what counts is the law of minimum effort: time is a scarce resource for the parliamentarian. The more practical the lobbyist’s approach is, the greater are the chances that he or she succeeds in his or her endeavor. On the other hand, long-term lobbyists do not need to make such an effort: the time they have been active in the activity makes them well-known people on the scene and strengthens relationships with key players in the decision-making process. Reputation is an extremely relevant variable to the old lobby.

At the hierarchical level, dealing with those who have real power to make decisions within the entity is a differentiating factor in how relationships are built and maintained, as narrated by Interviewee 30:

My president was in the CCJC [Constitution and Justice and Citizenship Committee at the Chamber of Deputies] this week, and I clearly saw 20 deputies going to hug the guy and so on. Then you say, “look at the power of [NAME OF ENTITY].” But my president is not there every day; he has other things to do. I am there. In addition, I don’t have this relationship. In addition, I don’t just come and say that I am from

[NAME OF ENTITY], and it's not like I'm projecting his image onto myself. It's not like that. It's much more distant; it's much more difficult. Therefore, if I could say what weighs more today, the real power weighs much more. My president's actions are completely different than my actions because my president means either vote or money. In addition, there I am not necessarily talking about money in kind. I am talking about all of these technical things that the guy gives that cost money and you don't do because you have neither people nor time. In addition, people and time is money (INTERVIEWEE 30, LOBBYIST).

Information is one of the main currencies of exchange within the legislative branch, especially in the 56th Legislature, in which most of the members are considered newcomers (challengers) to the legislature and public life: the lack of knowledge about the legislative process among members and their teams, some of whom were selected through a selection process and have no previous experience with the dynamics of the National Congress, makes the work of lobbying to talk to these parliamentarians much more meticulous. Here, the information must obey some elementary criteria: it has to be technical but not technical enough to be incomprehensible by those who are not familiar with the topic; it also needs to be direct and communicate what is intended in a clear and objective manner. The information needs to be presented succinctly, preferably accompanied by didactic elements and, if possible, point out proposals, suggestions, and solutions to a given problem. The parliamentarian or his or her staff may even be willing to comply with a given legislative demand, provided that it is not burdensome for them, demanding time from their staff, or damaging to their public image, as summarized by Interviewee 14:

There are people who ask to remove an item from the agenda. "I am a lobbyist, and I want you to withdraw an agenda item. Man, I am (*sic passim*) running. I have my cell phone in my hand, trying to solve other things. Wednesday morning, all that running around. If you don't come to me with the request ready, for me to put in [the deputy's] hand for him to sign, I won't do it because I have other things to do, unless I like you very much. In addition, then it is a matter of me or, again, that business of mapping out who are people of interest. If I don't like you very much, I won't make the effort. Therefore, the more chewed up the business is, the more qualified is the work that comes to you the better" (INTERVIEWEE 14, PARLIAMENTARY ADVISOR).

Broadly, the information provided by lobbyists can impact the decisions of parliamentarians in two ways: by causing them to either maintain or reinforce the opinions they hold on a given agenda. In other words, the parliamentarian can ignore an alternative proposal on some public policy brought to him by lobbyists depending on the impact of that proposed change on public opinion and his electorate; alternatively, he can use the technical information to support a position already taken in that direction, making the proposal more likely to succeed.

Public image and its visibility are factors dear to parliamentarians, especially in the 56th Legislature, given the strength that new media have been acquiring since the 2018 elections. The ease of vertical accountability provided by the instantaneousness of social media has caused parliamentarians to redouble their concern for their public image. Moreover, the need to always be in the spotlight is a way to report that they are politically active.

Lobbying structures a large part of its strategies based on this new type of behavior observed in parliamentarians. Parliamentarians are basically driven by three objectives: reelection, good public policy, and influence in the legislature (FENNO 1973). Above all, the vote is important to the parliamentarian. To vote, he needs to be responsive to his electorate, showing above all that he is acting legislatively and taking prominent positions within the parliament. For this, he needs visibility. Lobbyists make this visibility possible for parliamentarians in different ways, as narrated by Interviewee 13:

After private financing was prohibited, I think it even improved [the relationship between lobbyists and parliamentarians]. People started to listen more, at least. Since you don't want to tell me to give you money, what can I do? Currently, it is more like this: how can we provide a platform for the congressman to make his film, how can we give him a subject so that he can do well with his base or how can we do something for him to show his services? (INTERVIEWEE 13).

Financial capital has thus taken on new facets within the relationships between lobbyists and parliamentarians. This is an analysis that cannot be disconnected from the variables of renown, reputation, and strength of the entity, which also goes through the social acceptance that the institution has in society and the image it conveys. In addition to presenting the entity as part of an economic system that defends its own interests, part of the effort of lobbyists is also to show the social role of the institution, especially regarding large companies. Common practice for large

companies to which the interviewees in this industry are linked is to have, under their umbrella, nonprofit institutions focused on social causes. They register their lobbyists with the First Secretariat to work in the Chamber of Deputies even in the name of these institutions or foundations. For parliamentarians to have their image linked to an institution that does not have a good social reputation is not beneficial. Excerpts from the reports of Interviewees 25 and 32 express this dynamic:

It depends on how the image of the institution is being seen at the moment by the parliamentarian, right? For example, in [YEAR], we had a large institutional image problem that affected the religious group within the institution within Congress. [...] And then we had to reapproximate with all these parliamentarians. [...] What hurts us is our image, which is not very well liked (INTERVIEWEE 25).

Everything that involves the name of the company generates a giant uproar inside, even more so in this government. We are even having a hard time with this because the president's political position is very negative toward the company. [...] Therefore, because there are a lot of repercussions of us acting, currently more negative, we avoid exposing ourselves as much as possible in this performance. Our actions are as low profile as possible inside the company (INTERVIEWEE 32).

On the other hand, having one's image linked to an entity that has a positive social impact is beneficial to the image of parliamentarians. Aware of this, these entities offer visibility for the parliamentarian as bargaining chips. Promoting events in the constituency of the parliamentarian and enabling his participation in other events such as congresses and meetings focused on a particular class are examples of how the company can give visibility to the parliamentarian.

The offering of theme breakfasts, lunches, and dinners by the entities is an old practice but has gained more strength as a strategy to approach parliamentarians: these are informal opportunities for companies to show their strength and build or strengthen ties with parliamentarians. The partnerships between parliamentarians and institutions for social projects, such as the promotion of courses aimed at social training for a certain locality, usually in the state of origin of the parliamentarian, or the establishment of a plant of a certain company in the electoral stronghold of the parliamentarian, are also bargaining chips used by lobbyists. After all, business generates jobs. Therefore, linking a parliamentarian to such initiatives has a positive impact on his or her electorate, thus impacting

his or her political capital. Importantly, without financial capital, none of these actions can be carried out.

Small entities, on the other hand, despite representing sectors of the economy, may not have enough financial capital to bear the expenses of holding events but can provide visibility by publicizing the actions of the parliamentarian in their institutional social networks and in advertising materials, such as sectoral magazines. Strategies exist that are common to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other groups representing civil society. Although they are not within the scope of this study, these are interest groups with increasing activity within the National Congress and have social networks as major allies: they use them to mobilize public opinion in favor of their agendas. The power of mobilization through social networks can be an important indicator of the strength of an entity that, although it may not have the financial capital to mobilize, can mobilize human capital. For parliamentarians, allying themselves with the agendas of this type of actor can be beneficial since the mobilization of human capital can be subsequently converted into electoral mobilization.

5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Different from the US experience, in which lobbying activities are traceable, in Brazil, the differentiation in the interests that move each one of the segments, depending on their nature, is not something that can be clearly distinguished. According to what was ascertained through interviews with lobbyists working in the National Congress, there is a relevant difference between the types of interests depending on how they are internally organized by the entities. Organized interests, for example, are different from structured interests. A group may be characterized as representing a certain agenda. However, it may not have such interests structured in such a way that they can truly achieve their final objective with political decision-makers.

As gauged by the interviewees' narratives, the structuring of interests goes through back office and corporate governance activities, which provides predictability to lobbyists when performing high-intensity tasks in the legislature. Therefore, the compliance laws of each company emphasize the limits of the lobbyist's actions, especially regarding political bargaining, that is, what he or she can offer to the congressperson in exchange for help with a certain plea. Much more than they are knowing what may or may not be interpreted as a differential benefit offered to the

parliamentarian, lobbyists are concerned about how their actions and relations with parliamentarians will be characterized within the compliance of the entity under which they are linked.

Although the proposition that aims to regulate lobbying in Brazil intends to create stricter rules for the relationship between lobbyists and parliamentarians, according to the interviewees, the rules of compliance always have the final word since, above the political interests or the danger of committing any act that may be characterized as anti-democratic, is the name of the entity that the lobbyist is representing. Tarnishing the name of the entity through noncompliant attitudes is a risk, including personal risk, to the lobbyist's career within the entity and, consequently, to his professional reputation.

Through interviews with lobbyists, it was determined that congressional relations are, above all, human relations. In fact, the term lobby, in its original definition,⁴ has interpersonal relations as its first configuration. Thus, the links created by lobbyists with parliamentarians and, especially, the entire legislative framework that surrounds them, through actions characterized as high-intensity tasks, mean that access and influence are not totally dissociated. Therefore, congressional relations are configured as personal relations in which symbolic variables, such as deference, gratitude, and reputation, may become more relevant than money after the prohibition of campaign financing by large donors. Therefore, such variables are concepts to be explored in further studies.

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⁴ The term lobby refers to the lobby of the House of Commons (United Kingdom), a meeting place for politicians and people who used personal relationships to pursue their interests with decision-makers. According to Ornstein and Elder (1978), the first use of the term lobby, as used today, dates from 1820.

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