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# Twenty-First-Century Geopolitics: Fluidity Everywhere

## Immanuel Wallerstein

The most fluid arena in the modern world-system, which is in structural crisis, is arguably the geopolitical arena. No country comes even near to dominating this arena. The last hegemonic power, the United States, has long acted like a helpless giant. It is able to destroy but not to control the situation. It still proclaims rules that others are expected to follow, but it can be and is ignored.

There is now a long list of countries that act as they deem fit despite pressures from other countries to perform in specified ways. A look around the globe will readily confirm the inability of the United States to get its way.

The two countries other than the United States that have the strongest military power are Russia and China. Once, they had to move carefully to avoid the reprimand of the United States. The cold-war rhetoric described two competing geopolitical camps. Reality was different. The rhetoric simply masked the relative effectiveness of U.S. hegemony.

Now it is virtually the other way around. The United States has to move carefully vis-à-vis Russia and China to avoid losing all ability to obtain their co-operation on the geopolitical priorities of the United States.

Look next at the so-called strongest allies of the United States. We can quibble about which one is the "closest" ally, or had been for a long while. Take your pick between Great Britain and Israel or even, some would say, Saudi Arabia. Or make a list of erstwhile reliable partners of the United States, such as Japan and South Korea, Canada, Brazil, and Germany. Call them "number two's."

Now look at the behaviour of all these countries in the last twenty years. I say "twenty" because the new reality predates the regime of Donald Trump, although he has undoubtedly worsened the ability of the United States to get its way.

Take the situation on the Korean peninsula. The United States wants North Korea to renounce nuclear weapons. This is a regularly repeated objective of the United States. This was true when Bush and Obama were president. It has

continued to be true with Trump. The difference is the mode of seeking to achieve this objective. Previously, U.S. actions utilized a degree of diplomacy in addition to sanctions. This reflected the understanding that too many U.S. public threats were self-defeating. Trump believes the opposite. He sees the public threats as the basic weapon in his armoury.

However, Trump has different days. On day one he menaces North Korea with devastation. But on day two he makes his primary target Japan and South Korea. Trump says they are providing insufficient financial support for the costs deriving from a continuing armed U.S. presence there. So, in the to and fro between the two U.S. positions, neither Japan nor South Korea have the sense that they are sure to be protected.

Japan and South Korea have dealt with their fears and uncertainty in opposite ways. The current Japanese regime seeks to secure U.S. guarantees by offering total public support of the (shifting) U.S. tactics. It hopes thereby to please the United States sufficiently that Japan will receive the guarantees it wants to have.

The current South Korean regime is using a quite different tactic. It is pursuing very openly closer diplomatic relations with North Korea, very much against U.S. wishes. It hopes thereby to please the North Korean regime sufficiently that North Korea will respond by agreeing not to escalate the conflict.

Whether either of these tactical approaches will stabilize the U.S. position is totally unsure. What is sure is that the United States is not in command. Both Japan and South Korea are quietly pursuing nuclear armaments to strengthen their position since they cannot know what the next day will bring on the U.S. front. The fluidity of the U.S. position weakens further U.S. power because of the reactions it generates.

Or take the even more knotty situation in the so-called Islamic world going from the Maghreb to Indonesia, and particularly in Syria. Each major power in the region (or dealing with the region) has a different prime "enemy" (or enemies). For Saudi Arabia and Israel, it is at the moment Iran. For Iran it is the United States. For Egypt it is the Muslim Brotherhood. For Turkey it is the Kurds. For the Iraqi regime, it is the Sunnis. For Italy, it is Al Qaeda, which is making it impossible to control the flow of migrants. And so on.

How about for the United States? Who knows? That is the nub of fear for everyone else. The United States seems at the moment to have two quite different priorities. On day one, it is North Korean acquiescence with U.S. imperatives. On day two it is ending U.S. involvement in the East Asian region, or at least reducing its financial outlays. As a result, it is increasingly ignored.

We could draw similar pictures for other regions or sub-regions of the world. The key lesson to draw is that the decline of the United States has not been followed

by another hegemon. It has simply folded into the overall chaotic zigzagging, the fluidity of which we spoke.

This of course is the great danger. Nuclear accidents, or mistakes, or folly suddenly become what is on top of everyone's mind, and especially that of the world's armed forces. How to deal with this danger is the most meaningful short-term geopolitical debate.

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(c) Immanuel Wallerstein  Courtesy: Agence Global

Immanuel Wallerstein

# US Empire: Global Imperialism and Internal Colonialism

## James Petras

### Introduction

**T**he dynamic of contemporary US imperialism is built around two structural features: the drive toward global military expansion, conquest and occupation backed by the intensification of exploitation of domestic labour and pillage of the domestic economy.

In this paper we will challenge the notion that overseas economic exploitation has transferred income to 'buy-off' the domestic working and middle classes, in the course of consolidating imperial hegemony. We will argue that the empire is no longer based on robust overseas growth but rather the empire today is a costly and declining proposition. We will proceed to outline the costs of militarised imperialism and the relative economic decline of the empire. We will then turn to analysing how the US imperial state has resorted to financing the empire though its regressive tax, regulator and budgetary policies. We will conclude by refuting the notion that the US turn to protectionism will revive the US economic empire.

### Empire: Past and Present

From the end of WW II to the end of the Cold War, the US empire was driven by the wealth and power of the multi-national corporations to extract and transfer profits to the domestic economy and sustain a 'trickle' down effect on a partially unionized labour force, and to fund its military guardians of global capital.

The US dominated world trade, and led global investments, as well as acting as the leading force creating the international financial institutions (World Bank, the IMF). Free trade and neoliberal doctrine flowed from the 'Washington Consensus' designed to induce the denationalization and privatization of targeted national economies around the world.

US empire further ensured global ascendance with the demise of the USSR, the absorption of the ex-Soviet client states and the pillage of the Russian economy.

James Petras

Washington declared that the world had become a 'unipolar state', in which the US was the sole dominant power, free to invade, conquer and exploit any rival.

To sustain and further its global military dominance, Washington declared a world-wide 'war on terrorism' which accentuated the military dimensions of 'unipolarity'. The US empire was redefined through its military capacity to overthrow independent regimes, to carry on multiple wars, and to simultaneously fund overseas economic conquests while maintaining dynamic domestic growth.

The empire builders pillaged Russia but failed to build a viable productive satellite. Instead it poured billions of dollars into expanding NATO to Russian borders. In contrast, Germany profitably incorporated the post-Communist economies into the European Union.

The empire builders unipolar vision led them to endless billion-dollar wars, which did not finance themselves and reduced the US global economic presence as a source of profits. The empire's pursuit of the unipolar world, through global wars 'on terror', led to a highly militarized imperial state which greatly reduced US economic competitiveness and the exponential growth of its commercial deficit.

In response to military demands for state financing, MNC sought lower taxes, cheap labour and lucrative overseas markets. De-industrialisation was accompanied by the financialisation of the US economy.

The imperial state was a two-faced Janus: militarized foreign policy and financialised domestic policy. Military induced deficits and multiple and inconclusive wars led empire builders to make further demands on the economy.

Financialisation led to a deep economic crisis in 2008/09 and a decade long trillion-dollar bailout.

The financial-military empire was a cost not a benefit to the economic empire. Imperial empire builders found few overseas 'partners' willing or able to share the costs. The empire builders turned to intensifying the exploitation, of the domestic labour market, reallocating the federal budget and reducing taxes for economic elite. The US redefined empire building as exploiting the domestic economy to militarise the empire.

Washington debated two parallel options: one based on further internationalizing the US economy hoping to regain markets and capital; the second option was turning the US into a 'fortress Americana' by creating walls around a protectionist state and preparing a 'trade war'. Both options depended on lowering labour costs, concentrating wealth and reducing labour and welfare.

President Obama opted for 'internationalisation', linking economic and military imperialism. President Trump chose a protectionist-militarist strategy designed to bring overseas capital to the US domestic market through military and

trade threats in order to intimidate adversaries. Both approaches were basically premised on domestic colonialism.

*The Elements of Internal Colonialism*

The run-up to the financial crises of 2008-09 and the trillion-dollar bail-out led to the pillage of the state and deepened the financialisation of the economy. The large-scale transfer of profits from domestic manufacturing to overseas' markets and to banking, real estate and insurance (FIRE) sectors contributed to the growing polarization of the economy and deepening social inequalities.

Theses shifts in the economy were accompanied by regressive changes in the tax burden: the multi-nationals avoided hundreds of billions in taxes through overseas tax havens (*Financial Times 3/12/18*) and paid less domestic taxes as the effective tax rate declined (*Financial Times 3/12/18*).

National states competed to lower taxes for the elite which led to reducing welfare spending; deregulation of the banking and energy sector led to the rise of speculative capital.

Global capital grew at the expense of the domestic economy; the growth of financial capital reduced the income of the working and middle class; costly imperial wars increased the commercial deficit; low paid, temporary employment in the services became the norm.

Health and environmental conditions deteriorated. Empire building intensified and domestic 'under development' to finance a rising commercial deficit and a declining empire. Popular dissent grew.

The imperial state faced two choices to further marginalise the majority or to turn toward a protectionist policy which in effect sought to direct mass discontent outwardly toward economic and military competitors.

The Democrats sought to blame Russia, the Republicans pointed to China and Iran.

The election of Trump led to the adoption of a policy of deepening deregulation, increasing the concentration of wealth, massive tax reductions for the MNC , a trade war for local capital, a protectionist policy for labour unions and a war policy to satisfy the ideological warlords.

The Obama regime's resort to military and financial imperialism based on internal colonialism had reached its limits. The Trump regime sought to externalise enemies, first and foremost directing its "national imperialism" against China.

*President Trump: China and the Commercial Deficit*

The Trump regime backed by the Democrats sought to sustain at militarised imperialism by fabricating a Russian war threat in Syria, Ukraine, UK (the toxin

spy caper) The Democrats promoted the Russian conspiracy to control the US presidential elections.

Trump sought to avoid facing the impending failure of its trickle down economic policy, by blaming China, of unfairly exploiting the US via one-sided trade, investment and technology relations - all leading to large trade deficits.

Contrary to Trump, the trade deficit has everything to do with the perverse economic structure and policies of the US, which its ruling elites created .

The US trade deficit is a result of the MNC moving to China and exporting back to the US. US exports from China account for nearly one-third of the deficit. Washington is unable and unwilling to coerce or attract the MNC to return to the US even with generous tax incentives.

Secondly, the trade deficit is a result of growing US military spending in multiple and continuing wars, instead of increasing investment in export sectors. In contrast, China increases its public investments in high growth export sectors which add value and secure new markets.

Thirdly, the US restricts exports of high tech and military technology to China to further the interests of the warlord economy, leading to the loss of markets and the ability to lower the deficits.

Fourthly, the US restricts Chinese investments in sectors that would finance export industries that could rebalance trade relying on the fake argument of 'national security'.

Fifthly, US, MNC are allowed - receive incentives from the state- to retain 2.5 trillion dollars abroad in tax havens, thus reducing the capacity of the US to finance its export sector and 'balance trade' with China (and the rest of the world).

Sixthly, the US accuses Beijing of insisting that US corporations which invest in China transfer technology. This is a win-win situation: US MNC reap profits, China gains know-how. If the US invested their profits in constantly upgrading its technology it could continue to retain markets, and profits and its export advantages.

In a word China is not 'cheating' it is learning and growing; it's up to the US to do the same, instead of taking profit and moving to tax havens and the financial sector.

The US threat of a trade war against China will devastate US exports in technology, transport, agriculture and advanced industries, while undermining the domestic consumer sectors.

The net result will be the reduction of employment, income and trade. The US will have to squeeze the domestic income to sustain the primacy of its military and financial elite - provoking greater domestic discontent.

One thing is clear: in the face of a trade war China will adapt to its global infrastructure investments and secure alternative trading partners - it will survive a trade war.

## Conclusion

US military and financial imperialism was a temporary and short lived success based on the demise of the USSR, and a mono-polar world, and the launch of the global war on terror . With the military rise of Russia, and China's dynamic economic growth, these short term advantages disappeared and all the vulnerabilities resounded. Trillion-dollar bank bailouts and prolonged military losses undercut whatever temporary advantages existed. The pillage of the domestic economy deepened domestic discontent. Trump style "national" imperialism increased profits but lost trade wars.

A speculative economy, a plundered public treasury and a militarized empire cannot restructure the economy not even with trade war rhetoric and trillion dollar tax handouts. Time is running out President Trump; the economy is preparing to plunge and the voters are turning their backs.

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# Trump versus the Rest

## Prabhat Patnaik

**D**onald Trump's leaving the G-7 summit without budging an iota on protectionism is indicative of the disunity among the leading capitalist countries on the strategy to overcome the capitalist crisis. Trump has decided that the U.S. would go its own way, by enlarging the fiscal deficit, not just for giving tax concessions to the corporates, which would have little demand-stimulating effect anyway, but also for increasing government expenditure which would have this effect, and at the same time by protecting the domestic market.

These two strands of Trump's strategy have to go together. In fact in the absence of protectionism, any fiscal stimulus within the U.S. economy, such as what larger government expenditure would provide, would leak out of that country by creating larger import demand for other countries' goods, in which case the U.S. would be generating employment not at home but abroad, and also incurring a debt to those very countries for doing so.But a larger fiscal deficit that is combined with protectionism ensures that jobs are created at home and no external debt is incurred for the purpose.

Trump can afford to undertake this strategy because of the position of the U.S. in the capitalist world. Any other country pursuing such a strategy of enlarged fiscal deficit along with protectionism would witness an outflow of finance as the "investors' confidence" in that country would be undermined. But the U.S. is on a different footing: its currency is still considered "as good as gold" despite not being officially so ordained (as it was under the Bretton Woods System); and it constitutes for a variety of reasons the home base of finance, from where, unless there are strong provocations, finance would not like to move out. Trump is thus exploiting this position of the U.S. as the Monseigneur of the capitalist world, together no doubt with some increase in the U.S. interest rate, to push through a strategy for U.S. revival alone, with no thought whatsoever for the revival of the capitalist world as a whole.

What is wrong with this strategy is not the usual baseless claim like "protectionism is bad", that "free trade is good", or that this strategy represents "nationalism" which is reactionary as opposed to "internationalism" which is progressive. What is wrong with this strategy is that it would not work even for the U.S. (though it may appear at present to be succeeding), let alone for the capitalist world as a whole.

This whole discourse about "nationalism" versus "internationalism" is not only analytically wrong, because these terms cannot be defined without reference to their class content ("nationalism" for instance is not one homogeneous category and Ho Chi Minh's "nationalism" is quite different from that of Hitler); it is also ethically unfounded: if higher levels of employment could be achieved everywhere, together with higher levels of welfare expenditure, by each country following a "nationalist" strategy, as compared to a situation where they are trying in vain to pursue an "internationalist" strategy, then cavilling at such a "nationalist" strategy is clearly indefensible.

At present the Trump strategy, many point out, appears to be working in the U.S. The unemployment rate is officially down to around 4 percent. Even though the work-force participation rate continues to be below what it was before the 2008 crisis, so that, on the assumption of an unchanged work-force participation rate, the unemployment rate would be just over 6 percent, this rate itself, they suggest, represents a decline compared to a few years ago. At the same time, though Trump has used the fiscal deficit to please the capitalists through tax-cuts, he has not, they suggest, stinted too much on social spending. And yet, notwithstanding these supposed boom conditions, the inflation rate is quite low, and the dollar continues to be strong.

Let us, for argument's sake, assume that all these claims about the success of trump's strategy are true, though a moment's reflection would show that all of them cannot possibly be simultaneously true. It is impossible in other words to have a co-existence, except only transitorily, of the following four characteristics: a low unemployment rate, a large fiscal deficit, a policy of protectionism, and a low inflation rate. The first three of these would cause excess demand pressures that would push up the inflation rate, which would no longer remain low. But let us assume that all four claimed features are true.

But all these features are only the first round results of the Trump strategy. Other countries, those hit by U.S. protectionism, would not just sit back and accept the increase in unemployment which the U.S. strategy of going it alone is exporting to them. They would soon start taking offsetting measures through larger fiscal deficits of their own together with the necessary protectionism. In their case however such measures would entail a flight of finance, as they lack the Monseigneur status

that the U.S. enjoys. They would therefore either have to put controls on financial flows, i.e. "capital controls"; or jack up their interest rates to entice finance not to leave their shores.

Capital controls however would strike at the very root of the current globalization. It is noteworthy that even Trump with all his protectionist measures against the imports of goods and services, has not put restrictions against the free flows of finance. Likewise, the other capitalist countries would be loath to restricting capital flows across their borders. They would therefore resort to interest rate hikes to prevent any outflows of finance.

Such hikes in interest rates would nullify to an extent their efforts at expanding demand to bring down increase in unemployment because of U.S. protectionism; and it would also bring about a corresponding increase in the U.S. interest rates. What appears at present to be a "trade war" started by Trump, and is being discussed, and derided by his opponents, as such, would soon take the form of competitive hikes in interest rates, of which the current rise in the U.S. interest rates would have been the first symptom. And such hikes would nullify for all capitalist countries taken together, including for the United States, whatever gain in employment an enlarged fiscal deficit and protectionism might have caused.

What the current conjuncture clearly shows is that it is impossible to overcome the capitalist crisis without impeding free global financial flows, which means shaking off the hegemony of globalized finance. The Trump strategy does not aim at shaking off this hegemony; and unless the other capitalist countries are willing to shake off this hegemony, they would all be engaged in a competitive struggle of interest rate hikes which would collectively entail no improvement in the situation of the world capitalist economy.

There are only two possible logical ways in which the world capitalist economy can come out of its current protracted crisis. One is for a co-ordinated fiscal stimulus by all advanced countries, of the kind that Keynes and a group of German trade unionists had suggested during the Great Depression of the 1930s. This of course would be stoutly opposed by international finance capital, which opposes all direct State activism that does not work through itself; but unity among the leading nation-States, which could, through such unity, act as a surrogate world State, could conceivably overcome this opposition. But nobody in G-7 is even talking about this strategy, which means that it is not on the agenda of the capitalist world. Any attempt at pursuing it, since it would have to overcome the opposition of international finance capital, which capitalism is incapable of doing, would necessarily have to entail a transition beyond capitalism, i. e. a transcendence of capitalism in the very process of overcoming its crisis.

The second logical way is if particular countries decided to go it alone, as Trump is trying to do. But for this to succeed, capital controls would have to be

put into place, for, otherwise, the prevention of capital outflows as a fall-out of such going it alone (which would necessarily require fiscal activism that finance is always opposed to) would push the country, and its rivals, into competitive interest rate hikes, which subvert, both individually for particular countries and collectively for the capitalist world as a whole, the prospects of economic revival.

Trump's apparent economic success with the U.S. economy, if at all there is any success, which itself is doubtful, represents therefore only the first stage in this competitive struggle; this success is bound to get negated as others react to his moves. Since neither Trump nor his rivals are even thinking of any restrictions on capital flows, which would undermine the hegemony of international finance capital and is ruled out for this reason, the structural crisis of capitalism is bound to continue, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary.

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Courtesy:  News Click

# Indo-Pacific and India's Emerging Role

## K. M. Seethi

**I**s India sliding itself into the world capitalist centre as a 'sub-imperialist' country fulfilling the 'responsibilities' of the imperialist core? Going beyond the conventional Leninist conceptualisation, India, an emerging economy with a credo of neoliberal aspirations and militarism, appears to be exercising a particular form of imperialism over its partners in the Global South, by fulfilling the role of a sub-imperialist power in the increased coordination/collaboration between imperial forces. The latest in the series of such engagements could be seen in India's incorporation into the 'grand strategy' of the United States in the Indo-Pacific region. Here the conventional economic theory of imperialism could be effectively supplemented by concepts which take into account 'imperialism by delegation.'

The Indo-Pacific Business Forum held in Washington in 2018 witnessed this coronation ceremony—of elevating India's status to "Tier-1 of the 'Strategic Trade Authorization' (STA) regime. The Trump Administration already acknowledged that the American investment in the Indo-Pacific region "is good for America, good for business, and good for the world." The Administration announced "$113.5 million in immediate funding to seed new strategic initiatives in the Indo-Pacific region." Announcing "a range of new economic cooperation efforts with Japan, Australia, India, and Mongolia," the Department of Commerce "granted Strategic Trade Authorization Tier 1 status to India, enabling American companies to export more high-technology items under a streamlined license exception" (US, White House 2018).

It was the Secretary State Michael R. Pompeo—while addressing the Business Forum to launch the "economic and commercial pillars" of the Trump Administration's Indo-Pacific strategy—who emphasized "the critical role of the U.S. private sector in ensuring a sustainable, financially responsible economic future for the Indo-Pacific." Pompeo also announced strengthened support for important regional institutions in the Indo-Pacific, including the Association

of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and U.S.-ASEAN Connect, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and the Lower Mekong Initiative, along with a first-ever contribution to the Indian Ocean Rim Association (US, Department of State 2018b).

Following Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross's participation in the Indo-Pacific Business Forum, the Department of Commerce announced its plan "to dedicate  its upcoming flagship events" to Indo-Pacific themes which included "Trade Winds: India" which  will take place in New Delhi in 2019. It will be a conference and trade mission to India and other surrounding countries where "U.S. exporters will meet with decision makers on opportunities they have learned." Ross also announced that "India's status as a Major Defense Partner will allow it to receive more U.S. high technology and military items without individual export licenses.  India will be moved into Tier-1 of the Department of Commerce's Strategic Trade Authorization (STA) license exception. STA Tier-1 treatment, comparable to NATO allies, will expand the scope of exports subject to the Export Administration Regulations (EAR) that can be made to India without individual licenses." This regulatory change is expected to "enhance the bilateral defense trade relationship and result in a greater volume of U.S. exports to India.  Over the last seven years, approximately $9.7 billion worth of licensed exports to India may now eligible for export under this license exception" (Ibid).

In effect, India's status as a major defense/strategic partner would lead to its becoming a junior partner of the US imperialism, comparable to its NATO allies. This obviously reflects India's membership in three of the four multilateral export control regimes, as well the development of its national export control system. The American companies can now more efficiently export a much wider range of products to Indian high technology and military customers.  India's new status will benefit U.S. manufacturers immensely, while continuing to fulfill the 'strategic responsibilities' of Washington in the Indo-Pacific region.

India welcomed the announcement about the Trump administration's "decision to move India into Tier-1 of the Strategic Trade Authorization license exception."  Hoping that the new step would further facilitate India-U.S. trade and technology collaboration in defence and high technology areas, the Ministry of External Affairs statement said that it was "a logical culmination to India's designation as a Major Defense Partner of the U.S. and a reaffirmation of India's impeccable record as a responsible member of the concerned multilateral export control regimes" (India, Ministry of External Affairs 2018b).

It may be noted that way back in June 2016, Washington had designated India as a "Major Defence Partner" with a view to enhancing defence trade and technology sharing with India to a level proportionate to that of its closest strategic partners

and allies. India's relations with the U.S have, over years, transformed into a 'global strategic partnership' based on "increasing convergence of interests on bilateral, regional and global issues." The emphasis placed by India on a range of issues has facilitated the process to reinvigorate bilateral ties and enhance cooperation during the first two summits of Prime Minister Modi and President Obama in September 2014 and January 2015 respectively. The summit level joint statement issued in June 2016 called the India-U.S. relationship an "Enduring Global Partners in the 21st Century (India, Ministry of External Affairs 2017).

There were already more than 50 bilateral dialogue mechanisms between India and the U.S. The first two meetings of the Strategic and Commercial Dialogue were held in Washington DC in September 2015 and New Delhi in August 2016. This apex-level dialogue has added a commercial component to the traditional pillars of bilateral relations on which the erstwhile Strategic Dialogue of Foreign Ministers had focused (Ibid). Defence-strategic partnership has emerged as a major pillar of India-U.S. relations with the signing of 'New Framework for India-U.S. Defense Relations' in 2005 and the resulting dynamics in defence trade, joint exercises, personnel exchanges, collaboration and cooperation in maritime security, and exchanges between each of the three services. The Defence Framework Agreement was also renewed for another decade in June 2015.

India participated in Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise in July-August 2016 for the second time with an Indian Naval Frigate. Bilateral dialogue mechanisms in the field of defence include Defence Policy Group (DPG), Defence Joint Working Group (DJWG), Defence Procurement and Production Group (DPPG), Senior Technology Security Group (STSG), Joint Technical Group (JTG), Military Cooperation Group (MCG), and Service-to-Service Executive Steering Groups (ESGs).The agreements signed in recent years include Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Association (LEMOA) signed in August 2016, Fuel Exchange Agreement signed in November 2015,Technical Agreement (TA) on information sharing on White (merchant) Shipping signed in May 2016 and the Information Exchange Annexe (IEA) on Aircraft Carrier Technologies signed in June 2016 (India, Ministry of External Affairs 2017).

In 2017, the aggregate worth of defence acquisition from U.S. Defence had crossed over US$ 13 billion. The two countries also started a Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) with a view to simplifying technology transfer policies and exploring possibilities of co-development and co-production to invest the defence relationship with strategic value. The DTTI Working Group and its Task Force are expected to "expeditiously evaluate and decide on unique projects and technologies which would have a transformative impact on bilateral defence relations and enhance India's defence industry and military capabilities." During

Prime Minister Modi's visit to the U.S. in June 2016, the U.S. recognised India as a 'Major Defence Partner,' which committed Washington "to facilitate technology sharing with India to a level commensurate with that of its closest allies and partners, and industry collaboration for defence co-production and co-development" (India, Ministry of External Affairs 2017). The latest one taken at the Indo-Pacific Business forum is a continuation of this process of India's incorporation into the American grand strategy in the Asia-Pacific region, rechristened as 'Indo-Pacific' with a view to containing China and Russia.

Plausibly, the new partnership is a clear indication that Modi's talk about 'strategic autonomy' is a travesty of facts and his characterization of the "free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific Region" at the Shangri La Dialogue in Singapore (India, Ministry of External Affairs 2018a) is nothing but a threshold-magic of sub-imperialism. The US had already decided to recast its strategic interests in the Pacific Rim by reshaping the geopolitical layout put in place by the Obama administration—'rebalancing.' The 'rebalance'—initially called 'pivot'—implied that Washington would play an activist role in the 'Asia-Pacific' region—strengthening diplomatic ties, promoting a regional free trade agreement, and bolstering military and strategic relations with many Asian clients (US, White House 2014). However, during President Trump visit to the region in November 2017, he insisted on having a different strategic layout of the "free and open Indo-Pacific" (US, White House 2017a)—with a view to offsetting the Obama formulation. The politico-security implications of this 'shift' of emphasis have been explained by the Trump administration in the document National Security Strategy of the United States, December 2017 (USNSS 2017). The USNSS 2017 is more explicit in its anxieties on China and Russia:

> China and Russia want to shape a world antithetical to U.S. values and interests. China seeks to displace the United States in the Indo-Pacific region, expand the reaches of its state-driven economic model, and reorder the region in its favour. Russia seeks to restore its great power status and establish spheres of influence near its borders. The intentions of both nations are not necessarily fixed. ..For decades, U.S. policy was rooted in the belief that support for China's rise and for its integration into the post-war international order would liberalize China. Contrary to our hopes, China expanded its power at the expense of the sovereignty of others. China gathers and exploits data on an unrivaled scale and spreads features of its authoritarian system, including corruption and the use of surveillance. It is building the most capable and well-funded military in the world, after our own....Russia aims to weaken U.S. influence in the world and divide us from our allies and partners. Russia views the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and European Union (EU) as threats. Russia is investing in new military capabilities, including nuclear systems that remain the most significant existential threat to the United States... (US, White House 2017b: 25).

In a few weeks time, the Trump Administration underscored the role of India in the emerging US strategy in the Indo-Pacific. On 2 April 2018, Alex N. Wong,

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Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs said: The term 'Indo-Pacific' "acknowledges the historical reality and the current-day reality that South Asia, and in particular India, plays a key role in the Pacific and in East Asia and in Southeast Asia. That's been true for thousands of years and it's true today." It is "in our interest, the U.S. interest, as well as the interests of the region, that India play an increasingly weighty role in the region. India is a nation that is invested in a free and open order. It is a democracy. It is a nation that can bookend and anchor the free and open order in the Indo-Pacific region, and it's our policy to ensure that India does play that role, does become over time a more influential player in the region." "India for sure has the capability and potential to play a more – a more weighty role. But the role is on all fronts, whether it's security, economic and diplomatic" (US, Department of State 2018a).

The recognition at the Indo-Pacific forum that India's role is commensurate with the status of America's NATO allies is obviously an indication that the 'strategic autonomy' that the Prime Minister Modi has been talking about is a diplomatic chimera to masquerade the new equations in global power configurations where India has already become a delegated sub-imperialist power. The forthcoming 2+2 dialogues between the foreign and defence ministers of India and the U.S will witness the increasing accommodation of the American interests in the Indo-Pacific region.

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# Revisiting Sovereignty through Ancient Indian Notions of Dharma

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This paper seeks to engage in the debate on the 'inter' in International Relations (IR) by problematising one of the core concepts of this discipline, that is, sovereignty. In view of the centrality of the Westphalian model that has been replicated across the world, especially in the Global South, it makes a case for studying the diverse experiences of pre-Westphalian notions of political authority in different parts of the world to re-work this concept by analysing the diverse texts and practices of Mauryan polity in the pre-colonial India, to suit its internally stratified yet cohesive social structures through the notion of dharma (ethical and moral codes governing the conduct of individual, society and kings). Through these insights, the paper seeks to provide a critical framework of thought for arriving at multiple notions of sovereignty, attuned to the diverse ground realities of states in the international domain.

*Key Words:* Authority, *Dharma*, Empire, Legitimacy, *Maurya*, Sovereignty, State-formation, Territory, International Relations Theory (IRT)

## *Introduction*

**I**n IR, sovereignty is tightly bound with the existence and survival of the modern international state-system. The core constituent elements of sovereignty: authority, legitimacy, territoriality and the relationship between ruler and the ruled have been present, albeit with varying degree of importance, in all kinds of political order from the pre-modern forms to the contemporary era. Historical records offer ample evidence as to how sovereignty has been conceptualised and practiced differently in different parts of the world at different historical junctures but the 'mainstream' theory of IR, particularly political realism only recognises the legal-territorial notions of sovereignty which is traced back to the Westphalian Peace Treaty (1648).[1] All other constituent elements of sovereignty have been subjugated to an overarching legal-territorial understanding of the concept.

This notion of sovereignty was then transported to different parts of the world through colonialism and later got institutionalised as a logical culmination of the

process of decolonisation and the birth of new 'nation-states'. The characterisation of this juridical-political conception of sovereignty as a 'universal' experience rather than viewing it as a historical development emerging from a particular spatial-temporal dimension leads to several issues. First, the post-colonial nation state which attempted to replicate the Westphalian sovereignty model has emerged as a crucial site of contestation of various claims to legitimacy. Ethnic and separatist movements have repeatedly challenged the imposition of a secularised, territorially 'fixed' nation-state. Second, a conception of political authority which is founded on sovereign power, in a 'Foucauldian sense', fails to appreciate the various societal sources on which the political authority is often dependent. By hiving off the juridical-political from its societal moorings, the imitations of Westphalian sovereignty often endanger state legitimacy rather than strengthening it. And finally, for the discipline of IR, the exclusion of the rich historical sources of the Global South deprives it of evolving a thicker understanding of the 'working' of the world it aims to theorise.

Drawing on Indian plural traditions, this paper seeks to present an alternative notion of sovereignty based on the conception of *dharma* in pre-colonial *Mauryan* polity. This understanding of sovereignty is shared, fluid, ritualistic yet malleable; unlike the modern centralised, fixed and rigid conception of Westphalian sovereignty, which is the focal argument of this paper. For this purpose, the second part of paper underlines the philosophy and practices of *dharma* – an overarching ethical-moral code, binding individual, society and the ruler, in its fold. The paper further explores how *dharma* guided the individual and collective practices of the ruler and the ruled and why *dharma* itself was considered as sovereign instead of the ruler or the ruled? Finally, it seeks to understand how different meaning and practices of authority and legitimacy evolved in the ancient polity, especially during the reign of Ashoka.

## Revisiting Sovereignty

In IR, the prevailing idea of sovereignty is predominantly shaped by the realist school of thought which stabilises its meaning across space and time and makes it appear as 'natural' and 'given' rather than viewing it as a socio-economic or a cultural product specific to a particular place and time in history. In the realist tradition, sovereignty is a supreme legal authority exercised over a fixed territory within clear and demarcated borders. Territorially circumscribed states, with a combined political authority, founded after the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, constitute the central units of a realist international system (Morgenthau 1967: 299; Krasner 1999, 2001: 20-21; Hinsley 1986: 1-2).

Political realism considers territorial sovereignty as a universal fact – the natural culmination of earlier state-forms. However, the realist interpretation

of the international system is problematic on several counts. First, nation-state only becomes a dominant political form in the early twentieth century. The most important constituents of World War I were, for instance, all empires – Russian, German, British, Ottoman and Austria-Hungary. Second, it creates a geopolitical division between landed territory and oceans, domestic and the international, presuming the former to be the realm of the order, while the latter of anarchy. Third, the Westphalian focus of sovereignty silences different historical conceptions of sovereignty even in Europe (Ruggie on heteronomy 1993: 161-162). Fourth, a sanitised tale of sovereignty hides the class, race and gender dimensions that have often constituted the fibers of its edifice. And finally, 'non-Western' and 'post-Western' conceptions of sovereignty are erased from our historical memory.

It therefore ignores 'other' Western or non-Western examples as exceptional or as 'non-entity' cases because they offered a fragmentary or decentralised form of state-systems. This selective use of even Western history shows the 'ahistorical' and 'asocial' character of the realist approach. Though, such realist conceptions of sovereignty have been effectively contested by alternative IR theoretical approaches such as constructivism (Ruggie 1993; Walker 1993; Mishra 2008) or neo-Marxism (Rosenberg 1994; Teschke 2003) but this has mainly been done with reference to the European history only. The theoretical tools offered by these approaches are yet to be effectively deployed in the non-European contexts.

Alternative approaches in IR such as 'postcolonialism', 'non-Western' and 'post-Western' have tried to fill this gap.[2] For example, postcolonial theory's epistemological concern is to challenge and criticise the universal concepts and categories of IR like modernity, identity and sovereignty (Chakrabarty 2005; Seth 2009, 2013). It challenges the "centrality accorded to Europe as the historical source and origin of the international order" (Seth 2013: 15). It criticises the assumption that sovereignty had emerged in Europe in the 16th century and later naturally expanded to the rest of the world and questions the commonsensical understanding of an autonomous, *self-constituting* Europe that has thus far been the central anchor or *exclusive reference point* and not other non-European histories for the purposes of theorising IR.

'Non-Western' theory is undoubtedly a reaction against the 'Eurocentric' orientation of IR as it extended the scope of the discipline by bringing the experiences of 'non-Western' societies. For example, in an influential article titled "Why is there no non-Western IR Theory: Reflections on and from Asia," Acharya and Buzan argued that the acknowledgement of distinct indigenous IR theory (IRT) has been minimal and most of the mainstream IR theories are Eurocentric in nature and that is probably why their claims of universalism are narrow which usually misconstrue most of the world history (Acharya and Buzan 2007: 286).

Accordingly, they emphasised a 'cross-cultural comparative perspective,' outside of the 'Westphalian' understanding by introducing "Western IR audience to non-Western traditions, literatures, and histories relevant to how IR is conceptualized" (Ibid). They argued that "if we are to improve IRT as a whole, then the Western IRT needs to be challenged not just from within, but also from outside the West" (Ibid: 289).

They sought to make a case for acknowledging and eventually incorporating 'other' ideas into the existing International Relations instead of relying solely on Western ideas and theories. Following this line of argument, D C Kang highlighted a comparative disparity between European Westphalian system which was based on informal hierarchy and formal equality; and East Asian tributary system which was based on formal hierarchy and informal equality (Kang 2012: 20). He argued that the difference between these two systems reflected a different *Asian* understanding of maintaining international relations than Europeans, therefore in Western perspective, Confucianism seems ritualistic and paternalistic whereas to a Confucian, the Western ideas of the individual and the glorification of autonomy is an "exaggeration of style that leads to extremes of conduct and disrupts settled patterns of culture and human relationship" (Sim cited in Kang 2004).

The Western-centric IR has further been innovatively challenged by post-Western theory not in terms of highlighting the 'distinctiveness' but underlining the need to construct an alternative norm/space to challenge the dominant enterprise by including the 'diversity' and 'plurality' into the IR theorisation (Behera 2007, 2008; Shani 2008, Ikeda 2010). It does not mean rejection of everything that is 'Western' or modern, or to glorify the 'pre-modern' but to take 'varied historical experiences' as a source of theorisation, which enriches our understanding of modern problematiques of IR in a critical way (Seth 2013: 15).

Thus, there is a need for the creation of "alternative spaces where, in the long run, the foundational claims of what constitutes IR; its inclusions and exclusions; and its boundaries can be debated afresh" (Behera 2008: 1). Therefore, a study is needed about the ontological origins of the state in South Asia in terms of social and political formations in the pre-colonial period that would show that the state is not a reified *given* but a historical product (Ibid: 25). To this end, Josuke Ikeda proposed a 'cosmopolitan history of ideas' (Ikeda 2010: 38), that is based on the premise of *sharable ideas* about politics, an idea that has evolved historically and has potency to construct and reconstruct social reality. It is an *inter-civilizational* approach concerning global political life in totality (Ikeda 2010: 38-41). Thus, post-Western perspectives are a critical albeit evolving tradition in the theoretical bases of IR which holds the potential of comprehending the challenges of the contemporary world and creating an *inclusive* IR.

Influenced by these alternative approaches of IR, this paper is an attempt to understand the varied languages and practices of sovereignty that existed in pre-colonial Indian subcontinent that had bearing on the nature and form of ancient political authority. It tries to illustrate this point through the reference of *dharma* – theory and practice of ancient political authority.

## Dharma: The Overarching Political Authority

Sovereignty had multiple meaning in the ancient Indian texts and socio-political practices. The Indian classical texts such as *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Dharmashastras* and even *Arthashastra*[3] have several insights to such political arrangements that depict the dynamic nature of the shared and overlapping authority by highlighting the relationship between the rulers and the ruled. These texts have discussed in great details about the nature and functioning of shared authority in the ancient times. As such the reflections of these texts are not confined in the realm of metaphysics rather embedded into the day-to-day functioning. Bilimoria highlights this point by arguing that the contents and principles of *Vedas* are even though authoritative and generally embodied in the 'other-worldly' affairs or in the gods, but they are also linked to this 'material world' depending on how far these ideas *unravel* in moral-practical sense and impact the socio-political lives of people (2016: 35). It is therefore a principle which unifies the Godly and the humanly world through its code of conduct.

These intricate principles can be referred as *dharma,* signifying moral, social and political order. Hindu thought considered *dharma* as the real sovereign of the state (Mookerji 1966: 49). Etymologically, the term is derived from '*dhri*' that means to bear, to uphold, to nourish, to support or to sustain. In ideational sense, the term has multiple connotation, namely, law, order, duty, custom, quality, classification, model, adjudication and so on so forth (Horsch 2009: 4). However, in socio-political sense, the term is mostly referred in terms of laws, duties and rights associated with individuals, societies and the rulers. For example, *dharma* implied a commandment or an obligation upheld by the king and at societal level it referred to *varnashram dharma*[4] which every individual had to follow.

As an ethical order, it regulates the conduct of the individual, family, society and the state. Manu and even Kautilya (though differently) uses this notion of *dharma* in practical sense by devising a comprehensive system of moral regulations for different groups, sub-groups, castes, individual, rulers and so on within the Hindu social order.[5] These ethical-moral principles in turn had bearing on socio-political life of individual whereby norms and duties were arranged for different groups and the roles and requirements also vary in the different *Ashramas* (stages of life) for different individuals. *Varnashramdharma*[6] represented this social dimension of

sovereignty which regulated not only the individual but even the rulers. In this social-order, society is organised into a four category based on their functions, namely, Brahmans (for educational and spiritual functions); Ksatriya (for defence and sovereign functions); Vaisya (for economic affairs); Sudra (for menial tasks). Rulers had to perform their functions in conformity with the principles of *dharma* and the ruled also had to perform their respective socio-political duties. Apart from *varnashram Dharma*, individuals were expected to adhere to other types of inter-personal *dharma* such as practicing *pursharthas* (elementary principle of which are *artha* (material gains), *Kama* (pleasure), *dharma* (individual and social duties) and *moksha* (liberation) or observing *svadharma* (self-perceived *dharma* based on one's *gunas* or qualities) (Das 1996: 55-67).

At the political level, the most important aspect of *dharma* is linked with statecraft, namely, *rajadharma* (the duty of the king). The king was expected to perform various duties according to *Rajadharma* such as safeguarding his kingdom, to be impartial towards his subjects, to enrich the treasury by *just* methods, to punish the wicked and to protect the innocent and so on. Thus, *Dharma* was referred here as *ksatrasya Ksatram* (*dharma* as righteousness, is the king of kings) i.e. "the power behind the royal power" (Olivelle 2009: 81).[7] As an *omnipotent abstract entity*, it stands above the people and the ruler giving legitimacy and meaning to the political authority. The *Aitareya Brahmana* and the *Satapatha Brahmana* described the king as the defender and maintainer of such *dharma* (Mookerji 1966: 51). *Shantiparva* of the *Mahabharata* (Chapter 67, 122) highlighted that without king there will be *Matsya-Nyaya* in which people devour one another like fish.

*Shantiparva* further reflects '*Sarve Dharma Rajyadharmpradhanah, Sarve Varnah Palyamana Bhavanti, Sarvastayago Rajdharmeshu Rajasyatyagand-harmechaurgr Ayapurnam*' i.e. among all *dharmas,* it is the *rajdharma* which is supreme as it provides nourishment to all *Varnas*, it encompasses all sacrifices but the greatest sacrifice is that of the Kings who lay his life in the fulfillment of their *rajdharma* throughout the ages (Singh 2015: 136-137). *Rajdharma* acted as a moral force within which rulers exercised their authority and guided their people to follow –'*varnashram or svadharma*' in their individual and social life. In such a socio-political arrangement, individual, society and the state had definite but shared tasks to perform – to uphold – moral and ethical principles of life.

Since ruler was not only the part of that moral force but also the principle bearer, representing and replicating the moral ideal into the society to ensure that individual and community should practice *dharma* in their day-to-day affairs, as any deviation from the path of *dharma* had serious consequences even the confiscation of the crown. The same is true for the individual and the community

whereby any deviation from the practices of dharma would be severely dealt by the ruler.

In that socio-political arrangements individual were assigned to *swadharma* to achieve *purushartha*. In doing so, he/she performs their individual duty and realise autonomous self-hood and also helps the society and polity to achieve their respective moral ends. This makes individual autonomous in their separate realm and yet his/her separate acts had a shared linkage towards the society and the polity. As such he/she remains an autonomous 'self' at the same time constitutes 'others' in their individual 'self'. These individual allegiances were therefore not solely guided by the 'legal-territorial' sense but in the sense of 'dharma' which was 'non/extra-' territorial.

*Brahmans* were the conscience-keepers in this socio-political arrangement. They were the interpreters of the laws of *dharma* and had moral authority to provide legitimacy to the actions of both the ruler and the ruled. They performed these functions in their various capacities depending upon the power and positions they occupied ranging from *purohits* to *amatyas* or *mahamantris* and so on. Drekmeier has explained the role of king and *Brahmans* in terms of the distinction between power and authority (1962: 252-253). He argued that in ancient times, king might have the right to exercise power without being in a position to exercise it. On the other hand, *Brahmans* had the authority because of their superior understanding of *Vedas* (ibid: 253).

As such, *Brahmans* derived their authority by interpreting and declaring whether the deeds of the ruler or the ruled are in accordance with *dharma* or not? Since *dharma* as a moral and ethical code could not be realized by itself, it was the king with the help of *Brahmans,* to act as a political and moral force respectively and collectively to regulate not only the individual or group's behaviour but also each other. However, this dual authority in collectivity had given legitimacy to the ruler which in turn commanded political obligation from the people. In such shared political arrangements, the king had to respect and serve these priestly class by not only sharing his authority in principal but by also offering them 'gifts', land grants and so on. On their part, priestly class had to perform various ceremonies and rituals along with providing advice on the matter of statecraft.

Quoting *Yajnavalkya's* treatise on Jurisprudence, Olivelle elucidates the role of the king who should undertake court cases accompanied by "learned *Brahmans*, in conformity with treatises on dharma and free from anger and greed" (Olivelle 2016: 211). Manu considers such a king, who controls his emotion and deliver judgments in accordance with dharma then "his subjects follow him like rivers in the ocean." On the contrary, if a king judges foolishly or "in a manner contrary to *dharma*, his enemies will soon bring that evil man under their dominion" (ibid).

Thus, the king who performs his duty according to dharma was given divine status and those who failed in their duties and oppress his people were disreputable. Mookerji therefore considered the king as a "temporal sovereign" and not as a source of law, who had to "enforce the decrees of *Dharma* as the spiritual sovereign" (1966: 49). It was dharma which was "the true Sovereign of the State, as the Rule of law" (ibid). On the other hand, *varnashram-dharma* regulated the occupations of different castes in accordance with birth, heredity and age (ibid). *Dharma*, thus acted as an independent impersonal moral force binding 'individual', 'community' and the 'king' in one single, continuous thread. The role of each and every one could be independently assessed on the framework of *dharma* but neither of them had the complete autonomous identity as their duty was shared.

These three levels of *dharma* have separate yet unifying political tendencies wherein individual practicing *swadharma* leads to individual autonomy; society practicing *varnashram* dharma leads to social autonomy and rulers practicing *rajdharma* leads to political autonomy are not separate, as it appears rather they have unseen bondages over one another to achieve the purpose of creating an ideal polity. These three levels of autonomy which is inter-related and inter-linked try to realise moral purposes for each other.

The polity which could be based on such moral laws, where authority should not be centralised or becomes a coercive means to oppress, rather reflects the shared nature of authority; where individuals and through them society could provide the opportunity for the creation of an ideal polity. A polity based on such virtue and moral laws, where legitimacy flows from both the ends from top to bottom and from bottom to top, where authority and territory were not fixed but fluid and overlapping, where the relationship was not in the form of binaries rather each had separate and yet shared task to perform, where instead of centralised framework a fluid network of authorities gets operational and that has the potential to synchronise and harmonise the diverse and separatist tendencies emanating from the various socio-political tensions. The principle of dharma promises such polity which the Mauryan administration under Ashoka tried to achieve.

## *Mauryan Political Authority*

The ancient *Mauryan* Empire under Ashoka provides the case of a shared and overlapping authority based on *dharma*. As an ancient polity of the Indian subcontinent, it also presents a classic case of 'non-territorial' and 'extra-territorial' dimensions of shared political authority. It evolved in the Ganges valley out of one of the early *mahajanapadas*[8] (distinct but usually understood through the language of modern state or territory) namely *Magadha*, during the 3rd century B.C.E. *Mauryan* kings particularly the first three great rulers, namely, Chandragupta

Maurya, Bindusara and Ashoka gradually extended the empire. Under Ashoka, *Magadha* became an empire unprecedented in the history, in the sense that it was extended to the largest territory and included "such a variety of peoples and cultures" (Thapar 1997: 4).

Except the reign of Asoka (which is evident through *Ashokan* inscriptions), there are little archaeological and inscriptional evidences to describe the political history of the Indian subcontinent of that time or about their previous rulers (Sugandhi 2013: 145). However, there are different literary sources to study *Maurya* period ranging from the *Buddhist* and *Jaina* works to that of *Dharmashastra* texts and the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya to that of *Indika* by Megasthenes. There are also other secondary works having distinct conceptual and ideological approaches to study the *Mauryan* state-formation, which make the issue contested in Indian historiography.[9]

Historiography necessitates how the historians look at the past through particular research questions and issues that direct them to a particular type of enquiry into the past. As there is no single source to comprehend a particular situation of the past, historians in their course of enquiry chose to highlight or prefer a particular source over others. It is how diverse approaches to identical sources could generate contesting views of the past and lead to historiographical debates. For instance, the same Ashokan rock edicts have been read by some historians to perceive a highly unitary or centralised character of the Mauryan state whereas others to consider it differently. The outcome on the basis of such approach is subject to revision in two ways. First, through re-reading of the same sources with new set of questions and, the second, through the discovery of completely new sources. The first revision builds upon the 'old' existing sources which, in turn, create a ground to revisit the entire approach itself rather than making the old theory obsolete whereas the second revision based on the discovery of new evidences can contribute to the new understanding of the past and can even reject the old constructions of the past. Based on textual and archaeological sources, historians have variedly revisited the Mauryan period and tried to reconstruct its political and administrative way of life.

It is therefore reflected that the administration of *Mauryan* Empire was arranged in a way that the authority was centralised. Yet for all practical purposes, it was dispersed at various levels. For example, the kingdom and state lying at the borders of the Empire naturally maintained a 'relative autonomy' because of the 'distance' factor. Similarly, tribal republics like *Kambojas*, *Vrjjis*, *Licchavis*, *Pancalas* were autonomous in their governance. The *Arthasastra* suggests that the rulers had to "negotiate numerous centers of power both within his kingdom" and also in "neighboring regions occupied by other kings (enemies, allies, and neutrals),

as well as by tribal groups" (Olivelle 2013: 38). *Arthasastra* also talks about various interlocking layers of administration for domestic affairs, namely, counselors (such as mantrin or purohita); *mahamatra* (high officials); Collector (*samahartr*) and the City Manager (*nagarika*) for state administration; *dharmastha* (related to justice). Along with these officials the *Arthasastra* also talks about the various department heads called as *adhyaksas,* who were responsible for their respective departments.

In terms of administrative arrangements, the *Mauryan* Empire was divided into a number of provinces. Each of these provinces was of the "time-honoured and standardized pattern of the Hindu State," consisting of the ruler, the council of ministers and the bureaucracy represented by a "hierarchy of officers in different grades of jurisdiction, and self-governing village communities at the foundation of the structure" (Mookerji 1966: 52). Ashoka's inscriptions also talk about four provinces namely *Taxila*, *Ujjain*, *Tosali* and *Suvarnagiri* where the governors were recruited from the royal blood-lines known as *Kumaras* or *Aryaputras*. For example, Ashoka himself served as a governor at *Ujjain* and *Taxila*. Like the king, these governors had his Council of Ministers known as *Mahamatras*. Provinces were further divided into districts which were governed by three major officials namely *pradesika*, the *rajuka* and the *yukta*.

The smallest administrative unit in *Mauryan* Empire was that of village, having a parallel political structure for human settlements. Each village comprised of the headman. There were administrative centers comprising of several villages; for example a revenue collection centre for ten villages known as *samgrahana*; a county seat known as *karvatika* for two hundred villages; a district municipality known as *Dronamukha* for four hundred villages and a provincial capital *Sthaniya* for eight hundred villages. They were responsible for keeping various records of the areas under their jurisdiction (Olivelle 2013: 42).

During the reign of Ashoka these layered administrative set-up with the graded autonomy "had to propagate the *Dhamma* in the course of his work, whether it was the *pradesika* going on tour or the rajuka in his judicial capacity" (Thapar 1997: 149). *Dhamma* is the *Prakrit* equivalent of the *Sanskrit* word *Dharma*. *Dhamma* of Ashoka consisted of "practicing a set of virtues and avoiding a number of vices" (Chakravarti 2016: 157). Though there is no exact English translation of the word, it roughly meant goodness; virtue and duty (Singh 2012: 131). Ashoka followed the policy of *dhamma* after the conquest of *Kalinga*. It was against the background of *Kalinga* war that Ashoka expounded his policy of *dhamma* to eliminate social tension and to promote a harmonious relationship between the diverse religious ideas and practices as he had "equal regards for all orthodox and heretic sects of his time" (Dikshitar 1987: 82).

The policy of *dhamma* was not confined to moral goods; rather it included several measures relating to socio-political welfare. After the tenth year of his reign when he visited Bodh Gaya, Ashoka inaugurated the system of royal tours (*dhammayatra*). Through these tours, he came into direct contact with the general masses. In order to carry out his policy of *dhamma*, Ashoka especially created a new class of officers known as *dhammamahamattas*, who were given control over officials and special funds (Jha 2004: 83). He also tried to propagate his religious ideology through his edicts inscribed on rocks or monolithic pillars (ibid: 83). This not only helped him in the administration of his vast empire but also acted as an instrument of non-territorial expansion.

Even in the external affairs, Ashoka's missions to various parts of the Hellenic world were to acquaint the countries with the philosophy of *dhamma*. Two non-territorial practices, like the promotion or expansion of Buddhism and Jainism and later "traditions of Hindu devotional (*bhakti*) practice, is a clear evidence of interregional interactions across South and South-east Asia during this time, both in the actual spread of these ideologies and the networks of religious pilgrimage and patronage that they generated" (Sugandhi 2013: 147). Additionally, the evidence of long-distance trade clearly indicates the existence of wide-spread economic networks linking the Indian subcontinent with the rest of the world (ibid). Ashoka is further credited to have expanded the religious ideas of Buddhism across the Central and South Asia through the construction of *Stupas* and other Buddhist structures (Thapar 1997 as quoted in Sugandhi 2013: 150).

*Dhammavijaya* (moral conquest) was therefore practiced as a form of external political policy during the *Mauryan* period which was directly linked to the internal organisational notion of *dharma* or *dhamma* (Chakravarty 1992: 203). Even Ashokan Rock edicts mention two types of empire: moral and political (Singh 2012: 133). As such, Mauryan polity like other ancient polity was known by their political centres rather than by their boundaries, which were fluid and shifting (Ibid: 134). Ashokan edicts mention three types of borders, namely, those territory ruling beyond his political authority; those lying at the edge of his Empire and those who had been defeated by him but not subdued (Ibid). These all categories of the regions, he claimed were won by the principle of *dhammavijaya*.

In Major Rock Edict XIII, there are specific references which could be associated with the non-territorial expansion of Ashoka in the external realm. For example, he made reference to 'forest people', who occupied Mauyran territory, but evidently remained independent from his authority. It is in this context, he made reference of the *dhammavijaya*, which would transcend the territorial understanding of expansion. In the same rock edict, he made reference of his expansion in the land of the four kings, namely, *Tulamaya, Antekina, Maka*

*and Alikasudara (*Sugandhi 2013: 150). These four Kings had been identified by historian as "Ptolemy II, Philadelphus of Egypt, Antigonaus Gonatas of Macedonia, Magas of Cyrene and either Alexander of Corinth or Alexander of Epirus" (Ibid). This shows that the conquest of Ashoka need not necessarily meant concrete territorial expansion; rather, it primarily meant to be the spread of moral ideas. In both internal and external realms, these non-territorial and extra-territorial socio-cultural and political arrangements were based on the theory and practice of *dhamma.*

*Conclusion*

It is evident from the above discussion that the authority of the ancient political ruler was not territory-specific; rather it was in the realm of moral-social practices. Internally, this is evident from the fact that the political authority and control during *Mauryan* Empire was dispersed among various levels including the autonomous village level. It was shared by sheer practice of *dharma* and *dhamma.* Dharma practiced at individual, social and political level had created 'non' and 'extra' territorial arrangements whereby Empire, kingdoms, and 'other' forms of political centres co-existed on the basis of complex combinations of hierarchy and equality and not on the simplistic 'Realist' paradigm of internal hierarchy and external equality alone, thereby blurring the boundaries between the 'internal' and 'external' aspects of sovereignty. Likewise, monopoly over coercive instruments was not the only source of legitimacy; rather a complex interplay of socio-cultural norms and practices reasoned by '*dharma*' constituted the legitimacy of political authority. Therefore, insights from such historical practices have the potential to further theorise an alternative understanding of sovereignty in International Relations which could address the contemporary and future challenges of the Global South.

**Notes**

1   One can consider the examples of the Chinese 'tributary system' or imperial policy of Ashoka's '*dhamma/dharma*' as attempted in this paper as an alternative international system practiced in the non-European context but marginalised in the mainstream IR. The need for exploring alternative histories, beyond the "IR's Westphalian Straitjacket" is argued in Barry Buzan and Richard Little (2001).

2   Though 'non-Western' and 'post-Western' International Relations theory have emerged in the postcolonial context, there is a sharp distinction between these two approaches. Roughly speaking, the 'non-western' implies an understanding which is 'different' or distinct from the West, whereas the 'post-Western' means moving beyond the 'Western' understanding but not essentially negating the existing Western thought/theory.

3   *Dharma* part in *Arthashastra* has been discussed by Pradeep Kumar Gautam (2016) in his various IDSA (Institute for Defence and Strategic Analysis) research work.

4   *Varnashram dharma* is related with four *varnas* or caste of the Indian society and highlights four stages of life namely *brahmacharya* (period of study); *grahsthya* (period of household management); *vanaprasthya* (withdrawal from worldly responsibilities); and *sannyasa* (renunciation).

5   Kautilya's *Arthashastra* and Manu's *Manavshastra* represent that social and political arrangement.

6   Unfortunately, differences in function among these four *Varnas* which in principle, were not suppose to entail differences in their interests or rights and privileges, but gradually the outcome in practices show otherwise; especially after the evolution of caste (*jati*) system, turning *Varna* as a functional division of the society into a discriminatory and exploitative, hereditary-based institution (for details see, Bilimoria 2016: 33-55).

7   Patrick Olivelle through his detailed analysis of these ancient Indian texts provides a succinct account of *dharma* and its semantic history (Olivelle 2000, 2005, 2009, 2016). In his works one could gather various insights of dharma such as dharma in transcendental sense, in ritualistic sense and in practical political sense. For example he argued, how in *Yajurveda Samhitas*, the close connection between *dharma* and *Varuna* (heavenly sovereign) and his earthly counterpart, the king, is established through two rituals associated with kingship i.e *rajasuya* (the royal consecration) and the horse sacrifice (*asvamedha*), performed by a king to proclaim his sovereignty over others (Olivelle 2009: 71).

8   R. S. Sharma highlighted this aspect in his book *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India*. He argued that *janapada* primarily meant tribal settlement but in two post-Mauryan texts, Manu and Kamandaka had used it in reference to *Rastra* (close to the concept of state). In Kautilya's *Saptang* theory (seven elements of the state) *janapada* meant both territory and population. For details see page no. 34-35. Sixteen *mahajanpadas were Gandhara, Assaka, Avanti, Shurasena, Malla, Panchala, Vatsa, Vajji, Kashi, Koshala, Anga, Matsya, Kuru, Chedi, Kamboja* and *Magadha*.

9   Historiographical debates include imperialist, nationalist, and Marxist point of view. Imperialist writers like Max Muller, Gibbon, Green, Senart viewed ancient Indian history as full of spiritual and philosophical world which lacked the sense of material reality, nationhood, self-rule and the state. Nationalist scholars such as R C. Majumdar, A. D. Pusalker, R. K. Mookerjee, A. S. Altekar, K. P. Jayswal, D. R. Bhandarkar, H. C. Raychaudhari, K.A. Nilakant Sastri have countered the imperialist view and reconstructed the chronological history of India in general and evaluation of the roles of Mauryan ruler in particular with 'Indian perspective'. On the other hand, Marxist historiographies under the scholarship of D. D. Kosambi, R.S. Sharma, Romila Thapar, D. N. Jha, and others have tried to reinterpret Mauryan history through economic perspectives by arguing that the contemporary political developments are product of changing material conditions since the ancient times. Among the foreign intellectuals G. M. Bongard Levin have written on Mauryan history whereas one could get an insight of ancient Indian history in the works of P. V. Kane, Sheldon Pollock and R. P. Kangle who highlight the linguistic aspects to understand 'the ancient text in its proper context' in ancient India.

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# Mapping Indo-Afghan Relations in Post-Taliban Period: A Reflection of Soft Power

## Mohd. Usman Bhatti

In the contemporary scenario, the application of 'soft power' has assumed paramount significance in the foreign policy of nation states all around the world. India being an emerging power is no exception to this trend. In this regard an attempt has been made in this paper to analyse soft power approach in India's foreign policy towards post-Taliban Afghanistan. India has systematically tried to maintain good relations with Afghanistan through its substantial economic, cultural influence and humanitarian aid and assistance programmes, thus putting forward a strong strategic foreign policy based on soft co-optive approach. In this context, the study has tried to answer the following question—what interest does India, an emerging power, have in war torn Afghanistan, with specific focus on its role in the post-Taliban period; what constitutes India's soft power in Afghanistan; how India has projected its soft 'co-optive power' in Afghanistan to create political influence and to accomplish its foreign policy goals. This study has sought to answer the above questions within the context of soft power theory and its imperatives in the realm of India's foreign policy approach towards Afghanistan in the post-Taliban period.

*Key Words:* Indo-Afghan Relations, Foreign Policy, Soft Power, Taliban.

## *Introduction*

India and Afghanistan are close neighbours linked, inter alia, by culture, civilisation and shared historical and political experiences of the past. After independence, India initiated close diplomatic ties with Afghanistan and, over the years, both countries succeeded in establishing strategic partnerships. In recent years, India's relations with Afghanistan have undergone a significant transformation as New Delhi has been consistently contributing in the form of civilian aid and assistance for the development and stability of war torn Afghanistan, major attributes of its soft power projection. Against the context of India's 'charm offensive'[1] a reflection of 'soft power' approach towards Afghanistan since 2001, this paper has been organized in the following manner. It has been divided into two parts each with subsequent sections. The first section provides a brief account of historical

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and cultural ties shared by the two countries from ancient times. Subsequently, the section analyses the relations between the two countries into two phases, and categorises them into two phases. In the first phase, from 1947 to 1990, independent India established its relations with Afghanistan on a friendly note based on the cultural and historical ties shared by the two countries. From 1990 to 2001, the relations between the two countries became volatile. Part two of the study discusses Indo-Afghan relations from 2001 to the present. India's involvement in the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan, wherein a high degree of soft power dimension figures, has been examined in detail. The purpose of examining the Indo-Afghan relationship under different phases is to understand the changing dynamics of the Indian foreign policy in different times and its impact on the relationship between the two countries.

## Indo-Afghan Relations: Historical Overview

India and Afghanistan have traditionally shared a strong relationship based on common history, civilisational and political links. Arguably, the root of cultural proximity and cordial relationship between the two countries dates back to Indus Valley Civilization, around 3,500 years ago, which flourished into medieval period, and the cultural integration has grown substantially since then (Alikuzai 2013:153). It is also believed that before the advent of Islam, Afghanistan had been a principal seat of both Hindu and Buddhist cultures (Singhal 1982:02).

One can map several traditional, historical and cultural links from various other references such as Rabindranath Tagore's story of 'Kabuliwallah' (which implies a person from Kabul), the reach of traditional Indian folklore in Afghan's culture and society, and the spread of Buddhism from India to Afghanistan, all exemplify the earlier exchange of cultures and ideas by the people of two countries (Thussu 2013:140-143; Tharoor 2007:70-76; 2012).Thus the history of cultural exchanges, the shared memories of colonial rule, and the dynamics of modern geopolitics in the region characterise the nature of contemporary relations between India and Afghanistan.

## Indo-Afghan Relations in the Cold War Era: Phase-I (1947-1990)

India, after independence, established its relations with Afghanistan on a friendly note. A number of factors such as Afghanistan's position on the creation of 'Pakhtunistan', its vote opposing Pakistan's entry into the United Nations (UN) in 1948, and Kabul's refusal to endorse Islamabad's position on the dispute of Kashmir, laid the foundation for forging close links with India (Sharma 2011: 107). India's close ties with Afghanistan was thus to a large extent rooted in Afghanistan's Pakistan dynamics as aptly noted by Harsh Pant (2010):

> The partition of British India in 1947 ruptured India's geographical contiguity with Afghanistan, but not the warmth that characterized their relations; this stood in sharp contrast to Pakistan, which, in spite of its geographical contiguity as well as religious and ethnic congruity, has seen its relations with Kabul for most of its history being clouded by bitterness and a deep sense of distrust. India's role in Afghanistan has re-emerged into importance not just for Afghanistan and the region, but also as a test case for a rising power—India (Pant 2010).

Thus, the dynamics and fragility of Afghanistan-Pakistan relationship remained an important aspect in the Indo-Afghan relations. Consequently, to give diplomatic recognition to their relations, India and Afghanistan signed their first mutual treaty of 'Peace and Friendship' in 1950 so as to institutionalize their past historical ties and to strengthen the prospects of their relations. The treaty remains significant as it emphasized strong relations between the two countries based on the core idea of establishing close trade and cultural ties (Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India 1950). Since 1950, this treaty remained at the core of developing close relations between the two countries in economic, cultural and political aspect, until 1979 when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan (Pant 2016:118-119). The invasion remained a test for India as it was friendly with both the nations (Dixit 2000:22-24). Moreover, this was also the time when the United States (US) and Pakistan formed a strong axis against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Hence, following the US proximity towards Pakistan in providing billions of military assistance to Islamabad, India avoided any direct disapproval of the Soviet occupation.

Thus after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, New Delhi choose instead to work with the Soviet backed government until 1992 (Ganguly and Howenstein 2009:127). However, at the same time US and Pakistan provided active support in terms of weapons and training to the 'Taliban'[2] which was created to fight a holy war (jihad) against the Soviet Union (Ahmed 2009, 2010). This development was being cautiously watched by India because the rise of Taliban, a religious extremist group with the help of Pakistan, was perceived by New Delhi as a threat to its security vis-à-vis Kashmir. New Delhi felt that Pakistan backing Taliban could be directed against India to wage a proxy war over Kashmir (Sharma 2011:107-109). India had perceived the adverse prospect of Taliban rise and actively tried to remain engaged through its limited economic and humanitarian aid first to Afghanistan government supported by Soviets till 1992, and then to the "Northern Alliance" (Maitra 2001:57) till 1996 to prevent Taliban to emerge as a powerful entity. However, the Taliban overthrew the Soviet backed government in Afghanistan in 1992, and finally after an intense 'civil wars'secured power in 1996 (Olivier 1995). This marked the beginning of India's tense relations with Afghanistan in view of the emergence of Taliban forces at the helm of affairs (Ganguly and Mukherji 2011:21-

22).[3] Thus the period from 1990 to 2001 remains extremely problematic in Indo-Afghan relationship.

### Post-Cold War Period: Phase II-1990-2001

The period after 1990s remained strained in Indo-Afghan relations because this was also the period when the armed insurgency assisted by Islamabad broke out in India's state of Jammu and Kashmir. At that time India remained alert as the Taliban forces apparently emerged in Afghanistan with the close aid and advice of Pakistan (Sharma 2011:105-108). India was conscious of the fact that the emergence of Taliban in Afghanistan could be dangerous for India due to the fact that Pakistan was backing Taliban and could divert the same extremists' forces into Kashmir. This thought turned true when Taliban forces remained actively involved in the hijacking of Indian airline in Kandahar in 1999 which indicated the emerging threats posed by Taliban (Sharma 2011:103-108). The short spell of Taliban rule from 1996-2001 was the period when India closed its embassy in Afghanistan and did not recognise the Taliban government in Kabul. However, the 9/11 attacks that led to US intervention, aimed at destroying Al Qaeda (another Jihadist group aligned with Taliban) as well as the Taliban from Afghanistan (Coll 2004) once again provided an opportunity to India to maneuver its relations with Kabul.

### Indo-Afghan Relations in Post-Taliban Period

Indo-Afghanistan relationship from the beginning of this century can be best understood within the context of changes that India introduced in its foreign policy towards its immediate neighbours. As an emerging global power, India desires a stable, peaceful and economically robust environment in its neighbourhood and this is why India's policies and perceptions towards them become crucial. Therefore, India's foreign policy started orienting towards the neighbouring countries to promote peace and emphasis on democratic and economic development. The introduction of the "Gujral doctrine," (Murthy 1999:639-652) in 1990 remains the first step in India's changing approach to its neighbours. The Gujral doctrine is a set of five principles which includes policies like mutual non-aggression, noninterference, respect for territorial integrity, and helping without expecting reciprocity, a reflection of soft power approach through economic attractiveness (Wagner 2005).[4] In a way, India being the leading regional power is supposed to play a responsible role, and its policy towards Afghanistan is frequently justified in these terms. India frames its active role in Afghanistan on the grounds that economic development in Afghanistan is crucial for attaining regional stability (D'Souza 2007:833-8842). In addition, India also has geo-economic and geo-strategic interest in Afghanistan.

*Geo-Strategic-Economic and Security Significance of Afghanistan*

In view of the geo-strategic location of Afghanistan, the country is well positioned to become a hub of trade and business.The very fact that Afghanistan shares borders with China, Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan testifies to the strategic salience (Harshe and Tripathi 2015). Afghanistan therefore provided a gate way to link India in trade with the resource rich Central Asian Republics. It is because of these reasons that India is making substantial investment in these regions and Afghanistan is the link to connect India with Central Asian countries (Blank 2010: Campbell 2013). Moreover, Afghanistan itself possesses huge mineral deposits and natural resources such as oil, natural gas, coal and other industrial minerals(Alikuzai 2013:836). Afghanistan therefore offers significant investment opportunities to Indian companies to its huge unexplored natural resources.

*The Security Factor*

Although India does not share any direct border, and have  no diplomatic or territorial dispute with Afghanistan, it still has considerable interest in Kabul's stability. India's major goal in Afghanistan can be understood in security terms vis-à-vis Islamabad's conundrum in Afghanistan (Pattanaik 2012:569-583). Pakistan's frequent involvement in Afghanistan and the trajectory of insurgency particularly in Jammu and Kashmir, was linked to political and security situation in Afghanistan. Moreover, Afghanistan is also relevant to India's foreign policy because Pakistan sees the former as giving it "strategic depth, a notion that has led Islamabad to treat Kabul as its backyard" (Dalrymple 2013:01-29).[5] Thus, one major imperative of India's policy in Afghanistan was to prevent the rise of militancy that could harm India's interest and security. In this context, the next sections argues that in order to achieve some of the most enduring strategic goals, India has adopted what Joseph Nye calls a 'soft power' approach in its foreign policy.

*Defining Soft Power*

Soft power has emerged as a powerful tool in contemporary international relations. Joseph Nye, who has been credited for coining the term in 1990, has developed and re-conceptualized the concept in a manner that it encapsulates the idea of attraction, persuasion, appeal and co-optation as opposed to the traditional notion of power which employs threat, coercion, sanction and inducement (Nye 1990:153-171). Nye (2012) defines soft power as,

> The ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the outcome one wants. Nonetheless, there are several ways to affect the behaviour of others. One can coerce them with threats; one can induce them with payments; or one can attract and co-opt them to want what you want (Nye 2012:01-02).

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The first two methods are related to hard power and the third method of influencing others to get what one wants without the use of force was termed as soft power. As a theoretical concept, soft power therefore emerged as a vanguard in opposition to the conventionally propagated realist notion of power, more prevalently known as 'hard power'(Willsion III 2008:110-124). For Nye, as contrary to hard power, soft power is simply 'attractive power' or the power which 'comes from attraction' and attraction can be in terms of universal values of a country's culture, political values like democracy, and its foreign policy that promotes moral and legitimate values, such as respecting international laws or providing civilian aid and assistance (Nye 2012:06).

But, in addition to these primary sources, there are manifold manifestations of soft power that a country can possess, for instance in the areas of education, press freedom, use of digital and public diplomacy, human rights, democracy and so on (Nye 2012:01-30; McClory 2015). Soft power has the potential to get transformed in attractive power only when it manages to create general goodwill in the eyes of both the parties, i.e., the provider (aid and assistance) and the receiving audience (Nye 2012:01-32). Within this idea, it becomes an imperative to understand how India crafted its soft power in diverse ways ranging from its civilian aid and assistance programs to cultural and political influence.

## Contextualizing India's Soft Power Projection: Post-Taliban Afghanistan

Since the fall of Taliban regime in 2001, India supported the Afghan people and government in addressing vital issues in post-conflict state-building. India being the major regional power had been helping the war ravaged Afghanistan in its reconstruction and development. India initiated various aid and assistance programs and donated a substantial amount, being a traditionally non-donor country, making it the largest regional donor (US $ 2 billion dollar) and fifth largest donor of aid to Afghanistan till 2015-16 (Embassy of India, Kabul 2016). During the visit of Afghanistan president Ashraf Ghani to New Delhi, India announced $1 billion more aid and assistance in diverse areas (Panda 2016). These efforts reflected  India's soft power projection towards Afghanistan. The rationale behind India's role in Afghanistan since post-Taliban period can be summed up in the words of former foreign secretary:

> India is engaged in developmental and humanitarian work to assist the Afghan People as they build a peaceful, stable, inclusive, democratic and pluralistic Afghanistan. The landscape of destruction must change, India neither sees Afghanistan as a battle ground for competing national interests nor assistance to Afghan reconstruction and development as a zero sum game (Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Government of India 2010).

In the post-Taliban period, India therefore remained one of most trusted development partners for the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan. India extended its hand in the development and prosperity of Afghanistan ranging from providing basic amenities (education, food, medical services) to developing major infrastructure projects such as the construction of Afghanistan parliament, roads and so on. Thus, Indian investment in Afghanistan is related to the civil, social and economic reconstruction of the war ravaged country. India's foreign policy in the post-Taliban Afghanistan therefore has been examined by taking into consideration India's aid and assistance, education, training, capacity building, cultural influence as India's soft power elements in Afghanistan.

*Infrastructure and Humanitarian Assistance*

India helped and engaged Afghanistan during a crucial phase of its political instability caused by sporadic violence under the Taliban rule and the aftermath, the ethnic conflicts and the invasion by the NATO forces. At this critical juncture of Afghanistan's crisis, India emerged as one of the most reliable regional partner, which was capable of helping Afghanistan. India initiated its aid and assistance programme in Afghanistan right from the year 2002 and over the years New Delhi expanded its aid and assistance programs.

The principal objective of India's development partnership aims at covering four broad areas of development. First, the major-infrastructure projects, like construction of the Afghan Parliament in Kabul;[6] construction of 218-kilometer long road from Zaranj to Delaram to facilitate movements of goods and services in the western Afghanistan; the restoration of national TV network by providing links in all 34 provincial capitals and finally the construction of Salma Dam power projects in Herat province are some of the major infrastructure projects taken by India (Ministry of External Affairs, India 2009). Another major project was the construction of 202 km line to enable 220kv DC transmission line from Pul-e-Khumri to Kabul to bring additional power from Uzbekistan to the Kabul.

This project was completed by India with the collaboration of Afghanistan government, and was led in associations with agencies like 'Afghanistan Development Partnership' (ADP), 'Afghanistan's National Development Strategy' (NDS),[7] the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).[8] India's infrastructure development projects in Afghanistan therefore clearly indicate India's well-crafted soft power strategy aimed to win the hearts and minds of Afghan society.

Similarly, in the realm of the humanitarian assistance too, India has played a significant role in Afghanistan. The reconstruction and renovation of Indira Gandhi Institute of Child health in Kabul remains one of the most acknowledged

humanitarian assistance programmes to war torn Afghanistan. The reopening of children's hospital is supposedly, "India's one of the most significant moves, partly in support of its soft power strategy in Afghanistan. One role of Indian medical mission in Afghanistan is creating a positive humanitarian image of Indian doctors" (Murthy & Meier 2011). India's humanitarian assistance initiatives also included provision of free medical services and medicines through five Indian medical missions located in major cities like Kabul, Mazare-Sharif, Jalalabad, Herat and Kandahar. India also donated three air buses to enable the state run airline Arianna and hundreds of city buses and ambulances for public facilities. Daily supply of 100 grams of fortified, high protein biscuits to nearly 2 million school children known as 'School Feeding Program' administered by the World Food Program (WFP) reflects India's profound commitment towards Afghanistan (Embassy of India, Kabul 2016). Thus, India's both long and short term humanitarian projects have been well received by Afghans and there is a good will and support for Indian projects in Afghanistan.

### Education, Training and Capacity Development

India has not only been directly involved in reconstruction work, humanitarian assistance and medical facilities, but also in the sector of higher education, including capacity building for the civilian service and in training the Afghan diplomats, vocational training to women and so on, all of which strongly points to India's soft power approach. In the educational sector, Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) through Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) provides 1000 annual long term university scholarships for Afghan students to study in Indian universities. India provides these scholarships in coordination with the Indian Embassy in Kabul as well as the four Indian Consulates, which are open to Afghan youth from all provinces (Embassy of India Kabul, Afghanistan, ICCR Scholarship 2017).

Each year thousands of Afghan students come to study in India and today Afghanistan is the largest recipient of scholarships provided by the ICCR. The total number of Afghan students enrolled in Indian universities has been estimated around 5, 500, including the girl students. For girl's students from war ravaged Afghanistan, India is the best possible thing that could happen to them (Stillwagon 2011). In addition, India also provides 500 fellowships for technical training to the Afghan civil servants under the 'Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation' (ITEC) programme.[9] Regular training and mentoring by Indian civil servants is provided to Afghan diplomats in Indian professional institutes (Embassy of India, Kabul, ITEC Fellowships 2017).

Furthermore, the reconstruction of Habibia School, the construction of Afghan National Agricultural Sciences and Technology University (ANASTU) reflects

India's commitment in the educational initiatives in Afghanistan. India has also offered 614 agricultural scholarships for Afghan nationals who are being trained at Indian institutes (*Times of India* 2017).Thus, along with various scholarship and fellowship schemes for Afghan national's capacity building initiatives are also in progress in the fields of rural development, women empowerment, and public administration. Women's vocational training centre in Baghe-Zanana trains Afghan women (war-widows and orphans) in garment making, tailoring, nursery plantation and marketing, executed by one of the well-known Indian Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), known as Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) (SEWA Annual Report 2012). Moreover, Indian Chambers of Commerce has set up training workshops to train Afghan youth in carpentry, plumbing, welding, tailoring, local governance and so on (India, MEA, Public Diplomacy Division 2009).

Thus, from the above analysis, it becomes clear that India wants Afghanistan to be politically, economically as well as socially stable, which is why India's assistance projects remain focused in all the three sectors.Thus, it is quite obvious that India has not attached any conditionality in its aid and assistance programs in Afghanistan which has led to a good will and support for Indian projects in Afghanistan. Indian investment in Afghanistan is in conformity with the local government and common man's priorities, using local sub-contractors and materials and this differentiates India from other donor countries. All the measures as analyzed above help to foster friendly relations that can benefit India, for example in the struggle between China and India over Afghan resources or to counter Pakistan's strategic depth. Such efforts therefore create significant influence among the common Afghans as opposed to the initiatives undertaken by other donors like US and Japan who focus on providing weapons and other hard power related assistance.

### Influence of India's Culture and Media

India's cultural influence in Afghanistan is the most important strategic soft power tool that existed since the ancient times and has been admired by the Afghan population time and again. The sentiments of close cultural ties between the two countries are obvious from the frequent references to 'Kabuliwallah' which holds exemplary till date. Rabindranath Tagore wrote 'Kabuliwallah,' the sad story of a dry-fruit seller from Kabul who comes to Kolkata and befriends a small Bengali girl. Little did one imagine that it would become one of the most quoted instances of the historical and cultural links between India and Afghanistan (Birla 2017). Thus, the cultural exchanges between India and Afghanistan have been the mainstay of bilateral relationship.

This soft power aspect has emerged as one strongest tool at the disposal of the Indian foreign policy makers in the contemporary period too. In fact, the

Afghan culture has been frequently depicted by the Indian cinema which has made an imprint on the psyche of Afghan people. By virtue of their popularity with Afghan populace, Indian films, songs and TV serials facilitate the familiarization with Indian socio-cultural value system. Better knowledge of each other's cultures paved the way for increased cooperation between the two countries (Sharma, Goria, and Mishra 2012: 1206-1207). The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) conducted an opinion poll in 2009 which suggested that India was well regarded in Afghanistan, while Pakistan had been accused of creating instability in that country. India consistently ranks highest in the opinion polls of countries of which Afghanistan has the best perceptions. The report noted that it is difficult to miss the influence of Indian culture in the country; Bollywood movies are popular in cinema halls and on the black market, while TVs in the Kabul Airport lounge show Indian Soap Operas on repeat (BBC 2012).

Regarding cultural influence, India's 'charm offensive' in Afghanistan is not confined to the largest ever Indian reconstruction aid to Afghanistan, but also to the Indian cultural exports to the country. Given that both countries have shared linguistic and cultural ties, these cultural imports have most certainly endeared India much closer to Afghans. More than economic aid and nurturing of the bureaucracy, this cultural export will prove crucial in Afghan-India relations in future (Mishra 2009).

To channelize India's cultural influence in a more positive direction, an Indian Cultural Centre was being set up in the Indian Embassy in Kabul, with the support of ICCR in 2007. The main activities of the center included screening of films, and organizing concerts of Afghan and Indian musicians. Moreover, India-Afghanistan foundation was set up in 2008 to foster educational, cultural, scientific and technical cooperation between the two countries. The activities of the centre include, seminars/conferences, translations and publications of several books into Afghan languages, exchanges of scholars and historians and revival of a quarterly literary magazine, 'the Hindi' (Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Indian Cultural Centre Kabul 2017). Thus, one can see that India has left no stone unturned to establish a cordial and friendly relationship with Afghanistan by exploiting the intangible elements which constitute soft power attributes in a country's foreign policy. Both the countries enjoy strong cultural links which have been carefully crafted by India in the realm of soft power. India wants a peaceful, stable and economically robust Afghanistan and it is in this context that India has been employing the soft power strategy since 2001 in Afghanistan. India identified the core priorities of the Afghan population such as the basic amenities of food, water, shelter and clothing to major infrastructure projects such as construction of road, parliament building and investment in education, health care facility, training

to the Afghan bureaucrats and diplomats. All of these measures suggest that India wants the betterment of Afghanistan and its common people without expecting any benefits in reciprocity. It must be noted that all of India's commitments in the rebuilding of Afghanistan was aimed to target the common civilians as opposed to military. Afghanistan therefore remains a great example of India's soft power projection.

To further strengthen the well envisaged India's commitment in Afghanistan, the two countries jointly signed a historic agreement in 2011, known as the 'Strategic Partnership Agreement.' The agreement covers a wide range of areas from trade and economic ties to social and cultural exchanges (Gupta 2011).[10] The agreement identified a number of developmental sectors in which India would continue to support Afghanistan in the long run like information technology, communication, transport, training and so on (MEA 2017). This agreement became possible after India's soft power approach since 2001 and New Delhi once again indicated that it wants a friendly and stable Afghanistan.

*Contemporary Perspectives*

In the emerging milieu, India has been regarded as a significant ally brought at the center of the recent US foreign policy formulations to bring long term peace and stability in the war-torn Afghanistan. The United States President Donald Trump proposed a 'new strategy for Afghanistan' to increase the number of US led coalition troops and a larger role for army personnel to bring stability in the US long drawn war (Brown 2017). In addition, a cautionary notice has been issued to Pakistan to stop its support to terrorist groups and an appeal has been made to India to extend its role in Afghanistan (Connell 2017). Pakistan has been accused of promoting terrorism and Trump's administration maintained to suspend the US $255 million military assistance to Islamabad, until it proved mettle against the terrorist groups emanating from its territory into Afghanistan (George 2017). Though President Trump signaled out Pakistan as the at the core of instability in Afghanistan through its support to terrorists groups by providing safe heaven as well as training and ammunition, it is, however, not clear how the US is going to deal with Pakistan's double edge game.

Moreover, the US is sending varied and assorted signals on Islamabad. On the one hand, the President accused Pakistan of harbouring terrorism in Afghanistan and threatening to end the military aid. On the other hand, the prominent senate of his party emphasised the significance of 'strategic partnership' and maintained that there would be "no peace without Pakistan's cooperation" (Bej 2017). Thus, seemingly, US wants a safe exit from its decades' long war in Afghanistan and in view of the emerging scenario, Washington criticism of Pakistan is a welcome note for

New Delhi, but certainly does not mean that leaning towards India will serve India's strategic interests. Thus US Afgh-Pak policy is driven by the US's own interests rather than by the concerns of India and New Delhi's needs to be cautioned of the developments. Furthermore, India's open support to US in Kabul will pull Pakistan further to China's orbit. China is already keen to be a player in Afghanistan and, in recent years, attempted to play a mediator role between the Taliban and Afghan government. Beijing also showed interest in involving Afghanistan in its ambitious 'Belt and Road' project (Blanchard 2017). In this background, India needs to play more measured, nuanced and an independent role as far as its approach towards Afghanistan is concerned.

Trump's recognition of India as a promoter of peace and stability in the present and future stability of Afghanistan is based on New Delhi's positive and development oriented approach since 2001. India became the largest regional donor and majority of its aid and assistance programmes focused on civilian and developmental arenas rather than on military projects. Though India also provided small military hardware and training to Afghan forces, its approach has largely been civilian rather than military. Though the Indian government too welcomes the new initiative by Trump, it remains reluctant to assist in any capacity that goes beyond development and civilian needs. It is in this context that this paper argues that New Delhi needs to continue with its soft co-optive approach. India needs not to show its muscle power to Pakistan at a territory where India has less geographical and strategic advantage.

Though limited, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has projected its stake in Afghanistan security settings. Though earlier New Delhi provided training to Afghan national security forces, it is for the first time that the government decided to deliver some MI 25 attack helicopters to Kabul on their own requests (Haidar 2015). However, soon after assuming power, Prime Minister Modi announced $1 billion economic assistance making it to total $ 3 billion since 2001. He also reiterated New Delhi's commitment of rebuilding Kabul by helping in health, education, agriculture and other sectors which affect Afghans (Embassy of India Kabul, Afghanistan 2017). New Delhi never intended on deploying its forces within the Afghan territory. Thus even after US appreciation of India's role in Afghanistan, New Delhi has not shown any sign of deflecting from its traditional civilian and development oriented role as opposed to military oriented role.

*Summary*

Independent India has always stood by its traditional neighbour, either during the Cold War or during the regime of Taliban. In the post-Taliban era, both the countries reestablished strong relations based on the past historical and civilization

linkages. In the contemporary period, India engages Afghanistan economically, politically and culturally. India's aid and assistance programmes (2001 onwards) were ranging from humanitarian to infrastructure building, education, training, and various scholarships schemes among other things points to India's strong soft power influence in Afghanistan. India time and again showed its commitment towards Afghanistan which has been recognised by the Afghan government and people. The fact that binds the people of two countries is India has no border or any other critical diplomatic dispute with Afghanistan, as in the case of its other immediate neighbours.

The very fact that Afghanistan's strategic location acts as a gateway to resource-rich Central Asia and the country's close border with China, Pakistan and Iran indicates the prospect of India's calculation of its economic, political and security interests in Afghanistan and beyond. The relevance of Afghanistan for India had become more important at a time when Pakistan remained a factor in Indo-Afghan relations. Being a major power in the region by virtue of its geographical size, economy and military, India naturally enjoyed a dominant position. Moreover, in view of the chaotic US policy towards Afghanistan, New Delhi has proved itself as a reliable and capable partner for Afghanistan, whose aid and development efforts have been of direct benefit to many ordinary Afghans. The contemporary environment in Afghanistan is extremely sensitive and fragile, and it is unconceivable for India's policy makers to adopt an overtly realist approach towards a country which from strategic calculations lies at the centre of Indian foreign policy making. It is in this context that India has adopted a constructive soft co-optive power approach towards the rebuilding of Afghanistan. Soft power has a mass appeal. It is a multi-layered policy that tends to attract all the stake holders, be it people (masses), societies, government and elites, because of its cultural, accommodative and humanitarian edge.

### Notes

1   'Charm offensive' is referred to a campaign of co-optive behaviour intended to get people to trust you so that one can influence them to achieve the support or agreement of others. India's aid and assistance programmes in Afghanistan since 2001 have been analysed with reference to India's 'charm offensive' co-optive approach towards Afghanistan.

2   Taliban is a Pashtu word which means 'religious students.' Pashtus comprise a plurality in Afghanistan and are predominant ethnic group in much of the country. The Taliban who ruled Afghanistan during 1996-2001, was formed in the early 1980s-1990s by a Pashtu faction of mujahedeen (Islamic fighters) who resisted the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (1979-89) with the covert backing of the US, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Pakistan's Inter-services Intelligence (ISI).

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3   As Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic tribal society, inter-ethnic fault lines started to reappear in the political domain soon after the Soviet army vacated the region.

4   Christian Wagner (2005) noted that the post 1990 initiatives introduced  under the Gujral Doctrine like non-reciprocity, connectivity, and asymmetrical responsibilities indicate that India is willing to increase its economic and political attractiveness towards its neighbours.

5   Dalrymple (2013)noted that the idea of strategic depth had its origins in the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war, when India defeated Pakistan. According to Pakistanis' narrative, the disintegration of their country in 1971 happened because of India's support to the East Pakistan rebels. Thus it became important for Pakistan to develop and maintain friendly relations with Afghanistan in order to have a secure backyard in the case of a future war with India. The porous border offers a route by which Pakistani troops and other assets, including its nuclear weapons, could retreat to the northwest in the case of an Indian invasion.

6   India's construction of Afghan Parliament has been appreciated not only by the Afghans government and people as the first step of strengthening democracy, but also by the US and other major powers. Democracy promotion remains one of the most important parts of soft power strategy in a country's foreign policy.

7   Afghanistan National Development Strategy' (NDS) is a coalition of civil society, and various national and international NGOs, who works under the auspices of the Afghan government. The main purpose of the agency is to identify the core areas where the aids provided by the foreigner countries could effectively be invested.

8   USAID is a US led international agency with which India has collaborated for the compellation of certain major infrastructure projects in Afghanistan.

9   ITEC is a bilateral technical and economic assistance scheme, and involves short term training in Indian technical and professional institutions. With regard to Afghanistan, the object of this scheme is to train middle level public officials of the Afghan Government Ministers/Diplomats/Department/Semi Government Organizations.

10  Afghanistan and India signed a strategic partnership agreement in New Delhi in 2011. The agreement points to the significance as first of its kind which Afghanistan signed with any country in the region.

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# South Korea in the Middle East: Bilateral Relations with Israel

Angana Guha Roy

**S**outh Korea's relations with the Middle East have witnessed major changes in recent years. Seoul followed more or less a conventional foreign policy strategy for a long time and, naturally, the Middle East did not figure prominently in its policy agenda. This paper tries to analyse the recent changes in South Korea's bilateral ties with Israel against the backdrop of the developments in the Middle East politics.

## The Arab Dynamics

Until 1960s Seoul's policy toward the Middle East was passive due to its lack of political and economic interest in the region. The total trade volume in the 1960s between South Korea and the Middle East was $125 million. During the period, the total trade between US and Japan was $256 million and $2696 million respectively. The nature of Seoul-Middle East relations depended on the cold war dynamics between pro-Soviet and pro- US camps. In fact, the cold war defined the course of Seoul's engagement with its trading partners during that time. Also Middle East's political relevance was fundamental in the competition between Seoul and Pyongyang on the legitimacy of Korea since both were fighting for battle of legitimacy. Seoul established its relations with the Middle East countries (belonging to pro US camp) like Jordan, Iran, Israel, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia. Over the decade it expanded its engagement with other nations too. Countries not affiliating to the US camp (from Middle East and North Africa- Yemen and Sudan repectively) also found their place in South Korea's foreign policy map in late 1970s.

It was only after 1970 that the economic importance of Middle East grew to South Korea. In order to find market for its manufactured products South Korea started changing its policy towards the region. President Park Chung Hee was instrumental in developing the South Korean economy independent of its dependency from United States (for development and security). With economic

development and rise in the number of business conglomerate in South Korea there was an increased demand to find markets outside South Korea. Following Hyundai, Daewoo, Dong Ah who started exploring Middle East long back, automobile industries and manufacturers of communications equipments also started making inroads into the Middle East economy. With the oil boom the revenues increased in Middle East and created opportunities for it to compete internationally.

The South Korean government provided direct and indirect assistance to the Korean companies in the form of loans and tax reductions to encourage them to compete with other foreign companies in Middle Eastern projects. The government persuaded the Middle Eastern states to allow the chaebols build projects in the region. Even during a crisis situation between Korean workers in Saudi Arabia the government intervened to allow the chaebols to continue the projects. In the span of 10 years (1975-1985) approximately 1 million Koreans worked in Middle East. The demand for Korean workers by the chaebols crossed the supply due to which the South Korean government converted military camps to training facilities for Middle East bound workers.

### The Decline of the "Oil Boom"

The Iran-Iraq war and the Gulf War (in the 1980s and 90s) exposed Middle East's ties with South Korea to market volatility due to the drop in oil prices. The decline of the "oil boom" reduced the income index of the oil producing states which led to a cut in a number of Middle East projects outsourced to foreign countries. The war certainly affected the quantity of trade between South Korea and Iran-Iraq respectively. But it did not stop South Korea from trading with both countries. It never came across politically supporting one of the either sides maintaining a healthy economic relation with both. Meanwhile North Korea's ties with Iran did not affect South Korea's spectrum of economic engagement in the region. Although South Korea criticized North Korea for trading missiles to foreign countries, it never used any tactics to halt Iran's military transaction with North Korea.

After the war was over South Korea got ample opportunity to build projects in Iraq but again the Iraq-Kuwait crisis led to financial consequences leading to non-payment to the Chaebols for the projects. For example, Samsung was left with $100 million debt (which begun working on the Baghdad- Basra motorway) after the Iraq-Kuwait crisis. The economic profile of Middle East therefore began to be perceived by South Korea as profitable but risky.

The Asian financial crisis was a huge setback for Korea but it quickly overcame the shock and continued normal relations with Middle East. During all this time Korea never showed any interest in the political developments of the region or to be a  part of the peace process (at that time). However it contributed by supporting humanitarian projects in Palestine National Authority(PNA).

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Unlike its economic engagement, Seoul's diplomatic and military policy toward the region was limited until 1990s.In the new millennium South Korea's role in Middle East grew from economic engagement to include nuclear energy projects, military involvement sending out troops to Iraq and Lebanon.

In 2013, South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung Se described how Seoul's relationship with the region changed from "one of choice" to a relationship "of necessity"(Middle East Institute 2014). In 2012 the trade between South Korea and the region was more than $164 billion.

*The Constrained Bilateral Phase*

Israel and Korea share many common things. Both as young nations were born out of war "now grown into high tech economies reliant on no natural resources but the minds of their people."  Both the countries seemingly have vulnerable security issues with their respective neighbours-Iran and North Korea (Wilner 2018).

After the outbreak of the Korean War when United Nations Security Council called upon members for help to counter North Korean attack a debate sparked in Knesset between the  extreme left  and the centre and right-wing political parties in Israel.  While the left wing parties insisted that Israel should support North Korea, the center and right-wing parties decided to declare official support for South Korea and to send food and medicine but not military forces. Israel established its diplomatic relations with Israel by opening an embassy there in 1962 (Levkowitz 2014).

Trade between Arab countries and South Korea expanded fourteen fold within a decade in 1970s (from $1826 to $14691). Saudi Arabia became a major trading partner apart from being the major oil provider for South Korea, which over the time increased its dependency. This dependency as Alon Levkowitz explains, "increased the advantage—both direct (the oil embargo) and indirect (the fear of potential oil embargo)—that Middle Eastern countries had over Seoul, especially regarding Korea's policy toward Israel. The October 1973 war and the oil crisis in the same year made it clear to Seoul how great its Middle Eastern oil dependency was, the cost of its relations with Israel, and the complexity and volatility of the region" (Ibid). Hence South Korea's ties with Israel didn't flower out much because of the Arab boycott of any company trading with Israel.

Israel is indeed a delicate issue when it comes to Seoul's dynamics with Middle East. Owing to the fact that Israel fought several wars against Arab nations the economic relations between South Korea and Israel ensued in a rather complex form. After the 1967 Arab-Israel war South Korea was pushed to reconsider its ties with Israel.  The fact that Saudi Arabia and UAE became the largest oil provider of Korea resulted in limiting Korea's enthusiasm in expanding its ties with Israel.  In

fact, South Korea's neighbour, Japan also went through a similar fear and limited its engagement with Israel. Once the Israeli ministry stated that "the Koreans were even more subservient to the Arab "central boycott office" than the Japanese" (Ibid).

Hence for many years the relationship was constrained by the possibility of Arab boycott on South Korean companies if they traded with Israel. Seoul's decision to not open an embassy in Israel indicated well that it wants to keep the political relationship low key. In light of the limited political and economic relationship, Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan ordered to shut down the Israeli embassy in Seoul in February 1978 (Ibid). However, two decades later in 1992 Israel reopened its embassy in Tel Aviv.

### Easing of the Tension

As mentioned earlier, the first Gulf war affected Korea's economic prospects in Arab countries. In order to maintain its pay off in the region, it did not upgrade its economic relations with Israel for the longest time thinking this will revive the Arab boycott. However, the Oslo peace process and later the Israel-Jordan peace process carved a new path for Korea-Israel relations.

The peace process made it easier for other countries to develop ties with Israel without any fear of boycott. The peace process accounted for the advancement of political and economic relations between South Korea and Israel. Factors like mutual recognition of economic gain from technological cooperation and Seoul's realization that it could not ignore one of Washington's closest allies, Israel (Ibid). Israel, a low risk economic market became an open trading partner for Korea. In fact this did not affect South Korea's business prospects with Middle East anymore unlike the past.

Soon after, economic and military relations began to grow as concerns regarding the Arab boycott subsided. Even cultural relations improved. Israel's tryst with Korean drama in 2006 helped Israelis to understand more about Korean culture. Simultaneously Korean high tech goods started making inroads in Israeli society. Moreover branding of South Korean products also got more space in the (Ibid).

After Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin's visit to Korea in 1994 economic relations improved. Companies like Hyundai, Israel, Daewoo and LG began operations in the region and the trade increased much (from $9 million to $690 million). Trade relations between the two flourished during  1990-2000. Israel exported precious stones and metals, materials required in chemical industries, electronic and optical devices to South Korea, while Seoul exported back textiles, vehicles, and other consumer goods.

## Arenas of cooperation and the way forward

It is clear to Israel that it is not at par with the strength of the contracts offered to South Korea by Middle East, particularly in the Persian Gulf. However, Seoul and Jerusalem have understood that collaborating in the civilian and military industries can work out for both.

Israel is the only country in Middle East where South Korean conglomerates like Samsung, LG and POSCO has opened its Research and Development Institutes. President Park Guen-hye once said that the Israeli "Startup Nation" is a role model for South Korea to learn from to prioritize R&D and startups. In 2015, according to the data of the Israeli Vehicle Association, Korean vehicles led the sales in Israel. In the same year Samsung announced to expand its presence in Israel by establishing a startup accelerator to recruit 6-10 new startups (ROK Embassy in Israel 2015).

The military cooperation between the two states has huge potential. Both of them have a vulnerable border with   military threat, war, and a constant missile threat. However, this potential has few complex dynamics: (a) Owing to the fact that South Korea and US are allies, the latter expects Seoul to buy military equipment from US companies, and insists South Korean military to use same equipment like its own forces. (b) Another obstacle is Washington does not allow Israel to bid in South Korea as the military equipment supplied by them contains US components (as was the case with the IAI EL/M 2075-Phalcon). (c) the internal political and economic lobby of  South Korea.

It is interesting to point out here that the Israeli defense industry has the experience of long-term cooperation with the United States.  But, although Israel and South Korea are both U.S. allies, Washington has its own economic interest in South Korea, which limits Israel's ability to sell military equipment to South Korea. Israel must obtain approval from Washington before selling any military equipment that includes American components. When Israel tried to sell its Elta Phalcon AWACS system, Washington withheld approval in order to convince Seoul to buy American and not Israeli equipment. One of the ways to bypass this barrier is to cooperate with an American company in a joint contract by adding Israeli components to the military equipment that is sold to South Korea.

Israeli companies collaborated with Washington and Seoul for some joint projects. However, Israel is able to trade on products completely manufactured by Israel. Elbit, Elop, Elta, IAI, and other Israeli companies signed millions of dollars in contracts to sell military equipment to South Korea.  For a long time it seemed that South Korea's interest in Middle East's multi-billion trade contracts will continue to prevent it from having a fully fledged economic partnership with Israel. Also, because of Washington's tight scrutiny of South Korea's military relationship with Israel the scope of military trade and cooperation will be limited.

The military-security dimension of Israel-South Korea relations has grown over the years. Considering Israel's cutting-edge military industrial advancement, South Korea has expressed its desire to purchase military hardware including drones, missiles, radar and possibly also missile defense systems.

Seoul took a lot of interest in Israel's arms market. In 2009, South Korea's military decided to buy Israeli manufactured weapons like Green Pine Block-B, radar systems, Oren Yarok, in a deal worth $215m. In October 2010, Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) and South Korea signed two additional deals for radar systems (manufactured by Israel's Elta). Furthermore, in June 2011, the vice-commissioner of the South Korean Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA) Kwon Oh-bong visited Israel and toured the former's defense industry, and also met senior Defense Ministry officials. Kwon, after his visit to the Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, expressed interest in the Iron Dome rocket interception system. Thereafter, South Korea struck a $43m deal with Israel for the purchase of advanced Spike NLOS (no line of sight) anti-tank rockets.

The Korean government drew inspiration from Israeli version of 'Talpiot' focusing on developing a 'creative' national defense, often drawing on the example of 'Talpiot' (meaning 'best of the best' in Hebrew) which is a special unit of the Israeli military. Only 50 elites can join Talpiot annually, and they must serve in the army for at least 9 years. Once they have finished their military service, they can secure elite jobs such as professorships or corporate leadership positions.

In 2014, the South Korean Ministry of National Defense and the Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning signed an MOU to establish a Korean version of Talpiot. Some argue that during two years of compulsory military service for men in Korea, soldiers would also have a more meaningful time if the country could 'creatively' change its military system into one like that of Israel (Palestine Peace & Solidarity in S. Korea 2014).

In 2017 Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI is Israel's top-selling defence group, and its satellite, weapons and drones systems are used in many countries around the world) formed a joint venture with Korean company (Kankuk Carbon) called Korea Aviation Technologies (Firstpost 2017) to make unmanned aircraft together. It agreed to develop drones with vertical takeoff and landing capabilities aimed at both military and civilian markets in South Korea (Associated Press 2017).

In 2010 and 2011, Israel and Seoul mutually exchanged delegation to enhance economic and technological cooperation respectively. The aim was to increase political, military, and economic cooperation between the two countries (ROK Embassy in Israel 2010). Both the countries also considered working out an FTA arrangement to boost cooperation in the field of trade, science and technology.

It is important to mention here that Israeli President Shimon Peres' visit to Seoul in 2010 ignited small scale protests in South Korea. Protestors denounced

Israeli President as "killer". President Simon Peres visit coincided with Israel's raid that killed nine Turkish activists that sparked worldwide condemnation(Y Net News 2010). Amid the protests it was also reported that Peres' visit was downgraded from a "state" to a "working visit" (Y Net News 2010).

In 2013, The Korean Embassy and the SMBA in a collaborative effort with the support of the invest in Israel initiative and New Tech Program of the Israeli Ministry of Economy with Signals Intelligence Group was formed in order to create a Korea- Israel Hi Tech Network to present all relevant companies in both geographic locations. It aimed at serving a powerful visualization tool, establishing the groundwork for cooperation opportunities and potential business partnerships (ROK Embassy in Israel 2013).

Israel has been supportive of ROK's agenda of maintaining peace and stability in North East Asia. In 2010 Israel expressed grave concern on the sinking of the Republic of Korea warship (ROK Embassy in Israel 2010). Meanwhile, Korea has never deviated from its political neutrality towards the disputes. Rather than taking sides Korea implied its intention to maintain stability with Gaza and Palestine both. In 2011, it stated, "We want to promote peace and the stability and also music and friendship with the Israeli people and the Palestine people" (ROK Embassy in Israel 2011).

Also in light of the reports of North Korea started doing the rounds of supplying illegal items to manufacture weapons of mass destruction, Israel issued a statement: "Israel values the restrained and responsible response of the ROK government, and urges the DPRK to cooperate with the international community and to abstain from actions that undermine the stability and peace effort in North-East Asia as well as in the Middle East" (ROK Embassy in Israel 2011).

In 2016 both the countries acknowledged that they have great potential  for promoting trade and investment and enhancing cooperation in various promising areas such as technology startups, cutting edge industries, agriculture, and industry-academia collaboration. The two nations began FTA talks in 2015 and followed up with five rounds of negotiations but haven't yet finalized the pact Yonhap News Agency (2018). They shared the view that the launch of the Korea-Israel Free Trade Agreement would lay foundation for enhancing cooperation between the two countries (ROK Embassy in Israel 2016).

In 2016, the Korea-Israel Friendship Forest in the Jerusalem Forest was planted by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea and Samsung Electronics, Israel. "Israel has special meaning for Koreans," said Lee Gun-Tae, the Korean ambassador to Israel. "Over one-third of Korea's 50 million citizens are Christians and the word 'Jerusalem' is very significant for them. Both countries have also promoted educational exchanges (ROK Embassy in Israel 2015).

*Conclusion*

In sum, South Korea-Israel relations have assumed a dimension of strategic partnership, over the years. The bilateral relations have matured and are expanding to many new areas. Plausibly, the military-oriented cooperation is gaining ground in recent years.  Considering their problems with their respective immediate neighbours, South Korea-Israel bilateral relationship will continue to be driven by these strategic considerations and shared national security challenges.

The growing economic strength and political influence of Asian countries, including South Korea, led the Israeli government and companies to build stronger ties with them. Conversely, Israel's economic dynamism and cutting-edge technology has attracted South Korea leading to successful collaborations. Samsung and LG, for example, have opened research centers in Israel. Since the late 1990s, trade between the two countries has grown steadily (exceeding $2 billion), and there is greater potential for a rise in trade.  Consequently, South Korea and Israel are trying to work out an FTA and the talks for the initiative get underway. The business communities in both countries are expecting that if the FTA becomes operational, it will boost trade and investments, in areas like green tech startups and nanotechnology. Way back in May 2010, South Korea's Ambassador to Israel Young-Sam Ma had indicated the great potential in cooperating with Israel in the development of new technologies and purchasing new Israeli technologies. The fact that the Korea Israel Research and Development Foundation (KOIL-RDF), established in 2001, supported joint R&D between Israeli and Korean companies, is yet another example of economic potential.

From the Israeli point of view, security relations with South Korea will also help South Korea and Israel, both havening been close to Washington, will help enter into a trilateral cooperation with complex security issues common to all three.  Israel's well-developed defense industry demonstrates the economic potential of security cooperation with Seoul. After the North Korean shelling of Yeonpyeong Island in 2010, Seoul purchased the Israeli Spike non-line-of-sight (NLOS) missiles. In 2014 after the three North Korean unmanned aerial vehicles crashed in South Korea, the latter sought to consider purchasing the Israeli radar system. Seoul is also considering cooperating with Israel on developing a missile defense system.

Meanwhile, questions have emerged if  Seoul could play an active role in the Middle East peace process as part of a peacekeeping force and use its economic power as leverage over the countries of the Middle East. Over the years, South Korea has become more involved in the international arena. It has joined global and regional organisations and has participated in peacekeeping operations around the world, including the Middle East. For example, the Korea International

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Cooperation Agency (KOICA) built educational, occupational and medical facilities in the Palestinian Authority. These are indications that there is a change in Seoul's policy in the Middle East. South Korea's profile as an impartial regional player has helped it to preserve its ties with all the Middle East countries without costing its economic relations. Although Israel believes that South Korea could play a constructive role in the peace process by building economic and cultural bridges between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, it's difficult for Seoul to 'tilt' in favor of Israel. For example, Seoul will not agree to use its trade with Iran as leverage to increase pressure on Iran regarding the latter's nuclear programme unless obliged to do so by Washington or by a United Nations Security Council resolution.

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# Muhammad Abduh on Religious Revival and Secularism

## Priyanka Chandra

### Introduction

**A**s one of the pioneers of Islamic modernism, the contributions of Muhammad Abduh to engaging with ideas of modernity and the conceptualisation of organic ideas of religious revival and reform are significant. Equally significant is his perspective as an Islamic modernist thinker on Western modern notions such as secularism. While he imbibed the ability to question and re-imagine traditional norms that moulded Arab and Muslim societies from his mentor, Jamaluddin al-Afghani, he further contributed to the revival of Islam through an extensive reform programme that paved the way for new modes of thought that were more organic and nuanced. In order to understand Abduh's role as a precursor to nationalism and the significance of his contribution in Islamic revival and reform, the prevailing conditions of his time must be understood. Colonialism was a challenge not just to the sovereignty of the Muslim lands, but also to the Muslim identity. The colonial perceptions of the Muslims as the 'other' was being rapidly imposed on the Muslims, and in this context there was need for not just religious reform but, through it, also a redefining of Muslim identities. In the words of Samira Haj,

> In Abduh's times, Islamic discourses were experiencing difficulty in retaining control over a (social, political and economic) reality being rapidly taken over by more powerful discourses centred in Europe and armed with stronger modalities of power. Egypt conscripted to Europe's colonizing and modernizing project was undergoing dramatic transformation, including the reorganization of its political and social structures. Along with these new arrangements, a new idiom articulating this change emerged denigrating earlier forms and social structures as old, nonrational and nonmodern and the newer forms and ways of life (market- economy, secularism, nation-state, nuclear family etc.) as rational, progressive and modern. With this new articulation, religion came to be defined as primarily nonrational and inconsequential. It is in the context of colonialism and Europe's prescriptive definition of the modern as the site of universal rationality, progressive history, and emancipator politics and of tradition as the locus of autocratic religiosity and backwardness that Abduh's reform project came to unfold and acquire its particular meaning and significance (Haj 2009: 89-90).

Abduh did not take either the extreme positions of a conservative traditionalist or a modernist who accepted all things modern (and European) without question and examining them. "A modern society according to him demanded along with scientific knowledge, morality and a legal code" (Khoury 1976: 32). He wanted to strengthen the society in both science and religion so that the British would eventually be automatically ousted and Muslims would be capable of ruling themselves. It was for this reason that he did not even hesitate to cooperate with the British. It is important to note that he did not completely oppose or reject the most conservative faction of the society- the ulema. His intention was not to bring about a revolution that would lead to chaos and suffering and further subjugation of Muslims. That is why he opted for gradual change through reform. While he embraced scientific knowledge, he simultaneously worked on reforming the ideas of morality and the legal code to adapt them to the changing times.

Abduh's views on the idea of secularism are also very important, as they are relevant to his conception of the traditional *umma* and the role of the Caliph, which in turn occupy an important place in his imagination of a reformed Muslim community. It was also a significant factor in his reaction to Western modernity as secularism was central to Western modernity and democracy. Western scholars often equated the role of the Pope in Christianity with that of the Caliph in Islam, and proposed ideas of secularising Islamic societies on this assumption which Abduh opposed vehemently. It was also significant because his understanding of both secularism and Western colonial perceptions of Muslim identities, to which he reacted, were also factors that shaped his own imagination of alternate identities. Though he was very vocal in his criticism of the idea of secularism, he did not completely reject it, and it was a part of his approach to the political system in Islam.

### Abduh's Reform Programme

Reform is an essential part of religious revivalism. In an era when the Islamic community was beginning its exploration of modernity, an internal examination and analysis of the Muslim community was crucial, in order to adapt Western modern ideas to its prevailing conditions.

Abduh's programme of reform was an important aspect of the struggle against British colonialism, but it was located primarily in the Islamic discursive tradition. This programme examined the internal problems of the Muslim society as well as the external challenge of the invasive colonial rule. The internal examination was aimed at a revival of Islamic traditions while simultaneously identifying the problems of religious and social practices. The external examination, on the other hand, was aimed at fending off the invasive influence of colonial rule on the structure of the Muslim society and polity through its "Europeanizing mission" (Haj 2009: 77). Samira Haj has put it very aptly

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Abduh's project of renewal was double-faceted, engaging an internal front as well as an external one. The internal involved reconstituting Islamic orthodoxy by reordering fend off the colonizing and Europeanizing mission of Europe and its singular view of modernity. Within the tradition of Islamic revivalism, Abduh saw himself as a reformer with a duty to revitalize a morally decadent, socially stagnant Muslim community on the verge of collapse under pressure from an invasive colonial Europe (Ibid.).

Abduh's programme was based on the opposition of the tradition of *taghrib*[*] (Haj 2009: 72) or Europeanisation which involved both a blind adoption of the European value-system as well as a complete renunciation of one's own. Abduh condemned the practice of *taqlid*[**] (Ibid); he was strongly opposed to the practice of an unreflective, blind imitation, be it of traditional religious orthodoxy or of Western norms and values. "He deemed 'unreasoned following of authority' the 'enemy of Islam' regardless of whether the authority was Islamic or European" (Ibid: 71). As opposed to this, he promoted the practice of *ijtihad*, a process which involved an evaluation of the vast body of knowledge of Islam, retaining that which is relevant, and discarding the non-relevant parts. In this way, the factor of current time and changing social and political circumstances could be given due consideration and importance. To him, *ijtihad* was a crucial element of the discursive tradition of reform, because it enabled Muslims to find solutions to problems and challenges which had no precedence in history.

In this struggle, Abduh was opposing not just the colonial rulers, but also the conservative and orthodox faction of traditional religious authority i.e. the *ulema*. He was particularly opposed to their tradition of submitting to *taqlid*, which he opposed vociferously. In his words, in commanding Muslims to submit to *taqlid*,

> They command us to follow their words blindly; and if one attempts to follow the Kuran and Usage of the Prophet, they oppose him with denial, supposing that in so doing they are preserving the religion. On the contrary, nothing else but this has vitiated the religion; and if we continue to follow this method of blind acceptance, no one will be left who holds this religion. But if we return to that reason to which God directs us in this verse, and other verses like it, there is hope that we can revive our religion. Thus it will be the religion of reason, to which all nations shall have recourse (Adams 1933: 130-131).

However, unlike Afghani, Abduh did not confront this orthodox faction openly, his effort was to direct it towards reform and the process of Islamic modernisation based on scientific inquiry of the existing body of knowledge. This he attempted to do through the various offices he held during his lifetime, most importantly as the Mufti of Egypt. It is significant that while he continued his reform programme through fatwas and policy- changes, he avoided openly contradicting the ulema, as

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[*] *Taghrib* here means Europeanisation.

[**] *Taqlid* in this context means unreflective following of consensual precedent.

he was aware that a direct confrontation between the ulema and the colonial rulers could lead to the complete banishment of this body; which would have been totally contrary to Abduh's plan of including them into the mainstream of Islamic reform.

Adams gives an account of Abduh's views on science, reason and philosophy vis-à-vis religion in which he also includes a brief account of the degeneration of Islam and rationality in Muslim countries. This history is interesting because much like Adams' estimate of Abduh's work, Abduh in turn has also reviewed the effect of the works of scholars like Al-Baidawi and al-Adud and the lack of scientific teaching and inquiry, and how this led to the ignorance of the Muslim people, both towards science and towards their own religion. He describes how their understanding of Islam was far from what Islam actually means.

What comes across most clearly in Albert Hourani's (1983) work on Abduh in *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* is that Abduh was aware of the socio-political circumstances of the Egyptian society and had some insight into what he called its decay. Moreover, Abduh had a distinct idea of Islam, i.e. the 'true religion' that he envisioned, which was different from Islam as it was being preached and practiced at that time. This idea of true religion carried solutions to the problems that existed at the time in the Egyptian society. This was based on the assumption or premise that Islam was essentially compatible with all ideas and concepts of modern, and that the question of incompatibility of Islam and modernity simply did not arise.

Hourani points out that in strongly supporting the idea that Islam and modernity are compatible, and in doing so often, Abduh knowingly or unknowingly distorted the basic tenets and principles of Islam. For example, "*maslaha* gradually turns into utility, *shura* into parliamentary democracy, *ijma* into public opinion; Islam itself becomes identical with civilization and activity, the norms of nineteenth century social thought" (Hourani 1983: 144). Thus, "identifying certain traditional concepts of Islamic thought with the dominant ideas of modern Europe" led to the distortion of those traditional ideas. As a reformer, Abduh believed that Islam was not only compatible with but also facilitated development. He emphasised the use of *tamaddun* which can be described as

> A concept of 'balanced development' which Abduh derives from the Koran. While this concept includes the Western emphasis on technological progress, and *does not prohibit the diversification of political institutions*, it insists on balancing that with the development of social justice, family structure, a strong social fabric, all through belief in and the worship of God. *Development in this perspective does not follow from an estrangement from religion, but on the contrary, bases itself on religious ideas and thrives on them* (emphasis added) (Khoury 1976: 5).

Abduh was open to the "diversification of political institutions" as he realised that the political system required changes in accordance with the changing times,

but he did not necessarily see that as a complete break from religion. Rather, he propounded religion and religious reform as the means to achieving reform of both the society and the political system. Abduh places great importance on political development, which can also be understood as nation-building, the building of a democracy, administrative and legal development and stability.

> Having tried to prepare his government for a republican form of government opposing Turks and Europeans who did not wish to give Egypt its independence, Abduh is regarded today as an early founder of Arab nationalism... In Abduh's thought there were signs of the strain between pan-Islam and Arab nationalism which grew and developed after Abduh's time, mainly in Syria and the Arabian Peninsula (Ibid: 18-19).

Abduh found the condition and status of women in the Muslim community extremely appalling. The way young girls were married off to men twice their age, the practice of polygamy for which people used Islam as an excuse, the clear bias against women in legal procedures like divorce, and the imposition of the veil were causes of grave concern. Many thinkers, scholars and reformers have tried to fight these evils against women for centuries. What distinguished Abduh from them was that as an Islamic scholar he was willing to wage a religious battle against these practices. Rather than renouncing and rejecting a religious and social system that treated women so abysmally, Abduh as a theologian could question the very premise that these practices were sanctioned by Islam. Perceived sanction by Islam was the common excuse of people who indulged in these practices and Abduh challenged it. As a theologian, he went to great lengths to prove that these biases against women were un-Islamic and unsanctioned by the Quran.

As a way of improving women's status in the Muslim society, Abduh suggested 'changed marriage relations', which were not based on abstract, natural rights but rights which were congruent with the teachings of Islam, since Islam gave women equal rights with proper interpretation and application. Abduh observed that the system of arranged marriages was obsolete, and must be discarded. He criticised the marriage of two virtual strangers as completely unreasonable, especially in an age when the younger generation was more educated and progressive. He was particularly opposed to the coercion of younger girls into marriage as he considered attitudes and practices which led to forced marriages un-Islamic and a blatant violation of Islamic law. He recommended new courting practices where young partners could meet and ensure their compatibility in order to solidify the bonds of marriage.

Abduh attributed the inferior status of women to their lack of education. He was the most vociferous supporter of women's education. He argued that it was the women who shaped the future of the nation as they would be responsible for the upbringing of their children; thus it was very important that they be informed and

educated citizens and "have a will of their own." He also argued against polygamy which was, according to him, intrinsically incompatible with the nature of marital life and family solidarity. According to Abduh, polygamy, as per the Quran, is a conditional right contingent on a man's ability to love and provide equally for all his wives; furthermore the Sharia forbids it barring exceptional situations. Abduh was equally against sex segregation as being in complete contrast with the sensibilities of his time. To him, the tenets of the Quran dictated modesty for men and women equally, making the practice of the veil for women redundant. The legal procedure of divorce, according to Abduh, was a sphere in which the societal bias against women was absolute. He sought to reform the procedure by giving the following recommendations:

1. A man wishing to divorce his wife should first appear before a Sharia judge and inform him of his intention and reason for it.

2. The judge should then point out that divorce is looked upon with disfavour by the Sharia, and that the man should take a week to think it over.

3. After a week, if the husband persists in his demand, one or more mediators would be appointed by the judge, usually from the couple's family, to try and resolve the quarrel.

4. If mediation fails then a report is given to the judge and the divorce is then authorized.

5. Divorce will not become legal until signed before a judge and witnesses (Ibid: 176).

More importantly, Abduh insisted on the right to women to initiate divorce. He suggested two approaches for this: one was the Maliki position which granted women the right to divorce on evidence of harm with or without the husband's consent; the other was for all marriage contracts to include a conditional clause granting the women the right to initiate divorce. Abduh felt that the right to initiate divorce, along with proper education and abandoning polygamy would make a great difference in the status of women in the Muslim society, enabling them to have a more positive influence on the family and the society, and to participate in the political processes as responsible citizens of the nation.

Further, unlike most other reformers, Abduh was able to use his position as the Mufti of Egypt to fight these problems, often through his fatwas. In some of these, he addressed questions arising from the economic and social restructuring of Egypt. In 1899, he delivered a fatwa making suggestions on the role that the government should play in regulating the economy from an Islamic legal perspective. In another fatwa, answering a question from a woman, Abduh wrote that according to the Sharia, a woman holding stocks in a company had the right to buy or sell these stocks on her own, without the consent of the husband (Ibid.: 179).

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One of his more famous and controversial fatwas was the Transvaal fatwa[*] (Haj 2009: 147), opposing the belief that Muslims would forsake their faith by embracing non-Islamic practices in foreign countries. This often put him in a difficult position vis-à-vis the ulema because in opposing conservative practices so vocally, he was virtually confronting the conservative faction i.e. the *ulema*. However, he continued his reform activity despite their disapproval and opposition. While he was opposing them, and seeking favours from the British (who were in favour to getting rid of this conservative faction) in order to bring about some of the crucial reforms, he neither rejected religion as the nucleus of the Muslim community, nor did he attempt to place the ulema in a precarious position against the British. His aim was not to get them banned as a religious body but to bring them over to the side of reform, renewal and revival. It is, thus, obvious that Abduh's goal was not to cripple Islam but to revive it.

The other major area of concern for Abduh was education. Abduh was against both obsolete methods of teaching and curriculum as well as the complete ignorance of science and technology. There were two factors that made Abduh unique as a thinker, theologian and reformer. Though Abduh had received traditional training in theology from al-Azhar, under the influence of people like Afghani, he came to question and reject it. He found the methods of teaching obsolete and was most vocal in opposing *taqlid*. He questioned theologians who wasted students' time in teaching them from texts which were long obsolete while ignoring important contemporary works. The fact that al-Azhar students were not encouraged to question or debate but blindly accept what they were taught exasperated Abduh. The other factor that made Abduh unique was his exposure to the West. When he spoke of reforming the education system, he spoke as someone familiar with modern academic and literary trends in Britain, France and the United States of America among other places. One of his most modernising reforms was to attempt to bring in the study of science which had long been ignored by the traditional religious educational institutions; and which he also identified as the root cause of the backwardness of the Muslim community and the most important factor behind the progress of European nations. In his opinion, a community in the process of nation- building at the turn of the nineteenth century could not remain ignorant of the innovations of science and technology.

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[*] The Transvaal fatwa was Abduh's response to three questions posed by a Muslim from Transvaal: the first question was whether a Muslim living in a predominantly Christian country is permitted to wear European style attire; the second was whether a Muslim is prohibited from eating meat slaughtered by Christians; and the third was whether it was permissible for a Hanafi Muslim imam to lead public prayers for Muslims belonging to other legal schools. Abduh's response to all three questions was in the affirmative, based on his opinion that interiority and intention are the better criteria for measuring faith. This opinion was strongly opposed and contested by the orthodox Azhari ulema.

Thus, Abduh made suggestions and recommendations to create a more effective educational system, which would imbibe both religious and scientific subjects to counter the polarisation that resulted from traditional religious schools teaching Islamic theology and Christian missionary schools teaching science and foreign languages. The idea was to provide both moral and scientific education, by ensuring that religious schools included science as part of the curriculum and vice versa. He insisted on the teaching of the Arabic language and Islam which he considered the key for defining individual and communal morality. He insisted on free education for all members of the society. He was particularly concerned about the education of the lower classes of society. The government was to have the biggest role in this plan; in the establishment of schools, determination of the curriculum and guiding the educational system for the benefit of the individual and the society. Abduh came up with a Platonian plan to impart different kinds of education to different people, based on their capabilities, although this did not actually take shape. He also made recommendations for improvements in the al-Azhar system of education, incurring the displeasure of the teaching shaikhs in the process.

In suggesting these reforms, Abduh also criticised secular education vehemently. His criticism was based on the difficulties and dislocation of those exposed to it, especially without safeguards. According to Abduh, the duality that existed in the education systems of Egypt and other Muslim countries was a consequence of the secularisation of education (Badawi 1976: 74).

The inclusion of science in the academic curriculum of traditional religious schools was a very significant reform brought in by Abduh. Apart from being considered as essential to the progress of the Muslim people, it also facilitated the larger argument Abduh was making at the time about the compatibility of Islam and science. Although Abduh's approach was not completely scientific (for example, he could not completely do away with the concept of "miracles" in the Quran and, thus, tried to rationalise them), his approach was very progressive for his time. Time and again he had made the case that Islam supported rationality and science. His method of teaching religion and theology along with science was one step further in this argument. In his article *Philosophy and the Call for Modern Sciences*, Abduh expressed his astonishment with Muslims who still refused to teach logic

If this is our attitude towards such subjects... I dread to think of how we regard new sciences which have become everyday necessities and the basis of happiness, wealth and power in our modern era... We must go about acquiring these things in the proper manner following the lead of those of our own people who would have us be cognizant of our need for those sciences and of the danger of our ignoring them (Khoury 1976: 173).

More than anything else, Abduh felt that the understanding and the practice of religion had become polluted by superstitions and orthodoxy and more than

anything else, it was this Abduh fought the most through his reforms. He criticised the practices of *tajdid* and *taqlid* very staunchly as he was opposed to blind acceptance of old and obsolete interpretations of the theological texts. On the premise that Islam was not only compatible with, but also promoted the use of, reason and rationality Abduh could not help but oppose the unquestioned acceptance of these orthodox teachings. Thus, one of his most important instruments of reform was the practice of *ijtihad* i.e. the reinterpretation of theological texts based on reason and rationality in accordance with the changing times. As a Muslim reformer who was critical of both traditionalist religious authority and colonial perceptions of modernity, Abduh sought to reconfigure Islam to both accommodate and challenge the changes of his time. To him the spirit of Islam was consonant with change and progress. Thus, the Islamic reform programme was crucial to the survival of the Muslim community. And this was the only means of warding off colonial aggression without simultaneously having to reject the ideas of modernity that the West had to offer. The idea of *ijtihad* provided an important instrument of change to him, through which he could incorporate modern ideas into Islam, at the same time doing away with the rigidity and irrelevance of certain obsolete practices encouraged by the orthodoxy. In the words of Haj, the right to *ijtihad*

> Enabled him to reconfigure orthodoxy as a space within which he could integrate elements of colonial modernity (e.g., the nation-state and agents) and remain within the parameters of the Islamic tradition. Far from a simple process of emulating earlier historical moments and discursive arguments or fabricating a new Islam, Abduh drew on multiple tendencies and arguments within the tradition in order to establish a counter-discourse that could vie with established Islamic orthodoxy, on the one hand, and Europeanization, on the other (Haj 2009: 72).

In underlining the importance of *ijtihad*, Abduh highlighted the significant role of disagreement in Islam, that is, the practice of using reasoned arguments and disputing over strategies and practices to sustain the community- a tradition largely ignored by mainstream scholarship in his time. In the context of the Islamic tradition, which consists of a set of authoritative texts, beliefs and practices from which Islamic forms of reasoning are derived for the Muslim to make reasonable and persuasive arguments, by seeking new insights into contemporary questions and concerns within the Islamic discursive reasoning, Abduh only took forward this tradition, enabling its survival and continuation. Therefore, Abduh showed the way to place human reasoning and *ijtihad* alongside the revealed knowledge and consensual precedent to make the discursive tradition of Islam stronger. Contrary to claims that Abduh sought to modernise Islam by 'Europeanising' it, his reform programme was more internal, with its roots of origin within Islamic precepts.

## Abduh and Secularism

Abduh gave considerable thought to the question of separation of religion and politics, i.e. secularisation and its possibilities in both Christianity and Islam. According to Abduh, in Christianity, secularisation was not just possible but a necessary prerequisite for achieving the levels of modernity, industrialisation, science and learning that had in fact made the Western society prosper. However, on the question of secularisation in Islam and the Islamic society, Abduh's ideas are much more complicated. It is not a simple question and has no one simple answer- it plagues and puzzles Muslim and non- Muslim scholars till date. Abduh's answer to this question too was rife with nuances and complexities.

On one hand, Abduh openly criticised the concept of secularism and stated that secularism in Islamic society is not possible because the guide to humanity and every aspect of good living is the Holy Book- Quran, which also provides a source of law. Thus, religion guides and supervises politics, rendering a complete separation of the two impossible. He even goes so far as to say that the true nature of secularism in the Western society was not a total separation but political tolerance of religion and the fact that society was giving up religion (i.e. Catholicism). On the other hand, in going back to what Abduh identifies as the 'true Islam' and explaining its features, he lays down the powers and duties of the Caliph and the rights of the ruled. It is very clear from all his writings that his conception of the Caliph was as a political leader. According to Abduh, as far as religion was concerned, a Caliph's position was the same as that of any other Muslim, in that every Muslim had a right to interpret religion. No single interpretation of religion could be forced on the followers of Islam.

There is a subtle duality in Abduh's approach. The harsh criticism of secularism mentioned earlier comes more from a theological perspective in terms of what ideas and concepts are compatible with the tenets of Islam and the Quran. The description of the powers and duties of the Caliph and his position vis-à-vis the ruled is the pragmatic approach of a politician who is more concerned with the practical problems related to the ruling of a people through and by the principles of Islam. This pragmatic approach is further testified by Abduh's clarification over the conflict between the traditional concept of umma and the modern nation-state. In saying that both are compatible and that a single umma, divided into multiple nation-states but unified under one Caliph, can exist, Abduh took care of both the theological as well as the practical and political aspects of the problem by validating both the umma as well as the nation-state. Thus, in Abduh's doctrine, one finds that the concept of secularism may somewhere be present but is also strictly limited. What is interesting is that Abduh has addressed and discussed this concept as opposed to many other theologians who ignored it. It is indicative of the fact

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that Abduh was aware of the sub-textual conflict between the ideas of religion and politics, i.e. Islam and nationalism that he inherited from Afghani and expanded further with his own ideas.

That secularism has been acknowledged and discussed as an issue by Abduh has already been pointed out. The significant fact is that the discussion of secularism in Abduh's discourse can be subscribed largely to his ideas of politics and nationalism. That is to say, in some places Abduh has rejected and condemned secularism, in other places there is at least an attempt to delineate the role of religion in politics and vice versa. What this does is to show that the ideal rational type of political system that Abduh was talking about clearly needs to be in adherence with Islam, even though not solely and completely based on Islam. The difference is the thread of secularism that creeps into Abduh's suggested ideal type of political system, even as he criticises secularism. It has been clearly said that the model of the political system needs to be extrapolated from the Quran, but not restricted to it. Recognising that Quran may not directly answer many questions posed by modernity, both reinterpretation and use of rationality have been stressed by Abduh. This may not be the same as the idea of secularism prevalent in the West at that time, but is an indigenous kind of secular approach to religion itself, the whole activity aimed at demarcating and in some places limiting the role and influence of religion. For instance, in saying that the role of the Caliph is purely political, or that the umma and the nation- state can co-exist, he separated, to some extent, the theological concepts from the political ones, even while arguing that both are compatible.

Secularism in Abduh's discourse is significant not in the way that he has outwardly promoted it. Rather it is significant in the sense that as an Islamic scholar he had a somewhat secular approach to religion, if that could be possible. Criticism does not necessarily mean total rejection. Abduh may have openly criticised the concept of secularism, but that doesn't imply a total rejection of secularism in practice. When he spoke of reform in the social and political system and the constant reference to 'true Islam', the continuation of Sharia courts, imparting of religious education, etc. it was to make the whole political and social system adhere to Islam, but not necessarily be limited to it. When he spoke of the compatibility of Islam and science; the reinterpretation of Quran based on rationality and doing away with that which could not be rationally explained; when he referred to the questions and challenges thrown up by changing times which had not existed before and had not been directly addressed in the Quran and the need to answer these questions based on rationality, he was delineating the role and influence of religion in the political system. This may not be the same as secularism in the Western sense, but it was an indigenous secular approach more suited to the Islamic society.

Interestingly, despite his numerous attempts to prove the compatibility between science and Islam, Abduh opines that "philosophy and the secular sciences should not be mixed up with questions of religion" (Adams 1933: 125). According to Abduh,

> The two fields should be kept distinct, partly because in the field of religion, particularly in regard to the nature of God, there are well-defined limits to what reason can accomplish, or even attempt, whereas, in the natural world, no such limits are imposed; and partly because the handicap of religious intolerance and sectarian bias may throttle the spirit of independent investigation, as the history of Islam has shown (Ibid: 125-126).

Abduh's separation between the moralities that should guide the individual on one hand and the group on the other is extremely significant. In the words of Malcolm Kerr,

> His treatment of these questions follows one course for individuals and another for groups. For the individual the starting point of Abduh's thinking is man's ability to distinguish for himself between good and evil- to determine the norm of right behavior- through a combination of esthetic instinct and rational calculation of utility... For the group, the starting point is perception not of the norm but of the sanction, from which the norm can be inferred. The sanction in the case of the group is material and worldly, and can therefore be rationally perceived, whereas for the individual this is not the case (Kerr 1966: 121).

When one reads further into this doctrine given by Abduh, one understands that for the individual Abduh prescribed a strong religious morality whereas for the group it is one based on rationality and a sanction that is "material and worldly". This indicates a separation between religious and, what can be seen as, a more secular ideology for the individual and the group, respectively. It is important because when Abduh talks of a group, he is mostly referring to the traditional community or the "nation" which often mean the same thing. Thus, the inference is that religion and religious morality cannot dominate the "nation" or the community even though it is integral to the personal space of an individual. It also means that those tenets, the observance of which is binding on the individual, need not necessarily influence the community as a whole. That is to say that religion will not be a dominant force in the political role and functions of a community. As Kerr points out,

> There is a sharp distinction to be drawn, however, between religious and secular-nationalist ta'assub. The former is "purer, more sacred and of more general benefit;" the "foreigners" have encouraged suspicion of religious solidarity because they know that it is the Muslims' strength, while by vaunting secular nationalism they create divisions among the Muslims. "All intelligent persons know that the Muslims know no [true] nationality other than their religion and belief"... A proper religious attitude removes the psychological origins of nationalism (ta'assub al-jinsiyya) which lie in the necessity of self-protection amidst the conflicts caused by competing material interests (emphasis added) (Ibid: 138-139).

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Here, Abduh's questioning of the whole concept of nationalism is contradictory to his earlier separation of the morality of the individual from that of the group because while that separation suggests that unity rather than religion would play the dominant role in guiding the community, a sentiment very similar to the modern concept of nationalism, here he totally rejects any such conception of nationalism. This problem is not limited to the nature of solidarity of the community. It goes further than that and presents a problem for the very identity of the individual i.e. he has to choose between a Muslim and a national identity as Abduh's statement about nationality makes it not just incompatible but totally contradictory to the religious identity of the individual. A similar contradiction exists in the ideas of Afghani, but there the emphasis is on the idea of nationalism and he does not debate the theological aspect of religion and its significance to the question of identity. However, Abduh is actually dealing with this theological aspect and, thus, his ideas are even more nuanced, and as was the case with Afghani, often self-contradictory.

In his work *Al-Islam wa 'n-Nasraniyya ma' al-'Ilm wa 'l-Madaniyya*,

> He seeks to prove that political powers in the Islamic constitutional organization are not 'religious' or 'theocratic' but purely civil. The distinction he draws is essentially that between theocracy and divine-law nomocracy: the ruler and his subordinates exercise their authority within the confines of a law over which they have no exclusive power of interpretation, let alone formulation; as mujtahids they are on the same level as other mujtahids not holding office. The Caliphate must not be confused with what Europeans term 'theocracy', which would signify that the caliph receives the Law directly from God... It is the nation or its deputies that install him in office, and the nation that possesses the right to supervise him. It deposes him when it considers this in its interest. Thus he is a civil ruler [hakim madani] in all respects (Ibid: 148-149).

Khoury also opines that according to Abduh, the Caliphate was essentially a political leader, and that it could not be equated with the position held by the Pope in Christianity.

> If the Prophet himself had a limited function with respect to his followers, the Caliph, his successor, had even more limitations. The charge that Islam mixed political and religious power in one man has no basis according to Abduh. The Caliph is primarily a political leader. He is also a symbolic religious figure, serving as a good example to his people. The Caliph has no specific religious functions, and certainly no authority to interpret the Koran. Since the Koran itself is the final authority, a command of the Arabic language is what an ordinary man needs to understand it (Khoury 1976: 84).

Thus, Abduh's approach included a criticism of secularism which would marginalise religion and its role in society, but this criticism was not consonant with an opposition of the modern political system itself. As Kerr has noted,

> Abduh manages to suggest that the Islamic system, being a civil one, is of the same general species as modern secular systems, and therefore presumably open to the

same speculation, critical examination, and progressive development as the latter. Furthermore, by emphasizing that true Islamic government contains those virtues that are commonly recognized in the modern world- national sovereignty over the ruler, the conditional nature of authority, and regard for public interest; virtues that are supposedly of proven and universal validity- he hints, almost imperceptibly, that the Islamic theory coincides with natural law... The separation of secular and religious powers in Europe, Abduh claims, has only resulted in a struggle for power between the ecclesiastical and temporal authorities, since their jurisdictions cannot entirely be separated (Kerr 1976: 150-151).

When Abduh suggests that the Islamic system, meaning the Islamic political system and Islamic law, is similar to modern secular systems, it leads to a certain confusion, especially considering the fact that almost in the same text Abduh challenges the whole possibility of complete separation of religious and secular powers, decrying Christian secular systems of Europe. The way he envisages and defines the role of the Caliph in the Muslim society further problematises the question of whether secularism is possible in Islam according to him or not. Abduh's ventures into philosophy and secular branches of education were not an escape from Islam, but rather an attempt to consolidate religious teachings, place them on more solid proofs, and assign them side by side with the demands of the modern world (Khoury 1976: 24).

### Conclusion

The above examination of the works and ideas of Muhammad Abduh reveals a unique and nuanced approach to modernity, which was based in the given socio-cultural context as opposed to a simple regurgitation of Western ideas of modernity. It also reveals the political acumen of the thinker in recognising religion as the social compass for modernity, rather viewing it as an archaic obstruction to modernity. His contributions, especially in the form of the reform programme, paved new ways of imagining citizenship and society in a way which was neither bound to traditional and obsolete socio-cultural norms and interpretations of religion, nor subservient to colonial impositions of foreign ideas. The subtle anomalies in his ideas pertaining to secularism are significant because these provided entry points to future thinkers and scholars of Islam as well as politics to engage with newer and contemporary issues that the Arab and Muslim societies have been faced with.

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# Man, Nature and Politics: A Marxist Perspective

Rengupta, M.

**I**n the production of their lives, human beings enter into definite social relations with each other. At the same time, they also form a relationship with nature. Relations between 'Man' and nature, and relations among themselves are established simultaneously. These relations are specific to each period. In the 1859 'Preface' Marx outlined the main periods in the history of mankind, especially in the history of the West (Marx 1904: 10-15). With more research, later Marxists have added more periods from the history of other parts of the world.

Capitalism is a system of production that could dominate and alienate all the other human production systems. There is another effect unique to capitalism, namely the large scale destruction of nature. The construction of Taj Mahal or the Great Wall of China or the Pyramids of Egypt had their deep impact on nature. But none of these constructions were part of any global process. Therefore their effects were limited to particular places. On the contrary, in the capitalist world, productive and commercial activities are very extensive and are carried out in almost every part of the planet.

Non-capitalist production or relations with nature were never brought into global processes. Capitalism being global in its formation has a wider geography of interaction. In a capitalist system, communication, travel and currency of money get revolutionised frequently leading to large-scale environmental change all over the world.

By assessing the consequences of capitalism on environment and human life in early 20th century, Joel Kovel in his book *The Enemy of Nature* gives several examples to show the deteriorating state of environment. As he notes, by early part of the last century human population had witnessed a substantial increase. Along with the rising population rate there was also rise in the number of the vehicles across the globe including a rise in air traffic. Non-renewable energy sources like coal and natural gas have been extracted at a level that seriously affect environmental

balance and sustainable use of resources. While there have been attempts to make people aware about global warming, carbon emissions have continued to increase at a high rate, by more than 6 million tonnes every year (Kovel 2007: 3). The cost of unchecked growth and development is not limited to environment. The debt of the Global South countries has increased by many degrees and so has the disparity between the rich and poor.

The human quest of dominating nature started even before capitalism. The roots of domination can be traced to Christianity and Enlightenment. In a passage in Genesis (1–27) *Jehovah* gives Adam "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth" all of which is not only compatible with but mandated by the belief that "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him." This suggests a total domination over nature. The spread of Christianity simultaneously with capitalism and the domination over the indigenous systems of faith and thoughts universalised the idea of the domination of nature (Ibid: 122-24). Philosophical arguments favouring the domination, 'mastery,' came strongly during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Descartes argued that "general good of all mankind" could best be pursued not by resort to speculative philosophy but by the attainment of "knowledge that is useful in life" so as to render ourselves "the masters and possessors of nature." Such views were implicated in the development of modern science and the rise of distinctively instrumental and capitalist values with respect to human use of natural world (Harvey 1996: 121). Domination of modern science over the indigenous systems of knowledge was also a part of this. Considering the enlightenment and scientific revolution as closely related intellectual projects, modern science is more compatible with capitalism than any other production system; even when the history of the modern science predates capitalism. What makes capitalism different from various other production relations is its global system of exchange.

Marx's concern was socially organised labour and production of surplus value and alienation associated with it was not related to human–nature relationships. However, in Marx's texts one can find arguments regarding the possible responses from nature against human interventions. He writes in the first volume of *Capital* that "Natural elements entering as agents into production, and which cost nothing, no matter what role they play in production, do not enter as components of capital, but as free gift of nature to capital that is as a free gift of nature's productive power to labour, which, however, appears as a factor in the capitalist mode of production" (Marx 1982: 291).

The liberal democratic governments in the Western Europe facilitated capitalist growth, so the intervention of the State against the exploitation of nature

seems to be little at the starting point of capitalism. Under capitalism the original unity of man and nature is breached as well as the unity of manufacture and agriculture and it brings in unforeseen and harmful consequences (Parsons 1976: 37).

Advancing appropriation and mastery over nature, since it is the store house of all forms of matter where labour can be expended, is the most important condition for the constant growth of capital. The concept of resource refers to different forms of matter in nature that can be used for commodity production as raw materials, but the terminology resource would not hold the same idea if it is placed totally out of the process of capital, if there is any such space outside the capitalist process.

Virgin land and resources are appropriated as free gifts of nature and then transformed into commodities for profit often without due regard to their specific reproduction cycles, overall renewability and capacities to absorb pollutants.

The matter in the nature under a system of commodity production is "natural resource" with an economic value which can be exchanged through the medium of money. "Resource" "money", "social labour" etc. are different expressions of capital itself or all these are relations within the capitalist process, thus capital becomes the process that dominates and determines the process of nature. The interaction between nature and capital turns conflictual at moments where capital exerts its power and tries to condition the ways in which masses relate themselves with nature. Emergence of consumer society and new needs can also bring changes in the values assigned to nature.

The idea and reality of the exhaustion of land were unknown to many classical economists because of the state of agricultural chemistry in their time. Marx formed his assessment of the issue after reading Leibig's assessment of the state of agricultural knowledge prior to 1840. According to Leibig agricultural knowledge prior to 1840s had emphasized the role of manure and the "latent power" in the land as soil. Since the chemical properties of the soil were unknown at that time, the nature of the plant nutrition was also unknown. Hence the latent power attributed to the soil was frequently seen as inherently limited and at the same time indestructible. In no way could the real problems of agriculture be ascertained (Foster 2000: 148). The second agricultural revolution was characterized by the increase of chemical fertilizers. This naturally resulted in growth of the fertilizer industry. And with the third agricultural revolution there was a change in traction from animals to machines.

In the first volume of *Capital* Marx described how capitalism disturbs man's relation to the soil and robs them both. To him modern industry had brought a revolutionary change in the field of agriculture. The peasants who were the bulwark of the old societies were replaced by wage labour. Thus the desire for social change

and class antagonisms were brought to the same level in the country as in towns. Marx felt that capitalist production completely tears the old bond of union which holds together agriculture and manufacture in their infancy.

## The Metabolic Rift

In his article titled "Marx's Ecology in Historical Perspective" John Bellamy Foster summarises the different aspects of Karl Marx's ecological critique. According to Foster, Marx's concept of the metabolic rift is the core element of his ecological critique (Foster 2000: 71). The basic idea behind a 'metabolic rift' is that there has been a disjuncture in the metabolic interaction between humans and nature as a result of capitalism. He sees this disjuncture caused by capitalism as irreversible. Marx's ecological critique primarily targets the capitalist mode of production, especially the modern agricultural practices. He is also critical of the collaboration between industry and agriculture in capitalist society. According to him, continuing prominence of capitalism which gives heavy weightage to large scale agricultural production as well as trade across the world further aggravates and widens the 'metabolic rift'(Ibid: 74). Marx also finds modern agricultural practices facilitated by capitalism as directly responsible for increasing pollution and intensive exploitation of soil. He also believes that capitalism produces a relationship of conflict between the urban and rural belts. Marx uses his critique of capitalist mode of production, particularly in agriculture, to advocate the need for societies to adopt communism and socialism (Ibid: 74).

There are two important parts in Marx's ecological critique of capitalism. Firstly, Marx strongly believes that the break in the relationship between human beings and earth caused by capitalism severely destabilises "everlasting nature-imposed condition of human existence" (Ibid: 75). Secondly, Foster raises pertinent questions regarding the "sustainability of the earth" which has been adversely affected by capitalist practices of production. He quotes Marx:

> From the standpoint of a higher socio-economic formation, the private property of particular individuals in the earth will appear just as absurd as private property of one man in other men. Even an entire society, a nation, or all simultaneously existing societies taken together are not owners of the earth. They are simply, *together*, its possessors, its beneficiaries, and have to bequeath it in an improved state to succeeding generations as *boni patres familias* (Ibid: 75).

Marx provides a solution for these two significant issues brought about by capitalism. He postulates that human interaction with nature has to be controlled in a 'rational way.' For Marx, it was only a 'post-revolutionary' socialist or communist society which could address the problem of sustainability generated by the capitalist mode of production and facilitate a balanced non-exploitative interaction between human beings and the earth. In analyzing the 'metabolic rift'

Marx and Engels also covered problems like deforestation, desertification, climate change, the elimination of deer from the forests, the commodification of species, pollution, industrial wastes, toxic contamination, recycling, the exhaustion of coal mines, disease, overpopulation and the evolution (and co-evolution) of species.

One of the significant aspects of Marx's critique of capitalist mode of agriculture is the question of sustainability. Due to over exploitative practices under capitalism agriculture has lost its "self-sustaining" potential. Foster says:

> Marx employed the concept of a "rift" in the metabolic relation between human beings and the earth to capture the material estrangement of human beings within capitalist society from the natural conditions which formed the basis for their existence—what he called "the everlasting nature-imposed conditions of human existence" (Foster 2000: 155-62).

Throughout history we notice that in the relations between Man and Nature there is a balance between man as a creature subject to the laws of nature and man as a creature trying to go beyond what is naturally given. This balance is upset in capitalism and it goes more and more in favour of the quest of human beings to overcome nature. It is important to find out how this balance got disturbed for the first time in the West through the rise of capitalism

### Origins of Capitalism

At the end of the first volume of *Capital* Marx gives a brief history of the emergence of capitalism in Western Europe. He identifies various events which contributed to the process by which the two new classes – capitalist and the proletariat – took birth.

Abolition of serfdom and confiscation of Church property uprooted agricultural population in large scale. Rise of wool prices in the international market followed by the conversion of agricultural lands into pastures for the sheep disrupted the livelihood of the agricultural population. All these people started looking for alternative ways of supporting themselves and their families. These people were thus forced to go to towns and look for work in the factories that had started functioning there. This is how the two classes of owners of the factories and the working population who were forced to sell their labour came into existence.

Marx emphasises that separation of the agrarian poor from nature was an important condition of the rise of capitalism. In *Capital Vol:1* , Marx argues that "the expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasant, from the soil, is the basis of the whole process" by which "great masses of men are suddenly and forcibly torn from their means of subsistence, and hurled as free and 'unattached' proletarians on the labour-market." In this sense, "the expropriation of the mass of the people from the soil forms the basis of the capitalist mode of production" (Burkett 1999: 60).

The consideration of nature as a vast pool of formalizable matter which can be exchanged in the form of commodities is fundamental to the accumulation of capital. The expansion and evolution of capital and its gaining and regaining of control over Nature naturalizes money's position as an irreplaceable tool for the measurement and appropriation of nature.

The separation of the populations from the original relations with nature, followed by awards of compensations or prices brings money at the centre of the human relations with nature. This separation not only started a new epoch of production but it is also the permanent basis of the continuation of capitalism. Therefore capitalism is the first mode of production in history which depends on the complete separation of workers from nature.

Every capitalist try and capture more and more markets to expand without limits. Capitalist production is a continuously expanding system. The expansion of production results in harmful effects on health, life styles, and nature. These effects are unavoidable as long as the goal of production is not the satisfaction of human needs but exchange.

This is one of the reasons why capitalism cannot solve ecological problems in a fundamental way. In the first volume of *Capital*, Marx has written a section called Fetishism of Commodities at the end of the first chapter (Marx 1982: 163). In that section Marx shows how under capitalism commodities produced by men form relationship with each other and those who produced them can connect to each other only through these commodities. The world of commodities is an autonomous world.

## Marx and Engels on Labour

In his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* Karl Marx highlights the importance of nature in the process of creation and production. Nature provides all the materials necessary for the process of production (Marx1977: 51). A worker's skill is of no use in the absence of resources available in the nature. It is only through nature that a worker can realize and execute his creative potential. Simultaneously, nature also facilitates the very existence of the worker by providing him with resources to physically sustain himself. Marx goes on to argue that the spiritual aspect of human existence is also inextricably tied to nature. The close relation that nature has with the different crucial aspects of human life requires a continuous exchange between human beings and nature. In the absence of such exchange, Marx argues, human beings are bound to perish. He says:

> The life of the species, both in man and in animals, consists physically in the fact that man (like the animal) lives on inorganic nature; and the more the universal man (or the animal) is, the more universal is the sphere of inorganic nature on which he lives (Ibid 53).

As distinct from other beings, man not only lives on an organic nature, but he also interacts with it by means of his brain, hands and tool in order to subsist. Thus far more than any other species the human beings put their stamp on nature. Marx and Engels addressed themselves to the question of how the human species is differentiated from other animals, because on the one hand they wished to refute the idealists who repudiated man's animal nature and on the other hand they wanted to demonstrate the great possibilities for fulfilment in man's evolutionary relation to nature (Parsons 1976: 41).

Production in the human world is not something like a weaver bird making its nest. The bird makes the nest as a part of its natural quality therefore the structure or the design does not change as a result of a thought process.

What distinguishes production from natural evolution lies in the dimension of consciousness as shaped by language and social organization. Human beings work with a mental image of nature; we represent the section of nature before us – itself virtually always modified by previous labour – then act upon it to transform it according to an envisioned end. In every instance, some prearranged configuration of nature-as-transformed-by labour is imaginatively appropriated, then rendered according to a plan. Production is therefore inherently temporalizing and incorporates the future; that is why we call it production, to make with a view ahead (Kovel 2007: 234).

Labour performed by humans in social relations is of a different type in the animal world, human labour has been characterized with critical ability or it is a conscious activity. The conscious interaction with Nature in course of social evolution led to the emergence of production. It is the organized system of production that makes the humanity different. Engels in the Dialectics of Nature observes:

> The human life stands dependent and at the same time different from the animal life. Most of the animals can achieve to collect; but man produces, he prepares the means of life, in the widest sense of the words, which without him Nature would not have produced. This makes imposed any unqualified transference of laws of the life of the animal societies to human society (Engels 1983: 353).

Marx interprets labour as the subject and nature as its object of activity. Labouring transforms nature and its internal relations at the same time the mode of labouring changes according to the natural conditions, therefore the labour is a process of mutual transformation. Nature is understood through the labour process, and the progress in the process brings out new knowledge regarding the configuration of nature.

When objects are produced both the human and natural worlds are transformed and modified and it opens up both possibilities and impossibilities for

further production. Along with the progress in production new needs also emerge. Most important issue here is the overcoming of the impossibilities of production.

The evolution of the society is at the same time an evolution in the methods of labouring. Production of use value under the social system is not an isolated labour like a hunter gatherer who plucks and eats to satisfy appetite. A social production system is a larger process of production which undergoes frequent evolution. In 1933, Herbert Marcuse wrote an essay proposing that the material activity of human beings, or labour, has two consequences or results. He called them the "objective and subjective moments" of labour. The objective result of labour is, first, the object produced, the material product. More generally, the visible world of objects, in capitalism what Hegel called a "heap of commodities;" and, second, the material basis of a particular social order, or what Marx called the social relations of production. On the one side, labour produces objects; on the other, these objects physically reproduce not only the producers but also the social order or class system (O'Connor 1999: 78).

Human labour has been characterized with critical ability or it is a conscious activity. The conscious interaction with the nature in course of social evolution led to the emergence of production. It is the organized system of production which operates to produce pre- determined values that makes humanity different from the rest of the life world.

The history of the human society and the mastery over Nature starts with the appropriation of the labour of some humans by others. The control over the labour power enables civilization to emerge. Production is an organized and systematic phenomenon and it demands ordered and disciplined labour. Therefore the process of production extends to the appropriation and control over the individual human labours which alienates human beings from their natural habitats.  Under the social system of production the scope for the human agency and the capacity of self determinism is very less than the pre-civilizational periods. Human dialogue with nature through labour is conditioned and mediated through the system. Labour in a production system represents the system itself.

### Alienation from Nature

The irreducibility of species quality of human beings into the bio-physical state and process of organism, in Marx's observation, has been reversed in case of the labours who expend their labour at the capitalist workplace. Production in the human world is not specific to the individual bodies; human productive capacities are more universal.

The animal is immediately identical with its life-activity. It does not distinguish itself from it. It is its life-activity. Man makes his life-activity itself the object of his will and of his consciousness. Conscious life-activity directly distinguishes man from animal life-activity. It is only because he is a species being that he is a Conscious Being, i.e., that his own life is an object for him. Only because of that is his activity free activity. Estranged labour reverses this relationship, so that it is just because man is a conscious being that he makes his life-activity, his essential being, a mere means to his existence (Marx 1977: 76 ).

Estranged labour therefore is a process that reduces the scope of humans into the bio-physical relations of body and this process makes the humans the slaves of objects provided by Nature. Alienation from the thing in which labour has been objectified happens only with reference to a situation in which another individual human takes the ownership and control over the product of labour. This is the context where the idea of private property in relation to estranged labour comes to the forefront. "Man's relation to himself only becomes objective and real for him through his relation to the other man" (Ibid: 79).

 Marx presented his theory of alienation in his early work called *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* (EPM). According to this theory, the worker who works for the capitalist owns nothing except his labour power. He sells it to the capitalist and in exchange earns his wages. His labour power is employed by the capitalist to produce commodities out of raw material. Neither the raw material nor the product belongs to the worker. Even his activity is not his. He has to function according to the instructions given to him by the supervisor. This is described by Marx as his alienation. He says that the worker is alienated from nature, from himself and from others (Ibid: 80).

The expansion of production system boosts the intensity of alienation of the labourer from the inorganic body, namely nature. Such alienation is inherently a process that alienates the labourer from use values necessary for the physical subsistence. Marx writes in EPM as follows:

The worker can create nothing without Nature, without the sensuous external world. It is the material on which his labour is manifested, in which it is active, from which and by means of which it produces.

But just as Nature provides labour with the means of life in the sense that labour cannot live without objects on which to operate, on the other hand, it also provides the means of life in the more restricted sense-i.e., the means for the physical subsistence of the worker himself.

Thus the more the worker by his labour appropriates the external world, sensuous Nature, the more he deprives himself of means of life in the double respect: first, that the sensuous external world more and more ceases to be an object belonging to his labour-to be his labour's means of life,' and secondly, that it more and more ceases to be means of life in the immediate sense, means for the physical subsistence of the worker (Ibid: 72).

If the alienation of the worker is basic to capitalism, we can say that it is also the source of the rupture of relations between nature and Man. Labour is the activity through which the entire living organisms interact with the Nature. Labour is a natural process by which the organisms construct suitable environment for their sustenance. Therefore alienation of labour represents alienation of mankind from nature.

With the emergence of capitalism the diverse production systems of the world were de-legitimized. The appropriation of labour and the gaining control over Nature were the necessary conditions of the development of capitalism.

The estrangement of the "independent[*] concrete labour" becomes a necessary condition for capital to gain control over nature. The separation of the original producer from the natural conditions was at the same time to ensure the availability of labour force to the capitalist industry. The harnessing of workers' living and work conditions to an increasingly social production process evolving according to monetary criteria is and must be a process in which Nature is likewise treated as a condition of monetary accumulation, both socially and materially. In this sense, the subsumption of labour under capital implies a parallel subsumption of nature under capital (Burkett 1999: 67).

## Technology

Marx identifies the construction and use of the instruments of labour as the characteristic specific to the human labour process. He subscribes the idea of Franklin who defined man as a 'tool making animal'. It is the instruments of labour that distinguish the different economic formations (Marx 1977: 286). When the labourer interacts with the nature through the organized set of machineries he becomes a constituent part of the system of labour that translates the mental conception that is embedded in the machinery. Under the capitalist system of production human brain mediates the interest of the capital that the machinery represents. The relationships of the labourer with nature might not be same relationship that the labourer is supposed to have for the reproduction of life. Therefore what matters here in understanding the nature-capital relationship is the ideology that is implanted in the machinery and the organization of the labour process which is governed by the ideology represented in the machine.

The whole technological process in the industry is moved by the principles of natural science which understands its motion as mechanical process. The mode of operation of any machinery meant for the production of any commodity is ruled by grand scientific principles which are not free of ideology.

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* Independent does not mean that the labour is fully independent from all the social ties, here it means independent from the process of commodity production.

The revolutionary basis of technology continuously destabilizes the social relations. The functions of the worker get modified along with revolutionary change in technology. Thus large scale industry, by its very nature, necessitates variation of labour, fluidity of functions, and mobility of the worker in all directions. The seller of the labour power of today might not be on demand tomorrow, considering the changing character of technology (Marx 1982: 616-19).

The frequently advancing and changing process of technology is represented by the diversity of the machinery, production process and commodities. Diversity of technologies and production processes means the diversity in the relationships with nature. These diversities are governed by two fundamental principles. The first one is the modern scientific principles based on which both the assemblage and the motion of the physical body of the machinery has been materialized. The operation of the machinery is assessed by using mathematic logic. The next fundamental is the production relational logic of value. Whatever is the diverse form in which technology relates with nature, it moves upon the fundamental principle of accumulation of value through a process of production.

Marx takes a different and sometimes contradictory position on technology in the chapter Machinery and the Large Scale Industry. Marx identifies the immense potentiality of the industrial capitalist system for human emancipation. The development of the capitalist system demands flexible labour which can respond to new situations rapidly. The industrial workers are far more advanced than the workers of any other production system. The mobility, flexibility and scientific knowledge are better in case of the industrial worker. The rule of scientific laws over machinery and consideration of Nature as bio-physical relationship eventually lead to the legitimization of the modern natural sciences and the falsification of the systems of beliefs previously associated with the human-Nature relationship. The system of working class education is another progressive phase of the capitalist system (Marx 1982: 554). What is problematised by Marx is not the machinery but capital that employs it. Possibility of technology to represent social relations of a socialist system is a major question in the mainstream left political parties while they deal with issues of environmental collapse.

### Prospects of Change

Production is not just the reproduction of individual body but it is the production of nature. The conscious production of nature and the relationship between individual human consciousnesses which evolve into the social production has a universal character. The potential of social change, according to Marx lies in the working class who are alienated from the product, activity of production, species quality and Nature.

Production of "geographies of accumulation" defines and redefines the situatedness of the population with reference to the magnitude of the dialogue between the production process and the relations of nature. In situations where the population lies beyond direct participation in the production process as workers and industrial reserve army, the process of alienation flows beyond the agents who are directly involved in the process of production. Sections of populations who are untrained for the advanced production spaces produce pockets where 'non-appropriated' and alienated masses face a crisis of situating themselves in the social and production relations. This population include those who are displaced in the process of urbanization, tribal populations, people who are engaged in traditional modes of production and so on. The unity of alienation that can be identified with industrial working class cannot be found with the diverse sections of populations who do not enter the capitalist production house directly. Capitalistically produced alienation therefore would be understood differently with reference to the mode of the production of nature.

Freeing the Nature from its bondage is freeing Nature from a bondage which is purely a capitalistically erected one. The very issue of nature which is independent of the traditional chains cannot be something that emerges out of the mass psychology with little intervention of capital. But this idea of freeing the Nature is the fundamental condition/ force that drives the capital when it extends to the absence of the masses from the human ecological space. The relationship that the masses have with the nature might not be a modern scientific composition. This again is reading from the point of view of the capital, the masses might not consider their relationships with nature as something illogical or emotionally powered. The solutions of the problems that the communities face can be traced to their systems of knowledge. The non-development of the productive forces and the emotionally constituted relationships with Nature would be an obstacle for the spread of capital. We will conclude this discussion by pointing to a table from James O'Connor (1999) comparing traditional Marxism and a possible, new ecologically oriented Marxism.

When capital appropriates ecological space of communities who are less mediated by the ongoing process of capital, their relationships with Nature for reproduction of daily life gets excluded from the new system of socio-ecological relations. By appropriating social hierarchies capital tries to camouflage the kind of imbalance it produces. Both their lay and their tacit knowledge which are often marginalised by the more general or abstract knowledge associated with 'the green revolution' and the creation of monocultures (Peter 1996: 65).

The appropriation of the patriarchal social relations helps capital to drive the crisis of mutual appropriation of nature towards historically conditioned subordinated agencies and bodies. Patriarchy deploys different discourses of

masculinity and femininity that associate women with nature and men with culture (Erika 2005: 105). The crisis produced by capital passes to bodies and agencies of individuals who are already conditioned as submissive by various historical processes. The diversities in the modes of appropriating Nature can produce diverse forms of resistance. Such different forms of resistance will get related with various other forms of social powers related to distinct but connected hierarchies including the relationship of domination between Labour and Capital and between 'Man' and Nature. Establishing an ecologically sensitive relationship with Nature is closely related to all these forms of resistance and struggle.

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# The Delirium of Appearance

## Abhilash G Nath

**T**he philosophy and the way of life that the ancients developed around their understanding of *Brahman*, or the real self, or in a modern sense, the pure form of time, parallels the *Tao* of Chinese philosophy. A central concern is that the apparent self, the psychological self, should be negated to realise the true self, *Brahman*. The ancient epics portrayed Krishna as someone who achieved precisely this.

Time unhinged carries with it fear and fury. In an increasingly interconnected world, a crisis of conscience, stimulated by the attachment to material things, haunts our beings. Its reverberations are heard from the beginning of the modern age. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche screams: "The wasteland grows: woe to him who hides wastelands within" (Nietzsche 2012). More than ever, it is in the present time that the crisis of conscience demands attention and hence the nectar from ancient wisdom that can only nourish life. In this essay, an attempt is made to offer some insights that one such tradition has developed in the Indian sub-continent.

In the following, the focus is on a crisis that unfolds in Vyasa's epic poem, the *Mahabharata*, one of the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient India (the other being the *Ramayana*) and the solution that is offered there. If the *Ramayana* expounds the perfect King, then the *Mahabharata* illuminates the process of making him. It focuses on the purging from the heart of anger and emphasises understanding and empathy. Narrating the moral degeneration and violence of its time, it teaches us to show compassion to all and encourages us to understand the fundamental nature of the psychological self and physical reality. The insights that can be found in revisiting the epic can become only more valuable in times when we are at increased risk of losing touch with ourselves.

In an eternally replaying drama, birth in human form is a chance for life to attain self-realisation, and freedom from reoccurrence. For this reason, both Brahmin sociology and Buddhist mysticism give it immense value. The tale of King

Yudhisthira is the most virtuous of the five Pandavas, the five acknowledged sons of Pandu, and so, he is the only one at last sets foot in heaven. At the end of the *Mahabharata*, Vyasa uses this occasion as a way for the King to remind us of the central purpose of the poem. In heaven, the King, however, becomes angry, when he finds there his enemies, the hundred cousins, and not his wife and brothers. Worse, after he enquires about the fate of his relatives he finds out that they all are in hell! He blames the Gods for betrayal and in response, the Gods ask the king, why are you angry, if you have already renounced everything? If you couldn't forgive, even after renouncing your kingdom, brothers and the wife; are you truly worth? Why couldn't you renounce anger?

This questioning gains force from deep intuitive reasoning that understands, that the material world is eternally changing, and that reality is not a creation, but rather, an effect of processes. Thus, neither pleasure nor pain derived from material possessions last; but formed alongside, pleasure and pain are sides of the same coin. It is by renouncing both, through selfless action (inaction), that one can lead oneself to liberation.

This profound insight is one of the sources of the *Bhagavad Gita*'s radiance, the 'Bhishma Parva' or the sixth episode of the *Mahabharata*. Reckoned as one of the five jewels of Sanskrit literature, it has a simple plot of a discourse between two friends. Prince Arjuna, the brother of King Yudhisthira and Krishna, the transcended one, disguised as a charioteer, talk to each other and us. The exchange unfolds in the midst of an impending war, in a war-chariot drawn up between the armies of the Kauravas, led by the wicked King Duryodhana and Pandavas, headed by King Yudhisthira, in the flat country that surrounds the city that is now the modern Delhi.

The *Bhagavad Gita*, or what Sir Edwin Arnold, the English poet, and journalist called *The Song Celestial*, is Krishna's advice to his cousin and childhood friend, Prince Arjuna, while the impending war adds an extra dimension. As the war-chariot settles at the centre of the armies, the view from there creates a moral quandary for Arjuna.

The *Gita*'s meaning unfolds at more than one level. On the simplest, it is an advice to the son of Pandu, the prince Arjuna, who belongs to the warrior class of India. Arjuna's duty in life, therefore, is to fight against evil and fight for the right. His social duty demands him to defend his brothers in their legitimate claims against their wicked cousins. Hence, by custom, he is expected to defend the rights of his brother. However, the view from the centre of the gathered armies is a revelation that to earn a victory for his brothers he has to kill his own family, his cousins, grandfather, and even his teacher. Hence, Arjuna finds himself facing a crisis of conscience. He has spoken words that he should not have spoken, brave as

he may be. As Arnold describes it: when Arjuna arrives at the open ground between the armies, he says these words,

> Krishna! as I behold, come here to shed their common blood, yon concourse of our kin, my members fail, my tongue dries in my mouth, a shudder thrills my body, and my hair bristles with horror; from my weak hand slips Gandiv, the goodly bow; a fever burns my skin to parching; hardly may I stand; the life within me seems to swim and faint; nothing do I foresee save woe and wail! It is not good, O Keshav! (Arnold 2018).

In other words, he cannot see any good coming out of the war. This deep crisis in conscience unsettles the balance of his body. From the centre of the gathered armies, he foresees the end of his clan, which as the Hindu chronology says, he predicts rightly. The end of the war marks the end of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age.

However, it should be taken into consideration that the Hindu chronology does not really follow the occidental; the times of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* do not, in fact, run parallel to the Western understanding of history. The turning point of an age in Hindu chronology is marked rather by the decline in Dharma, the veiling of the True Self, or the pure consciousness. Dharma is the essential nature of beings and things. According to the moral degeneration of the age, the essential nature of beings and things is veiled and becomes unrealisable even to the finest of beings. *Dharma*, hence, is the inner bliss and tranquillity, the true cause of the sense of duty.

*Dharma*, nevertheless, is subtle; the *Mahabharata* describes it as *sukshma*. Realising one's dharma cannot be an easy task; it demands insight into the process that governs life – a process that opens interfaces, from within oneself, among the cosmological, the metaphysical, the physical and psychological assumptions and temptations, shaping actions. *Dharma* advises that, in any given situation, there is always a choice (untouched by this morphogenetic field of assumptions and temptations) to act in a precise and right way. Right action, however, demands an intuitive oneness with the spirit of the macrocosm. By uncovering the true nature (that is, *who am I?*) and the purpose (that is, *what ought to be done?*) of life, dharma acts in line with the spirit and the intelligence of the macrocosm i.e., in accordance with the "Rta" of nature or the principle of natural order. In other words, dharma is action in tune with time.

Realising dharma is, in effect, self-realisation. The *Mandukya Upanishad*, addressing explicitly the question of self-realisation, distinguishes three states of consciousness or spirit. This is significant since it essentially unfolds the cosmological, the metaphysical, the physical and the psychological as vibrations within a single fold, unfolding the microcosm and the macrocosm in an eternal dance, within the fold of infinity. It is said that this Upanishad is enough to attain

self-realisation and bliss. The *Mandukya Upanishad* is noticeably short and offers the following states of spirit. Adi Shankara considered *Mandukya Upanishad* as one of the basics of Advaita Vedanta.

In the waking-state, the spirit is outward-turned, enjoying the gross objects. In the field of the dream-state, the spirit is inward-turned, enjoying the subtle object. In the field of dreamless sleep, in the absence of desires and dreams, the spirit is undivided and undifferentiated; at this stage, the spirit is in bliss and enjoys bliss. In the last state, the spirit is omnipresent; it is the indwelling controller, the source of all, the beginning and the end of all beings (Krishnananda 1996). The path for self-realisation, outlined in *Mandukya Upanishad* for all ages, also reverberates in *Gita*.

In *Tattvabodha*, Adi Shankara identifies five corresponding sheaths: body, mind, intellect, ego and the spirit. The gross body is a mixture of five elements. It – a combination of earth, fire, water, air, and space – is an expression of the spirit, the Self. The subtle body (made of the five inner senses and the organs of action, such as, desire, will etc.) that controls the gross body (the material body has five apertures – eye, ear, tongue, skin, and nose) is made of these same elements but in their pure state i.e. without combining as "they alone." The subtle body, rooted in mind, is the source of all the faculties of knowledge. The causal body or the ego marks and differentiates the subject from the objects. It is a combination of ignorance and bliss, and surfaces in the form of the individual self in the microcosm and in the facade of *Isvara* (the Gods in their apparent forms) at the level of the macrocosm. In both cases, it is ignorant of its own nature. The last form of the sheath is the nearest and yet farthest of all; it is beyond time and space; *Brahman*, Advaita Vedanta argues, is the true cause of all. The universe, that begins and ends in *Brahman*, is only an expression of *Brahman*. It alone fuses the gross, the subtle and the causal body with vital energies setting them into motion (Sunirmalananda 2015).

Adi Shankara considered the *Gita* as one of the important texts of Advaita Vedanta which along with *Samkhya* School upheld the evolutionary theory of the origin of the universe. Though there is difference in these two traditions, some scholars of the *Gita* have traced the *Samkhya* School of thought in the *Gita*; W. J. Johnson, for instance, focuses on the three *Gunas* in the *Gita* – an idea that comes from the *Samkhya*. [1]

The main difference between Vedanta and *Samkhya* lies in the understanding of cause and effect. Both these schools understood the cause as the un-manifested state of what is called effect and what is called effect is the manifested state of what is called cause; that means, the effect is always already in the cause, that is,

even before it surfaces itself. Thus the effect is an unrealised potentiality of the cause. The Samkhya holds the view that the universe, the effect, is real as it came out of a real cause called the *Pradhana*; and for that reason, the universe is not a phenomenon. However, the Vedanta school holds the view that the universe is unreal, a meagre phenomenon evolving out of a subtle reality, a real cause called *Brahman* (Sinha 1915). In his celebrated documentary for PBS titled *Cosmos: A Personal Voyage*, Carl Sagan, for instance, quoted the Upanishad to suggest that the universe is *Brahman*'s dream.

Evolving from within, the gross, subtle and causal sheaths, Advaita Vedanta hints, are mere expressions of the eternal spirit that pervades "what has become, what is becoming, what will become, and what is beyond these three states of the world of time" (Krishnananda 1996). The spirit or the *Brahman*, marked by its eternal, formless and all-pervasive nature, is entirely separated from nature or *Prakriti*. Nature, marked by the gross, subtle, causal sheath (the apparent self or the power of differentiation) and the vital forces are in effect a deviation; and it is a consequence of an imbalance in the combination of the five core elements. Thus, the microcosm and the macrocosm partake in a cosmic dance as they forever swing between balance and imbalance. Depending upon the psychological state and the choice, a reader may be able to trace either the monism of *Vedanta* or the dualism (*Bhakti* tradition) of the *Samkhya* in *Gita*.

At another level, the *Gita* is part of the Hindu metaphysics and cosmology. In this metaphysics, the Trinity is personified in a triple synthesis of time. First, Brahma, the creator-god, represents bliss and transparency. He is the representation of the pure form of consciousness, the original cause of creation. Secondly, Vishnu personifies the force that maintains the great cycle of time, or it is the actual time and distance travelled by the sun to make a rotation around its sun. Of the four different stages in the great cycle, we live at the beginning of *Dwapara Yuga*. Some of the stages are marked by Vishnu's incarnations, and Krishna is one among them. The divine itself reoccurs in time, and for this reason, Vishnu also personifies the eternal reoccurrence of life – life imitates matter until it realises the pure consciousness, the Real Self or *Brahman*. Vishnu is the personification of the circular time.

Since the microcosm and the macrocosm are one and the same, time is intrinsically connected to space. The temporal unfolding at the cosmic level affects the microcosm and vice versa; that is both the external and the internal worlds evolved according to one underlining method. Sri Yukteswar Giri, in his *Kaivalya Darsanam: The Holy Science*, has charted the implications of the temporal unfolding of the macrocosm on the unfolding of the microcosm in time. He writes:

We learn from oriental astronomy that moons revolve around their planets, and planets turning on their axes revolve with their moons around the sun; and the sun, with its planets and their moons, takes some star for its dual and revolves around it in about 24,000 years of our earth – a celestial phenomenon which causes the backward movement of the equinoctial points around the zodiac. The sun also has another motion by which it revolves around a grand centre called *Vishnunabhi*, which is the seat of the creative power, Brahma, the universal magnetism. Brahma regulates dharma, the mental virtue of the internal world.

When the sun in its revolution around its dual comes to the place nearest to this grand centre, the seat of Brahma (an event which takes place when the Autumnal Equinox comes to the first point of Aries), dharma, the mental virtue, becomes so much developed that man can easily comprehend all, even the mysteries of Spirit (Giri 1977).

The orbit of the sun is divided into two equal halves of 12000 years of ascending and descending arcs, which are subdivided into four quarters called *Yuga*. In 12000 years, the sun reaches the farthest point in its orbit from the Brahma; at this point, the dharma or the blissfulness in man is at the lowest; in such a state, man is unable to grasp the truth of the spirit, the Brahma and he would succumb to material pleasures. This point, in the orbit of the sun, is called *Kali Yuga*. In the 12000 years, the sun reaches the nearest point to the Brahma, opening an age of spiritual revival. The *Satya Yuga* is the peak of human spiritual development; after the *Satya Yuga*, the human spirit descents and becomes moderately clouded in *Treta Yuga*, the time of Ramayana; and it further degenerates in the *Dwapara Yuga*, the time of Mahabharata; the descending of human spirit continues till the sun reaches the farthest point in its orbit, in the *Kali Yuga*. Once it reaches *Kali Yuga*, the sun along with its planets and their moons ascend along an arc towards higher energy zones elevating the spiritual energies within man. According to this cosmology, the present age is the early stages of *Dwapara Yuga*, along with the ascending arc towards *Satya Yuga*.
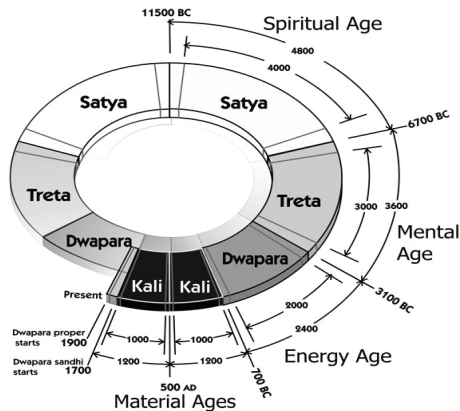
The third element, *Shiva*, is the divine spark that tears the every passing unit of time; his dance at once destroys and creates worlds. The feminine force, personified as *Adi Shakta*, is the primal force, the all-pervasive primordial cosmic energy, the base of creation. In this metaphysic, things or states are transitory by nature; they are only snapshots of change in progress. From a modern standpoint, as Norbert Wiener, the mathematician and developer of cybernetics, for instance, has observed: "We are not stuff that abides, but patterns that perpetuate themselves" (Barash 2014).

Valmiki, who wrote the *Ramayana*, could talk about the perfect king during his time because *Dharma* revealed itself in the phenomenal world. In other words, people lived their Real Self and, therefore, revealed their essential nature. Time, experienced as the pure consciousness, revealed its essential nature. They, therefore, say gods walked on this land. The time of the *Ramayana* is Ideal.

Nonetheless, Vyasa had to take into consideration the moral degeneration of his time and meditate upon the process of making the perfect king that is, the process of attaining Dharma. However, things degenerate further in Kaliyuga, as John Algeo, former President of the Theosophical Society America, writes:

> In Indian dice, kali is the one-spot; and to throw a kali is to lose the game – to crap out. So the Kaliyuga is the most degenerate era of history, the losing time. Arjuna foresees that the onset of the Kaliyuga will result from the battle (Algeo 2000).

*Kaliyuga* is the age of Apparent Self, the ego. Hence, the one-spot, the 'I', is the form of time. The *Gita* unfolds during a period when time itself is about to take a spin on its pedestal. "The Song Celestial," thus, is teaching for humanity, to arm itself against its own degeneration.

In such a system, pure consciousness, the blissful state, is not a property of space; but rather space is a morphogenetic field, a field of endless unfolding through modifications. If space is indeed a field of energy, then all rational forms unfolded in it are persuaded by irrational processes. In such a field of action, though pain is unavoidable, suffering is optional. In consequence, too, the blissful state can only become an inner experience, the creative potential of one's inner silence and liberation comes through a union with the inner silence. However, hindrances to one's attainment of pure consciousness and eternal bliss attained through inner silence vary according to the moral state of an age. Then again, the *Gita* says, devoid of the moral degeneration of the age, those who are armed with the deepest truth of the nature of reality would be compassionate to all the living things. As W. J. Johnson, the translator of the *Gita* for the *Oxford World's Classics* series puts it:

> For the supreme bliss comes to the yogin whose mind has grown calm, whose passion is stilled, who has become Brahman, without taint," and such an existence would see the same thing 'in a wise and disciplined Brahmin as in a cow or an elephant, or even in a dog or an outcast (Johnson 2008).

*Dharma* is action motivated by one's deep insight into the nature of time and causality. The time of the *Mahabharata* revolves around Krishna. He is the hinge, the pointed finger that spins his beloved weapon, the *Chakra*. When Arjuna and his grandfather, Bhishma fight each other during the war, they test the will and the patience of the time. Both men admire each other, and wouldn't desire to defeat one another. The battle goes on yet without conclusion, and thus, Krishna is forced to intervene and attacks Bhishma. As he turns against Bhishma; the *Chakra*, the absolute tyrant, time itself spins at his fingertip.

This incident from the epic offers an insight that would explain the nature of time and *Dharma* that Krishna embodies and their relationship with each other. Throughout his life, he is a character that rejects conventional morality. When Draupadi, the Pandavas' wife, is dragged and ill-treated in the court, none of the great men present there reacted as they were confused and thought the essence of *Dharma* hidden in its path is difficult to grasp. Besides the conventional morality taught them that the master is the lawful owner of the save, and since Duryodhana won her and her five husbands as slaves in a dice game, he has absolute authority over them.

Krishna, however, does not have such hesitation, and he offers help as she needed it. Free from guilt and the traces of the conventional morality, Krishna shows the character of a visionary and is willing to sacrifice his name and fame in his fight to end dark forces and establishes a world of righteousness, a world of light.

Still, his moral principles are not imposed from outside, they are strictly not conventional morality. They are formed through his realisation of the true self, the untainted *Brahman* within. What Krishna sets into play is the difference between the 'written law' and the 'spirit of the law.' The spirit of the law is the good-in-all. However, the law is dependent on context. Its essence changes with context; for this reason, no law is universally applicable. In the battlefield, when Drona asks the king Yudhishthira to inform him about the truth of his son's death, the king conforms to the conventional morality by clinging to the truth in word and lies in spirit. The king is upset because he does not want to lie to his teacher even though Drona is fighting for a wrong cause – the victory of darkness.

On the other hand, when Krishna rushes towards Bhishma in the aforement-ioned context, he is breaking his vow of not fighting in the battle. Provoked by Duryodhana's incessant badgering that he is not sincere in battle Bhishma is in a blind fury. Like a whirlwind, he destroys everything on his way, and this forces Krishna to ask Arjuna to stop him. And yet while encountering him, Krishna notices that Arjuna is not striking back with all his heart. Breaking his vow, he leaps out of the chariot, holding a chariot wheel he picked up from the field. When Bhishma

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sees the approaching Krishna, he says to him: "Come, come Krishna, and put an end to my life today." Arjuna runs after Krishna and reminds him repeatedly that, if he does not stop, the world would call him a betrayer of his own word, a common liar. Still, Arjuna could only stop him after a furious struggle by holding on to his legs from behind and clinging on to them.

Throughout his life, Krishna does not follow the conventional morality once, but rather, he acts according to a higher morality that is derived from self-realization, and therefore, his actions are not prompted by greed, anger, vengeance, jealousy, bitterness and resentment, or intolerance. Valmiki portrays the man as someone whose consciousness is steadily rooted in *Brahman* – as a *sthitaprajna*. He is time's inner silence, its untainted and pure consciousness.

As time's inner silence and its will, he is the divine witness and the measure of the virtues of the time. Though great men fought this battle, they showed weakness. Drona decides to fight to protect his son; Yudhisthira is slow in grasping the meaning of dharma; Arjuna is emotional; Bheema is a crapulous and sleepy; Bhishma is preoccupied with his image as the martyr, the self-sacrificer. As an incorruptible man of total integrity, he enters into the war to keep his vow that he would always stand with the ruler of the land. So, though unwilling in spirit, he fights for the evil. Besides, his narcissistic obsession with his image fails him to guide his grandchildren away from wrongdoings.

And therefore, what Arjuna foresees as being the end, is in Krishna's vision, only a transition and a beginning. In this way, his intervention into the affairs of this world itself is a selfless act aimed to run the transition smoothly. What the *Gita* offers us is his way of life.

The *Gita's* stress on the selfless action (inaction), directed towards transition and new beginnings, takes political form in modern times in the life of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi was introduced to the *Gita* by the theosophists, and his reading of Henry David Thoreau's essay "On Civil Disobedience" had inspired his policy of passive resistance or *Satyagraha*.

It is in Gandhi that *the truth of power* and *the power of truth* unfolded as an effective political strategy. He realised that the truth of power is that it marks individuals and subjects them by differentiating along social and political identities. Gandhi, therefore, could identify himself with movements, such as the anti-apartheid moments in South Africa; anti-caste and anti-colonial movements in India. He saw government as a system of rule-governed relations, and for that reason; his struggle wasn't directed against the British personnel in India. On the other hand, Gandhi defined *Satyagraha* as the force of truth; that he was able to see the humanity in all. He was in a position to hear God in the voice of the subjugated masses. Gandhi's speaking, recorded in London, in 1931 reminds us

this: "I do dimly perceive, while everything around me is ever changing, ever dying, there is underlying all these changes, a living power that is changeless; that holds all together, that creates, dissolves and recreates. That informing power or spirit is God; in the midst of this, life persists; in the midst of untruth, truth persists; in the midst of darkness, light persists" (Hashmi 2012).

Inspired in turn by Gandhi's policy, Martin Luther King created his own program of non-violence. This underlines that in an increasingly interconnected and complex world such as ours, works like the *Gita* or the *Tao Te Ching* offer guidance for cultivating the self. Politics today strongly demands clean minds and selfless action, and it demands from us leaders and thinkers, who can foresee a future beyond caste, class, race, gender, religion, and nation to lay down strategies to achieve a better future for all.

If the historical myth of the *Gita* is a discourse between two friends at the turning point of a golden age in the background of an ancient civil war, then the archetypal myth of the *Gita* speaks about our inner struggle.

After deep introspection, the *Gita* locates the spirits of the microcosm and the macrocosm as identical. It teaches us that the human spirit and the universal spirit that pervades the phenomenal world are nothing but the same. This deep insight primarily hints that life on this planet is neither the work of an alien force nor an accident. Alan Watts, the twentieth century British-born American philosopher, known as an interpreter and populariser of Eastern philosophy, suggests in the seminar titled *The Nature of Consciousness* that neither the ceramic model (meaning the kind of world imagined in the book of Genesis, where the world is given as an artefact; the creator, God imposes his will on the primordial matter, clay, and breathes life in it, and thereby, it is informed and its intelligence, therefore, is granted by an external energy and an external intelligence) nor the fully automatic model of the world (in such a model, the world is created by a dumb energy, through natural selection and evolution. Darwin developed such an understanding of the world), gives an adequate myth or an image in terms of which we can make sense of the world. Hence, in order to manage our sensations and our feelings, we need the most sensible image of the world.

On the other hand, in the Oriental myth the universe is a self-contained intelligent process, and as Watts puts it playfully, if the earth is a grand apple tree, then its fruit is life. The *Gita* calls this pure consciousness, the *Brahman*. Self-contained bliss, purity, and indestructibility are its qualities. Just as the entire sun is reflected at once in perfect miniatures in each and every dewdrop, *Brahman* is omnipresent and perfect. It is like the salt of the great oceans that can only be tasted but cannot physically be located. *Brahman* residing within each of us is our Real Self, the source of inner peace, harmony, perfection and the blissful state.

Those who realise the state of *Brahman* from within would see the world from *its* point of view, and this is the reason why, Krishna, the incarnation of Vishnu, maintainer of the great circles of time, is the divine witness.

Like the *Great Tao, Brahman*, or the Real Self, is devoid of all qualities; it lacks sound, taste, form, smell, and touch, and, for that reason, it does not act, and is not an agency. Self-contained and undivided, it is not a sense of itself. The *Gita* argues that the *Brahman* is the Real and the only perfect. It is inaction, selfless action. Those who achieve this state enjoy mental tranquillity and freedom. It is the reason why, Krishna tells Arjuna: 'The learned do not mourn" and advises him to 'be thyself," which means, to realise his essential nature, the Real Self. *Dharma*, then, is this self-realisation, and the sense of duty derived from one's self-realisation. The sage lives in the Real Self. Unconscious of the worldly phenomena, it is his night and his day is the Real Self. For ordinary people, their day is the worldly phenomena, and unconscious of their Real Self, it becomes their night.

However, our emotional investment and fidelity is in a transitory reality, which is, the *Gita,* warns, a hindrance to self-realisation. From his different standpoint, Heraclitus too directs our attention to the unpredictability of the phenomenal world. He writes: "As they step into the same rivers, other and still other waters flow upon them "(Kahn 1999).

In Hindu tradition, the mind-body complex is the apparent Self. In a field of energy, when fading connections link body and mind, ephemeral points emit apparition. The apparent Self is such an emission. The sense of 'I', the doer takes form, when one synthesises from a field of relations, a sense of the world, my world. Produced at once with the synthesis, it offers itself as an apparition. When the mind senses itself as the body, the sense of 'I', or the doer is a disguise that projects itself at once with an ego.

With the sense of a *doer*, there is a *receiver*. However, neither the receiver nor the doer is real, rather both of them are apparitions formed in a temporal unfolding that involves the body located in space and mind unfolding in time. Since space is infused with energy, it removes objectivity from intentionality. Hence, both the doer and the receiver becomes a difference in degree in a field of feelings and emotions that essentially set that field to change. In this field of continuous judgment, as one identifies oneself in that field as an agency, the selfless act or the inaction that the *Gita* advocates does not take place. In contrast, the 'I' or the doer links one into the causal chain.

With the apparent Self, the Real Self, the form of selfless action, is veiled into the depth within. In one fragment, Heraclitus writes, "Nature loves to hide." This veiling of nature is due to our indisposition to know ourselves. We fundamentally lack insight into ourselves.

Heraclitus also hints: "Not comprehending, they hear like the deaf. The saying is their witness: absent while present." Adding, "Not understanding how to listen, they do not know how to speak." Ordinary life, for this reason, is an eternally unfolding drama, a play of light and shadow, on which neither the doer nor the receiver has authority. In contrast, the Real Self, like the sun in Plato's cave allegory, is the true source of light. In the *Gita*, Krishna sees the world as its light; he is the form of inaction. As the personification of the formless, as the Real Self, he is omnipresent and perfect, inner bliss is his state; and therefore, the *Gita* sees him as the divine spark within us.

Ordinary life is trapped in the clutches of likes and dislikes, which are effects of a process that involves differentiation and separation. Since it is a process, its qualities are shaped by the past. However, the past takes form through the adding up of dreams and imaginations into the lived experience. This addition itself is nothing but a process. The Song Celestial tells that beings pass through various wombs according to their contacts in this world. In this way of thinking, they really do. Moreover, beings are conceived here as becoming. Still, to become a process, i.e. to institute change in progress, there must be a stable foundation. *Brahman* from the standpoint of the *Gita* provides the necessary foundation. Even then, it does not change with the ceaseless change, the change in progress veils it within us.

*Maya* is the veil of our true nature. This veil essentially is that of the world of name and form. It is neither an illusion nor a mirage but an obstacle that hides the Reality. Thick strata of desire, inhibitions and values that clouds the sun within us, a golden lid that covers the face of the Truth. Otto Pfleiderer sites Johann Gottlieb Fichte, the foundering figure of the movement known as German Idealism in his *The Philosophy of Religion on the Basis of its History*: "Our seeing itself hides the object we see; our eye itself impedes our eye" (Pfleiderer 1886).

Reality is not actually seen with the eye, but with the eye of the spirit, which means, we haven't yet touched the reality. Gandhi in his interpretation of the *Gita* writes: The reality at the back, the substance of which the diversity is but the shadow, is seen not with the eye of flesh, but with the eye of the spirit (Gandhi 2018).

Or, as Heraclitus tells it: 'our senses are liars'. Camille Flammarion, the nineteenth-century French writer, and enthusiastic astronomer, for instance, illustrates how they are so:

> We see the sun rise above the horizon; it is beneath us. We touch what we think is a solid body; there is no such thing (as a solid body). We hear harmonious sounds, but the air has only brought us silently undulations that are silent themselves. We admire the effects of light and of the colours that bring vividly before our eyes the splendid scenes of Nature; but, in fact, there is no light, there are no colours. It is the movement of opaque ether striking on our optic nerve which gives us the impression of light and colour. We

burn our foot in the fire: it is not the foot that pains us; it is in our brain only that the feeling of being burned resides. We speak of heat and cold; there is neither heat nor cold in the universe, only motion. Thus, our senses mislead us as to the reality of objects around us (Gandhi 2018).

Reality lies behind the world of name and form, and the ancients called it *Brahman*. The divine light breaks up while passing through the world of name and form, just like when light passing through the prism breaks up into colour rays. It seems as Gandhi says: 'The prism is the gross medium of our fleshly senses'. Hence, the world is nothing but a reflection of the Absolute, the *Brahman* (*Brahman*, at this point, is neither god nor concept; it is rather pure consciousness, devoid of qualities). Realising the true Self, the *Brahman* is at once the relief from the physical and psychological bondage of the world of senses.

On the other hand, diversity is the *Maya* of the true Self. *Maya* that brings forth all things is the primordial nature as the feminine force. Its relation with *Brahman*, *Purusha*, parallels the *yin* and *yang* of Chinese philosophy. *Brahman* is the universal Self, but when reflected in the *Maya* of *Prakriti*, appears as an individual soul. Though in itself unconscious, *Maya* dwells within consciousness, and in this metaphysics, the pure consciousness is the *Brahman*. All forms take form through the play of these primal poles, *Prakriti* and *Purusha*. However, none can predict what might have triggered those primordial elements to initiate a process that led to the birth of the universe. And still, with such a system, it can be intuited that the universe is an organic unfolding.

Interconnected by nature, *Maya* unfolds alone with *Brahman*. Hence, the white radiance of eternity, the *Brahman* reflected and diffracted is the world of senses. Algeo writes: "Each of us is a consciousness (*Purusha*) functioning through material forms (*Prakriti*) – a reflection of the one pure consciousness in the matter of *Prakriti* "(Algeo 2000).

In the non-dualist, *Advaita* school of Hindu philosophy, the *Brahman* is the only real; god, as its personifications, are only masks that would direct one to self-realisation and to the state of *Brahman*, the real Self. In the pantheistic devotional movement (*Bhakti*) developed in medieval Hinduism, devotees choose deities on their path to self-realisation according to their spiritual and emotional state. However, liberation from the causal chain and the self-suffering inflicted by it are the ultimate goal of all mysticism.

The Gita teaches both this tradition: one based on devotion and the other through the intuitive reasoning of the real Self or *Brahman*. The first path, of selfless action, involves agency as here the devotee disciplines the mind through the devotion to a script or a great teacher. Here the Great War becomes our inner struggle for self-realisation. In this struggle, Arjuna is us, our individual selves;

Krishna the omnipresent; and the blind king Dhritarashtra the mind under the spell of *Maya*. Since one could observe that each character in the epic is unique, the blind king's hundred sons, the Kauravas, embody as the numerous evil tendencies of the human mind.

Imitating human experiences, the *Gita* unfolds in multiple layers. It starts with the blind King Dhrtarastra's exchange with his charioteer, Sanjaya, who tells the unfolding events at the battlefield using his intuitive perception. It contains the images, noise and the rhythms of the battlefield from various angles, including Arjuna's vision from the war-chariot settled at the centre of the gathering. His moral quandary, when he sees the good peoples gathered on both sides, Krishna's discourses with his friend and, Duryodhana exchanges with the teacher, Drona, and his allies create a kaleidoscopic and intense visualisation. *Gita* suggests, if one could follow with devotion the divine spark then one would eventually master the mind and attain Self-realisation.

The second path taps an innate intelligence that the *Gita* calls *Buddhi* - the faculty of intuitive understanding. *Buddhi* pervades the microcosm and the macrocosm and is innate to both the individual spirit and the universal spirit. It is insight and is with such insight that we can, at last, identify and negate the apparent self and realise the True Self. Here the negation, however, is not dialectical. It is not the negation of the negation, as systematised by Hegel and the later Marxists but rather, grown in a vibe of inner bliss, it is an absolute negation. This would liberate such an existent from the play of causality that link and differentiate between the self and the other.

By transcending the play of causality, the material becomes the source of a spiritual awakening. Negating the apparent self thus affirms the whole. By affirming the whole, such an existence transcends the past, and life becomes a pure play. The *Bhagavad Gita* reveals that the one who has realised the true Self requires no further scripture or teacher.

## Notes

1   Samkhya is one of the earliest dualist traditions of Indian philosophy founded by Kapila, who is  believed to have lived in the 6th-century BCE, or the 7th-century BCE. According to this tradition, the universe is made of two primordial elements, *puru'a* (consciousness) and *prak'ti* (matter). *Jiva* (a living being) is that state in which *puru'a* is bonded to *prak'ti* in some form. The consciousness is eternal bliss, while *Prakriti* is the state of equilibrium of the three *Gunas: Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*. *Sattva* is light and illuminating, Rajas is active and urgent, and *Tamas* is heavy and enveloping. In such a system, though everything, internal as well as external, is in a state of continuous flex, side by side with the principle of mutation, there must also be a principle of conservation. Consequently, there couldn't be change, both in time and space, without rest (Prabhupada 1977).

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# The Promise of 'Naya' Pakistan and the Rise of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

Shiraz Sheikh

The general election of 2018 in Pakistan which placed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on to the zenith of power generated a critical debate among the scholars who observed the entire electoral process and the second consecutive democratic transition. There were two spectrums of arguments which followed from this debate. The optimistic pro-democracy observers saw a positive progression and hoped that it will somehow consolidate the process of democratisation of Pakistan. On the other hand, the critics saw entire electoral exercise as another coming of deep state in the guise of constitutional façade. Amidst these intriguing arguments, this article intends to analyse the factors which have determined the outcome of the election. The article traces the trail of PTI's evolution, its expanding social base and political campaign, in order to explain its rise to power. Since the promise of *Naya Pakistan* ushered optimism for democratic consolidation, the article engages with the question, if there is any hope for democracy in Pakistan?

*Keywords:* General Election 2018, Imran Khan, Naya Pakistan, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, PTI,

## *Introduction*

**O**n 25 July 2018, Pakistan witnessed a historic day in a way of its second consecutive democratic transition of power to civilian regime. The general election for the 11th National Assembly created deep rupture in the pattern of two dominant party politics. It was no less than a revolution from the perspective of party politics when *Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf* (PTI) led by Imran Khan emerged victorious and dethroned the PML (N). Many in the media, political circles and academia, who observed this entire electoral exercise, deduced the arrival of this outcome on the basis of beclouding conspiracy theories.

Their line of arguments is substantiated by an array of overt and covert evidences that how this election was far from fair. There were allegations of rigging, manipulation by using state machinery, coercion and persuasion, and creating

factions among political parties. The debate following the election results also tends to suggest that entire electoral process was a façade to secure a verdict the deep state – as the armed forces of Pakistan called by scholars – wanted. It is also argued that the Pakistan military's expertise is not in warfare but in the country's political governance, they are the largest political party which rules without contesting. In this side of the spectrum the entire electoral exercise looks farcical and democracy a façade to legitimise the indirect exercise of power by the military establishment. This argument should not be rejected as conspiracy theory concocted by opposition due to tradition of allegation in Pakistani election.

On the other hand, there was strong reasoning indicating how people of Pakistan voted for change from the past dominance of the mainstream parties. While analysing this rupture, the context of party politics in Pakistan must be critically examined. The rise of PTI nonetheless had a populist undertone as Imran Khan sold the promise of *Naya Pakistan* to be built on Medina model of Islamic welfare state. This was his promise of change and democratic consolidation. These must be examined in the light of events which occurred in the last few years that could lead to some conclusion. But before making this analysis it is essential to gaze the evolution of PTI and compare its past performances with the present one and also analysing bases of their social constituency and then develop criterion for the assessment of present nature of the debate.

## The Evolution of PTI

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) or Pakistan Movement for Justice is a centre-right and Islamic welfare party founded by cricketer-turned politician, Imran Khan on 25 April 1996. The flamboyant Pakistani cricketer became a philanthropist after retirement and built a charitable cancer hospital named after his mother Shaukat Khanum. He started his party as a socio-political movement after mobilising funds for his hospital. The PTI formed its Central Executive Committee (CEC) in June 1996. The CEC was constituted by the seven founding members including, Imran Khan, Ahsan Rasheed, Naeemul Haque, Mowahid Hussain Syed Hafeez Khan, Nausherwan Burki and Mahmood Awan. Just after its formation in 1996, the party decided to contest in the next general elections of 1997. Imran Khan, the party leader contested from eight constituencies across Pakistan but did not win a single seat (Talbot 1998). The party was "touted as embryo of 'third force' in Pakistani politics" (Ibid) but not taken seriously in the elections and gathered only 2 per cent of votes polled.

The Central Executive Committee ratified the PTI constitution on 24 January 1999 in Lahore. The constitution in its introduction states its *raison d'être* for entering into Pakistani politics. It says that because the leadership failed to

achieve the ideals of the founding father to create a country free from exploitation, corruption and social injustice but rather Pakistan fell into the hands of a ruling elite such as 'selfish politicians, feudal, civil and military bureaucrats' who plundered the country to the extent that it is at the verge of institutional breakdown. And therefore the party entered politics "to mobilise people to extricate Pakistan from its present state of despair and to set it on the path of attaining unity, solidarity, social justice and prosperity" (*The Constitution of PTI*). The constitution further laid out 55 objectives of the party to be fulfilled if it came into power. The Party's main objective is "to make Pakistan an egalitarian, modern, Islamic democratic welfare state which upholds the fundamental rights of the people in which all citizens, regardless of gender, caste, creed or religion can live in peace, harmony and happiness" (Ibid). It then advocates for various reform, such as more provincial autonomy, decentralisation and devolution of power, free media and police reforms etc. The constitution vowed "to recognise, promote and implement policies that protect the rights of women... and encourage the participation of women in the national and political life" (Ibid). For minorities, the PTI declared its determination to reintroduce and continue the practice of joint electorates and minorities would be brought into mainstream politics and be given representation at all levels according to their numerical strength.

After the first election it was relatively inactive for a period of time. Formally their representation was not in the parliament and the party was in its formative phase. The PML (N) government which was elected in the 1997 election was dismissed in a military coup within two years. The country fell into the hands of a military dictator; General Pervez Musharraf who conducted general elections in 2002. This time around, the PTI released its manifesto with detailed policy schemes. The manifesto was presented as 'An Agenda for Resurgence.' In its preamble, the manifesto emphasised its aspiration for 'a modern Islamic republic' based on tolerance and religious plurality (PTI 2002). It proclaimed PTI to be a broad-based movement than just being a political party.

The manifesto claimed of its capacity to provide credible leadership that can restore Pakistan's political and economic sovereignty. It underscored its commitment to the principles of 'unity, faith and discipline' expounded by Jinnah to revive the self-esteem of all Pakistanis including minorities. The mission of the party was to establish rule of law through an independent judiciary. It vowed to promote democracy, ensure religious freedom, lead an education revolution, poverty alleviation, encouragement to the private sector, end to the VIP culture, and to promote merit-based recruitment in jobs. Imran Khan who supported the military intervention in politics (Walsh 2011) did not say anything about the military rule or reform in civil-military relations in the party manifesto.

Although PTI vowed to end the feudal system in its constitution, it did not say anything on land reforms in the manifesto. However, it promised the agriculture reforms and economic security through various policy initiatives. With this, the PTI went to the General Elections of 2002 held under the new election laws issued under the Conduct of General Elections Order promulgated by the military government. This time the PTI chairman Imran Khan managed to win from Mianwali, his home town in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). That's how the PTI made an entry to the parliament in its second stint wining just one seat out of 272. The popular vote share reduced from 2 per cent in the previous election to a mere 0.8 per cent (Mehdi et al. 2010). Nevertheless, the PTI sent its first representation to the parliament. In the controlled political environment under the military's civilianised government the party adopted the path of street protest. However, Imran Khan, who initially supported General Pervez Musharraf, began to question his legitimacy as president and dubbed him as an 'American puppet' (Hertzberg 2005).

His anti-American protest continued in the next year when Imran Khan and his party held a rally against President George W. Bush's visit to Pakistan in 2006. Imran Khan was put under house arrest by the police and many party cadres were arrested (*The Hindu* 2006). The party activists chanted slogans 'Killer Bush go back.' The PTI was never out of the news and in 2007 when Salman Rushdie was awarded Knighthood by Queen Elizabeth; PTI condemned the honour and protested in Peshawar. The PTI supporters chanted 'Curse Rushdie, Long Live Osama' (*Al Jazeera* 2007). In the same year, PTI ran into another controversy when the MQM and the PML (Q) filed dual 'Disqualification References' against the PTI chairman Imran Khan on the basis of moral misconduct seeking his disqualification from the National Assembly. However, both the references were rejected by the Election Commission on 5 September 2007 (Khan 2007). General elections were announced for the same year but were postponed to 2008 following Benazir Bhutto's assassination. The PTI decided to boycott the election and thus were completely out of the National Assembly.

After ending its soul searching in political wilderness when it stayed away from the parliament, the PTI released its second manifesto for the 10th National Assembly election in 2013. The election was important because for the first time it witnessed democratic transition of power. The coalition government led by PPP failed to deliver basic civic amenities especially supply of electricity. Inflation was on a rampant high. The period was also marred with widespread violence and loss of human life. In this backdrop the new manifesto was released with the slogan '*Naya Pakistan*' (new Pakistan) promising to bring change. The preamble committed to establish a *Naya Pakistan* on 'Iqbal's dream and Jinnah's vision encapsulated in an Islamic welfare state' (PTI 2013). It pledged to fight against

injustice and promised to build a just order. The manifesto highlighted the forty thousand people who had lost their lives due to the scourge of terrorism resulting from growing intolerance, therefore the party committed to restore tolerance in the society. The new manifesto stressed that 'it is the party of ordinary Pakistanis' and *Naya Pakistan* is hope for the dispossessed and deprived people.

Since PTI had never held power, it had no responsibility to share for the deteriorating condition of the economy, basic amenities, security and American arm-twisting of the Pakistani government. Imran Khan started his political campaign two years in advance in 2011 with highlighting the failures of the incumbent PPP-led government. On 30 October 2011 the party organised its public meeting (which they called PTI *Jalsa*) at Lahore's historic *Minar-i-Pakistan*.[1] Imran Khan called the gathering as a sign of a revolution in Pakistan and claimed that the rulers cannot stop it (*Dawn* 2011). He said corruption was the biggest challenge facing Pakistan and his party would strive to resolve this. He "warned politicians to declare their assets or his party would launch a civil disobedience movement against them" (*The Express Tribune* 2011). One year later, on the same date PTI leaders and workers observed their last meeting day as the Revolution Day.

As the election date approached, PTI accelerated its campaign. The election saw the colossal use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) especially the internet. The inclination towards social media for campaign was the consequence of both the push of the circumstances and pull of the popularity to reach out to large number of *netizens*. The push was the security risk involved in the physical campaign as many party workers died in violent attacks. The pull was the fact that Pakistan had 8 million Facebook users and around 2-3 million Tweeter users who could be reached by using these virtual platforms at any time, day or night. Apart from social networking sites, other platforms like blogs, official party websites and unofficial supporting sites also boosted up the political campaign. Through these platforms voters could evaluate the manifesto, candidates and the party itself. The PTI and the MQM were two political parties which used these new opportunities more efficiently than other parties. Imran Khan's Facebook page *Naya Pakistan* had the largest followers than any other political rival.

In the elections, PTI won 26 general seats and emerged as the third largest party following the PML (N) with 124 seats and the PPP with 31 seats. But the PTI become the second largest party as it received 17 per cent of popular vote share 2 per cent more than PPP (*Gilani's Index* 2013). And then after a year, PTI which had expected a landslide victory alleged that the elections were rigged and demanded a judicial commission to be formed to probe the 2013 general elections. Imran Khan then decided to boycott sessions of parliament until the demands were met. The government did not agree to the demands and the PTI launched its *Azadi March* or

(Freedom March) on 14 August 2014 (Independence Day of Pakistan) at *D-Chowk* from where Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was to hoist the national flag. His demands were: resignation of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif; dissolution of assemblies and fresh election; electoral reforms; with the consensus of all parties a caretaker government be formed; resignation of all the members of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP); Article 6 of the Constitution be invoked against who helped in the 'rigging' of 2013 general elections (*The Nation* 2014). His protest march was joined by another similar march called *Inqilab March* launched by *Pakistan Awami Tehreek* led by cleric Muhammad Tahir-ul Qadri.

The protests were suppressed with violence and 2520 supporters of the *Azadi March* and *Inqilab March* were arrested and jailed in 27 jails in Punjab (Ghumman 2014). The buzz word of the protest was the slogan 'Go-Nawaz-Go' which posed many problems for the PML (N) government. After 126 days of sit-in protest in the national capital, Imran Khan announced to the end of the protest, following the Taliban attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar which killed 148 people. The government later agreed to set-up a judicial commission to look into the allegations in April 2015 and thereafter Imran Khan and his party returned to parliament after a boycott of eight months.

### Social Base of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's entry in the electoral arena of the country is relatively new. It entered to contest its first election in 1997 when the party's arrival was touted as the entry of a 'third force.' The new enthusiast contested on 134 seats out of 206 totals. The party leader, Imran Khan, peculiarly contested from 8 seats in three provinces.[2] Khan and his party awfully lost all the seats. The maximum votes he could gather were in his hometown, Mianwali. Here he ended up at third position by securing 17,859 votes from the 101,726 total valid votes polled in the constituency. His worst performance came in Karachi where the national hero of cricket managed to win 911 votes out of 59,078 votes polled. Collectively the party secured 313,673 votes in which Imran Khan's share was 56,542 from all the 8 seats combined. PTI won 2 per cent votes polled in the election. The major share of it came from Punjab (217,169) and KPK (71,042) (*Gilani's Index* 2013). Thus it was easy to conclude that majority of PTI supporters were concentrated in these two provinces.

Then arrived the election of 2002 in which electoral rules were revised and number of seats increased to 272. But the party reduced its candidates and contested only on 94 seats. This time Imran Khan fought from three seats only.[3] He managed to win from his home constituency, Mianwali. The voters once again rejected his party as his collective vote share was less than 1 per cent. More than 85

per cent of its vote share came from Punjab and KPK combined. Its Punjab's vote share was as high as 69 per cent. It was difficult to conclude about PTI's social base as it won only 1 seat in two elections but one could notice the Punjabi-Pakhtun tilt from its vote share. The exhausted and demoralised leadership decided to boycott the 2008 election under the military's watch. After a long break the party decided to contest in the 2013 general election which established the party's political significance as well as its social base.

It returned to national politics with significant impact. The party contested 248 seats. PTI emerged as the second largest party in terms of popular vote share in the polls. It won 26 general seats and was the third largest party following the PML (N) and the PPP. In terms of support base, the result was a pristine statement of its Pakhtun-Punjabi proclivity. All the 26 seats came from Punjab and KPK. The party could not open its account in Sindh and Baluchistan in its third attempt. Within Punjab and KPK it fared well in certain divisions. The following table shows the intra-provincial concentration of its support base.

*Table 4.5: Division-wise Seat-Breakdown in KPK and Punjab*

| Division – KPK | Seat won | Vote share in % | Division - Punjab | Seat won | Vote share in % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kohat | 3 | 37 | Lahore | 1 | 20 |
| Hazara | 2 | 30 | Multan | 3 | 27 |
| Malakand | 2 | 24 | Sargodha | 2 | 20 |
| Mardan | 3 | 26 | Rawalpindi | 3 | 26 |
| Peshawar | 6 | 41 | **Total** | **9** | **18** |
| FATA | 1 | 11 | | | |
| **Total** | **17** | **27** | | | |

Source: *Gilani's Index of Electoral Record 1970-2013: Volume 9, Pakistan National Election 2013.*

The intra-provincial variations showed that the party which campaigned with populist and Islamist rhetoric fared well in rural divisions.[4] His Islamist rhetoric was well received in KPK where anti-Americanism was high due to consistent Drone-attacks and military operations.[5] PTI fared well in the semi-urban divisions of northern Punjab. Other than rural-urban preferences, surveys showed that more educated people voted for PTI compared to PML (N). This has partly resulted from the party's reach to the educated youth through online campaign. *Time Magazine* dubbed it as a party of 'Social Networkers' due to its popularity among netizens. It captures the magnitude of Khan's online support as: 'He is the only politician in the country to have used social media to engage his followers and potential supports

on a large scale' (Rana 2012). Rubina Saigol, who found PTI's support among the conservative Pakhtuns and urban middle class, succinctly summarised that the party is popular 'among sections of the middle class in Lahore and Karachi, and among war-weary Pakhtuns in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa' (Saigol 2014). But due to the occurrences of last five years under PML (N) rule, Imran Khan and his party managed to expand its social constituency beyond its traditional stronghold which is discussed in the following section.

### Election 2018: PTI's Rise to Power

After the results of general election of 2018, the PTI emerged as the single largest party by securing 116 seats – 20 seats short of absolute majority. It was a huge leap by PTI if compared to its past performances. Imran Khan's party could rise to this level only by transcending its traditional social constituency and expanding its bases in other provinces outside KPK. In provincial-wise breakdown of seats, the PTI won 60 seats from Punjab, 30 seats from KPK, 15 seats from Sindh and two, three, and six seats respectively from Baluchistan, Islamabad and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). This section discusses the factors which contributed to the rise of PTI beyond its traditional constituencies.

After the 2015 sit-in fiasco Imran Khan returned to the parliament. However, since then he went into the campaign mode. Khan was one of the leading political figures who never accepted the mandate of 2013 election alleging rigging and stealing of public will through fraudulent exercise and never respected the legislative business. His attendance in parliament during that period was abysmally low. On the other hand, the government was also weakening the case of parliamentary practices by diluting the institutional mechanism for governing.

In mid-2016, an Islamabad-based think tank published its qualitative and quantitative findings on the quality of democracy for the third year of Nawaz Sharif's government. The report indicated that civilian writ eroded for the period in consideration. The erosion accelerated in the third year due to military's activism and visibility in framing country's internal security and foreign policies. More than this, the democratic system atrophied because institutional mechanisms such as parliament and cabinet were circumvented in favour of informal and temporary alternatives to govern the country. The preferences and over-use of ad hoc mechanisms such as 'all-party conferences,' and 'apex committees' to formulate policies and as well as to supervise their implementation sacrificing institutional options put the government's capability to rule in question. According to the report the federal cabinet only met four times in 2015 wherein it is needed to meet 52 times as per the rules.[6] The National Security Council (NSC) which was revived by the Prime Minister after he took charge did not meet for a single time during this

period. Above all the COAS and the Prime Minister met for a record 78 times since Raheel Sharif's appointment as army chief in November 2013 till December 2015 and in 21 per cent of these meetings the minister of defence was absent (PILDAT 2016).

On the face of it, lawmakers' performance was below satisfactory level. The parliamentarians, whether in the Senate or in the National Assembly fared average in terms of attendance. The Prime Minister attended only 20 per cent of sessions in 2015 while Imran Khan was present for two per cent of such sittings (Ibid). This in a way displayed their none-seriousness for legislative business. It can be said that civilians collectively failed in their commitment to democracy and were responsible for giving the military a lead in the game.

Simultaneously bruised and compromised, Nawaz Sharif who somehow survived the sit-in fiasco of 2014 orchestrated by Imran Khan conceded considerable civilian space to the military leadership. Through apex committees and military courts, the military institutionally expanded its role in the civilian domain. While in the process of recovering from sit-in shocks and military's institutional assault, Nawaz Sharif suffered another setback in May 2016 when the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) made a disclosure (known in media as Panama Leaks) that how Sharif's daughter Mariam Nawaz and his two sons Hussain and Hasan Nawaz owned off-shore entitlements (International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ 2016).

The *Panama Leaks* allowed the political opposition to raise the ethical accountability question against him. After the revelation of Sharif family's off-shore holdings the opposition parties demanded 'forensic audit by a reputable international firm' as well as probe by the 'National Accountability Bureau, the State Bank of Pakistan, the Election Commission of Pakistan and the Federal Board of Revenue' and setting up of a judicial commission (Khan 2016). Upping the ante in a televised speech, the PTI leader demanded Sharif's resignation on ethical grounds (Ghuman 2016). They warned of organising massive protests in case the government does not meet the opposition demands.

Simultaneously PTI started building-up its electoral campaign for the upcoming general election. In this run-up to the election PTI benefitted from multiple factors. First, the Sharif government failed in all crucial fronts including the management of internal security, managing political crises, improving the economy, delivery of key services (especially supply of electricity) and development of education and health sector. PTI largely tailored its campaign around these issues. These issues are well reflected in political speeches of Imran Khan and PTI's election manifesto. The manifesto starts with promise of *Naya Pakistan* on the vision of Jinnah and on the basis of principles of 'Medina Charter' of ideal Islamic welfare state (The

Road to Naya Pakistan 2018). It claimed to be the party of 'ordinary Pakistanis' and committed to build a just and equitable social order (Ibid). It further shared its achievement in KPK's provincial governance and promised for greater transparency in future governance and to devolve power to grassroot level.

But what helped PTI to gain its foothold outside KPK was its specific nature of vision for those areas. Unlike, PML (N) and PPP's generic and sentimental appeal, Imran Khan promised to create autonomous South Punjab where demand for separate Saraikistan was high (Ibid). Majority of PTI's seats in Punjab came from this region. Then the manifesto promised to transform Karachi which is suffering from lack of resources and poor local governance. Karachi which used to be the bastion of MQM, the Muhajir dominated division; this time preferred the new alternative. Out of 20 seats in Karachi, the PTI managed to win 13 seats. The manifesto also vowed to consolidate the integration of Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) with KPK. The PTI won six seats out of 12 seats from the tribal areas. So outside Imran Khan's Pakhtun bastion these three electoral divisions were the major contributors to PTI's tally of 116 seats.

Second, the party immensely benefitted from the absence of the political stalwarts. Imran Khan's arch-rival and incumbent Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was disqualified by the Supreme Court in July 2017, one year prior to the completion of his tenure. He was found guilty of dishonesty and concealing his source of income thus barred from holding public office (Bhatti 2017). A year later, and a week before the national election, both Nawaz Sharif and his daughter and political heir Maryam Nawaz were arrested in Lahore after being convicted in corruption case (Zulqernain 2018).

Much earlier another political nemesis Altaf Hussain, the former leader of MQM was side-lined by his own party members. In 2016, while addressing his followers protesting against 'media bias' Hussain chanted anti-Pakistani slogans calling Pakistan a 'cancer for the entire world' and 'down with Pakistan' (*Dawn* 2016a). The party leaders dissociated themselves from Hussain's slogans, condemned it and expressed patriotism in the social media by raising *Pakistan Zindabad* slogans. The incident turned-out to be rupture in the power-structure of MQM. Alienated by his own party members, Hussain handed over 'powers of reorganisation, policy-making and decision-making,' to the party's coordination committee (*Dawn* 2016b). Although everything seemed to have settled after that but with the departure of Altaf Hussain the MQM was no longer the force it once was. Beside this, the PPP was also without its charismatic leader Benazir Bhutto and was led by 29 year old Bilawal Bhutto. Bilawal who had no grassroots experience and was devoid of local language efficiency barely survived on his party's legacy.

Third, the defection among mainstream political parties was another major factor that strengthened chances of PTI. Ever since Sharif was disqualified, many PML (N) leaders defected the party. They either joined PTI or formed their own party and as well as contested independently. As discussed earlier, PTI had its main spread in KPK and its penetration in Punjab and Sindh was limited. PTI exhibiting pragmatism and fluidity embraced the electable candidates from other parties. Imran Khan welcomed any turncoats who had potential to win. One of the notable inductees was Makhdoom Khusro Bakhtiar who dissented from PML (N) and formed Janubi Punjab Suba Mahaj (JPSM).[7] At the time of its merger with PTI the JPSM had around 20 former PML (N) leaders from Punjab (Raza 2018). Many of them were given tickets at national and provincial elections and few of them also secured their seats. Other notables who joined PTI were Tahir Iqbal, Ghulam Bibi and Bilal Ahmad Virk (*Global Village Space* 2018). The former two managed to win their respective seats while Virk could not make it this time. But his presence in the party was significant given his hold in his community. Many others were given tickets for Punjab assembly election and they too increased PTI's tally in the provincial polls.

Another blow for PML (N) was that its supporter in the government, Jam Kamal Khan formed his own party named Baluchistan Awami Party (BAP). Many of the former coalition partners too joined BAP. In the general election of 2018 BAP won 3 seats for National Assembly but emerged as single largest party in Baluchistan Provincial elections by securing 15 seats out of 51 seats total. It rendered its support to Imran Khan at national level and in return PTI which won 4 seats in the provincial election will support BAP forming provincial government (Shahid 2018). Apart from benefitting from PML (N)'s defection Imran Khan's party also wooed dissenters from PPP. Many notable former PPP leaders such as Ghulam Mustafa Khar, Firdous Ashiq Awan, Nazar Gondal, Nadeem Afzal Chan and Raja Riaz were given PTI tickets (*insaf.pk* 2018). However, PTI even with the help of dissenters could not make a dent in PPP's stronghold in rural Sindh, but nonetheless they made inroads in urban constituencies of Karachi. With the departure of MQM's patron Altaf Hussain there were internal fissures leading the party into two factions. One of the factions is MQM-Pakistan led by Farooq Sattar which developed differences with the second faction MQM-Bahadurabad leader Khalid Siddiqui. Later both the factions seemed to be compromising and patching-up but in the public perception both had apparent legitimacy and leadership crisis (*The News* 2018). This was reflected in their electoral performance as it used to win 18 out 20 seats from Karachi in the past but now only managed to win 6 seats and ceded 13 seats to PTI in the Karachi division.

Beside these factors, the fourth and pivotal factor which determined PTI's rise to power was the military's visible and invisible hands. Almost all critics have

indicated that the entire exercise was curetted to yield desirable outcomes by the military establishment. And the signposts of this ultimate fiddling were visible since the first democratic transition in 2013. Civil-Military relation throughout PML (N) rule was never cordial, rather it strained as Nawaz Sharif gradually began to assert civilian supremacy which military believed is exclusive sphere of discretions. Nawaz was expected to lay out a civil-military framework in which both could enjoy relative autonomy in their respective spheres of influence. The military officers who dislike absolute civilian subordination and adjust to conditional subordination, sees the military as a 'watchdog' of national interest therefore did not like Nawaz's assertion. Analysts noted that the military did not like Nawaz Sharif's efforts to make peace with India, the trial of General Musharraf, his silence during the Hamid Mir incident and business deals with China without taking the military into confidence (Hussain 2014; Siddiqa 2014; & Javed 2014). Therefore, whenever the military found the opportunities to weaken the government it did by using political proxies, judiciary and non-cooperation.

This non-cooperation and pitching political actors against the PML (N) government was much overt during the *Azadi* protest. Many in Pakistan believed that the entire theatrics of crisis was scripted and directed by the military. The sole motive was to weaken the elected government as they increasingly asserted civilian supremacy. But instead of taking power back in their hands the military fixed the civilians through this indirect mechanism (Javed 2014). They created this crisis with the help of politicians to leave a 'problem of legitimacy' to the civilian government (Ibid). These politicians, Imran Khan and Qadri were called as military's 'stooges' deployed to weaken the democratically elected government (*Dawn* 2013; and Hussain 2014). Some analysts interpreted this crisis as a 'soft coup' and 'new coup' by the real boss who did not like the civilians to rule on their own (Siddiqa 2014). This narrative was corroborated by the synchronised behavioural pattern of the military and agitating parties which unfolded during the period of protest. The military instead of being neutral and come to the aid of the civilians chose to be the referee in the political process and made decisions in favour of the side that rejected to play by the constitutional rule of game (*Dawn* 2014). All these indicated the military's disregard for the constitutional mechanism to resolve political crises as well as its capacity to undermine elected leaders by using its political opponents.

These situations cumulatively created a political vacuum to which Imran Khan offered a viable alternative. Thus, in the general election of 2018 PTI emerged as single largest party expanding its social and political base in Punjab and Sindh, especially Karachi. Imran Khan in his victory speech repeated his promise to bring change '*Tabdeeli*' and create a '*Naya Pakistan*' on the basis of Medina model.

## The promise of 'Naya' Pakistan and the Hope for Democracy

Now returning to the initial argument of the sceptics on the merit of the election one should not generalise the entire electoral exercise as pernicious and constitutional façade to keep military's influence relevant. First, there is no conclusive evidence to establish rigging but certainly circumstantial evidences to suggest manipulation. Therefore, it would be unfair to completely delegitimise the outcomes. Second and more deterministic factor was the preferences Pakistani voters had in their disposal. The electorates had one decade of experience of governance under civilian regimes since 2008. And their expectations of development, security and betterment of quality of life were not met. Both the PPP and PML (N) led governments performed poorly in delivering of the promised welfare and development. On top-of it, with the absence of Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto PPP and PML (N) looked less promising options compared to the '*Tabdeeli*' alternate of PTI. In Karachi there was no Altaf Hussain to pose the challenge and further there was a fragmented MQM. Therefore, PTI seemed more politically informed and rational preference from the voter's acumen. Moreover, PTI was still unproven in mainstream politics at the national level. In addition their performance in the governance of KPK province stood out compared to other provincial governments. Therefore they generated hope and offered a viable alternative to the exiting political avenues.

Having argued that, it cannot be rejected that the military played a decisive role beyond its sphere. The incidences of the past, during polls and during the counting of ballots suggest foul play (Bari & Hussain 2018). On the other hand Imran Khan promised to enquire into these allegations (*The News* 2018). He has shown degree of maturity and expression of statesmanship once he became certain of occupying the top office. His has transformed his language from his campaign days to a more seasoned politician. He has accommodated turncoats who sought his refuge and struck alliances with parties with which he had antagonistic relations. After all the chaos, he managed to form a government and attained what he strived for in the last two decades. Now the challenges he faces are his own promises of bringing change and creating *Naya Pakistan*.

His vision of *Naya Pakistan* was the recalling and reclaiming of the Medina model based on just and egalitarian social order of the ideal Islamic state founded in Prophet's time.  Imran Khan sold this Medina dream to the masses through the populist promise. His promise for *Tabdeeli* had undertone of reverse elitism. He made Pakistani voters believe that it were the dynasties, rich and political elites who occupied the polity and eroded the country's potential to prosper due to their incompetence and selfish motives. People believed the person who brought glory to Pakistan in cricket. His political competence is yet to be proven. The voters

expected some revolutionary heroics from him. Now, he has risen to the helm of power he faces the pressure of realising the expectations he had built during his campaign. This is a mammoth task in his hand as he inherited a crippled economic system, a fragmented society and an antagonistic political fraternity.

In the immediate scenario the new premier will have to fix the sluggish economic engine and make it run in order to generate employment. At present the country is under massive international debt. Going to the multilateral donor forums with begging bowl will not reflect well on his hyper-muscular aura created during his campaign. Second, industrial output in Pakistan in is in lower trajectory. To make this sector competitive, it will need massive investment which may be deterred by the hostile socio-political ambience of the country. Third, there is an acute agrarian crisis putting rural societies in economic stress. Given the limitations of resources at disposal expecting revolutionary transformation in economy in the immediate run is unlikely. The situation worsens due to the pressure from the present US dispensation which does not like Pakistan's proximity with China who is deepening its roots in the region through China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) (*The Economic Times* 2018).

Besides fixing the economic crisis, the second crucial challenge before Imran Khan is to bring the ethnically and religiously fragmented society in harmony. In recent times there has been ever increasing discords among social groups leading to sectarian, religious and ethnic violence. Pakistan has witnessed unprecedented scale of terror attacks in last decade that has caused loss of scores of human lives – civilian and military personnel.[8] There is so much of trust deficiency due to the insecure social ambience as well as challenge to legitimacy of the state as the arbitrator of violence. Fixing this social faultline, for the party in power which thrived on the support of extremist groups with anti-democratic sentiments, will be a daunting task.

These two factors collectively will have consequential impact on democratic consolidation but in the longer run it is the political hostility which will have serious repercussion. The political antagonism of political parties has potential to completely reverse the democratic gain achieved in the last decade of civilian rule. It has been a tendency in Pakistan, especially of political parties to play antagonistic role in the deepening of democratic institutions and culture. It is not a new trend in Pakistani politics when losing opposition has dismissed the entire electoral exercise as unfair. The roots of this cyclic practice could be traced back to the first democratic interlude when Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) rejected the results of 1977 election. At that time neither the opposition parties accepted their defeat, nor the ruling PPP attempted to address their complaints. Thus, a situation of political confusion and chaos emerged in which the military recaptured the political power sending political parties into hibernation for the next one decade.

After a decade of political lull, the political parties got their opportunity during the second democratic interlude between 1988 and 1999. During this period four successive civilian governments were dismissed before their terms. Military's predatory instinct nonetheless was a reason but main political parties such as PPP led by Benazir Bhutto and PML (N) led by Nawaz Sharif did not play by the rule of game. They never accepted their defeats in elections and resorted to numerous modes of protest to destabilise the governments. Their notorious 'Long March,' 'Train March,' 'Wheel Jam,' and other forms of protests eroded the legitimacy of exercise of power by civilian regimes. At times they sought military's interventions. The cumulative result of the infighting amongst political parties was sign of weakening of the civilian forces that were supposed to create an alternative system against the military order. Their infighting resulted in military's ultimate return to politics in 1999. Thereafter it took a decade for democracy to return in 2008 with the departure of General Musharraf.

In the general election 2008 there was no party with single majority but for the surprise of all, the historical political nemesis, PPP and PML (N) came together to forge a coalition government. With issue based minimal support from opposition parties the PPP led government managed to complete a first ever civilian term in 2013. In the general election of 2013, Imran Khan's PTI which boycotted the previous election contested and lost but emerged as third major force. Imran Khan never accepted his defeat and rejected the result and hardly been to parliament. To delegitimise PML (N) government he staged *Azadi March* and *Ehtsab March*. But with so much chaos, PML (N) government managed to complete its tenure and second democratic transition in 2018. Imran Khan emerged as victorious and formed a coalition government. On the other hand PPP and PML (N) rejected the credibility of the election. Given the past practices of political parties, a possibility of confrontational politics always looms in the future. Since Imran Khan was the main nuisance creator who mocked democracy and constitutionalism, the opposition parties may rerun to vendetta politics. And this will be Imran Khan's biggest challenge, to mange his political counterparts.

Apart from the opposition parties if he manages to bring consensus among coalition partners, the second democratic transition will yield fruits for democratic consolidation. The good and bad thing for this government is that it will remain hostage to numbers. This will prevent Imran Khan from resorting to authoritarian tendency and unilateral decision-making. On the other hand, the opposition is also very strong as PPP and PML (N) have more than 103 seats collectively in contrast to 116 seats of PTI. In the upper house also PTI will have to wait for few years to have majority. This could be institutional check on Khan's unilateral and one man show approach. This equation promises for healthier and consensual form of politics.

Shiraz Sheikh

The other hope for democracy is that for the last decade functional democracy is in continuation. This very fact can help perpetuate the spread of a democratic culture.

## Notes

1   *Minar-e-Pakistan* or Tower of Pakistan is the national monument of Pakistan built on the exact location where historic Lahore Resolution was passed on 23 March 1940. The monument symbolises the spirit of Pakistan movement and is situated in Iqbal Park, Lahore.

2   In KPK he fought from Abbottabad and Swat, in Punjab from Mianwali, Dera Ismail Khan, Lahore-3 and Lahore-4, in Sindh from Karachi south and the federal capital Islamabad.

3   This time Imran Khan contested only from Mianwali, Swat and Lahore-5 constituencies.

4   According to the available official data, districts of Hazara, Mardan, Malakand had less than 20 per cent urban population. Kohat was estimated to have 26 per cent urban population while the provincial capital had the highest urban population of 48 per cent. *Pakistan Bureau of Statistics*, "District at Glance: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," retrieved from http://www.pbs.gov.pk/pco-kpk-tables

5   According to an estimate by New America Foundation the total casualties of drone strikes in Pakistan between 2004 and 2013 were 2851. *New America Foundation* (2014): " Drone Wars Pakistan Analysis,"*New America Foundation*, retrieved from http://securitydata.newamerica.net/drones/pakistan-analysis.html

6   Meeting of the Cabinet should normally be held once a week on a day and time to be specified by the Prime Minister according to Rule 20 (1) of the Rules of Business of the Federal Government.

7   The JPSM has its roots in "Saraikistan Movement" – a movement of identity assertion based on a notion that Saraiki is a distinct language with rich cultural past and heritage. Before JPSM there were eight major Saraiki groups and parties formed in various years and are active in South Punjab: Pakistan Sraiki Party (1989), Saraikistan Quami Council (n.d.), Saraiki Quami Movement (1988), Saraikistan Quami  Movement (1990), Saraiki National Party (1992), Saraiki Sooba Movement (2002), Saraiki Quami Ittehad (2004), Saraiki Lok Party (2007), enlisted from Khan, Hussain Ahmad  (n.d.): *Re-thinking Punjab: The Construction of Siraiki Identity*, Lahore: Research and Publication Centre, National College of Arts, 113-15.

8   From 2007, just prior to General Musharraf's ouster, till 22 July 2011, a series of terror attacks resulted in the loss of 11,726 lives and 23,037 people suffered serious injuries.

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## Trail-blazers in International Relations
## Tributes to Samir Amin and Robert Cox

K. M. Seethi

**W**ith the demise of Samir Amin (1931-2018) and Robert Cox (1926-2018), the discipline of International Relations (IR) has lost the trail-blazers of two intellectual traditions. While Amin was literally an indispensable component of a new genre of the Radical Political Economy School of Marxism, Cox represented a Critical Theory tradition of Marxism that set off an alternative discourse in the realm of IR Studies.

Samir Amin was born in Cairo in 1931, to an Egyptian father and a French mother. Amin had his formal education in Egypt and then moved to Paris for the PhD in political economy. During the student days, he was attracted to socialism and took membership in the Communist Party of Egypt. During 1957-60 Amin spent his early career days at the Institute for Economic Management in Cairo. Even as Nasser started his rule, he had to move out of Egypt. Then he decided to settle down in Dakar, Senegal. It was here that he took charge as the Director of the UN African Institute of Economic Development and Planning and, subsequently, as the Director of the African Office of the Third World Forum. One of the distinct contributions of Samir Amin was his abiding interest and commitment to the cause of socialism. As Prabhat Patnaik observed, he "was not a mere arm-chair theorist who used Marxist tools to analyze the contemporary reality as a form of detached intellectual activity." He could be called "a passionately-committed activist, for whom intellectual activity was quintessentially an aid to praxis." Amin also accorded a prime importance to imperialism, in his analysis. He saw "imperialism as central to capitalism, but placed it firmly within the framework of the Labour Theory of Value through his theory of unequal exchange for which he is justly celebrated, as noted by Patnaik. A critique of the capitalist world-system/ imperialism, the ultra-right regimes and reactionary forces across the world, Amin had talked and written about strategies of transforming the world through political

action and social interventions. His ultimate aim was obviously to liberate the Global South and thereby demolish the North-South polarisation.

It was since the 1950s and 1960s that radical political economists like Samir Amin, Paul Baran, Paul Sweezy, Arghiri Emmanuel, Giovanni Arrighi, Andre Gunder Frank, Immanuel Wallerstein et al. set in motion a wave of studies and perspectives on the nature and working of the capitalist world system and the place of the Global South countries within it. Their major aim was to unravel the processes by which the Global South has been amalgamated into the 'centre' of the Global North. They had also demolished the notion that the Global South countries would get elevated to the 'centre' in sharing the global prosperity. Amin and his contemporaries sought to problematise the development/underdevelopment paradox in the global accumulation matrix. The dependency/world-system analyses thus brought in debates across social science disciplines.

Writing a tribute to his contemporary, Andre Gunder Frank, in 2005, Amin said that they "were found themselves in similar agreement with the 'world system' school of thought introduced by Wallerstein in the 1970s. He wrote that despite differences, they established themselves as a gang of four' (Amin, Arrighi, Frank and Wallerstein), even authoring two volumes (Amin 2005; Amin, Arrighi, Frank and Wallerstein 1982 and 1990). In another tribute to Giovanni Arrighi, Amin noted that Arrighi, Frank, Wallerstein and himself believed that "capitalism had entered a phase of systemic crisis, marked by the fall in growth rates in its dominant cores..." Arrighi "associated this crisis with the decline of US hegemony" and "focused on the upheavals of the labour movements, which were perhaps the social movements most implicated in the crisis (Amin 2011).

Though the 'gang of four' shared the broad features of the historical trajectory of the capitalist world system, they differed on specific details of the cycles of change and the patterns of transformation within and across the system. For example, while Amin more or less operated within a two-tiered world-system, Wallerstein insisted on having an intermediary category (semi-periphery) between the core regions—with strong states that can enforce unequal exchange relations favourable to themselves—and the periphery made up of exploited regions characterised by a dependence on the export of low-wage products. In Wallerstein, the semi-periphery acts as a buffer producing both high-wage and low-wage products continuously, exploited by the core but, in turn, exploits the periphery. On the other side, Frank's world system only includes developed (metropole) and underdeveloped areas (satellites), but also those which are 'partially-developed'—seemingly limited to a few areas of the world system. There are differences between Wallerstein and Frank too—about which country should be included in what category.

However, for Amin, internal structures are always constrained by the global context. He agreed that those Third World social formations appeared to be

different articulations of modes of production, and the diffusion of capitalism leads peripheral societies increasingly to resemble one another. Way back in the early 1970s, Amin wrote that "real, autonomous self-centred development" cannot occur when the periphery breaks the chains that link it to the centre. It would be a necessary prerequisite but eventually it is not sufficient: the aim must be the creation of the "global socialist society" (Amin 1974) and the stimulus for this would not come from the centre but from the periphery. However, when it comes to exploring the political possibilities of 'global socialism' Frank, Arrighi Wallerstein and Amin were equally pessimistic. Notwithstanding the persisting crises, the capitalist world system continued to survive, increasingly incorporating 'socialist societies' which compromised their avowed principles and dilute their revolutionary commitment by helping perpetuate a system based on the exploitation of the world's poor by the international bourgeoisie.

Amin argued that 'globalised neoliberalism' with its constituent dogmas (privatization, free trade, flexible exchange rates, cuts in public spending) "cannot last because they shut capitalism into a fatal stagnation, shutting all the doors that might let it overcome the slump and begin a new growth path" (Amin 1999:37). He said that contrary to the popular notion of 'pure economics,' "markets are not self-regulating. To work they need government regulation" (Ibid). Amin later called for a revolt against North-South polarization. He believed that "a humanist response to the challenge of globalization" accelerated by the capitalist expansion might be "idealistic but it is not utopian" (Amin 1997:10). He would characterise it as "the only realistic project possible." Amin added: "If only we begin to develop it, powerful social forces will rally to it from all regions of the world" (Ibid: 10-11).

As a committed activist scholar, he underlined the need for developing "world organizational forms which are more authentically democratic so as to be capable of reshaping economic relations on the basis of diminishing inequality" (Ibid: 11). Amin also said that "high priority should be given to reorganizing the global system around large areas which group together scattered parts if the peripheries. Thus would be the place for the constitution of Latin American, Arab, African South-East Asian regions, alongside China and India…" He proposed that this objective should "receive the priority treatment of the Non-Aligned Movement." Amin further reminded that "the transformation of the world always begins by struggles at its base. Without changes in ideological, political and social systems, at the national level, any discussion about challenging globalization and polarization remains a deal letter (Ibid). While saying this, Amin also called for greater vigilance in understanding various movements within. For example, his criticism of religious and ethnic movements focussed on various fundamentalist, reactionary forces at play.

Being critical of political Islam, Amin tended to see it aligning "itself with the camp of dependent capitalism and dominant imperialism." He says that political Islam "defends the principle of the sacred character of property and legitimizes inequality and all the requirements of capitalist reproduction." Amin categorically said that political Islam "is not anti-imperialist, even if its militants think otherwise! It is an invaluable ally for imperialism and the latter knows it. It is easy to understand, then, that political Islam has always counted in its ranks the ruling classes of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan" (Amin 2007). Amin was equally critical of postmodernism and called it as a "neoliberal utopia in disguise" (Amin 1999:77-101). He writes: "The 'low intensity' democracy resulting from this has become extremely vulnerable, and the recrudescent appeal of various fascist movements gives grim testimony to that fact" (Ibid: 100). Amin seldom left out issues of the contemporary times from his critical scholarly engagements. In an interview, Samir Amin had said that "this neoliberal phase is in state of collapse. It doesn't mean that capitalism is collapsing; but that its current form is collapsing and we're entering a new phase. It has to adapt, and whether the new system will be biased to the ruling class or the masses, is still be revealed" (Ahramonline 12 August 2018). However, Amin's concerns for the survival of Global South remained throughout.

## Critical International Relations Theory: A 'Subversive' Turn

The discipline of International Relations has lost another outstanding scholar, Robert W. Cox (1926-2018), who made a mark in its intellectual history in the last century, like Samir Amin. Canada-born IR theorist Cox had a long stint at the International Labour Organisation (ILO)—for over two decades—before he started teaching at Columbia University, New York. He then proceeded to take up a professorship at York University, Toronto where he remained for a decade and half (1977-1992). In 2014 Cox was made a member of the Order of Canada. A leading Critical Theorist in IR, Cox emerged as an indispensable scholar in International Political Economy (IPE) like Susan Strange. His writings displayed a distinctive historicist approach to IR studies with a focus on political economy. Though an independent scholar that he was, Cox never sought to bring in any particular school or tradition.

His academic work spans over five major single authored books, perhaps the most widely read is *Production, Power, and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History* (1987) that examined power relations in production and its effect on the organisation of society and world politics. His two articles, published in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, "Social Forces, States and World Orders" (1981) and "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations" (1983), were pivotal in turning the discipline toward critical thinking: the former offering

a new critical theory beyond problem-solving, and the other introducing the ideas of Antonio Gramsci to the discipline. His later work remained historicist in its approach and was concerned with civilisations, coexistence and the importance of plurality in the future of humanity.

Robert Cox is a scholar-extraordinary in the discipline of IR.  His writings continued to inspire scholars in both Global North and Global South. Cox's deeply entrenched historicist position, in fact, set in motion shock waves across the positivist-realist traditions which dominated the discipline for decades.  Cox's intellectual life was influenced by his passion for conceptualizing social conditions in historical terms. R.G. Collingwood was one of those who inspired him, as he told in an interview, and he inevitably fell in line with his "sense of historical materialism." Collingwood, according to him, had a different sense about the 'inside' as well as the 'outside' of historical events. Even as positivists see at what happens (by classifying and collecting events and drawing inferences from them), Collingwood looks at the 'outside.' His emphasis on the 'inside' of events was "to understand the meaning of things in terms of the thought-processes of the people who were acting, and their understanding of the structure of relationships within which they lived. To understand history in those terms is what gives meaning to events."

Cox said that though he was not a Marxist, he believed that a lot should be learned from Marxist thinking, particularly the "ideas on the tension between capital and labour, and the attempts to institutionalize these relations on state-level and the international level in order to advance material interests." He identified his approach as 'historical materialism,' yet he had linked it not so much with Marx as with Giambattista Vico, the 18th-century critic of Descartes and later with Gramsci. According to Cox, among the Marxists, Gramsci made a distinction between a deterministic and positivist historical economism and historical materialism, in which "the realm of ideas is an autonomous force." Gramsci recognized the relative autonomy of cultures and ideas and their intimate relationship with material conditions.

Cox argued that Critical Theory is basically concerned with how the world may be changing while the problem solving theory has to take the basic existing power relationships as given. It will be biased towards perpetuating those relationships, thus tending to make the existing order hegemonic. What critical theory does, according to him, is "question these very structural conditions that are tacit assumptions for problem-solving theory, to ask whom and which purposes such theory serves. It looks at the facts that problem-solving theory presents from the inside, that is, as they are experienced by actors in a context which also consists of power relations. Critical theory thus historicizes world orders by uncovering the

purposes problem solving theories within such an order serve to uphold."

What Cox actually meant is that "there is no theory for itself; theory is always for someone, for some purpose." According to him, there "is no neutral theory concerning human affairs, no theory of universal validity. Theory derives from practice and experience, and experience is related to time and place. Theory is a part of history. It addresses the problematic of the world of its time and place." As such a scholar "has to aim to place himself above the historical circumstances in which a theory is propounded. One has to ask about the aims and purposes of those who construct theories in specific historical situations."

Stephen Gill calls Cox as "an intellectual pioneer, a towering figure, a fugitive from orthodoxies and cliques: a "universal foreigner. Andrew Linklater says that for more than three decades, Robert Cox's of-quoted phrase that "theory is always for someone and some purpose" has been popularized as a "symbol of shifting disciplinary concerns." Linklater reminds that critical theory "has diversified greatly over the last three decades and scholars continue to search for and draw on new sources and perspectives. But all who work within the critical theory perspective, broadly defined, remain indebted to Robert Cox's pioneering investigation of the changing complexities of world politics." For Mustapha Kamal Pasha, Cox was "the original trailblazer in the unfinished critical project in International Relations." He says that "Cox's humility and seriousness are virtues in short supply in a profession eager to idealize new stars and immediacy."

In an interview Cox said that the neoliberal world order will be forced to change, sooner or later. He said that some change called "self-organization" at a global level is inevitable. In that sense, the world economic crisis is 'a great advantage' because it shows that global capitalism has failed, Cox noted. Like Samir Amin, Robert Cox continued to inspire new generation of both IR and IPE scholars across the world.

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# Xi Government's Global Policy Rhetoric:
# A Reality Appraisal in 2018

## Rajeev Kunwar

Xi Jinping's Government Global Policy rhetoric outlines the scope of China's meaningful role in world affairs. Its role is undoubtedly buttressed by its economic advancement and is augmented by its wealth acquisition and capital expenditure. In the annals of world history, China defies any comparison of an uncommon comeback of a civilizational-state. China's global aspirations are accentuating diplomatic and strategic assertiveness in the recent past. It is shelving the earlier followed policy of quiet diplomacy. The buzz of China's rise is filled with mixed reactions of amazement, controversies and skepticism in this unquiet world. China's audacity to break the fold of silent approach which was evinced in its post-war history would see with active, proactive and execution measures in world affairs. Thus China's conduct latently depicts it as the mover and shaker in this Third Millennium. The coming decades might be the turning point in international relations wherein China would be beckoned in the areas of global public policy management. The Chinese prosperity depends much on America's cooperation and understanding in spite of growing countercurrent strategic pulse. American strategists are wary of the Chinese exceptionalism so that it does not follow suit the nemesis of the erstwhile Soviet Union. There are changes to the tone and tenor in China's foreign policy which needs juxtaposition to the reality appraisal in 2018. This can provide a clear picture of the potential and limits to China's power politics ambitions.

*Key Words:* China's Global Policy; Rhetorical Analysis and Appraisal; Foreign Policy Praxis Environ; China's Diplomacy and International Relations; No Containment Policy; Inductive/Deductive Policy Paradox; Different Policy Prescriptions.

## Introduction

The People's Republic of China is slowly asserting its global role. It silently exerts its influence in its *peripheral countries or neighbours* and invests on global policy and praxis that is mutually beneficial. One of China's principal ideologues whose leadership succession is on the back burner, President Xi had outlined

some fundamental principles that would govern China's global policy embraced in *ambitious foreign policy agenda*[1] offered at 19th National People's Congress (NPC) of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in October 2017. It confirmed the end of Deng Xiaoping's dictated *hide and bide* policy era demonstrating China's interest in becoming an influential player with substantial roles on the world stage. Xi Government's global policy continues with conventional underpinnings amidst changes that *struck some new and controversial themes*.

Students of foreign policy cannot disregard continuity and change in foreign and security policy (FSP) wherein adaptations, adoptions and learning in this domain gets utmost priority, currency and verses. A country defends national interests coupled with national security, using the words of Xi, in *emerging international relations*. Strategic and economic diplomacy overrule in China's perception in order to ensure and achieve its power status, and of development, progress and prosperity which are within the reach of *the Chinese dream*. Often invoked by Chinese leaders of the so-called *the Mandate of Heaven*, the Chinese civilization-state mediates the heavenly State and the earthly or worldly affairs.

The then President Jiang Zemin from 1993 to 2003 had spearheaded and presided over China's development when in 2003 Zheng Bijian, a Chinese grand strategist, depicted a re-advent of China as *the peaceful rise*. China is getting traction in the world economy and neighbourhood notwithstanding challenges in its domestic sphere and inevitable great power rivalry on regional, continental (vying in Latin America and Africa) and international turf.

### Xi Government's Global Policy Rhetoric in 2018

Xi's thought is expressive on policy rhetoric in his corpus *Governance of China* declaring that "socialism with Chinese characteristics has ushered in a new era."[2] Xi, the most powerful Chinese leader after Mao Zedong (another sham political leadership analogy) had *a terrific* 2017 to overhaul and recalibrate FSP. A global affairs challenges compelled Xi to introduce four new concepts into Chinese foreign policy: a new type of major country relations, major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics, a global community of common destiny, and in his words 'a new type of international relations.'

In a Foreign Affairs Conference organized in Beijing on 23 June 2018, Xi reiterated his government's position on China's global policy.[3] Boasting of cultural abode and richness and civilization heritage of 5000 years old, China is committed to *national rejuvenation* along with creating *a shared future* of the Chinese people. Xi stands for reform and improvement in equality, equity and fair play in the global governance system. He favours enhancing a network of international partners to achieve and convey those aspirations which are due and deserving.

Xi spoke on the terms of FSP that three dimensions in foreign affairs cannot be overlooked upon.[4] Firstly, China has to understand the history of International Relations and comprehend the global trend, undercurrents and progress updates. Historians say that the past teaches us good lessons. The primer on Xi's Foreign Policy restates that the laws of history must not be forgotten so that diplomatic behavior is rational, objective and coherent in narration and narrative of unfolding events naturally in an uncertain policy world. Secondly, diplomatic activities, concentrating on immediate tasks, ascertaining phenomena and situation, and indulging in meticulous details and its nitty-gritty, must not sideline change amidst continuity in international relations. In his own words, Xi remarked that China has to *seize the essence of situation* and has to be well-versed in the global principle/ policy *contradictions*. Thirdly, there is an analytical need of composure and keenness on the role China has played in global affairs. Xi stressed on figuring out these global aspirations, aspect, perspective, prospect and perception of China in *emerging structures of international relations*. In pursuit of formulating foreign policy of China, scientific and positive approach is to be undertaken. Xi expects that China's Foreign Policy would be definitely *outstanding* and obvious. It would be appreciated by the countries of the Non-West as China expects.

It is not uncommon in *a fiery patriotic speech* of Xi expressing to thwart any outside powers to split and to sow divisions in the mainland and non-respect to its *one country, two systems* policy eventually breaking way *a renegade province* of Taiwan (The Republic of China). Promising China of a tall/towering figure and brand new posture in the East, Xi repeated this pledge in his 19th NPC of CPC (a nominal unicameral legislature).[5] In his own words stated in 18th NPC of CPC which revealed the true colors of assertiveness - "We must ride on the mighty east wind of the new era, charge forward with a full tank and steadily steer the wheel with full power, so that the giant ship of China carrying the great dream of more than 1.3 billion Chinese people will continue to cleave through the waves and sail to victory for a promising tomorrow!"[6]

On the other hand, *Financial Times* further analyses that three decades of foreign policy caution under a doctrine created by former paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, who described his policy of focusing national effort on economic growth with the slogan: 'Hide your strength and bide your time' has been replaced by a dynamic poise in emerging pragmatism in foreign policy environ of China.[7] The 19th NPC of the CCP convened during October 18-24, 2017 bespeak the foreign policy *regurgitations* this time too in essence and in true spirit of what was similar rhetorical posture of the earlier years.

In the gist, Xi's foreign policy emphasizes on its historical understanding, focusing on current goals and reckoning the China's Rise. China has kept abreast

of dynamics and profound changes undergoing in global affairs which Mandarins anticipate that everyone should be aware of. Multi-polarity in international relations is the journey albeit power politics and friction among major powers shifting the balance to the rise of the Rest which no IR experts can shun. To China, international order is maintained by adhering to the core principles of UN Charter and a desirable stability among major power relations at international levels.

Xi has been strong supporter of benefits of economic globalization. It is the currency and trend of global economy which has witnessed *peaceful development* in the midst of security challenges. Conflicts are never-ending activity, and it is imperative to maintain peaceful co-existence according to China's global policy stance. To advance economic well-being and durable prosperity, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) cooperation has been formulated and in ground sites enforcement despite misgivings and criticisms against it by the so-called *the informal alliance* of democratic countries. On the other hand, the deepening ties with *peripheral countries* of China and strengthening the regional groupings, forging a unity of developing countries is a noble ends of China's foreign policy objectives.

Xi stated that this is the right time and opportune for Chinese diplomacy by learning lessons from the world without compromising its national interests. Xi invoked closer cooperation to push reforms in global governance which has emerged in his words as a *trend of the times*. It hinges upon offsetting international power politics. China is exploring new areas of concern where regulations based on consensus is underlined such as in oceanic affairs, the Polar Regions, cyberspace, outer space, nuclear security, anti-corruption and climate change control. China would extend support to the projects on educational exchanges, dialogue among civilizations and ecological conservation.

The thrusts are given on actively participating in global governance, raising voices in international affairs, hone-in on economic pursuits whilst managing domestic affairs, and taking up substantially more international roles and responsibilities without *overreaching* concerted efforts and *overstretching* resources of China. Instead of confrontation, a cooperation formula will be continually taken up by China in foreign affairs. According to Xi, China has been promoting to 'shaping a new type of international relations where win-win situation prevails, to building a community of common destiny and advocating the concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security' since the last convening of the 18th NPC of CPC in 2012. For achieving these multi-pronged roles, enhancing and enabling Chinese *esprit de corps* is necessarily felt by the Government of China.[8]

It is perceived to some China watchers that the one party communist state's supreme body – the Politburo Standing Committee is vested with the ultimate

decision-making power on foreign policy.[9] Under its immediate jurisdiction, an ad hoc body, a Central Leading Group on Foreign Affairs, deliberates often on major FP issues comprised by major foreign policy players in China. To some others, the Central Committee of CPC is considered to be the authority in Chinese diplomacy. Undoubtedly, the intricate nexus of Chinese state and party apparatus reveal that decision making practitioners and policy makers base their tack on consensus and unanimity which is elicited from plural actors in diverse party organs and government departments which also include military.

The diplomatic outreach depends on the influential vectors and typical *modus operandi* of Xi's government. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs is entrusted formally to execute high degree of autonomy in international relations. It is understandable given the nature of Chinese leadership which is nurtured in the Art and Craft of Sun Tzu and Confucian ethics. With its ascendancy in global power balance, the external environment for China is not favorable as it seems to be. It would be ominous to predict the topsy-turvy situation when transition is encircling across the world. Thus the Mandarins are to be adept at handling foreign affairs as underlined by Xi's government.

### China's Global Policy: Reality Appraisal in 2018

Xie Tao remarks that new Foreign Policy agenda is 'a Chinese manifesto for its global leadership.'[10] A gap would surface in envisioning leadership and reality in world affairs where China needs America more than the other way round if China flexes its muscle as pointing toward, what Xinhua Agency coined, 'Unpredictable States of America.' The point is that the tragedy of great power politics manifested in the shape of a mythically fictitious 'Thucydides Trap,' lead to the contradictions in contemporary international relations which is not distant. On the other hand, China can ill afford to ignore its neighbors whatsoever the level of strategic trust exists in regional policy environment. This also curbs its role to entertain global ambitions. In Xie Tao's articulation, a curse of 'hot economics and cold politics' may not endure. These intertwining public policy field are interdependent not independent. Thus, it limits China's potential power, lest economic pursuits are devoid of convincing political ties, confidence and rapport in foreign countries which it acknowledges.

There is an apprehension on the world media that the great power politics would be based on the joint leadership of China and America abbreviated as G2 (Group of Two) as purportedly suggested from Xi. This may be somewhat exaggerated. A conceited image of power status in international relations negates the role of other power centers. In 2016, Xi was believed to have introduced a concept of *Chinese solution*[11] to the existing crises in the model of liberal democracy which

even American political analysts say have ended "the end of history" and the arrival of the final form of government. Nonetheless, transitional crisis have multiplied in such geographic space and time wherein universal claims of systemic rule and ideals are becoming deviant or abnormal or principled contestations appear and reappear.

Likewise, the bitterness of the Tiananmen Square Massacre of 1989 adds insult to injury to the pro-democratic movement in China. The US and Europe lend credence to such activism towards democratization process against socialism with Chinese characteristics. Exploring China's rise as a global superpower, some experts have forewarned that China still lacks *a grand strategy*. We have to keep in mind that China's assertion in world affairs is a recent development buttressed by astronomical economic leap and that under the prevailing conducive environment of trade relations with USA for decades.

China is a member of WTO since 2001 and has become a staunch supporter of global trade regime. It has benefited much from global trade practices vindicated by increasing living standards of Chinese people and reduction of poverty level in China. There are trade wars witnessed in 2018 with Trump administration putting tariffs and trade barriers against China inclusive of America's allies like European Union, Japan, Canada, Mexico and India to name a few of those countries taking trade advantages at the cost of American economy and employments.

No international trade supporters defended publicly the world trading system when America unilaterally abrogated many of its practices through a populist call to 'make America great again.' China has leverage in its investment in American debt and cannot avoid this facet of economic linkages with American government and people. However, it is said that the foundation of American power is robust, and the gap between America and China is considered to be significant in many domains of existential situation of powerful country. China is aware of overcoming would-be *a new containment policy* alike situation enveloping around its *peripheral countries*. It is believed that China tries to curb American influence from the Asia-Pacific to the Indo-Pacific. According to Financial Times report, President Xi 'parts decisively with caution of previous era in Beijing's international relations.'[12]

It is remarked that the world financial crises of 2007/08 has not affected China profoundly and it survived the global meltdown with Chinese imitating the Western way of life. In its aftermath, Chinese President Hu Jintao formulated a new set of 'core objectives' in 2009 which was showcased by hosting Summer Olympics in Beijing in 2008. This sporting event brought a spotlight of Chinese soft power. In 2013 successor Xi Jinping profiled New Silk Road project, heightened its strategic presence in the South China Sea and advocated globalization against protectionism of the Trump era.[13]

It is observed that Europe is divided over the issue of BRI project which links together Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe in a web of physical and digital infrastructures with a trillion dollar Chinese fund. The BRI rhetoric connects the dots from the Arctic to Latin America and would wield disproportionate influence and power in Eurasia and Indian Ocean Rim. Eastern and Central European countries were expressing desires to sign the bilateral arrangements which were confidentially sent to many European capitals to undersign in April 2018 without making any concessions from China. 27 member-states of EU did not sign the memorandum document. It is not to be forgotten that in mid-2017, EU could not issue an unequivocal stand on human rights question in China in UN Human Rights Council. Such are the prospects and pitfalls of diplomatic undertakings.[14]

*India's Take*

India as a regional power in Asia-Pacific has assisted and motivated diplomatically to include China's normal statehood in international relations in history after the 1949 Communist takeover. India, after India-China war of 1962, could not find a solace how to bury its friendly sentiments when Nehru's policy posture toward Mao's China was being stabbed at the back. India had been supportive of China in acceding UN Security Council permanent membership in 1972 at the cost of its own veto power aspirations.

It is said that China could not carry out its normal role in international relations on the backdrop of Cultural Revolution and legitimacy crises that killed many Chinese within the mainland. These historical events of pinpricks in bilateral relations of India and China should not be debunked while fostering good neighborliness. There should be an amicable empathy giving justice to legitimate Indian interests at this juncture of current history. China has time and again ignored India's concern.

For example, its reservations on India's membership of Nuclear Suppliers' Group and disapproval of expanding veto power of permanent membership of United Nations Security Council. Sporadic incidents in the Indic Subcontinent like the Doklam clashes, irredentism in India's North East (Arunachal Pradesh), Northern part of Aksai Chin area where China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is underway, Chinese presence on the Sri Lankan maritime base, infrastructure development in the Maldives, Bangladesh and Nepal, Chinese high footed presence on India's orbit are cause of worry and concern for small or large countries alike when ulterior motives allegedly rules the roost.[15]

Under the helm of Narendra Modi's government in India, there is a perception of India's foreign policy which does not necessarily align with America to contain China according to Arzan Tarapore.[16] Modi's statements made categorically during

Wuhan meet with Xi, Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore and Shanghai Cooperation Organization meeting in Qingdao in early 2018 stress that any grand ventures like BRI must be 'inclusive, sustainable, and transparent' when commencing connectivity across the regions without ensnaring the countries into a mire of debt and dependency. Furthermore, the term Chinese foreign policy using peripheral diplomacy has a tinge of dependency syndrome packaged and postulated by a schooling of radical international political economy.

A consultative mechanism, the Quad – India, the United States, Japan and Australia – could alleviate certain levels of foreign policy anxiety and madness in international relations. India has discerned the limitations to counter this Chinese civilization baggage and takes uncertainty pleasure in strategic conditions which is encircling the Indo-Pacific. India's foreign and security policy dharma can never compromise its space of external sovereignty too. Indian Premier Modi has also stood in his words for 'rules based inclusive world order' similar to China's stance. But their approach and style are different and distinct due to their political upbringing, political culture and political socialization.

*The Path*

There are three accomplishments under Xi's leadership since 18$^{th}$ NPC of CPC which, emphatically, is China's concerted classical resurgence in the form of BRI as a venture in global public goods; putting efforts to tackle global challenges and roles in global governance process; and ensuring its deserving rights to make rules in international affairs. International community has using Xi's words to concede China's due place to say and sway in the burning issues of 'new type of international relations' based on 'fairness, justice, mutual respect and win-win cooperation.'

China desires abandoning 'the law of the jungle that leaves the weak at the mercy of the strong' so that its foreign policy and philosophy complements 'the commanding height of morality.' Additionally, China in strategic terms would like to achieve a world class military by the middle of the century. A long standing posture of China's defense policy is claimed to be 'non-threatening, non-expansionist and anti-hegemonic.' China expects that the world recognizes its role in global affairs business continuing its advancement to the centre of the world arena. China is to be now seen as 'an agenda setter' for the just world order.

The 19$^{th}$ NPC of CPC confirmed to replace the mantra of 'keeping low profile' with a conceptual notion of 'striving for achievements.' The American retreat into isolationist global policy has left international relations in a dangerous jungle of interests. China stresses on promoting 'cooperative international development' to redress 'ever-widening global deficit in peace, governance, and development' and assist in 'the construction of ecological civilization.' Moderation as well as extremism at times suited in global policy rhetoric is natural given the fact that

internal politics cannot be ignored. China is seen as 'stabilizer' and 'a source of wisdom' in a world troubled with uncertainties and challenges.

The Cold War like George Kennan's containment policy prescriptions against the sources of Soviet conduct cannot be the precedent case in China's context. A default alternative to traditional policy, is non-sensical and futile in America's China policy options too. American optimists who disguise as liberal democrats opine that the 'deepening development' in China integrates it into the world affairs taming its totalitarian aspirations and liberalizes the Chinese state in the offing.[17] They underscore interdependencies and interconnectedness as the norm of contemporary international relations.[18]

China holds this view of an American withdrawal into selfieism or me-first attitude is not leading us anywhere, and America admits implicitly that 'a shared global prosperity' is the recipe to maintain peace and security today. Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank, New Development Bank (BRICS) and hosting of global conferences, symposia and event management are some global products hosted and proffered by China with high stakes on promoting and building shared prosperity. It is favoring 'communication over confrontation and hostility' and 'partnerships over alliances' bolsters China's 'well-established independent foreign policy of peace.'

Lucrative opportunities with China have attracted Hungary and Greece in Europe, Ethiopia in Africa, the Philippines, Laos and Cambodia in ASEAN as they align with economic largesse of China. They mute or abstain from criticizing Chinese interests and human rights records as critics say. South Korea, Mongolia and Norway paid a price for raising stakes in political issues with China at the cost of tightening their trade opportunities a year ago.

Notwithstanding illiberal democracies on the rise, China's non-interference policy in internal affairs in these orbiting countries is a sigh of relief from the Western democracies which put them pressures to adhere the rule of law, free, fair and peaceful electoral democracy and to abide the principles of human rights. Rebalancing trade and addressing trade deficit cannot be matched by raising tariff barriers. Sino-American mutual investment in each others' companies on their territory is unavoidable and imperative as of now. Further the Trump administration has abandoned the Paris Deal on Climate Control, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Iranian deals, etc. and withdrawn from services to the world leadership that at the cost of American exceptionalism. On the contrary, China is not balking at the opportunities of globalization and the quest for its meaningful role in world affairs.

## Concluding Note

China's soft power outreach comprising its movies, literature, fine arts, architecture, cuisine, Confucius Institutes and China Town along with the

entrenchment of large economic and financial firms, in acquiring valuable cultural assets and well-recognized classic brands/products of the West, and excelling at technological feat especially in Information and Communication Technology and Artificial Intelligence should not go unnoticed in the lexicon of Chimerical world. Meanwhile enhancing hard power is the flipside of national and international power indicators. The hard laws of the global state of nature and the global state of compact allow China an expansive space to unleash global policy praxis beneficial to many underdogs. Simultaneously it incites jealousy in others to communist China's benign prosperity profiting project with imperfections and shortcomings. The pith is, however, value enrichment which is a process of the global social contract and it is not essentially a lopsided worldview of universal blueprint as pluralists signal. Global policy rhetoric is to be witnessed in praxis in a situational reality or in a contingent pragmatism. This is the challenge in foreign and security policy of every nation either great or small which must bear such onus in emerging and ever-changing world order, world disorder or world reorder.[19] The final showdown lies in mitigating a gap in publicity stunts in oratory/rhetoric and the abstract, and delivery/performance and the concrete actions in policy regime. Power aspirant countries must vie in making a difference in international politics.

## Notes

1    Read a brief German media analysis (DW (Deutsche Welle) 2018).

2    For understanding Xi's Government and Governance including China's Global Policy ambitions, read Jinping (2014); see also Jinping (2017).

3    For more information see China (2018).

4    Read more on the brief overview of features of Xi Government's Foreign Policy divided into three areas with global and Asia policy milieu; economic goals and achievements impinging on Foreign Policy and tenets of FSP; and a glimpse of pro-government opinions and non-authoritative Chinese views, Swaine (2018).

5    To apprise the reader on the ideologies in the Constitution of the Communist Party of China since its inception from Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, and Three Represents as a 'guiding ideology' of the party is followed by 'the Scientific Outlook on Development' of Hu Jintao. Now a new guiding ideology is "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era." The 19th NPC of CCP emphasized on this dictum along with party building and 'the socialist rule of law.' The political report document presented by Xi since 2012 on 19th NPC of CCP in 2017 has set the concrete timelines to achieve development goals, pursuing 'a moderately prosperous society' and 'socialist modernization.' These innovations in Chinese communist political thought are 'the recent development of Marxism being adopted in the Chinese context.' See "Scientific Outlook on Development," *China Daily*, at http://cpcchina.chinadaily.com.cn/2010-09/08/content_13918103.htm

6    See CPC (2018).

7    See news reports, "Xi Jinping promises more assertive Chinese foreign policy," *Financial Times*, 20 March 2018, https://www.ft.com/content/ad0bda86-2be9-11e8-9b4b-bc4b9f08f381 (accessed on 25th June 2018).

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8    Read new updates on Mandarins and need for reforms in diplomatic practices, "NPC 2018: China's foreign minister Wang Yi promoted in move to boost diplomacy," *The Straits Times*, 20 March 2018. https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/npc-2018-chinas-foreign-minister-wang-yi-promoted-to-state-councillor (accessed on 25th June 2018)

9    Read a glimpse of China's foreign policy apparatus, Gan (2018).

10   Read this online piece on Xi, a leader unparalleled neither in ancient nor contemporary China, has attraction of foreign guests to the Middle Kingdom as well as a globe trotter vindicated by flurry of diplomatic visits, Tao (2017).

11   Read an analysis that the Washington Consensus, which has predicted the global convergence to and unanimity on the Western economic model, does not materialize in the Non-Western world. Furthermore, a 'tenuous' connection of capitalism and democracy support the fact that the State Capitalism can yield results of ameliorating the human conditions out of poverty and that in a massive scale without practicing liberal democracy, Simpson (2018).

12   See note 8.

13   Chindia story can be counter-narrative with a surprising 'deep global implications' to Occidental perceptions and practices of international relations & diplomacy. Prof. Singh quotes Wang Yi's quipping of "one-plus-one" of China and India becoming "equal to 11" is becoming "more convincing" matched by bilateral trade figures.  Read Singh (2018).

14   Read on skepticism and cynicism on BRI from financial benchmarks, 'debt distress,' democracy, human rights and good governance aspects and this article prescribes an alternative development and strategic approach to be led by America, Fontaine, Richard and Daniel Kliman(2018).

15   Read views on 'hailed' BRI similar to US' Marshall Plan for Europe alleged to be promoting a 'Sinocentric global order' connecting the web of peripheral countries on the land and maritime field and South Asian dynamics in responding to such grand initiatives which Andrew Small remarks as *avant la lettre* (a conceptual project existing before), Small (2018).

16   Read an interesting piece on an alternative but critical thought on India's reluctance to come under strategic bandwagoning of the established powers which escalate tensions and pressures to counter the rise of revisionist power China on multiple fronts. India's China policy ambiguities, ambivalence and asymmetrical leverage are to be noted in the New Asian Hemisphere. India's distinct style of strategy is worth to ponder upon, Tarapore (2018):

17   Simpson says that 'the beauty of the post-Cold War emerging market story was that it was apolitical' and Jim O'Neill's acronym BRICS in 2001 is a diplomatic vogue for 'the leading protagonists in a new era of peaceful globalization under the Pax Americana.' Read Simpson (2018).

18   Read an analysis that the Washington Consensus, which has predicted the global convergence to and unanimity on the Western economic model, does not materialize in the Non-Western world. Furthermore, a 'tenuous' connection of capitalism and democracy support the fact that State Capitalism can yield results of ameliorating the human conditions out of poverty and that in a massive scale without practicing liberal democracy. Simpson says that 'the beauty of the post-Cold War emerging market story was that it was apolitical' and Jim O'Neill's acronym BRICS in 2001 is a diplomatic vogue for 'the leading protagonists in a new era of peaceful globalization under the Pax Americana,' Simpson (2018).

19   It is hard to predict the future but one can have a fair insight to world events that are "known knowns" and global prognoses could "fizzle or sizzle" out in 2018, read Lindsay (2017).

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The last name of the author and the year of publication are inserted in the text at the appropriate point. For example,

There is a view, however, that the agreement is, in fact, a continuation of the process of the last few decades (Bajpai 2005).

If the name of the author or the date appear as part of the narrative, cite only missing information in parentheses. For example,

Writing on a hypothetical possibility of India threatening to proliferate, Perkovich (2005) writes, ".....China proliferated to Pakistan and Pakistan proliferated to Libya, Iran, and North Korea. Nor does proliferation that occurred before the NPT was negotiated justify promiscuous proliferation behaviour today."

## Works by Multiple Authors

When a work has two authors, always cite both names every time the reference occurs in the text. In parenthetical material join the names with "&". For example,   as has been shown,

(Vanaik & Bidwai 1989)

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as Vanaik and Bidwai (1989)demonstrated

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Srinivasan, Grover, and Bhardwaj (2005) found

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Srinivasan et al. (2005) found

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(World Trade Organisation (WTO) 2006)

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(WTO 2006)

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*Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2007)

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(Srinivasan, Grover & Bhardwaj 2005: 5183-88)

## Journal Article: where the page numbering continues from issue to issue

Bajpai, Kanti (2005): "Where Are India and US Heading?," *Economic and Political Weekly,* XL(41), August 6: 3577-81.

Perkovich, George (2005): "Faulty Promises: The US-India Nuclear Deal," *Policy Outlook,* 34(4), September: 18-20.

**Newspaper Article**

Rappai, M.V. (1998): "China: a status quo nuclear power," *The Hindu,* 18 June.

**Book**

Jalan, Bimal (1991): *India's Economic Crisis,* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

**Article or Chapter in an edited Volume/Book**

Thomas, A. M. (2005): "India and Southeast Asia: The Look East Policy in Perspective," in Rajan Harshe and K.M. Seethi (eds.), *Engaging with the World: Critical Reflections on India's Foreign Policy,* New Delhi: Orient Longman.

**Website:**

"President Meets with Displaced Workers in Town Hall Meeting," at http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/12/print/20011204-17.html

# FORM IV

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