



“Today we use the term ‘the world’ with what amounts to brash familiarity. Too often in speaking of such things as the world food problem, the world health problem, world trade, world peace, and world government, we disregard the fact that ‘the world’ is a totality which in the domain of human problems constitutes the ultimate in degree of magnitude and degree of complexity. That is a fact, yes; but another fact is that almost every large problem today is, in truth, a world problem. Those two facts taken together provide thoughtful men with what might realistically be entitled ‘an introduction to humility’ in curing the world’s ills.”

— President Emeritus John Sloan Dickey,  
1947 Convocation Address

# WORLD OUTLOOK

AN UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL  
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AT DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

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*World Outlook* is a student-run journal of international affairs that publishes papers written by undergraduate students. In addition, the journal features interviews with major global thinkers and opinion pieces written by our own staff. Our name and missions are motivated by the words of late Dartmouth President John Sloan Dickey. Please visit our website at <http://sites.dartmouth.edu/worldoutlook>.

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

International relations and foreign policy are not new topics; quite the opposite actually, they have been studied extensively over history. Nevertheless, research in this field continues to develop and grow. In this edition of *World Outlook*, we showcase six cutting edge undergraduate research papers in the field. The papers all display innovative approaches to answering questions of international relations, whether it be applying interdisciplinary methodologies or utilizing existing international relations theories to examine modern case studies.

Shira Hornstein employs theories of international politics and psychology to explain President Obama's use of the Vietnam War analogy in her interesting piece "Afghanization; the Obama Administration's Use of the Vietnam Analogy." Natalia Henry approaches the question of why the British government purchased a controlling interest in APOC in 1914 from a historical perspective in her paper "Petroleum, Politics, and Persuasion: Why the British Government Purchased 51-Percent of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company." In her paper, "A New Economic World Order? Assessing intent and impact of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank" Fina Short utilizes comparative analysis to understand the extent to which the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank threatens US-led international development regimes. Lastly, Barav Barzani collected primary source in-depth interviews with elites (representatives) among the Sunni Arabs and Kurds to understand which factors enabled Salafi-Jihadi groups, specifically ISIS, to garner public support among Kurdish and Sunni-Arab communities in Iraq.

As the world continues to develop rapidly around us, new case studies can validate or question existing theories in international relations. In "China's Geopolitical Strategy in Latin America: Pursuing Hegemony" *World Outlook* Senior Editor, Sarah Solomon, argues that China's strategy vis a vis Latin America goes beyond that of an economic competitor or development partner, and instead reveals China's true intentions as an aspiring hegemon.

We chose these papers as we believe they reflect exciting new avenues for exploring topics in international relations. Perhaps the research can even spark future avenues of study among our readers. At the very least, we hope you enjoy reading our selections.

Sincerely,

Ciara Comerford '21 and Madeleine Sach '21  
Editors-in-Chief

## “AFGHANISTANIZATION;” THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION’S USE OF THE VIETNAM ANALOGY

Shira Hornstein

In order to make sense of the world, leaders constantly rely on heuristics to make decisions and process events. Commonly, they reference events of the past in order to understand current situations. This allusion of past events—the use of “historical analogies”—allows leaders to define the risks of a situation and formulate policy (Khong, 10). Throughout American history, presidents have utilized historical analogies, often previous wars, when making policy decisions in order to learn from past conflicts and to avoid repeating the same foreign policy mistakes. Continuing this tradition, the Obama Administration frequently cited the Vietnam Analogy, which can both prescribe both conflict escalation and also avoidance, with regard to the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan. In this paper, As such, I will argue that the Obama White House’s pervasive employment of the Vietnam Analogy can help explain the policy strategy of “escalate and exit” in Afghanistan (Sanger, 28).

### SECTION ONE: PRESCRIPTIONS OF THE VIETNAM ANALOGY

The Vietnam analogy provides two, chief, albeit somewhat -contradictory, policy prescriptions: the first, commonly known as “Vietnam syndrome,” warns against foreign military intervention, especially in the absence of U.S. vital interests. The second, which Khong names the “massive force syndrome,” prescribes the use of overwhelming force from the onset of foreign conflict in order to squash the enemy (259). At different points during the Obama Presidency, it appears that the Administration invoked and utilized each of these prescriptions, as Obama ramped up forces in Afghanistan only to retrench and cut U.S. losses. The Vietnam War, one of the most costly American wars both in terms of monetary spending and human lives, served as a cautionary tale for U.S. decision-makers. Much of the Vietnam War involved unfamiliar guerrilla warfare and nebulous objectives. This resulted in an exhausting, unsuccessful, and drawn-out military intervention. Thus, “Vietnam warns against intervention in politically messy Third-World conflicts, especially those fueled by nationalism and waged asymmetrically” (Record, 166). As a result, successive U.S. presidents have vowed to avoid Vietnam War-like conflicts since the conclusion of the Vietnam War in 1975.

The first interpretation of “no more Vietnams means that the United States should abstain from intervening in areas of dubious strategic worth, where the justice of both the cause and of the means used are likely to be questionable, and where the United States is unlikely to win” (Khong, 258). This line of analogical reasoning prescribes the avoidance of conflict. In the case of Obama, however, the question was

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not whether or not to intervene, but whether to remain involved in an inherited war. In this context, then, the Vietnam syndrome prescription can also translate to “cutting U.S. losses” by exiting war. In contrast, “massive force syndrome” stipulates that “the mistake the United States made was not to have fought harder. That the United States lost because it chose not to fight harder, not because the war was unwinnable” (Khong, 258). Therefore, this prescribes “removing [unrealistic military] constraints and doing whatever is necessary to win in future conflicts” (Khong, 259). The use of this interpretation would encourage escalation of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan. As the lessons of Vietnam can both prescribe avoidance (or withdrawal) from conflict as well as intensification of war, even in name, it is clear that both of these interpretations of the Vietnam Analogy played a role in the “escalate and exit” strategy of the Obama White House. With the objective of exit in mind, the Administration chose first to utilize the teachings of massive force syndrome to quell the insurgency in Afghanistan in order to then withdraw military forces, as dictated by Vietnam syndrome.

## **SECTION TWO: SELECTION OF THE VIETNAM ANALOGY**

Having explained the policy prescriptions provided by two predominant interpretations of the Vietnam Analogy, I will now explicate why the Obama Administration favored the Vietnam Analogy in regard to Afghanistan. In any process of analogical reasoning, there are two major heuristics for analogy selection: representativeness and availability. Most likely, both of these played roles in the Obama Administration’s use of the Vietnam Analogy. First, I will explore the representativeness heuristic, in which decision makers select analogies “on the basis of superficial similarities between the prospective analogue and the situation it is supposed to illuminate” (Khong, 217). Therefore, policymakers will interpret surface-level similarities as confirmations of the validity of a particular analogy for a given situation.

In many respects, apparent similarities manifest between the wars in Vietnam and Afghanistan. In both situations, “the United States waged a protracted counterinsurgency campaign against a foreign non-state actor on behalf of a corrupt and incompetent local government” (Miller, 461-462). Furthermore, the U.S. employed similar tactics in order to combat the insurgencies: “both involved what the US military calls ‘foreign internal defense’ and ‘security assistance’ alongside civilian efforts to foster good governance to support US war efforts.” (Miller, 462). In Vietnam, the U.S. and South Vietnamese governments instituted Civil

Operation and Rural Development Support (CORDS) to pacify and win over the civilian population (Phillips), while in Afghanistan, the U.S. government launched “clear-hold-build” missions in attempts to flip the Afghan public in favor of the American presence by guaranteeing the population’s security (Sambanis et al., 805). These superficial likenesses, therefore, may suggest that “the United States could learn useful lessons about how to wage counterinsurgency warfare in Afghanistan by examining its performance in Vietnam” (Miller, 462). The surface similarities between Vietnam and Afghanistan likely influenced the Obama White House to utilize the



Vietnam Analogy in the development of Afghan policy.

In addition to representativeness, the availability with which the Vietnam Analogy was recalled added to the potency of its policy prescriptions. A number of variables contributes to the availability of an analogy to policy makers. These include first-hand, formative, or generational experience. First, Vietnam serves as a particularly vivid analogy for those in the Obama Administration as many Obama officials, (aged roughly in their 50s through 70s), experienced the Vietnam War during their "formative years," defined as ages 12-29 (Schuman and Corning, 81). However, although experiences during these "critical years" are especially influential, Schuman and Corning prove that even those who did not experience the Vietnam War during their formative years—which include Barack Obama, born in 1961—still choose the Vietnam Analogy over the World War II Analogy. In fact, those born between 1957-1961 are 62.8% more likely to utilize the Vietnam Analogy over the World War II Analogy. Furthermore, Americans born 1906-1986, which encompasses the vast majority of government officials, favor the Vietnam analogy, albeit to varying degrees (83). Furthermore, Democrats (84%) are even more likely to opt for the Vietnam Analogy than Republicans (41%) (Schuman and Corning, 84).

Though Schuman and Corning's 2006 study primarily discusses analogy selection for the Iraq War, it nonetheless serves as a valuable reference for the analogy selection for both of the wars Obama inherited in the Middle East. As the Obama Administration is a Democratic administration composed of many officials generationally affected by the Vietnam War, this research implies that Obama officials were more likely to invoke the use of Vietnam in regard to their decisions in the Middle East.

Moreover, a number of noteworthy White House officials in the Obama Administration had first-hand experience with the Vietnam War. First, Richard Holbrooke, who served as Obama's Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, got his first assignment as a junior Foreign Service officer in Vietnam in 1962 (Woodward, 84). Holbrooke repeatedly cited his past experiences, including Vietnam, (among others), as a Foreign Service officer in reference to Afghan policy. Thus, Holbrooke's early experience with Vietnam heightened his accessibility to the Vietnam Analogy. Notably, the Obama Administration also consulted Henry Kissinger with regard to Afghanistan. As he was heavily involved in the Vietnam War, the lessons of Vietnam greatly affected Kissinger's view and policy guidance. In response to Obama's fixation on exiting Afghanistan, Kissinger advised: "you should never be negotiating a peace when the opposing force knows you're leaving" (qtd. in Sanger, 123). This appears to be in line with Nixon's policy of escalating military force in order to bring the North Vietnamese to the negotiation table, a policy in which Kissinger, himself, played a large role. Finally, both National Security Advisor James Jones served as a Marine and also Secretary of State John Kerry served in the Navy in South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. These are only four examples of Obama advisors with significant personal experience in the Vietnam War, though there were presumably others across

different departments within the Administration. These men's accessibility to the Vietnam Analogy is of importance, as each had direct access to the President. Accordingly, both accessibility and representativeness heightened the probability that the Obama Administration used the Vietnam Analogy when forming policy in Afghanistan.

### **SECTION THREE: THE VIETNAM ANALOGY IN OBAMA'S "ESCALATE AND EXIT" FROM AFGHANISTAN**

Likely due to the availability of the Vietnam Analogy to members of the Obama Administration and its perceived representativeness to Afghanistan, the Administration repeatedly invoked the Vietnam Analogy informing discussions of Afghan foreign policy. As Miller remarks, "the Vietnam analogy returned in 2009 with the change of administrations and a review of US policy and strategy in Afghanistan" (451). Particularly telling of this Administration's reliance on the Vietnam Analogy, Obama and his aides circulated a copy of the book *Lessons in Disaster*, which documents Lyndon B. Johnson's decision-making in Vietnam, "determined to avoid turning their inherited wars in Afghanistan and Iraq into a Vietnam-style morass" (Liptak). Exhibited by the circulation of *Lessons of Disaster*, it is evident that there was a culture and encouragement of "learning from the past," specifically from Vietnam, within the Obama White House.

Although Obama, himself, publically avoided the use of the Vietnam Analogy, prominent members of his administration frequently cited Vietnam. When the administration was debating the extent of the 2009 troop surge in Afghanistan, "Vice President Joe Biden was 'more convinced than ever that Afghanistan was a version of Vietnam,' and when Obama was about to order more troops he warned that the US might get 'locked into Vietnam'" (Miller, 451). Similarly, Holbrooke warned President Obama that "history should not be forgotten" as he had learned that "guerrillas win in a stalemate" (Woodward, 97). Moreover, "Clinton's deputy of State, Jim Steinberg, had privately told her he was worried they were on the path to another Vietnam. There was an 'open-endedness' to the mission" (Woodward, 250). And, when John Kerry, a Vietnam veteran, assumed the role of Secretary of State during Obama's second term, he routinely referenced Vietnam, noting: "I think [Obama] understood the lesson of Vietnam, and more" (qtd. in Liptak). Finally, Vali Nasr, a special adviser to the President's special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, claimed that Mullah Omar, the Afghan Taliban Leader, "is the Ho Chi Minh of the war," pointing to the infectivity American forces to put down the insurgency despite apparent superior military capabilities (qtd. in Sanger, 120). Taken together, these examples offer some insight as to the prevalence of the Vietnam Analogy during the Administration's deliberations on the topic of Afghanistan. This analogy was not only used once or by a single individual during the administration, but floated repeatedly around the subject of Afghanistan.

Many of the references to Vietnam surround discussion of the 2009 troop surge in Afghanistan, revealing that these policy-makers utilized the Vietnam analogy

to assess the stakes and dangers associated with remaining in the ongoing conflict as well as to rule out other options (Khong, 10). In particular, Holbrooke, Biden, and Steinberg cited Vietnam in order to express concern that, if not handled responsively, the conflict in Afghanistan would turn into "another Vietnam," a protracted and costly conflict. Therefore, in the context of the troop surge decision, leaders cited the Vietnam analogy to support an immediate ramp-up of troops, in line with "massive force syndrome," over slower options. When debating the deployment timeline, Holbrooke, Clinton, Mullen, and Petraeus endorsed the immediate deployment of 17,000 troops over a more graduated installment or further strategy review (Woodward, 97). Therefore, in this key decision, Holbrooke, Biden, and Steinberg's warnings of another Vietnam proved powerful in emphasizing the danger of a "light" intervention, which could prolong the conflict and result in a stalemate. Instead, they cited Vietnam to support a forceful, immediate installment of all 17,000 troops. During the 2009 troop surge decision, the Administration used the Vietnam Analogy to illuminate the costs of ongoing war and eliminate other policy options, resulting in an "escalation" strategy in attempts of speeding an "exit" to the conflict and safe U.S. withdrawal.

Although the Obama administration initially used the Vietnam Analogy to prescribe escalation in Afghanistan, evidenced by officials' talk of Vietnam in the 2009 troop surge decision, the Administration then took the lessons of "Vietnam syndrome" in order to attempt a peaceful exit from the region. As Obama's primary goal was to exit Afghanistan, he only utilized the approach of "massive force syndrome" in hopes of curtailing an already-lengthy war. Thus, Obama hoped that by the end of the troop surge, US forces would have diminished the insurgency enough for the Afghan government to regain control, providing thefor U.S. the opportunity for withdrawal once and for all. Obama wanted "the military effort in this new approach [to] focus on creating 'conditions for a transition', as well as ensuring 'a civilian surge that reinforces positive action' in Afghanistan" (Aslam, 141). This aim of transition closely mirrors Nixon's approach of Vietnamization. Like Nixon, who aimed to return power back to the South Vietnamese Government, Obama wanted to transition control from American military forces back to the Afghan Government and President Hamid Karzai (Sanger, 28). Ultimately, aligning with "Vietnam syndrome," Obama wanted what he called an "exit strategy" from Afghanistan (Woodward, 253). Thus, throughout his presidency, Obama followed both primary policy prescriptions dictated by the Vietnam Analogy— first "massive force," followed by "Vietnam syndrome"— in order to achieve a Nixonian, Vietnamization-like policy strategy for "escalate and exit" in Afghanistan.

In contrast to my psychological approach highlighting analogical reasoning, some scholars may take a structural approach to explaining Obama's foreign policy in Afghanistan. Peter Trubowitz highlights the importance of "slack" in presidents' foreign policy flexibility, claiming that "leaders have little geopolitical slack when... security is scarce and their state is exposed and vulnerable to foreign intimidation and aggression" (19). According to this definition, Obama had very little geopolitical

slack due to the U.S. commitments in the Middle East, forcing him to conduct a “realist” strategy to minimize the U.S. security threat. Furthermore, incorporating the domestic arena, Trubowitz argues that “during the Cold War, successive presidents... so feared a domestic political backlash for ‘losing a country to communism’ that they attached value to places of little intrinsic geostrategic interest” (18). One might argue that this argument can thus be transferred to the War on Terror: Obama ramped up the intervention in Afghanistan due to avoid the domestic backlash that would come with being “soft” on terrorism. However, though these arguments explain the “escalate” aspect of Obama’s strategy, they neglect to explain Obama’s fixation on “exit.” For Obama, exit—a “realistic ramp-down of troops”—was his primary concern (Woodward, 253). Thus, a structural, realist argument alone does not prove satisfying in understanding Obama’s obsession with withdrawal. However, when combined with a psychological approach incorporating the use of the Vietnam Analogy, it is possible to understand why Obama, cognizant of the dangers of ongoing war, so wanted to avoid further involvement in Afghanistan, only agreeing to ramp up his military commitments in order to achieve his primary objective of exit.

#### **SECTION FOUR: CONCLUSION**

A close examination of both the Obama Administration’s policy and language surrounding Obama’s “escalate and exit” strategy in Afghanistan reveals pervasive use of the Vietnam Analogy. Obama’s policy in the Middle East adhered to the policy prescriptions provided by the Vietnam Analogy. Massive force syndrome helps explain the rationale between the immediate troop surge in 2009, while Vietnam syndrome may underlie Obama’s persistent desire to exit the Middle East. Combined, these policy prescriptions explain Obama’s “escalate and exit” approach to Afghanistan. Throughout his presidency, Obama enacted policies that closely mirrored Nixon’s in Vietnam: both presidents ramped up their military presence in their respective wars. Both presidents, too, desired to ultimately return control to the host governments in attempts to achieve some idea of what Nixon coined “peace with honor.” In place of bombing raids, which Nixon ordered in Laos and Cambodia, Obama ordered drone strikes in Afghanistan in Pakistan. With these parallels, Obama’s policy of “escalate and exit” appears to be a modern version of Vietnamization, what I would call: “Afghanistanization.” Thus, it is possible that Obama did “take the lessons of the past too seriously,” as Miller warned, as now both Vietnam and Afghanistan serve as examples of messy and largely unsuccessful wars (453). Though it is still too soon to know the lasting effects of Obama’s policy, the continuing unrest in the Middle East implies that even those that do learn from history may still be “doomed” to repeat it.

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## PETROLEUM, POLITICS, AND PERSUASION: WHY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT PURCHASED 51-PERCENT OF THE ANGLO-PERSIAN OIL COMPANY

Natalia Henry

After receiving a concession to prospect and sell the petroleum contained in three-quarters of Persia, William Knox D'Arcy established the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC) in 1908. Six years later, the British government rescued APOC from financial destitution and accelerated its development by purchasing fifty-one percent of the company's shares. In doing so, His Majesty's Government became intimately involved in Iranian affairs and Middle Eastern "petro-politics," two matters which greatly affected British foreign policy throughout the 20th century. Given the long-term implications of this investment, many scholars have wondered what incentives motivated the British government. By studying records from the India Office, the Admiralty, the Foreign Office, Parliament, and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, this paper examines how commercial, diplomatic, and strategic concerns intersected. Ultimately, this paper argues that, although the British government rationalized its decision based on the need to secure fuel oil for the Royal Navy, commercial concerns initially inspired the investment in APOC.

### INTRODUCTION

In 1901, William Knox D'Arcy received a concession from Shah Mozzafar al-Din granting him exclusive rights to prospect and sell petroleum contained in three-quarters of Persia (British Library 1901, 33). Subsequently, with support from the Burmah Oil Company, D'Arcy struck oil at Masjid i-Suleiman on May 26, 1908, establishing the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC) on April 14, 1909 (Ferrier 1982, 88, 107). Ultimately becoming the multinational giant British Petroleum, the company's founder, R.W. Ferrier writes, "signaled the emergence of the first-oil producing area in the Middle East, with all the economic and political consequences which this meant" (Ferrier 1982, 89). Similarly, Peter Frankopan argues that "the discovery of oil made the piece of paper signed by the Shah in 1901 one of the most important documents of the twentieth century . . . it laid the basis for a multi-billion-dollar business to grow . . . it also paved the way for political turmoil" (Frankopan 2015, 320).

However, the company did not succeed independently. Rather, in 1914, the British government rescued APOC from financial crisis and catalyzed its development by purchasing 51 percent of the company's shares (Ferrier 1982, 199). This investment involved two steps: the first, on May 20, 1914, with Admiralty signing an agreement with APOC for the supply of fuel oil, and the second, on July 7, 1914, with Parliament passing a bill whereby the Treasury subscribed to the company's capital. Under the July legislation, His Majesty's Government purchased £2.2 million worth of ordinary shares, preferred shares, and first debentures in exchange for a guaranteed supply of fuel oil for the Admiralty (British Library 1914). This influx of cash, Ferrier

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elucidates, provided a “sufficiently strong financial base on which the Company with its concession could really establish itself” (Ferrier 1982, 113).

Besides accelerating APOC’s success, the government’s subscription of capital was of extreme geopolitical significance. Two weeks after the investment, World War I increased the importance of petroleum. Thus, the newly secured Persian fuel oil gave the Royal Navy a crucial advantage, which ensured that, as Lord Curzon proclaimed, “the allied cause floated to victory upon a wave of oil” (Frankopan 2015, 320). In addition, its connection to APOC caused Britain to remain intimately involved in Iranian affairs and Middle Eastern “petro-politics” throughout the twentieth century. Henceforth, as Frankopan and Ferrier respectively write, “the desire to win control of oil would be the cause of many problems in the future” and would have “a significant impact upon national economies and international relations” (Frankopan 2015, 321). Given such long-term implications, this paper seeks to determine why the British government purchased a controlling interest in APOC in 1914. Did commercial, political, military, or other incentives motivate His Majesty’s Government (HMG)? Did the Foreign Office and the Admiralty incite this decision? Or did APOC and its executives persuade the government to subscribe capital?

Since 1914, many historians have studied the history of APOC, its relationship with the British government, and the reasons why HMG purchased 51 percent of the company’s shares. Frankopan argues that early twentieth-century European geopolitics motivated HMG to secure fuel oil for the navy (Frankopan 2015, 321). Amidst nationalist and imperialist tensions, the investment reflected Britain’s desire to gain an advantage over the other Great Powers. In contrast, Black portrays the government’s purchase as part of a Machiavellian plot to control Middle Eastern oil (Black). He contends that, after investing in APOC, the government intended to acquire other foreign petroleum resources. Thirdly, Jack argues that three departments—the Foreign Office, the India Office, and the Admiralty—all played essential roles in the decision to rescue the firm. Jack claims, however, that the Foreign Office, not the Admiralty, was the most important force (Jack, 139). Finally, Ferrier maintains that APOC’s chairman Charles Greenway persuaded the government to support his company. (Ferrier 1982) Therefore, Ferrier claims, the arrangement was inspired by commercial, rather than strategic, interests. (Ferrier 1982, 168)

Despite elucidating several reasons why HMG might have purchased a controlling stake in APOC, these authors have insufficiently analyzed how interactions between the company and the government prompted the decision. While arguing that Greenway inspired the investment, Ferrier fails to reveal how the chairman gained support from the Foreign Office and the Admiralty. Moreover, Ferrier only explains why the Admiralty signed its agreement with APOC but does not address why Parliament later allocated the necessary capital. Therefore, by studying records from the India Office, the Admiralty, the Foreign Office, Parliament, and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, this paper examines how commercial, diplomatic, and strategic concerns intersected. Accordingly, this paper argues that, although the British government ratio-



nalized its decision based on the need to secure fuel oil for the Royal Navy, commercial concerns played a significant role in its investment in APOC. Charles Greenway first attracted the government's support by correlating his commercial interests with the Foreign Office's political concerns and the Admiralty's strategic policies; subsequently, First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill adopted Greenway's argument and convinced Parliament to subscribe capital.

### **DESTITUTE AND DESPERATE: APOC'S FINANCIAL CONDITION**

By 1912, after developing its concession and launching production, APOC found itself in a precarious financial state. The company's failure to understand the unique physical and chemical characteristics of its Persian oilfields increased costs, delayed development, and caused its refinery at Abadan to open three years behind schedule (Ferrier 1982, 8). As a result, development expenditures and capital investment in installations more than doubled initial predictions (Ferrier 1982, 190). Yet, despite struggling to market its products, the company continued to expend capital. For example, in a March 1913 memorandum on APOC's proposal to supply fuel oil to the navy (hereafter the "Admiralty Memorandum"), the Admiralty revealed that "the Company have expended their capital in sinking wells, building a pipe line of 150 miles from the wells to a port (Abadan, at the head of the Persian Gulf), setting up a refinery, and in providing tank barges for conveyance of oil over the river bar to load deep-draught steamers, &c" (National Archives 1913). Such expenses drove APOC to the brink of bankruptcy. By 1913, APOC's current liabilities far exceeded its current assets—the company could not meet creditors' compensation requests and appeared headed for liquidation (Ferrier 1982, 186). Therefore, without outside capital, the company could neither continue to expand production nor operate independently. In its memorandum, the Admiralty claimed that APOC "could not undertake further large supplies without large capital expenditure for new wells, longer pipe lines, enlarged refinery, &c" (National Archives 1913, 2). Similarly, the Admiralty's agreement with APOC later stated that "the Company cannot adequately develop this very extensive Concession without additional capital" (National Archives 1914).

Accordingly, committed to rescuing APOC and turning the company into a successful, international oil enterprise, Greenway began searching for a large capital investment in 1912. By proposing to absorb APOC, the Royal Dutch Shell Group provided a potential solution to this challenge. Shell offered to buy out APOC and relieve the company of its debts and responsibilities in Persia. The "Admiralty Memorandum" revealed this intention, stating that "The Royal Dutch Shell Company . . . [is] desirous of buying out the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and working the Persian concessions" because it "think[s] so highly of the Persian oil-fields and the advantages of amalgamation that they are willing to pay a large sum for their acquisition" (National Archives 1913). However, despite this offer of financial assistance, Greenway was determined to preserve APOC's independence. Therefore, he rejected Shell's overture and sought alternate sources of capital. Meanwhile, in tune with the Foreign Of-

office's priorities and the British Admiralty's new policies, Greenway began correlating APOC's success to national security and the use of his petroleum as British naval fuel oil. Thus, at this juncture, the Foreign Office, the Admiralty, and the British government emerged, respectively, as a source of political support, an attractive customer, and a potential investor.

### **DESTITUTE AND DESPERATE: APOC'S FINANCIAL CONDITION**

While Greenway searched for capital to save his company, the Foreign Office maintained strategic and political interests in Persia. Given the country's proximity to India and the Persian Gulf, the Earl of Ronaldshay, Lawrence Dundas, declared in the House of Commons that Persia "had always been recognized as vital" to Britain "both from the strategical and political points of view" (*Shanghai Times* 1914). Moreover, he claimed that "if . . . a strong continental power were to come down on . . . Persia, and establish itself in the neighborhood of the Persian Gulf, it would constitute a menace on the line of our communication to India and the Far East, and also with Australia and New Zealand" (*Parliamentary Papers* 1914). Therefore, the Foreign Office sought to preserve British influence in the region and prevent other nations from dominating Persian affairs. Sir Edward Grey served as Foreign Secretary from 1905 to 1916. In this role, he focused on protecting Persian integrity, sustaining order in the Gulf, and curtailing Russian interference (*Fitzpatrick* 1920, 16, 82). Grey highlighted these intentions in a dispatch to Sir Arthur Nicolson: "His Majesty's Government will continue to direct all their efforts to the preservation of the status quo in the Gulf and the maintenance of British trade" (*Sessional Papers* 1908). For this purpose, Grey and the Foreign Office signed the Anglo-Russian Agreement in 1907, constraining Britain and Russia to southern and northern spheres of influence—with a neutral zone dividing the two spheres. The agreement aimed to restrict Russian intervention and, as Sir Mark Sykes stated, "to guarantee the integrity of Persia" (*Parliamentary Papers* 1914). While not pursuing territorial expansion, the Foreign Office was preoccupied with limiting foreign intrusion in Persia. Hence, throughout his tenure, Grey sought to uphold the Anglo-Russian Agreement and maintain Britain's stake in this strategic region. Accordingly, as an emblem of British commercial power in Persia, APOC attracted Grey's attention and coincided with his agenda.

### **FUEL OIL AND THE ADMIRALTY**

In addition to the Foreign Office, the British Admiralty also developed an interest in APOC; yet, rather than the company's political importance, its fuel oil appealed to the Admiralty. Throughout the early twentieth century, the Royal Navy was expanding its oil consumption. In an arms race with Germany, the Admiralty sought to modernize the navy and secure a strategic advantage. Thus, replacing coal with oil quickly emerged as the means to this end. Aptly known as the "oil maniac," First Sea Lord Admiral John Fisher led the early fuel transition (*Black* 26). First, in 1903, Fisher appointed an "Oil Fuel Committee" under Admiral Ernest Pretyman, which

made it clear, as Pretyman wrote, “that petroleum would largely supersede coal as the source of the fuel supply of the Navy” (Black 26; Longhurst 1956, 24). Oil conferred massive advantages, which promised to increase the efficiency and power of the Royal Navy. According to Churchill in *The World Crisis*, the benefits included speed, maneuverability, and efficiency:

In equal ships oil gave a large excess of speed over coal. It enabled their speed to be attained with far greater rapidity. It gave 40 per cent greater radius of action for the same rate of coal. It enabled a fleet to refuel at sea with great facility. An oil-burning fleet can, if need be and in calm weather, keep its station at sea, nourishing itself from tankers without having to send a quarter of its strength continually into harbor to coal, wasting fuel on the homeward and outward journey (Churchill 2005, 74)

Overall, Churchill claimed that “the use of oil made it possible in every type of vessel to have more gun-powder and more speed for less size or less cost” (Churchill 2005, 74). Therefore, Admiral Fisher began directing the Admiralty to build oil-fueled destroyers and torpedo boats. As Churchill testified to the House of Commons in July 1913, “in the year 1909 the first flotilla of ocean-going destroyers wholly dependent upon oil was created, and since then, in each successive year, another flotilla of oil only destroyers has been built” (Parliamentary Papers 1913). Consequently, the Admiralty developed a growing dependence on and demand for fuel oil.

This fuel transition intensified when, in October 1911, Churchill became First Lord of the Admiralty. Confident about the advantages of oil, he expanded the fleet and appointed two commissions to investigate potential sources of supply. First, in December 1911, Churchill appointed an oil commission under Captain William Pakenham, and second, in July 1912, he created the Royal Commission on Fuel and Engines under Admiral Fisher (Jack, 148; Ferrier 1982, 165). Churchill insisted to Fisher that “this liquid fuel problem has got to be solved . . . You have got to find the oil; to show how it can be stored cheaply; how it can be purchased regularly and cheaply in peace; and with absolute certainty in war.” (Ferrier 1982, 165). Then, using the commissions’ conclusions, Churchill wrote a cabinet memorandum titled “Oil Fuel Supply for His Majesty’s Navy,” which emphasized the importance of oil, explained the difficulty of securing its supply, and outlined the Admiralty’s new oil policy (National Archives 1913).

On July 17, 1913, Churchill brought these issues before the House of Commons. In his testimony, he first confirmed the “advantage of using oil fuel in ships of war” and professed that oil would “add an appreciable percentage to the relative fighting strength of the British Navy” (Parliamentary Papers 1913). Second, he equated the Navy’s access to oil with Britain’s political and economic security: “if we cannot get oil, we cannot get corn, we cannot get cotton, and we cannot get a thousand and one commodities necessary for the preservation of the economic energies of Great Brit-

ain” (Parliamentary Papers 1913). Then, based on such crucial and urgent benefits, Churchill outlined the Admiralty’s “twofold” oil policy, split into “an ultimate policy” and “an interim policy” (Parliamentary Papers 1913). While “our ultimate policy is that the Admiralty should become the independent owner and producer of its own supplies of liquid fuel,” Churchill declared, “the interim policy consists in making at once a series of forward contracts for about five years . . . to secure a regular and an adequate supply during this immediately future period at reasonable and steady prices” (Parliamentary Papers 1913). Furthermore, Churchill established three governing principles for the Admiralty’s policy:

First, a wide geographical distribution, to guard against local failure of supplies and to avoid undue reliance on any particular source . . . secondly, to keep alive independent competitive sources of supply, so as to safeguard the Admiralty from becoming dependent on any single combination; and, thirdly, to draw our oil supply, so far as possible from sources under British control or British influence, and along those sea or ocean routes which the navy can most easily and most surely protect” (Parliamentary Papers 1913).

Through this impassioned speech, Churchill confirmed the Admiralty’s permanent dependence on oil, inaugurated a campaign to ascertain its supply, and attracted Parliamentary support for his naval program. Consequently, he further accelerated the fuel transition and made the Admiralty perceive oil as critical for maintaining naval supremacy and protecting the British Empire.

However, rising prices soon challenged the Admiralty’s policy. Meanwhile, competition from Germany and other Great Powers only magnified its desire to secure a strategic advantage. During Fisher’s tenure, oil consumption had grown exponentially—Ferrier states that “within a decade demand for fuel oil . . . by the Admiralty increased enormously” from “1200 tons in 1902 to 277,850 in 1912” (Ferrier 1982, 163). Concurrently, higher demand led to higher prices. For example, in his speech to the House of Commons on July 17, 1913, Churchill explained that “the growing demand for oil fuel” had led “oil, which in 1911-12 could practically compete on favourable terms with coal,” to have “now almost doubled in cost” (Parliamentary Papers 1913). As a result, Churchill declared, “the problem” became “not one of quantity” but “one of price” (Parliamentary Papers 1913). Amidst these escalating prices, the Admiralty faced the mounting challenge of securing a steady supply of oil for its fleet. Thus, anxious to improve its navy and protect the Empire, the Admiralty became an obvious target for Greenway’s campaign.

### **CHARLES GREENWAY’S CAMPAIGN FOR CAPITAL**

Given the Foreign Office’s interests in Persia and the Admiralty’s yearning for fuel oil, Greenway identified these two departments as potential allies. By framing APOC’s

fate as a matter of British national security, Greenway appealed to their political sensibilities and campaigned for a government subsidy. Since the company's growing destitution made Shell's buyout offer more attractive, he used this potential merger to attract the government's attention. First, in September 1912, Greenway alerted the Foreign Office, which wrote to the Admiralty that "Mr. Greenway informed [us] that one of the objects of the Shell Company for years past has been to arrive at an amalgamation of interests with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company" (British Library 1912). Subsequently, in March 1913, the Admiralty stated that "the prospect of an advantageous sale and relief from all further risk and responsibility is an extremely tempting one for the Company" (National Archives 1913, 2). However, in communicating with both departments, Greenway emphasized his desire to reject Shell's proposition. The Foreign Office recognized that the company "largely on Imperial grounds have hitherto rejected all overtures," while the Admiralty acknowledged that the company's directors "prefer to maintain independence as a British Company, if this is in any way feasible" (National Archives 1913, 2). Yet, Greenway also stressed that APOC's continued autonomy depended on significant financial assistance—without such assistance, a merger with Shell was all but inevitable.

Henceforth, Greenway used the threat of a Shell takeover to appeal for government aid. Since Shell was foreign owned, Greenway argued that amalgamation would constitute a national security risk. As Gareth Jones writes, Greenway "repeatedly emphasized that [the company] was threatened with absorption by Shell, that Shell was now 60% Dutch, and that the Netherlands were very vulnerable to pressure from Germany" (Jones 1997, 652). Contemporary geopolitics, rising tensions with Germany, and presumed connections between the Dutch and German governments made the British government susceptible to these assertions. By implying that Shell's ownership of APOC would undermine British influence and permit foreign intrusion in the Gulf, the chairman's claims directly coincided with the Foreign Office's agenda. Meanwhile, Greenway's warnings that Shell might create a monopoly and further inflate fuel prices alarmed the Admiralty. In addition to the Foreign Office and the Admiralty, Greenway's campaign also caught the attention of the India Office, which wrote that, "unless the Government can come to some arrangement with [Greenway's] company to assist not only in the matter of contract for supplies but also some form of subsidy to aid developments and active support, . . . it will probably be impossible for the Anglo-Persian to preserve its independence" (Murray 1914).

Consequently, Greenway presented, as a viable alternative to Shell's buyout, an Admiralty fuel oil contract and a government investment. Thus, the March 1913 "Admiralty Memorandum" stated that "the Anglo-Persian Company . . . suggest, as a suitable method of finding the capital and preserving the independence . . . of the Company, that the Admiralty, as a condition of a long term (twenty years) contract, should advance 10s per ton up to 200,000 tons . . . and should recover this advance by a corresponding abatement of 10s per ton on the first 200,000 tons delivered in each year" (National Archives 1913, 2-3). Before this fuel contract could go into effect, however,

the British Treasury had to invest in APOC—the “Admiralty Memorandum” highlighted that “the Company offer the low price for oil in consideration of the Government assistance in procuring capital for fresh development” (National Archives 1913, 5). Greenway presumed that the Admiralty was “very anxious to preserve Persia for all time as a source of Fuel Oil for the British Navy in order (1) that the Shell may not secure a monopoly and thus be in a position to demand their own price, and (2) that they might not run the risk of supplies being cut off in time of war” (British Petroleum Archives 1912). Furthermore, Greenway emphasized APOC’s value, contending that the “concession extending over nearly the whole of Persia is so large, and the results obtained on the basis of wells already sunk are so satisfactory, that it is only a question of drilling and piping . . . to get the results necessary to meet a large Admiralty contract” (National Archives 1913, 5). Shell’s interest in APOC was, Greenway believed, further proof of his company’s intrinsic worth. This point convinced the Admiralty, which wrote in its memorandum that “the faith in the productivity of the Persian oil-fields shown by the Shell Company with its world-wide experience is evidenced by the offer of absorption” and that “the confidence of the Anglo-Persian Company and that of the . . . Shell Companies . . . should inspire the Government with confidence in the ability of the Anglo-Persian Company” (National Archives 1913, 6). Hence, by emphasizing the danger of amalgamation and presenting the coupled fuel oil contract and government investment as the predominant alternative, Greenway placed the onus on the Admiralty for APOC’s survival. Evidently, Greenway inspired the British government’s intervention—as Ferrier concludes, “it was Company necessity, not national policy,” that prompted this result (Ferrier 1982, 168).

### **THE FOREIGN OFFICE’S SUPPORT FOR APOC**

Greenway’s arguments persuaded the Foreign Office, leading that department to support government aid for APOC. Through his correspondence, Greenway easily convinced Grey that, without alternative funding, his company would be forced to combine with Shell. The foreign secretary feared that amalgamation would threaten British interests in Persia. Thus, Grey wrote: “our position, both commercial and political, will be seriously jeopardized if the most important British concession in Persia, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, is allowed to pass under foreign control by absorption in the Shell Company” (National Archives, 1912). Moreover, Shell’s Dutch nature particularly intensified concerns because the Foreign Office believed that the Netherlands was vulnerable to German influence. While the Boer War had weakened Anglo-Dutch relations, the Netherlands had expanded its connections to Germany (Sternborg 2015). For example, Dutch Queen Wilhemina’s husband was German, Prime Minister Pieter Cort Van der Linden espoused pro-German sentiments, and the Netherlands traded frequently with its eastern neighbor (Ruis 2016, 149). Therefore, Britain feared that Germany’s political influence over the Netherlands would extend to commercial influence over Dutch companies like Shell. In that scenario, Shell’s purchase of APOC could prompt German intervention in Persia. Given contempo-

rary Anglo-German tensions and the likelihood of war, the Foreign Office saw such an extension of German power as a massive risk. Britain could not afford to sacrifice its position to Dutch and German authorities.

In addition to fearing foreign interference in Persian territory, the Foreign Office also recognized the danger of a global oil cartel. If Shell acquired APOC, the Dutch company would control a vast majority of the world's oil. Subsequently, this monopoly could manipulate prices and supply, which could affect the Royal Navy's ability to acquire fuel. Thus, Foreign Office Assistant Undersecretary Louis Mallet wrote: "it is clear . . . that the Shell group are aiming at the extinction of the latter as a competitor . . . one of their objects being to control the price of liquid fuel for the British Navy" (National Archives 1912).

Based on such threats to Britain's political, strategic, and naval interests in Persia, the Foreign Office decided to support Greenway's campaign for a government investment and prevent the emergence of a foreign-controlled oil monopoly. Grey assumed that protecting British enterprise was part of his role as foreign secretary: "we are told we are to promote British commerce all over the world. That, of course, is one of the first duties of the Foreign Office" (Parliamentary Papers 1914). By defending APOC's independence and encouraging the government to subsidize the company, Grey intended to satisfy this duty. Meanwhile, he did not seek to expand British territories in Persia. As Grey wrote to the British Ambassador in Russia, Sir George Buchanan, "the British Government does not acquire any rights under the concession that were not possessed by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company already" (Edward 1914). Ultimately, Mallet revealed the Foreign Office's decision to collaborate with APOC, writing "that we should go to every length in supporting the independence of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and subsidise them if necessary" (Mallet Minute).

#### **FROM AMBIVALENCE TO AN AGREEMENT: THE ADMIRALTY'S SUPPORT FOR APOC**

Although Greenway persuaded the Foreign Office that Shell jeopardized Britain's political and naval security, the Admiralty was slower to concede and to endorse APOC's request for aid. Ferrier notes that initially "the Admiralty, on naval and commercial grounds, refused to consider Greenway's proposals and was indifferent to the fate of the Company or the diplomatic implications of 'some risk of the oil fields in . . . Persia being under foreign and largely German control'" (Ferrier, 172). However, the Foreign Office helped convince the Admiralty otherwise. While overtly in support of APOC, the Foreign Office knew that "diplomatic assistance alone will be useless in preserving the independence" of the company (National Archives 1912). Rather, the department wrote on November 28, 1912 that "it is pecuniary assistance in some form that they require: whether this should be given depends upon considerations that the Foreign Office cannot decide" (National Archives 1912). Thus, the Foreign Office recognized that APOC desperately needed the Admiralty fuel oil contract and the subscription of government capital. Accordingly, that department emphasized the risk of a Shell-controlled cartel by alerting the Admiralty that, if amalgamation oc-

curred, “practically the whole oil supply of the world would be under the foreign control of the Shell Company” (National Archives 1912). Then, Grey and Greenway both explained that Shell would be able to gouge oil prices and limit fuel contracts. Heeding their warnings, the Admiralty came to the position that “the maintenance of the Persian oil fields in the hands of a British Company” was crucial (National Archives 1912). Otherwise, amalgamation would obstruct the navy’s access to cheap oil. On July 4, 1913, the Admiralty explicitly recognized this notion, writing in its “Proposed Arrangement with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company for the Supply of Fuel Oil” that “the offer of contracts on favourable terms to the Admiralty . . . is dependent upon the Anglo-Persian Company retaining its independence and not being absorbed by the ‘Shell’ group of companies” (National Archives 1913). If the companies merged, the “Admiralty Memorandum” claimed, “contracts for Persian oil would certainly be at a much higher price than is now offered” (National Archives 1913).

Therefore, the Admiralty came to see a contract with APOC as the only alternative to a foreign-controlled monopoly and expensive fuel oil. APOC offered to supply 40 percent of the Admiralty’s fuel requirements at highly competitive prices (Ferrier, 179). Thus, the “Admiralty Memorandum” noted that the contract was “highly favourable . . . as compared with purchases which would otherwise have to be made at market rates, which have risen rapidly in the last two or three years and are likely to go much higher” (National Archives 1913). Likewise, the Royal Commission on Oil Fuel and Engines confirmed that “the Anglo-Persian Oil Company’s offer is reasonable in price, and particularly desirable on grounds of the superior quality of the oil” (National Archives 1913). Consequently, in the summer of 1913, the Admiralty began drafting its agreement with APOC.

By July 1913, the Admiralty had completed a “Proposed Arrangement with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company for the Supply of Fuel Oil” (National Archives 1913). This document was a preliminary version of the “Agreement with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, Limited,” which the Admiralty signed on May 20, 1914 (National Archive 1913). Both documents delineated that, in return for a guaranteed supply of fuel oil, His Majesty’s Government would subscribe £2.2 million’s worth of APOC securities. After outlining the terms of the government’s investment—£2,000,000 of ordinary shares, £1,000 of preference shares, and £199,000 of first debentures—the agreement stated that “the Company shall during the said term of twenty years sell and deliver to the Admiralty . . . 6,000,000 tons of oil fuel (National Archive 1913). Additionally, the Treasury would gain the right to appoint “two ex officio directors” with “a power of veto over all acts . . . of the Company” that “may affect questions of foreign and military policy (National Archive 1913). However, the Admiralty’s agreement depended on the British government’s financial assistance—the document stating that the fuel oil contract “shall come into force only if funds are provided by Parliament (National Archive 1913). Thus, perceiving the contract as “essential and indispensable,” the Admiralty wrote to the Treasury that it wanted the government to “assume the responsibility of authorizing this contract with the approval of the Tre-



sury (National Archive 1913). Subsequently, the Admiralty appointed a committee to campaign for government sanction and to prepare Parliamentary procedures. In the ensuing debates, Churchill emerged as the advocate of state support for APOC.

### **FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY WINSTON CHURCHILL IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS**

After the conclusion of the “Proposed Agreement” with APOC, First Lord of the Admiralty Churchill brought the matter of capital investment before Parliament, presenting a bill to the House of Commons “to Provide Money for the Purpose of the Acquisition of Share or Loan Capital of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, Limited.” However, the Treasury did not initially approve, finding “the proposal to bind the Government for 20 years to so speculative a business” as being “most objectionable,” “unbusinesslike and so unsound.” (National Archive 1913). Likewise, the Treasury Secretary Sir Robert Chalmers stated: “I do not see any justification for a contract on these terms for so long a period as 20 years (National Archive 1913). Therefore, in order to bring the opposition around and demonstrate APOC’s worth, Churchill sent a commission under Admiral Edmond Slade to examine and report on the company. Between October 1913 and January 1914, the Admiralty Commission on the Persian Oilfields studied APOC’s geology, production, and output. Ultimately, Admiral Slade’s commission reported that “we are satisfied that the Company’s Concession is a most valuable one” and that “the existing field is capable, with proper development, of supplying a large proportion of the requirements of the Admiralty for a considerable period while the whole Concession, judiciously worked, would probably safeguard the fuel supply of HMN [His Majesty’s Navy] (National Archive 1914). Then, after highlighting that “the Company cannot adequately develop this very extensive Concession without additional capital,” the commission endorsed the idea of “His Majesty’s Government affording [APOC] financial support (National Archive 1914). The commission thus recommended “that control of the Company should be secured by the Admiralty . . . and that all possible steps should be taken to maintain the Company as an independent British undertaking (National Archive 1914).

Subsequently, thanks to the Slade Commission’s positive report, Churchill’s commitment to securing fuel oil for the navy, and his rhetorical skill, he convinced Parliament to approve the bill and to subscribe shares in APOC. On June 17, 1914, Churchill debated emphatically in the House of Commons. There, he presented a passionate speech that correlated the proposed investment with naval strategy and foreign policy. First, Churchill restated the strategic importance of oil: “the Navy must have oil for the ships which are already built or building. We must have a steady supply, we must be able to know beforehand . . . where we can get it from” (Parliamentary Papers 1914). However, the quantity of oil, Churchill clarified, was not the problem, as “there never has been, and never will be, any shortage of oil for the British Navy (Parliamentary Papers 1914). Rather, the concern was about price: “the supply of oil in peace depends on the price. In war the supply depends on prices, plus force

(Parliamentary Papers 1914). Thus, Churchill described how the Admiralty had experienced a “long steady squeeze by the oil trusts all over the world” and “found prices and freights raised steadily (Parliamentary Papers 1914). To these problems, Churchill argued, the Admiralty’s agreement with APOC offered a solution. Accordingly, he stated that he had “put this proposal forward . . . as an important contributory source as regards quantity and as a powerful controlling influence as regards price (Parliamentary Papers 1914).

In addition to raising the issue of prices, the First Lord also highlighted the particular advantages of APOC and of the proposed contract. During his speech, Churchill declared that “we recognize in the Persian field a necessary source of supply for a long time. We recognize in it the best source from which we could obtain the best kind of oil (Parliamentary Papers 1914). Then, he emphasized the urgency of the decision, because APOC “was in constant danger of being absorbed by some other combination and welded into an ever-widening price ring (Parliamentary Papers 1914). Without financial support, APOC would be forced to combine with Shell. Instead, by investing in the firm, the government could guarantee its independent survival and success. Furthermore, Churchill claimed that the Treasury’s investment and the Admiralty’s contract would “confer upon the Anglo-Persian Company an immense advantage which, added to their concession, would enormously strengthen the company and increase the value of their property (Parliamentary Papers 1914). Thus, he proclaimed to the House of Commons, “was it not wiser, was it not more profitable on every ground, naval, financial, and indeed equitable, to acquire control of an enterprise which we were bound to help and bound to enrich, which we alone could sustain, and on which, to a large extent, we must rely?” (Parliamentary Papers 1914). Ultimately, on July 7, Churchill finalized his argument by insisting there was no better alternative: “we have not only obtained oil, but an independent supply of oil scientifically developed and controlled in its production in the interest of the Navy. That is a matter in which very few alternatives are open to us . . . there is no other area of supply which offers advantages comparable to those which exist in Persia” (Parliamentary Papers 1914). For these reasons, Churchill declared, the British government should subscribe to the capital of APOC and acquire a majority share in the company.

As a result of Churchill’s persuasive arguments, the House of Commons approved the bill on July 7, 1914. By a vote of 254 to 18, Parliament overwhelmingly supported the decision “to Provide Money for the Purpose of the Acquisition of Share or Loan Capital of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, Limited” (Longhurst 1959, 52). The House of Commons stated “that it is expedient to authorize the issue, out of the Consolidated Fund, of such sums, not exceeding the whole two million two hundred thousand pounds, as are required for the acquisition of share or loan capital of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company” (Parliamentary Papers 1914). Through this investment, the British government acquired a controlling 51-percent interest in APOC and secured fuel oil for the Royal Navy.

## CONCLUSION

Evidently, Churchill's speeches were crucial. Without his arguments about naval strategy and national security, Parliament would likely not have approved the bill. Through ingenious rhetoric, Churchill made the choice black and white, giving Parliament no practical alternatives to the investment. Like Greenway and Grey, Churchill avowed that, if His Majesty's Government did not allocate capital, a foreign-controlled monopoly would undermine the Admiralty's access to and ability to pay for fuel oil. In contrast to this massive threat, the commercial risk of investment seemed negligible. Other members of Parliament revealed Churchill's influence in their own speeches. For example, Sir Mark Sykes asserted that, "if the Admiralty say they want oil, and the oil is of a suitable quality, he will be a very unpatriotic man who will say that they are not to have the oil" (Parliamentary Papers 1914). Likewise, the Earl of Ronaldshay stated that "the First Lord of the Admiralty is responsible. This venture in oil . . . is the child of the genius of the First Lord of the Admiralty" (Parliamentary Papers 1914). Both of these statements underscore the persuasiveness of Churchill's testimony in the House of Commons. As a result of his performance, the rationale behind the government's investment became the need to guarantee a steady supply of cheap oil for the navy. Accordingly, the Earl of Ronaldshay asserted: "I conceive that the only reason for this arrangement upon which it can be justified to the Committee is a great and vital urgency that oil should be provided somewhere" (Parliamentary Papers 1914). Similarly, the agreement with APOC stated that "the grounds on which His Majesty's Government arrived at their decision to enter into the Agreement . . . are purely naval, viz., the imperative need of direct control of a reasonable proportion of the supply of oil fuel required for naval purposes." (Parliamentary Papers 1914, 7). Clearly, Churchill's speeches inspired Parliament to rationalize its investment based on the need to secure fuel oil for the Royal Navy.

Nonetheless, the First Lord did not arrive at these arguments independently. Rather, Greenway's inspiration, pressure, and manipulation drove the Foreign Office, the Admiralty, and Churchill to support APOC. As demonstrated, Greenway portrayed amalgamation with Shell as a threat to Britain's foreign policy and national security. Thereby, Greenway attracted the support of the Foreign Office, with which he collaborated to convince the Admiralty. Subsequently, Greenway presented the agreement with APOC as a solution to the navy's fuel oil requirements. Therefore, while Parliament justified its investment based on Churchill's arguments, it was Greenway who originated the bailout scheme and incited the British government's intervention into private enterprise. By aligning his commercial interests with the Foreign Office's political concerns and the Admiralty's strategic needs, Greenway obtained Parliamentary approval and £2.2 million in capital for APOC.

In the long run, the government's acquisition of a majority stake in APOC significantly affected Britain's foreign policy. For the rest of the twentieth century, Britain remained intimately involved in Iranian affairs, and APOC often served as an arm of the government. In the end, the nation's desire to protect its oil interests

drove many decisions during World War I, World War II, and the Cold War. For example, in 1953, Britain collaborated with the United States to overthrow Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh. Christopher de Bellaigue notes that, at this point, the re-named Anglo-Iranian Oil Company “was Britain’s largest single over-seas investment and it was an important source of revenue for the shattered British economy” (Bellaigue 2012, 117). Consequently, as Ofer Israeli points out, “the government of Winston Churchill, enraged by Mossadegh’s 1952 nationalization of Iran’s mainly British-owned oil assets, was anxious to have him removed” (Israeli 1993, 248). Evidently, Britain’s investment in APOC permanently affected its diplomatic priorities.

On May 27, 1914, an article appeared in the Times titled “The Political Aspect of the Persian Oil Agreement,” which correctly predicted that the decision to invest in APOC would transform Britain’s Middle Eastern policy: “the agreement . . . raises certain important considerations of foreign policy and defence” that “may in the end lead [Britain] into responsibilities of a character which Ministers seem unable to comprehend” (British Library 1914). Without Greenway’s ingenuity, Britain might never have intervened in the Iranian oil industry. Likewise, without the combined influences of APOC chairman’s persuasion, the Foreign Office’s endorsement, and Churchill’s rhetoric, the history of British involvement in the Middle East might have taken a dramatically different course.

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## A NEW ECONOMIC WORLD ORDER? ASSESSING INTENT AND IMPACT OF THE ASIAN INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT BANK

Fina Short

While U.S.-led institutions have dominated the global financial architecture for decades, the 2016 kickoff of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) as a new multilateral lending platform presented one of the first serious challenges to established systems of global financial governance in modern times. My research seeks to assess: to what extent does the AIIB threaten the US-led international development regimes? By setting the establishment of the AIIB in context, as well as examining key hypotheses regarding why it was founded, I will use comparative analyses of the AIIB and other pre-existing development institutions to evaluate the extent to which the AIIB threatens regimes led by the U.S. After evaluating the collaborative nature of AIIB projects undertaken in India, the organization's largest beneficiary, I conclude that as of 2019, the AIIB does not threaten the power of U.S.-led development regimes – despite affording China a leadership role much more significant in scope than the nation's role in preexisting development institutions. However, an analysis of the AIIB's environmental impact in Bangladesh and Pakistan, as well as of the organization's use of “financial intermediaries,” raises questions about the bank's commitment to mirroring the sustainable practices of its peer institutions.

### INTRODUCTION

In the shadow of World War II, the 1944 Bretton Woods conference sought to impose economic order upon a Western world ravaged by the Great Depression and five years of military conflict. Initiatives like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and more recent arms of multilateral development such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) aid development through both short- and long-term lending projects with developing nations, while also helping to maintain of an international balance of power dictated by the United States. After U.S.-led institutions have dominated the global financial architecture for decades, the 2016 kickoff of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) as a new multilateral lending platform presented one of the first serious challenges to established systems of global financial governance in modern times. As the AIIB's founding comes on the heels of other eye-catching projects by China like the One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative, the world wonders whether or not China seeks to use economic development initiatives to upset a U.S.-led world order. (China Power Team 2016). Just as the United States once used its economic might to further its influence in Europe by way of the 1948 Marshall Plan, pundits fear the Chinese may seek to expand the influence of their nation's state-led, authoritarian development model. My research seeks to assess: to what extent does the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank actually threaten US-led international de-

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velopment regimes?

By setting the establishment of the AIIB in context, as well as examining key hypotheses regarding why it was founded, I will use comparative analyses of the AIIB and other pre-existing development institutions to evaluate the extent to which the AIIB threatens regimes led by the U.S. After evaluating the collaborative nature of AIIB projects undertaken in India, the organization's largest beneficiary, I conclude that as of 2019, the AIIB does not threaten the power of U.S.-led development regimes – despite affording China a leadership role much more significant in scope than the nation's role in preexisting development institutions. However, an analysis of the AIIB's environmental impact in Bangladesh and Pakistan, as well as of the organization's use of “financial intermediaries,” raises questions about the bank's commitment to mirroring the sustainable practices of its peer institutions.

## BACKGROUND

In 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced that he planned to found the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank while at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in Indonesia. (Runde & Goodman 2019). During the eighth meeting of the Leading Group for Financial and Economic Affairs of the CCP's Central Committee in November 2014, Xi stressed that the AIIB would serve as a vehicle for financial support to the OBOR initiative, with the goal of promoting “interconnectivity and economic development in the region through the development of infrastructure and other productive sectors.” (Brombal 2018). The bank would be a multilateral development institution that approves loans for energy, transport, agriculture, telecommunications, and infrastructure projects; by intaking capital contributions from members, it generates capital to lend out. (Brombal 2018). The bank is unique in its mission, which aims solely to finance infrastructure, rather than including broader developmental objectives in its mandate like other MDBs. (Wilson 2019). Headquartered in Beijing, the AIIB began operations in 2016, with 57 founding members drawn mostly from Asia and Europe. (Lichtenstein, 2018). Membership grew quickly: by December 2017, it boasted 84 approved members, and now has over 100. (AIIB Annual Report 2017). (AIIB 2019). The organization's governance mimics the structure of other development regimes: similarly, to the Asian Development Bank, the AIIB president must be a national of a regional member country elected by a Board of Governors supermajority vote. (Lichtenstein 2019). While institutions such as the IMF and ADB have fallen into a pattern of leadership by specific regions – the IMF presidency is reserved for a European, while the ADB is typically Japanese – the AIIB charter includes a transparent, merit-based selection process not included in the charters of other MDBs such as the IMF or IBRD, which may broaden the scope of the institution's prospective leaders. (Lichtenstein 2019). Today, Jin Liqun heads the AIIB, a Chinese politician and banker who formerly served as the Vice President of the ADB, as well as the Alternative Executive Director for China at the World Bank. (“AIIB Governance,” 2019). The Bank's five Vice Presidents are nationals of Germany,

France, India, Indonesia, and the United Kingdom. (“AIIB Governance,” 2019). Within the AIIB, each member country contributes delegates to the Board of Governors, with the opportunity to appoint a “Governor” and “Alternate Governor.” (“AIIB Governance,” 2019). The AIIB follows a practice of weighted voting: each AIIB member holds voting power calculated on the basis of “share votes,” “basic votes,” and “Founding Member” votes. (Lichtenstein 2018). “Share votes” equal one vote for each share of stock a member holds, consequently affording most power to primary shareholder China; such a practice mimics that of other development banks including the ADB and IBRD. (Lichtenstein 2018). “Basic votes” are the same for each member, while “founding member votes” simply afford each founding signatory an equal number of extra votes. The organization has taken other measures to ensure regional leadership: a minimum of 75% of capital stock must be held by regional members, which exceeds requirements that other MDBs have reserved for special voting blocs (the ADB requires that regional members hold 65% of capital stock). (Wilson 2019). As the driving force behind the bank’s founding, and as its chief shareholder, China thus plays a pivotal role in the governing structure of the AIIB. Beyond a non-resident Board of Directors, the structure of the AIIB is not a significant departure from that of other preexisting development banks.

### **WHAT ARE CHINA’S MOTIVES IN FOUNDING THE AIIB?**

According to China, the primary impetus for the AIIB’s founding is economic need: the organization aims to meet the need for infrastructure financing in Asia. Although public spending can account for a strong percentage of necessary infrastructure investing, governments in the region face fiscal constraints and debt sustainability considerations that limit their spending capacity. (“Asian Infrastructure Finance,” 2019). Thus, China reasons that the AIIB will compensate for Asia’s large “infrastructure financing gap,” estimated by the ADB to total around U.S. \$8 trillion. (Asian Development Bank 2012). Such a gap can be defined as the difference between investment needs and available resources, or between funds necessary to maintain economic growth and available funds. (Reisen 2015). The Asia Development Bank’s 2012-2020 “Public Private Partnership Operational Plan” states that “available funding from traditional sources falls far short of the investment need,” recommending that countries explore additional funding options from traditional sources of funds, investigate how more resources can be generated from off-budget sources, or consider a greater role for public-private partnerships in procuring infrastructure. (Reisen 2015). The AIIB argues that its establishment will help fill this gap through private sourcing of debt lending. Former OECD Development Center Head of Research Helmut Reisen writes that infrastructure finance will benefit from the creation of the AIIB: he notes that China does not have an infrastructure deficit, and has large construction companies, with spare capacity, that welcome the opportunity to participate in projects abroad. (Reisen 2015). This contributes to the AIIB’s strong potential. Research thus exists to support the relevance and even necessity of a new infrastructure investment bank. Along the

lines of Reisen's argument, one primary hypothesis argues that China seeks to leverage the bank as a means of satisfying the need to export China's domestic excess capacity. In a 2016 "China Daily" article, the government identified addressing overcapacity in heavy industries, including the steel, energy and construction sectors, as a top economic policy priority. (Song Jingli, 2016). However, the international community has argued that the AIIB aims to achieve far more than simply filling an existing financing gap. China could have simply increased capital investments in the ADB, if the its only goal was to leverage its heavy industry overcapacity by supporting regional infrastructure.

Beyond economic reasons, China is argued to have founded the AIIB in order to increase its influence in the global financial system. After Xi Jinping announced plans to found the AIIB, former U.S. Treasury Secretary Larry Summers stated that the institution's establishment "may be remembered as the moment the United States lost its role as the underwriter of the global economic system." (Sheng & Geng 2015). Upon its announcement, American officials lobbied against the development bank and tried to persuade allies from joining (Perlez 2014) – even releasing a statement to UK newspaper the Guardian asking Britain's not to sign onto the new institution. (Watt 2015). This attitude from the United States elicited negative responses from the global community, as well as opposition from within the World Bank itself. In a 2015 speech, World Bank President Jim Yong Kim spoke out against apprehension regarding the AIIB, stating that "your enemy cannot be other institutions. Your enemy has to be poverty. If your enemy is poverty, the natural thing to do is welcome any new players that are interested in developing the kind of infrastructure that will end poverty." (Virmani & Patra 2011). U.S. allies moved to join the bank anyway, and now feature prominently on the aforementioned AIIB Board of Governors.

Prior to the establishment of the AIIB, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) was primarily responsible for development projects and Asian infrastructure financing in the region. (Subacchi 2015). The ADB is a branch of the World Bank, which China joined in 1980. Alan Wolff and Robert A. Rogowsky, of the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development's E15 Initiative, write that they see the AIIB as a Chinese initiative in direct competition both with the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. Wolff and Rogowsky ask, "If it is a zero-sum proposition, and it is hard to imagine that it is not, wasn't the US correct to encourage its allies to stay dedicated to the ADB?" (Wolff & Rogowsky 2015). Economics researcher Paola Subacchi writes in *Foreign Policy* that the AIIB threatens notions of "good governance and multi-lateralism," arguing that while demand for infrastructure investment can certainly accommodate another lending platform, the AIIB will do little to strengthen global "economic governance." (Subacchi 2015). These scholars support the hypothesis that the AIIB poses a direct and intentional threat to US-led development regimes. Indeed, He Fan, assistant director of the Institute of World Economics and Politics in Beijing, told the *New York Times* that "the major motivation for the initiative is the failure of the United States to live up to promises to allow greater Chinese participation in the

World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.” (Perlez 2014). He believes that China lacks a sense of ownership over existing international institutions, prompting its move to found its own.

China’s history with U.S.-led development institutions indeed indicates consistent dissatisfaction and pushes for reform. While China has been a member of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund since 1980, the 21st century saw its economy outgrow its role in existing multilateral regimes. Jakob Vestergaard and Robert H. Wade write that “the world is currently experiencing the biggest shift in the location of economic activity in two centuries; roughly speaking, from West to East.” (Vestergaard & Wade 2013). Sixty years ago, Asia was arguably the poorest region in the world; today, Asia is the world’s largest saver and exporter of capital, with over 75% of global reserves. (Wie 2012). According to the Asia Development Bank, Asia’s share of global GDP has almost doubled from what it was in the 1950s, currently accounting for 28% of global GDP and 23 percent of global financial assets as of 2009. (Wie 2012). If it maintains this trajectory, Asia would nearly double its share of global GDP to 52% by 2050, and its per capita income could rise sixfold in purchasing power parity – to reach Europe’s levels. (Wie 2012). In the corporate sector, McKinsey estimated that Asia accounted for 36 percent of global corporate banking revenue in 2009, and by 2014, 45% of all new growth in global wholesale banking will be in Asia. (Wie 2012). Yet as the economies of China and other East Asian nations grow in scope, institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank have been slow to accommodate these shifts.

The IMF has repeatedly failed to satisfy Chinese financing officials through revisions of its quota structure. In what IMF management called “the most fundamental governance overhaul in the Fund’s 65-year history,” (Virmani & Patra 2011) the 2010 IMF Quota and Governance Reforms shifted more than 6 percent of quota shares to what the IMF calls “dynamic emerging market and developing economies,” which included China and India. Quotas are a key determinant of voting power in the IMF, as votes comprise one vote per IMF Special Drawing Right (SDR) 100,000 plus basic votes; quotas also serve to determine the maximum amount of financial resources a member must provide to the IMF, as well as the member’s own access to IMF financing. (IMF 2019). They are also a highly disputed aspect of IMF financial and governance structure, especially as the United States has power to veto any change in quotas, with 16.5% of voting shares and the majority vote required to change quotas set at 85%. (CGTN 2019). China has continuously expressed dissatisfaction at the general quota reforms conducted by the IMF Board of Governors, which occur at “regular intervals” typically not spanning more than five years. (CGTN 2019). In response to the IMF’s 2019 quota review, Governor of the People’s Bank of China Yi Gang expressed disappointment at a reform package that delayed quota changes. (CGTN 2019). Yi said that China planned to “continue to push for reforms of the IMF’s quotas that will strengthen the voice and representation of emerging market economies and developing economies...and reduce distortion in quota structure to

reflect members' relative positions in the global economy." (CGTN 2019).

At the 2010 Spring Meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, the Board of Governors approved proposals on "voice reform" that would give "developing and transition countries" increased voting power in the governing body of the World Bank, (Wie 2012) alongside commitments to holding countries' share of world GDP as a primary criterion for share of votes. (Vestergaard & Wade 2015). China was one of the largest beneficiaries from these reforms, moving to become the third largest shareholder after the United States and Japan with a 1.64% increase in voting power. (Vestergaard & Wade 2015). However, the World Bank has traditionally defined a voting power to GDP ratio of below 0.85 as the threshold for under-representation: China's voting power to GDP ratio in the World Bank sits at 0.43. (Vestergaard & Wade 2015). Moreover, only 10 out of the largest 25 countries have a voting power to GDP ratio within the 0.85-1.15 band of variation set as a goal by the World Bank, proving that most of these countries are either over- or under-represented in accordance with the Bank's own criterion. (Vestergaard & Wade 2015). The ratio varies from China's approximately 0.5 ratio up to Saudi Arabia's 4, illustrating an eightfold difference in GDP to voting power ratio that yields a broader picture of the Bank's imbalances. (Vestergaard & Wade 2015).

Indeed, while the reforms brought the World Bank closer to voting parity between developed and non-developed countries, country voting power arguably remained unaligned with countries' economic weight: China's voting power remains significantly underrepresented. (Reisen 2015). China's voting share increased by 61%, growing from 3.81% to 6.16%, yet this voting share still pales in comparison to the United States' share of 16.5%. (Weisbrot & Johnston 2016). A 2016 brief by the Center for Economic and Policy Research observed that "OECD countries" retained a vast majority of the voting share within the IMF post-reforms, noting that outside of Brazil, Russia, India and China, the voting shares of other developing countries decreased by three percentage points, from 26.21% to 23.2%. (Weisbrot & Johnston 2016). As the 36-member OECD was founded in part to implement the Marshall Plan, which sought to wield economic power in order to increase the ideological weight of U.S. backed liberalism, analysis of these voting shares highlights a clear impetus for China to establish its own organization, independently of established groups. The decrease in developing countries' voting power also illustrates the low likelihood that emerging economies can increase their influence within the International Monetary Fund.

Now, China will play a far greater role in leadership and decision-making within the AIIB than it has in other MDBs or institutions. At its inception, China was the largest AIIB shareholder with 25.65% of voting power, followed by India (7.65%), Russia (6.06%), and Germany (4.2%). (Lichtenstein, 2018). In contrast, China holds 5.442% of voting power in the ADB, while Japan and the United States both hold 12.756%. (Asian Development Bank 2018). In the World Bank's IBRD, China holds 4.8% of total voting power, while Japan holds 7.79% and the United States holds 15.48%. (World Bank 2019). In the International Monetary Fund, Chi-

na holds 6.09% of voting power; the United States holds 16.52%. (IMF 2019). By the numbers, the AIIB clearly affords China a much stronger role in global financial governance than it has previously enjoyed.

Hypotheses regarding the motives for the AIIB's founding extend beyond a Chinese desire to improve its power over development regimes: some scholars argue that the AIIB forms part of a larger Chinese desire to upset the liberal world order, in favor of one in which China is the hegemon. Hong Yu of the National University of Singapore's East Asian Institute portrays the AIIB as an initiative intended to aid in the implementation of the One Belt, One Road strategy. (Yu 2017). He states that the AIIB serves as "the spearhead of China's OBOR initiatives" that aim to put China at the center of geopolitics in the region, facilitating Chinese plans to strengthen its global economic power. (Yu 2017). Reisen writes that the establishment of non-Bretton Woods MDBs can be viewed as "China's shadow global diplomacy that aims at undermining US-led governance structures....China's foreign policy is working systematically towards a realignment of the international order." (Reisen 2015). As evidence for China's increased dominance, Reisen stated that he believes China has a lead over the U.S. in terms of GDP growth and reserves/GDP, citing a recent study which found that GDP/budget balance, GDP per capita growth, governance indicators and reserves for Standard and Poor's (S&P) are the most reliable factors of rating sovereign credit quality. (Reisen 2015). Ratings help attract capital flow and investments, a vital asset in the early stages of a lending platform. In 2017, the AIIB was assigned the highest possible rating by S&P; ratings that S&P stated reflected their "opinion that over the next three-to-five years AIIB will establish a track record and significantly enhance its operational setup, supporting our assessment of its very strong business profile and its extremely strong financial profile." (AIIB 2017). Such a statement indeed bodes well for the AIIB as a rising global economic power.

Other pundits hailed the bank's announcement as a welcome sign that the global balance of power will shift towards Beijing. Sholto Byrnes, senior fellow at the Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Malaysia, called the AIIB an entirely appropriate rebalancing of power marking an "inexorable shift towards a multipolar world that cannot be stopped by arm-twisting Americans upset at the gradual erosion of their dominance...the world has moved on. It's time for America to catch up." (Byrnes 2015). These systemic-level hypotheses regarding the motives implications of the AIIB make the case that it threatens the modern world order as we know it.

However, an examination of the AIIB's member-states makes it difficult to argue that the AIIB seeks to fully upend today's liberal world order. The bank counts Great Britain, Australia, France, Japan and many more historic allies of the United States among its members. The British government was the first major western economy to join the bank, and despite official claims that the nation did so primarily in hopes of shaping AIIB governance arrangements from the inside, observers also argued that Britain hoped to establish London as a Chinese finance hub. (Magnier 2019). After news of Britain's application, German, France and Italy announced plans



to join. (Wilson 2019). Moreover, seventeen countries are members of both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the AIIB – with NATO member Armenia also currently pending as a prospective AIIB member. (AIIB 2019). These nations have no small stake in a U.S.-led international order. In light of aforementioned discrepancies in voting shares and quotas in the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, which undermine the credibility of the bank's own advertised standards, European states have credible motives to join a new multilateral lending platform.

A comparative analysis of the AIIB's lending practices thus far illustrates that its investment and lending projects are not only far outdone by those of the ADB and World Bank, but also have often served to act in collaboration with U.S.-led regimes. Years after the official establishment of the AIIB in January 2016, the amount of capital invested by the institution has grown rapidly. In 2016, it approved 1.7 billion USD worth of investments in infrastructure; this number grew to 4.22 billion in 2017, ("AIIB Annual Report and Financials," 2017) and again to 7.50 billion in 2018. ("AIIB Annual Report and Financials," 2018). This exponential growth has strong ramifications for the institution's ability to gain lending power in a mere three years of operation. However, these numbers do not necessarily tell a story of rising AIIB dominance, especially when initial expectations projected that the AIIB would lend \$10-15 billion per year for its first five or six years. (Wong 2016). In 2019, AIIB estimates predict that total capital invested will fall to approximately 4 billion USD. ("Asian Infrastructure Finance," 2019). Moreover, its investment initiatives pale in comparison to those of other institutions including the World Bank and ADB.

For example, AIIB lending projects in India, which is the AIIB's largest borrower, illustrate the collaborative and non-threatening nature of many of the bank's initiatives. Since its establishment, the AIIB has approved twelve projects in India; ("AIIB: "Approved Projects," 2019). India also holds the second-largest vote share in the institution, behind China. (Iwanek 2019). AIIB loans to India thus far constitute at maximum \$2.844 billion USD, with this estimate including the vaguely defined "India Infrastructure Fund" project which denotes investments that may reach up to 150 million USD. ("AIIB: "Approved Projects," 2019). Conversely, as of December 2018, the Asian Development Bank boasts \$43.81 billion USD worth of cumulative lending, grant and technical assistances commitments in India. ("AIIB: India," 2019). China's own borrowing from the ADB also continues at a high rate: in 2018, China borrowed a total of \$2.6 billion from the ADB, less than India borrowed in that same year. (Endo, 2019). As of 2018, ADB cumulative loan and grant disbursements to the PRC amount to \$29.24 billion. ("Asian Development Bank Member Fact Sheet," 2018).

Today, China is in fact the largest borrowing shareholder of the ADB, with 6.4% of shareholdings. ("Asian Development Bank: Shareholders," 2018). China's continued reliance on the ADB, in conjunction with the continued economic engagement of the ADB that far surpasses that of the AIIB, illustrates a low likelihood that the AIIB poses an immediate threat to such development regimes.

By other measures, the AIIB may even complement U.S.-led regimes. Many of the initiatives undertaken by the development bank thus far have acted in cooperation with the World Bank and other MDBs. In April 2016, the AIIB signed a co-financing agreement with the World Bank, which stipulated that the banks would develop and fund infrastructure projects together with the World Bank as the supervising partner. (Wilson 2019). The AIIB also signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with the ADB, EBRD and European Investment Bank that contained provisions for dialogue on policy development and the joint financing of infrastructure projects. (Wilson 2019). Such agreements serve a dual purpose: first, to send a message that the AIIB would not act as a competitor to preexisting MDBs, and second, to provide the AIIB with assistance in getting its own financing projects off of the ground. The World Bank and ADB have willingly obliged in such assistance – the presidents in each institution even offered to “share knowledge” with the AIIB during its early phases. (Wilson 2019). At a 2016 event with Asia Society Policy Institute President Kevin Rudd, AIIB president Jin Liqun stated that the organization had “a high number of American professionals of [the] highest caliber...and they have years of experience working in the World Bank, in [the Asian Development Bank].” (Wilson 2019). In 2018, 60% of AIIB projects – or 21 out of 35 total projects – were co-financed with other lending institutions. (AIIB Annual Report 2018). In India alone, the AIIB partnered with the World Bank and government of Andhra Pradesh in a \$160 million project to improve rural roads; partnered with the Asian Development Bank and Power Grid Corporation of India in a 2017 transmission-strengthening project; and partnered with the European Investment Bank in a project to improve the Bangalore metro rail. (“AIIB: Approved Projects,” 2019). In light of such cooperation efforts with the ADB and World Bank, is difficult to argue that the AIIB threatens other development institutions when most of its lending projects have been undertaken as joint ventures with pre-existing regimes.

### **THE AIIB ON THE ENVIRONMENT**

Despite the bank’s history of collaboration thus far, undertaking lending projects as joint ventures does not ensure the environmental sustainability of AIIB development practices. Many concerns regarding the AIIB have centered on fears that it will not support sustainable practices while working with Asian developing nations. In a statement to the Guardian, the White House national security council expressed concern regarding the AIIB’s ability to meet the standards established by the World Bank and regional development banks, noting that “based on many discussions, we have concerns about whether the AIIB will meet these high standards, particularly related to governance, and environmental and social safeguards.” (Watt 2015). Many AIIB regional states are geographically situated in regions that are specifically vulnerable to climate change risks related to sea level rise, potential agricultural productivity losses or extreme weather, heightening the need to invest in adaptation-related infrastructure. (Nassiry & Nakhouda 2016). The German Development Institute notes that the

AIIB, along with the New Development Bank, constitute crucial additions to development finance in the region because of their purported openness to funding sustainable infrastructure. (Griffith-Jones & Lesitner 2018). Due to the region's potential for both progress in clean energy investment and environmental damage due to climate change, the global community has thus kept a watchful eye on the sustainability of AIIB practices.

An examination of AIIB materials and environment protocol exhibits a demonstrated effort to show commitment to sustainability. Its website describes a mission of being “lean, clean and green,” with target projects that are “financially, environmentally and socially sustainable.” (Nassiry & Nakhooda 2016). The bank's 2019 report addresses the institution's commitment to environmental and social sustainability, through a framework for an environmental and social policy that contains “environmental and social” requirements for projects funded by the AIIB. (“AIIB: Final Environment Framework,” 2019). The framework also includes an “exclusion list,” which states that the bank will not finance projects that either involve or result in forced evictions, or projects involving the production of or trade in pharmaceuticals or hazardous substances “subject to international phase outs or bans,” invoking the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, as well as the Montreal Protocol. (“AIIB: Final Environment Framework,” 2019). Mention of these Western-led environmental guidelines exhibits an interest on the part of the AIIB in abiding by international norms for sustainability.

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank has also signed a memorandum of understanding with other MDBs regarding the Paris Agreement, illustrating a commitment to aligning with the Agreement's objectives. (“AIIB: MDB's Alignment,” 2019). The joint declaration commits nine MDBs to working together in key areas central to Agreement goals, which aim to limit global temperature increases to below 2 degrees Celsius, among other objectives. (“AIIB: MDB's Alignment,” 2019). Such a memorandum further illustrates AIIB efforts to cooperate with global environmental standards, and other signatories include the World Bank Group and the Asian Development Bank. However, multiple facets of the AIIB's sustainability practices have drawn significant criticism from local communities and civil society organizations. Such criticism has targeted the bank's use of financial intermediaries (FIs), as well as its involvement with the Pakistani Tarbela 5 hydropower project, and its funding of projects in Bangladesh that draw mostly from non-renewable energy sources. I will first provide a general assessment of the AIIB's investment practices relative to sustainable sources, followed by a case study of each aforementioned topic.

According to a 2019 report on the AIIB by BIC Europe, out of the approximately \$8 billion in capital that the AIIB has invested so far, 20% of its funding has gone towards fossil fuels, while only 8% of this funding has gone towards renewable sources. (BIC Europe 2019). Within the \$2.7 billion AIIB energy sector portfolio, 57% of funding is through fossil fuels; all of the AIIB's direct investments in fossil fuels support natural gas projects, which emits the potent greenhouse gases of carbon

dioxide and methane – both gases that inhibit the pursuit of limiting warming to 1.5° Celsius, in accordance with U.S.-led development regimes. (BIC Europe 2019). In comparison, a recent analysis of 675 World Bank Group active energy project investments found that the World Bank Group (WBG) currently provides \$21 billion in funding to projects using fossil fuels and \$7 billion to renewable energy, with a total of 44% of its active project lending portfolio providing project finance exclusively to fossil fuels. (Mainhardt 2019). The AIIB thus invests a considerably higher percentage of its capital in fossil fuels than the World Bank Group does. In the energy sector, the AIIB has not eliminated the possibility of funding “efficient and clean” oil and coal-fired power plants. (“NGO Forum,” 2016). Although fossil fuels have historically been more economically efficient investment projects than renewable energy sources, thus providing an economic impetus for the emerging AIIB to turn away from sustainable practices, such practices would not necessarily align with China’s recent efforts as an emerging renewable energy leader. In 2015, China spent 110.5 billion on clean energy technology, a 17% spending increase from the year prior, and added more wind energy capacity than the European Union. (Nassiry & Nakhouda 2016). Yet the nation’s drive to mitigate climate change has not been reflected in the AIIB’s practices thus far.

Second, the AIIB’s practice of funding investment projects through financial intermediaries (FIs) allows the bank to skirt around its Environmental and Social Framework, which calls into question the extent to which the bank truly adheres to the environmental standards it purports to abide by. FIs represent a “hands-off” form of lending which provide clients with greater agency regarding risk assessment and environmental standards applied to projects. The bank’s Environmental and Social Framework delegates decision-making regarding FI subprojects to the FI itself, with the exception of high-risk projects, in which case the bank engages in “selective supervision and monitoring.” (BIC Europe 2019). Funding through FIs such as private equity funds or infrastructure represents 15% of the AIIB’s portfolio. (BIC Europe 2019). Specifically, the bank has come under fire for its September 2017 approval of a U.S. \$150 million investment in the World Bank’s IFC Emerging Asia Fund, a sub-investment of which went into the Shwe Taung Cement Company in Myanmar – a project that will support increased use of coal power. (BIC Europe 2019). In January 2018, 30 civil society organizations wrote to AIIB President Jin asking for steps to be taken to address perceived risk in FI lending. (BIC Europe 2019). In response, the AIIB committed to releasing information about FI subprojects including “relevant social and environmental documentation,” yet has thus far failed to do so. (BIC Europe 2019). Moreover, the AIIB does not disclose FI subprojects on its website, with only limited information on the FIs that it invests in. (BIC Europe 2019). The AIIB is not the only MDB to use FIs: in 2016, the International Finance Corporation, the World Bank’s private sector lending arm, was found to have indirectly funded more than 40 coal projects even after the World Bank Group introduced its “virtual ban” on coal. (BIC Europe 2019). However, the World Bank has since taken quick action to

close this loophole, with 2018 reforms that included a Green Equity Strategy which proposes the reduction of its FI coal exposure to zero. (BIC Europe 2019). IFC CEO Philippe Le Houérou stated that the IFC would “reduce IFC’s own exposure to higher risk FI activity and apply greater selectivity to these types of investments, including equity investments.” (BIC Europe 2019). The AIIB has failed to match such a commitment of applying greater selectivity to its investments. The use of FIs in investment thereby represents one potential way in which the AIIB threatens standards set by U.S.-led development regimes.

The AIIB’s “Pakistan Tarbela 5” project provides another example of the bank’s murky commitment to social and environmental sustainability practices. In partnership with the World Bank and Pakistani government, the project seeks to regulate the flows of the Indus River for irrigation use, as well as to generate electric power, add employment opportunities during construction, and contribute to tourism. (BIC Europe 2019). It comprises part of a larger set of infrastructure projects under the Indus Basin Irrigation System (IBIS). (BIC Europe 2019). The Tarbela Dam project has faced opposition from local communities due to its projected negative impacts on local residents’ access to traditional livelihoods. Civil society organizations including the NGO Forum on ADB, the Bank Information Center, and Transparency International have spoken out against this project. (Ublin 2019). A critical report from the Bank Information Center noted that since the original hydropower project’s inception in 1971, 120 villages have been submerged, affecting 96,000 people. (BIC Europe 2019). Consultation and access to information about the project have not followed best practices: translated project documents in Urdu were only made public after inquiries to the banks. (Ublin 2019). During an open discussion with various villages surrounding the project site, communities expressed consternation over the continued failure of other actors to resolve these issues, stressing that 48 years have passed since the resettlements. (Geary & Iqbal 2017). Many of the people who were displaced by the project have yet to be resettled: the World Bank’s documents claim that only 15 of 450 cases were settled through the Resettlement Commission. (Geary & Iqbal 2017). The AIIB acknowledged the sensitive nature of the Tarbela project in its proposal, calling the unresolved resettlement troubles “social legacy issues” that will be addressed under the already existing Tarbela Fourth Extension Hydropower Project. (“AIIB: Project Summary Information,” 2019). Going forward, this case will test the AIIB’s commitment to the “exclusion” section of its Final Environmental Framework, which states that the bank will not finance projects leading to the resettlement of local peoples. (“AIIB: Final Environment Framework,” 2019). Additionally, the project highlights the responsibility that U.S.-led regimes continue to hold over the impacts of such projects, as the World Bank was originally responsible for the displacements caused by the Tarbela project – and the AIIB is relying on the World Bank to draft the current project’s environment. (Geary & Iqbal 2017). While this project threatens the AIIB’s own standards of best practice, it also represents a collaborative effort with a U.S.-led development regime that was chiefly responsible for the social and environ-

mental damages experienced in the region, meaning that it does not threaten U.S.-led development regimes.

Further examples of an AIIB failure to abide by sustainable practices can be found in its energy investments in Bangladesh. The AIIB currently has provided five loans to Bangladesh, a low-lying, coastal state that is a founding member of the Climate Vulnerable Forum. (BIC Europe 2019). Out of the \$405 million allocated to the AIIB's four loans in Bangladesh's energy sector, 30% of the funding supports fossil fuels. (BIC Europe 2019). While the AIIB has applied its Environment and Social Framework to its Bhola IPP Bangladesh project, for example, the bank does not have to apply its standards to every co-financed project. Although the AIIB has put forth a framework for abiding by sustainable practices, in which it recognizes its commitments to the Paris Agreement, its institutional standards do not reflect a continued dedication to meeting such commitments, as evidenced by the exclusion of many "significantly" co-financed projects where other lenders' environmental standards apply rather than those of the AIIB.

Ultimately, the AIIB cannot be held chiefly responsible for any harm caused in areas where it has funded infrastructure projects, as exemplified by the Pakistan Tarbela Dam Project, which was taken on as an extension of the World Bank's efforts. However, the organization's high volume of investments in fossil fuels calls for critical analysis of its sustainability practices going forward, as well as the complications presented by opaque FI investment practices that leave loopholes for coal and fossil fuel investment.

## CONCLUSION

While the AIIB's establishment indicated to some that China may want to upset an international order historically led by the United States, its founding also filled a well-documented infrastructure investment financing gap in Asia. Extensive evidence thus far illustrates that most AIIB initiatives have been undertaken as co-lending projects, often with Western development regimes such as the ADB or World Bank. Moreover, China remains a prime benefactor of loans from the ADB, further supporting the notion that the establishment of the AIIB does not pose an immediate or comprehensive threat to existing international development regimes. Even the AIIB's environmental initiatives do not pose an immediate threat to a U.S.-led international order, especially considering the United States' recent reluctance to act as a leader in conservation, as exemplified by its 2017 withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. However, the AIIB's high proportion of investment in fossil fuels, practice of investing through FIs, and already-documented history of dissonance from verbalized commitments to sustainability bring into question the extent to which the organization is committed to a sustainable future. Should the AIIB wish to maintain the legitimacy it has gained with the support of many Western powers, it must act in accordance with the "lean, clean and green" values that its projects.

## APPENDIX

Approval Date	Project Name	Total Capital	AIIB Contribution	Western institutions
Sep 26, 2019	Mumbai Urban Transport Project 3	997	500	
Sep 26, 2019	Tata Cleantech Sustainable Infrastructure On-Lending Facility.	75	75	
July 11, 2019	L&T Green Infrastructure On-Lending Facility	100	100	
Dec 7, 2018	Andhra Pradesh Urban Water Supply and Septage Management Improvement Project	570	400	
Sep 28, 2018	Andhra Pradesh Rural Roads Project	666	455	
June 24, 2018	National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Phase I	600	100	
April 11, 2018	Madhya Pradesh Rural Connectivity Project	502	140	World Bank: 210
Dec 8, 2017	Bangalore Metro Rail Project – Line R6	1785	335	EIB: 583
Sep 27, 2017	Transmission System Strengthening Project	303.47	100	ADB: 50
July 4, 2017	Gujarat Rural Roads	658	329	
June 15, 2017	India Infrastructure Fund	600	“up to 150”	
May 2, 2017	Andhra Pradesh 24x7 – Power For All	571	160	World Bank (IBRD): 240
<b>Total</b>			2.844 billion USD	

Table 2: AIIB Bangladesh portfolio as of December 201

	Project	Sector	Total budget (USD million)	AIIB investment (USD million)	Western Institutions
1	Distribution System Upgrade and Expansion Project (P#000003)	Energy/Power	262.29	165	
2	Natural Gas Infrastructure and Efficiency Improvement Project (P# 000015)	Energy/Gas	453	60	
3	Bhola Integrated Power Plant (P#000057)	Energy/Power	271	60	
4	Power System Upgrade and Expansion Project (P#000088)	Energy/Power	176.6	120	
5	Municipal Water Supply and Sanitation Project	Water	209.53	100	The World Bank
	Total		1,162.89	405.00	

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## CHINA'S GEOPOLITICAL STRATEGY IN LATIN AMERICA: PURSUING HEGEMONY

Sarah Solomon

As the People's Republic of China (PRC) increasingly engages with the countries of the global South, the question arises as to what motivates Chinese leaders to involve their nation with much weaker, peripheral states. Utilizing Chris Alden's framework set forth in "China in Africa: Partner, Competitor Or Hegemon?", three major schools of thought underlie this debate: China as a development partner, economic competitor, and aspiring hegemon (Alden 2007). As the 'backyard' of the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) provide particularly useful insight into this question. The manner in which China approaches Latin America indirectly reveals China's attitudes and intentions toward the incumbent hegemon and consequently its aspirations toward the liberal democratic world order writ large. In this paper, I argue that China's foray into Latin America reveals its role as predominantly an aspiring hegemon. Beginning in the 1990s, China has exerted influence in the region by means of economic statecraft, soft power projection, and emerging hard power projection. I contend that China's security and military engagement with LAC suggest interests beyond the role of development partner and that the extensive diplomatic and cultural exchanges China has undertaken in Latin America indicate its role is more extensive than that of economic competitor.

### INTRODUCTION

Scholars have broadly interpreted China's interactions with the global South in three manners, reflecting differing beliefs on China's foreign policy strategy. The most benign interpretation classifies China as a development partner that seeks to promote 'win-win' relationships with other developing countries. This view posits that China's long-term strategic interests include transmitting its development model and building cooperative partnerships across the globe in conjunction with satisfying domestic, economic needs. The explanation of China as an economic competitor characterizes China's engagement in the global South as a short-term opportunistic and exploitative strategy. Disregarding and undermining local preferences and needs, China siphons resources from nations lacking the economic and political wherewithal to resist. Finally, the categorization of China as an aspiring hegemon stems from a belief that China seeks to undermine the current world order and forge new Sino-centric partnerships with nations on the global periphery. China strategically incorporates weaker countries into its sphere of influence to prepare for competition with the United States. (Alden 2007).

The PRC's interactions with Latin America provide significant insight into the nation's aims because of LAC's strategic importance for the United States. Since

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the United States declared its own hegemonic intentions in the Western Hemisphere through the Monroe Doctrine, Americans have regarded Latin America as an exclusive sphere of influence (Zhu 2013). The US has consistently utilized its military supremacy in addition to its role as a key market and source of capital to LAC countries in order to ensure cooperation with the US political agenda. (Ellis 2016). Thus, Beijing's attempts to exercise influence in LAC hold broader implications on the world stage than China's encroachment into other regions.

China's intent to use Latin America for geostrategic purposes has become progressively more evident under the Xi Jinping presidency. Elevated levels of trade, investment, and aid fosters an interdependence between Latin American and China states that can be leveraged in the event of conflict between Beijing and Washington. Frequent diplomatic and cultural exchanges promote loyalty to the PRC without a need for the coercive measures that have repelled Latin Americans from the United States. Military cooperation and control of strategically significant regions will provide a foundation for potential future Chinese hard power projection.

## **CHINA AS AN ASPIRING HEGEMON: ECONOMIC STATECRAFT, SOFT POWER, AND EMERGING HARD POWER**

### **1). ECONOMIC STATECRAFT**

The The PRC has coaxed Latin American countries into its sphere of influence by fostering interdependence between LAC economies and Chinese monetary support. President Xi Jinping has outlined his vision for China-LAC integration in the 1+3+6 framework which uses trade, investment, and financial collaboration to fuel cooperation on crucial elements of Latin American economies. (FMPRC 2016). This plan grounds itself in the explosive growth of economic exchanges between China and LAC. By US estimates, the volume of Chinese-Latin American trade grew 25.5 times larger between 2000 and 2018 (Morrison 2019). Thus far, China has constructed strategic partnerships surrounding trade with Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela (Xu 2017). These relationships emphasize an expectation of cooperation across economic and political affairs. Strategic partnerships, albeit below the level of formal military alliances, provide a counterweight to US influence in the Asia-Pacific region and a basis for entering long-term confrontation (Yu 2015). Regarding investment, the China Development Bank and the Export-Import Bank of China currently provide more financial assistance annually to the LAC than the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, and Andean Development Corporation combined. China has promised to elevate investment in the region to a staggering \$250 billion by 2025. (Gallagher 2017). China's condition-free economic support is particularly appealing to nations that oppose the current liberal order and perceived US imperialism. As one South American diplomat articulated, "Given the choice between the onerous conditions of the neoliberal Washington consensus and the no-strings-attached largesse of the Chinese, elevating relations with Beijing was a no-brainer" (Piccone 2016, 6). Providing an alternative to the explicit interference

attached to Western loans and aid, Chinese money reduces US influence on the region and has strengthened anti-American sentiment in the region.

Despite claims of noninterference, Chinese trade, investment, and aid have often been linked to political cooperation. Studies from the early 2000s demonstrate a strong correlation between trade volume with China and voting alignment in the United Nations. While convergence of voting behavior tended to decline in the following decade, those LAC states most economically linked to Beijing still reliably adopted Chinese positions (Piccone 2016). Much of China's disagreement with the United States on international fora stems from China's devotion to the principles of independence and the sovereign equality of states. Were China to establish a new world order, it would likely center around partnerships with other global South countries in support of these same principles. (Lanxin 2016). Thus, Chinese funds elicit cooperation from developing countries in promoting norms of nonintervention and democracy in international affairs, which feeds into China's long-term bid for hegemony.

China has also used economic support to incentivize diplomatic isolation of Taiwan in an effort to consolidate power domestically. Throughout modern history, an unusually large concentration of governments that support Taipei have been Latin American. Currently, nine of Taiwan's remaining sixteen allies are located in LAC, spurring the PRC to focus both diplomatic and economic resources on the region (Mendez 2019). Chinese loans consistently favor LAC governments that have established diplomatic ties with Beijing over Taipei. China has actively indulged Latin American countries that seek to play Taiwan and PRC against each other to extract the most advantageous aid package (Piccone 2016). Taipei occasionally wins such battles; however, Beijing's vaster pool of resources has allowed it to prevail upon LAC, including states that had withheld recognition for decades. For instance, when Costa Rica recognized the PRC in 2007, the country immediately benefited from Chinese largesse. Rewards ranging from construction of an oil refinery to the purchase of \$300 million worth of bonds demonstrated the perks of cooperation with Beijing (Zhu 2013). Hence, China has used the power of deep-pocket diplomacy to win loyalty and foreign policy convergence. LAC countries and other members of the global South lack the desire and ability to extricate themselves from trade networks with China (Mendez and Alden 2019). This vulnerability to a halt in Chinese economic support provides a subtle means of imposing political cooperation.

China's most recent pursuit of economic statecraft is its push for the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Most relevant to the Western Hemisphere is the Maritime Silk Road Initiative (MSRI) arm, an ambitious project that seeks to connect billions of people across the world and hundreds of billions of dollars in trade, investment, and loans through maritime transportation and infrastructure development. (Blanchard 2016). If completed, the MSRI will provide a material basis for a new Chinese world order by shifting global trade to a Sino-centric system.

## 2). SOFT POWER

Beijing has successfully ingratiated itself to many Latin American governments through cooperative exchanges that treat global South nations as partners vital to the PRC's own rise. China has intensified diplomacy in Latin America significantly over the past three decades. Conducting high-level exchanges in bilateral and multilateral fora, Chinese leaders have demonstrated their commitment to the region. In stark contrast to Washington, which has recently retracted itself from Latin American affairs, Beijing has stated a desire to cooperate in mutually beneficial endeavors due to a sense of South-South solidarity (Mendez and Alden 2019).

China's tendency to operate in settings that exclude the United States, particularly the China-CELAC forum, highlights a desire to isolate America from its historic allies and promote a multipolar world order. A common philosophy included in China's policy statements is 'democracy in international relations,' an idea appealing to global South states that have traditionally been ignored or dominated by the US's liberal international order (Yu 2015). China validates this principle with adherence to a policy of non-intervention, allowing Latin American countries to obtain aid without imposing domestic practices or institutions. Because of China's rapid rise to international prominence, other members of the global South seek to emulate Chinese practices and eagerly accept Chinese offers of cooperation. In its 2016 policy paper on LAC, China flatters the region profusely, calling it 'a land full of vitality and hope.' (FMPRC 2016). By treating LAC countries as invaluable co-equals on the international stage, China has obtained their favor, promoting the multipolar ideology behind its hegemonic bid and increasing the likelihood LAC will cooperate with Beijing on international matters.

China has demonstrated a commitment to the people of LAC beyond rhetoric. After six years in office, President Xi has visited thirteen LAC countries, more than U.S. Presidents Obama and Trump combined. (Mendez 2019). Unlike the United States, the PRC has erected an embassy in every LAC country that recognizes Beijing. China has also advanced people-to-people contact by means of tourism, sports contests, artistic exchanges, cooperation on scientific and technological research, scholarships for Latin American students to study in China, and the construction of Confucius Institutes in several LAC countries (Zhu 2013).

Of course, the Chinese government and associated firms have employed some exploitative measures, resulting in consequences that range from environmental damage and labor abuses to mercantilism resulting in deindustrialization. (Ellis 2016). As a regime with legitimacy predicated on continued domestic economic growth, the Communist Party of China cannot neglect its own economic interests in the global South. Such profiteering works to undermine China's soft power and bolsters the argument that China acts as an economic competitor in the region. However, this economic competitor argument fails to account for how extensively China has participated in diplomatic activities superfluous to gaining economic control. The expenditure of significant resources on winning the hearts and minds of Latin Americans cannot



be explained entirely by any short-term or opportunistic strategy.

### 3). HARD POWER

Although China claims its military presence in LAC exclusively serves to protect assets and citizens, recent expansions of hard power projection indicate more perfidious intentions. The PRC has rapidly expanded engagement from its closest allies to most countries that recognize Beijing. China has cultivated military-to-military relationships in the form of joint exercises and trainings. Both the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and myriad Latin American militaries have sent officers to education programs in each other's homelands. (Ellis 2017). Arms sales in the region have progressed to advanced equipment such as aircraft, radar, and air-to-air missiles. Sales from 2000 to 2015 reached an average of \$100 million among several South American states (Piccone 2016). In 2015, China progressed to a new stage of hard power projection by announcing a defense cooperation agreement with Argentina that included co-production of highly sophisticated military and space hardware as well as enhanced military-to-military engagement. The U.S.- China Economic and Security Review Commission described this action as "a new regional security hazard," warning that regional actors might "use Chinese arms in ways unfavorable to U.S. interests" (Wilson 2015, 13). Beyond projecting hard power into LAC, China can leverage its presence in the region to support its activities in the Asia-Pacific, directly threatening the US and its allies through area-denial capabilities (Morgan 2015).

In spite of mounting U.S. concerns over China-LAC collaboration on security, China has announced plans to continue such activity. China's 2016 policy paper on LAC declares Beijing will enhance military cooperation in exchanges ranging from policy dialogues and state visits to personnel training and arms trades. (FMPRC 2016). Developing footholds in Latin America will allow China to prepare for confrontation in the long term. While conflict appears highly unlikely, balancing U.S. encroachments into the Asia-Pacific region will prove vital to Chinese hegemonic competition (Yu 2015). The MSRI promises to provide China more potential bases in LAC. Many, especially within the West, view the BRI as a project to construct a Sino-centric world order that leverages Chinese control of trade and investment to alter the maritime status quo (Lee 2015. (Chellaney 2016).

While China's military activity in Latin America remains relatively modest, its pursuit of security cooperation indicates intentions beyond the economic and social development. LAC's position as America's 'backyard' suggests that any maneuvering in the region is calculated. China's reticence to act more boldly can be attributed to fear of invoking retaliation from America. In accordance with Deng Xiaoping's mantra of "hide your strength, bide your time," China is strengthening its position while avoiding direct conflict. (Heydarian 2014).

### PANAMA: GEOPOLITICAL NODE

Th China's interactions with Panama, the most geopolitically significant country in

Latin America, expose China's hegemonic pursuit as a motivation for engagement in LAC. Panama's strategic importance derives from its 'nodality' (Mendez and Alden 2019). Panama connects both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans through the Panama Canal as well as the Northern and Southern regions of Latin America. As a node, Panama controls the flows of commodities, people, and information (Nystuen and Dacey 1961). Hence, access and control over this potential chokepoint is crucial for China as it uses the BRI to create a Sino-centric network of global South states.

After Panama's sudden shift to recognizing Beijing in 2017, China-Panama bilateral relations exploded. China has utilized economic statecraft and soft power projection in efforts to win Panamanian loyalty. Alden and Mendez posit that Chinese collaboration with Panama demonstrates a two-track grand strategy: a zero-sum realist contest with the United States supported by liberal internationalist co-prosperity with peripheral states (2019). As a node, Panama is crucial to China's commercial and strategic priorities in unifying a coalition of the global South (Mendez and Alden 2019).

Agreements between the two nations have encompassed a broad agenda including open trade, infrastructure development, tourism, and cultural exchange. Discussions of a free trade agreement (FTA) have yet to produce results, but the reason behind the delay highlights the geopolitical underpinnings of the negotiations. Fears of stoking alarm in Washington amid the trade war between China and the U.S. have prevented China from more aggressive hard power projection (Mendez 2018).

Control over Panama will play a key role in China's challenge to U.S. pre-dominance. China's ownership of the ports on both sides of the Panama Canal has sparked concern among U.S. officials (Zhu 2013). It is no coincidence that the first condemnation of China to a Latin American audience by an American official occurred in Panama. After meeting with Panamanian President Juan Carlos Varela, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo cautioned, "when China comes calling, it's not always to the good of your citizens." (Churchill 2018).

### **VENEZUELA: A BID FOR HEGEMONY GONE WRONG**

Venezuela's importance to China arises from both economic and political considerations. The socialist government has eagerly pursued trade and investment from the PRC because of the West's refusal to fund a repressive narco-regime that has frequently abused lending. China has complied, providing Venezuela billions in loans, millions in arms sales, and diplomatic legitimacy (Piccone 2016). This money has proven crucial in prolonging Maduro's failing model of government. In spite of Chinese economic interests, Beijing has furnished highly risky loans to Venezuela during political and economic crises. (Ellis 2016). China grounds its support for Maduro in claims of nonintervention, but propping up an unpopular, coercive regime is clearly not value neutral (Piccone 2016).

Although the ongoing crisis in Venezuela has forced China to diminish its assistance, Beijing continues to support Maduro in stark contrast to a broad consensus of nations. U.S. officials including Secretary of State Pompeo have accused

China of both precipitating and prolonging Venezuela's ongoing strife. (Carlos 2019). Some economic considerations underlie this position, as Venezuela has failed to repay billions in loans to the PRC. This precarious situation for China demonstrates how economic statecraft based upon debt-trap diplomacy can backfire.

Several political explanations also exist to explain China's continued involvement in Venezuela. China values the presence of an anti-American government in the Western hemisphere, and fears losing its reputation as a 'no-strings-attached' lender by siding with U.S.-backed opposition. (Carlos 2019). Venezuela has proven an ally to China in international fora, supporting Chinese conceptions of human rights and state sovereignty (Piccone 2016). Thus, China's entanglement in Venezuela reflects a long-term strategy of undermining LAC reliance on Western backing in effort to garner support for its own vision of a multipolar world order. However, this cautionary tale demonstrates the risk of creating economic relations that are too intractable and investing in unpopular regimes.

## CONCLUSION

A study of Chinese engagement in LAC reveals a use of economic statecraft, soft power projection, and emerging hard power to incorporate Latin American states into Beijing's sphere of influence. The preponderance of evidence suggests that China holds intentions in the global South beyond those of a development partner or economic competitor. Significant diplomatic and security exchanges on top of economic interdependence provide the groundwork for a hegemonic bid against the United States. China's involvement in Venezuela demonstrates its divergence from the current liberal world order and desire to promote anti-American regimes. The case study of Panama reveals China's interest in controlling geographic nodes to support a Sino-centric world order based on a coalition of global South states.

While China has not yet achieved a position by which it can successfully challenge US supremacy in Latin America, the mounting concern among American officials is justified. If the US hopes to maintain hegemony in the Western Hemisphere, it must reverse its recent turn to isolationism. Otherwise, China will utilize its cooperative agreements with the global South to establish a multipolar global system that centers around Beijing, not Washington.

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## THE MAIN FACTORS EXPLAINING SALAFI-JIHADI GROUPS' MOBILIZATION AND RECRUITMENT AMONG THE KURDISH AND SUNNI-ARAB COMMUNITIES IN IRAQ: ISIS AS A CASE STUDY.

BARAV BARZANI

This study intends to investigate how the Salafi-Jihadi groups succeeded in establishing an Islamic state in Iraq by focusing on the case of ISIS, specifically asking: What are the factors that enabled Salafi-Jihadi groups (specifically ISIS) to garner public support and mobilize among the Kurdish and Sunni-Arab communities in Iraq? The study follows a qualitative research strategy and is based on a case study design. Research data were, to a great extent, collected from primary sources via in-depth interviews with elites (representatives) from among the Sunni Arabs and Kurds and political elites in the Kurdistan region. The study reveals that framing, political opportunities and resource mobilization theories provide a framework for understanding the factors behind ISIS's rise and success. This research concludes that the combination of the following factors enabled the rise of ISIS and helped it to sustain its support among the Sunnis: (1) that the ceding of power to the Shiite authorities in Iraq and the Sunnis' exclusion from the power balance, and the resulting socio-economic grievances in Sunni areas, accompanied by the rise of authoritarianism and sectarian polices, created fear and anger within the Sunni community, and this, in turn, provided an opportunity structure for ISIS to gather sympathy among Sunni-Arabs and Kurds to some extent; (2) ISIS quite pragmatically framed these issues, mainly through the notion of 'a better life', to appeal to a large number of people, particularly the Sunni Arabs and the Kurds. ISIS used religion as a source of framing both to justify its actions and to evoke emotions. Also, the frame of 'injustice', conveyed within the 'Us vs. Them' narrative, presenting the Sunni Muslims as oppressed, and was disseminated through various media outlets. Finally, (3) ISIS's economic power, which mostly came from its oil sales on the 'black markets', enabled it to acquire resources and provide certain public services to keep the public support alive.

### CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The popularity and support that Salafi-Jihadi groups, especially the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS), garnered, not only among the populations of the countries where they emerged and were based but also in the larger international level, raises the question of what factors enabled its popularity and support. The 'ideology' that these groups promote, Salafism (particularly Salafi-Jihadism), is a conservative tradition within Sunni Islam based on the literal interpretation of the Quran and the Sunnah (actions and sayings of Prophet Muhammad) and rejects innovation (*bid'ah*) in religious matters. Accordingly, Salafism venerates the predecessors – specifically, the first three generations of Islam – and demands strict adherence to them (Mardini, 2013). Although there have always existed people embracing such an understanding of Islam, Salafism emerged as a social movement only in the 20th century, with the formation of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt. Subsequently, the Soviet-Afghanistan war created

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a fertile ground for the growth of Salafi-Jihadi groups across the Middle East; then, veterans returning to the Kurdish region after the war formed their Islamic vision for Kurdistan (Romano, 2007). The modern wave of Jihadi-Salafism, on the other hand, was mostly born out of the conflict created by the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, and has subsequently grown within the settings of the Arab Spring and the civil war in Syria (since 2011) (Oosterveld et al., 2017). Today, Salafi-Jihadi groups are prominent in the Kurdish regions of Iraq, Baghdad and southern Iraq (Sunni Arab areas).

Al-Qaeda in Iraq was one of the first Salafi-Jihadi groups formed in this context, 2004. The group declared war against the US-led coalition forces and their local allies in Iraq (i.e. the Shiites, the Kurds and some sections of the Sunni Arabs) following the establishment of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) in 2006 – which, in 2013, took the name of the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS), later known as the Islamic State (IS) following the takeover of Mosul in 2014. The rise of ISIS in Iraq started with the marginalization of the Sunnis by the Shiite majority, which had largely been repressed under the regime of Saddam Hussein. Aggrieved by their political exclusion, Sunnis, mainly comprising Kurds and Arabs, gravitated in large numbers towards the Salafi movement (Levallois and Cousseran, 2017).

While Salafi-Jihadists can be defined as “violent rejectionists which aim at the absolute reconstruction of the world order at large and believe it is overall corrupt” (Maher, 2016, p.11) – which is also the ideology of ISIS – ISIS has differentiated itself with its extreme use of violence based on the doctrine of ‘Takfir’ (excommunication of other Muslims who are deemed not ‘true’ Muslims), and the ultimate aim of establishing a state (Levallois and Cousseran, 2017; Impara, 2018). Takfir is a main pillar of Salafi-Jihadism, and large-scale adoption of this doctrine opened a new chapter in the history of Islamist activism, as it had previously only been embraced by a minority (Badar, Nagata and Tueni, 2017).

Thus, against this background of the rise of ISIS, this study intends to explore the factors that created support for Salafi-Jihadism among a large number of Muslims, by asking the following research question:

*What are the factors that enabled Salafi-Jihadi groups (specifically ISIS) to garner public support and mobilize among the Kurdish and Sunni-Arab communities in Iraq?*

Many of the existing studies on ISIS are limited to socio-economic and/or grievance-based and psychological explanations, which do not take account of the full picture. The present study, however, aims at contributing to the literature on Salafi-Jihadi groups, in particular ISIS, from the perspective of social movement theory. The main theoretical framework of the present study, thus, is composed using social movement theory, by employing political opportunity, resource mobilization and framing theories conjunctively. This study treats Salafi-Jihadi groups as social movements within ‘Islamic activism’, which can be defined as “the mobilization of contention to support Muslim causes” (Wiktorowicz, 2004a, p.2). The use of social movement theory in the context of the Middle East is contested, as it is typically grounded in

Western democratic countries with fairly open systems. However, this study follows Bayat's (2005) definition of social movements as fluid and flexible, able to fit a wide range of systems and ideologies, including Islamism. Social movement theory thus provides a framework within which to understand collective motivations behind the formation and practice of Islamic movements. Resource mobilization theory focuses on the strategic mobilization of resources, which may be tangible or intangible (money, expertise, natural resources) in achieving a desired objective (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, 1988). Political opportunity theory is concerned with opportunities arising in the external environment that open up new possibilities (Tarrow, 2011). The term 'political opportunity' denotes "consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure" (Tarrow, 2011, p.163). These opportunities, along with the availability of resources, can either accelerate or decelerate collective action (Robinson, 2004). Following Munson (2001), who adapted political opportunity theory for his study of the Brotherhood, in this study it is employed to focus on the political opportunities that enabled ISIS to recruit, grow and succeed to account for the region-specific factors in Iraq not characteristic of Western countries.

Overall, political opportunity, resource mobilization and framing theories are employed together in order to analyze the underpinnings of the success of ISIS, with a particular focus on the determinants of the support they garnered among the Sunni-Arab and Kurdish communities. These theories guided the interviews, the primary data collection method of the present study, by directing the focus on specific factors and aspects of these movements.

This study is structured into five chapters. Following this introductory chapter is the Literature Review, presenting the existent literature on social movements in relation to ISIS. It is followed by the Methodology chapter, in which the research strategy and data-collection methods are outlined. The Discussion chapter discusses the theories in the case of ISIS among the Sunni-Arab and Kurdish communities in Iraq in the light of the interview data. The concluding chapter summarizes the findings and offers some suggestions for further studies.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: to present (1) an overview of social movement theories, namely political opportunity structure, resources mobilization and framing relevant to the research question; and (2) the findings and arguments found in the existing literature about the recruitment strategies, underlying opportunities, and resources employed by Salafi-Jihadi movements, regardless of whether or not they are discussed in reference to the aforementioned theories.

### **THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO ISLAMIST MOVEMENTS**

As noted in the Introduction, Bayat (2005) suggests that social movement theo-



ry can be applied to Muslim contexts even though it originated in developed and politically open countries. Even so, it should be noted that there exists a fixed, or, rather, an Orientalist view – as discussed by Said (1978) – in the Western literature regarding the Middle East. For example, Lewis (1990) argues that it is inherent to Muslim identity to be opposed to the West, thereby dismissing important factors that may help to understand various aspects of Muslim societies and movements. Bassil (2019) argues that the contemporary Western representations of ISIS have also been informed by Orientalism, involving a ‘discourse of power’ that depicts the Middle East and Islam as the ‘Other’ of the West. Such Orientalist representations account for the emergence of ISIS as an inevitable result of the ‘savagery and fanaticism’ inherent in Islamic culture and identity. Pipes (2014), for example, dismisses economic, social and historical factors when viewing Islam as indistinguishable from ISIS. Wood (2015) holds a similarly ‘fixed’ perception by stating “they have taken emulation of Muhammad as strict duty, and have revived traditions that have been dormant for hundreds of years”. Bassil (2019), however, claims that, to better understand ISIS, Islamism and the emergence of ISIS should be contextualized and historicized, rather than reduced to inherent characteristics of Islam and rage among Muslims (Bassil, 2019, p.85). Such an approach is valuable as it considers both the historical and contemporary factors that may help understand the rise of ISIS, and thus is adopted in the present research. The present study thus examines ISIS as a social movement across the theories of political opportunity structure, framing and resource mobilization.

### **POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURE**

Excluded social groups face many obstacles when attempting to advance their interests in times of varying opportunities. While the classical approach considers how short-term ‘strain’ leads to an insurgency, which acts as an agent of change, others attribute ‘change’ to a wider and longer-term social process, which is less intense (McAdam, 2010). Tilly et al., for example, point to changes in political opportunity structures:

Urbanization and industrialization...are by no means irrelevant to collective violence ... their effects do not work as...[classical] theories say they should. Instead of a short-run generation of strain, followed by protest, we find a long-run transformation of the structures of power and of collective action (1975, p.254).

Similarly, Jenkins and Perrow argue that the opportunities which arise in the social environment independently from the movement itself often work in favor of social movements originating in “economic trends and political re-alignments” (Jenkins and Perrow, 1977, p.266).

Tilly (1977) discusses three important dimensions of opportunities affecting mobilization: (1) opportunities that lower or raise costs; (2) the power of a group to advance its interests; and (3) threats to a group’s interests to which the group

responds rapidly. He argues that the openness or closeness of a society determines how social movements act, i.e. whether they pursue conventional or unconventional means in raising their demands (Meyer, 2004; Tilly, 1977). Tilly (1977) sees ‘conflict’ and ‘group solidarity’ as vital to collective action, but also recognizes the role that the rationality of social movement actors, as well as those of beliefs, ideas and ideologies, plays in shaping interests and facilitating mobilization.

Tarrow (2011) also emphasizes changes in the political opportunity structure. Tarrow (1994) states that the challenge lies in getting together a dispersed population and transforming it into “common and sustained action” (p.9) and claims that “the major power of movement is exerted when opportunities are widening, elites are divided, and realignments are occurring... Even movements that are poorly organized can take advantage of generalized opportunities” (p.150). Thus, Tarrow (2011) adopts a strict political opportunity-based approach, while dismissing the influence both of grievances and resources in favor of political opportunities. However, unlike Tilly (1977) and McAdam (2010), Tarrow (2011) recognizes the role of cultural symbols or frames, which this study will consider along with the changes in the political opportunity structure and resources.

With regard to the Salafi-Jihadi groups, Oosterveld et al. (2017) argue that opportunities for the Salafi-Jihadi movements arose due to the alienation of the Sunnis in Iraq post 2003, the civil war in Syria, and the weakened Iraqi state, including the disbanding of the army. Weiss and Hassan (2016) state that the takeover of large parts of land in Syria was at the forefront of ISIS’s success, as this not only provided a base for mobilization but a pool of recruits ready to go to Iraq, where they were trained, a point on which Reuter (2015) agrees. Other scholars underline that the Arab Spring was the ‘breaking point’ for the Arabs, which the Salafi-Jihadi groups capitalized upon in a context of dismantled and weak state institutions, thus offering a pan-Sunni narrative for aggrieved Sunnis who did not get much in the distribution of the spoils by the US, and made it appealing for them to join such movements (Gerges, 2017; Robinson, 2004). Furthermore, Gerges (2017) identifies the government policies, particularly those of al-Maliki’s premiership, which failed to develop or alleviate any sectarian conflict, as underlying causes and opportunities for the rise of both ISIS and Al-Qaeda.

## FRAMING

A prominent feature of Islamist movements is their use of ‘framing’ in order to generate support and recruit new followers. Framing is the interpretive schema used to find and make sense of events in an environment (Snow et al., 1986). Frames allow meaning to be assigned to events and ideas that are simplified and “intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support” (Snow & Benford, 1988, p.198). The literature of social movements suggests various methods of recruitment, such as recruitment in the form of pre-existing relations (McCarthy and Zald, 1977), bloc recruitment (Oberschall, 1973), or recruitment through con-

version (Stark and Bainbridge, 1980). Snow et al. (1980), based on an empirical study, note that interpersonal ties and networks are important in familial communitarian societies, such as Iraq in particular and the Middle East in general. These theories have, however, been criticized by Rochford et al. (1986) as static, arguing that social movements vary in terms of their recruitment methods.

Religion is an important frame not only because it is stable but, as Tarrow (1994, p.112) contends, comes with symbols and rituals that enforce unity and groupness, and thus is a cultivating ground for a social movement. Bayat (2005) states that Islamist movements employ frames of religious symbols such as martyrdom, halal and haram in order to influence their potential followers and gather resources (money, space, publicizing mediums and, most importantly, humans) from the public (Freeman, 1999). Ingram (2018) argues that this is exactly what ISIS took advantage of in Iraq and Syria at their early mobilization stages, with massive publicity in the form of magazines publicizing violence and a narrative attracting many people; and that the same strategy was popular among other groups for coverage and recruitment, such as Al-Qaeda's 'Inspire', the Afghan 'Jihad Quarterly', published during the Soviet invasion of Pakistan, and Nidul-Islam in Australia.

Robinson (2004) suggests that framing also acts as a simplifying ideology for the common recruit who may not be well versed in either Arabic or religious studies, and refers to the slogan 'Islam is the solution' serving this role. However, other scholars, like Jasper (2008), are against portraying framing as merely a simple recruiting strategy. They argue that the frames of 'being oppressed' and 'a corrupt world' speak to the search for glory and justice (Gamson, 1992a, 1992b), especially among the youth, and leads them to leave their idle and boring lives in the pursuit of something more meaningful and exciting (Robinson, 2017; Hemmingsen, 2015; Sageman, 2011). Likewise, Andersen and Sandberg (2018) note that Salafi-Jihadi groups portray their conflict as a defensive war that can only be resolved by fighting back, and, in the extreme case of ISIS, by creating a state. In sum, as noted by Wiktorowicz (2004a), the employment of rituals, signs, language and symbols reinforces identity in the rhetoric of Islamic-activism, and the most prominent frame used to convey the oppression of Muslims is 'the war waged on Islam by the West' (Wiktorowicz, 2004b).

Thus, framing theory can help explain the rhetoric as well as the recruitment strategies that ISIS has been using. Nonetheless, there is a potential pitfall to be avoided: the fact that rituals, symbols and lifestyles may not initially resonate with the target population/persons, requiring these ideas to be nurtured and improved (Snow et al., 1986). Fominaya (2010) argues that actors have common cognitive definitions about actions, ends and means which are not necessarily unified in their understanding of symbols and rituals, meaning that mere framing alone is not sufficient for successful recruitment and the overall success of a movement. This in turn demonstrates the importance of an eclectic approach to analyzing Islamist movements, using resource mobilization and political opportunity theories along with framing theory.

## RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

A more critical approach asserts that a collectivity of people must feel aggrieved, and that there are specific ways to redress those grievances in order for social movements to emerge. According to resource mobilization theorists, however, grievances are not primary drivers of movements but are seen as relatively stable and even constant (Tilly, 1977; Jenkins and Perrow, 1977; Jenkins, 1983; Collier and Hoeffler, 2004). As Haklai (2007) underlines, the central argument of this approach is that a movement needs strategic planning, effective use of resources and creation, and good management of new opportunities. From a similar perspective, Jenkins and Perrow (1977, p.251) argue that “collective action is rarely a viable option because of lack of resources and the threat of repression... [and so] when deprived groups do mobilize, it is due to the interjection of external resources”. Thus, the scholars in this school place primary importance upon other factors that accompany the rise of social movements, especially on resources which a movement possesses or garners. Differing from grievance-based models, therefore, resource mobilization theory postulates that the main task is to convert non-adherents into adherents and adherents into constituents, and to maintain constituent involvement (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). Morris (1981) states that these resources can be internal – i.e. within the group – such as human expertise, or external – i.e. acquired – such as land or oil; and the combination of both creates a dynamic of power.

With regard to Islamist movements, bookstores, cafes and mosques are mentioned in the literature as the traditional sites of recruitment. Wiktorowicz (2004a) states that the mosque is the center for Islamic activism because it is where potential members are recruited, educated and mobilized. Some authors contend that it is the dissemination of belief systems in such sites that help movements to flourish (Polletta and Kretschmer, 2013), while others argue that it is rather their distance from the reach of authorities as they are religious sites which makes mosques a valuable resource for Salafi-Jihadi movements (Hirsch, 1990).

Winter (2015), however, argues that the advent of digital media enabled instant, direct contact with thousands across the world and became a major resource mobilization tool (Castells, 2015), which Tarrow terms ‘print and association’ (Tarrow, 1994, p.43). Page et al. (2011) state that Salafi-Jihadi (and/or terrorist) groups have used the media for three main functions: legitimizing the movement, spreading the message, and showing opponents that they are better than them. Reid and Chen (2007) have also found, based on an analysis of extremist groups, numbering above 50 both in Middle East and United States, that movements have also used the media to raise money and conduct training sessions. For example, Page et al. (2011) mention Al-Qaeda’s e-magazine *Sada al-Malahim*, arguing that it is portrayed as a truthful magazine, yet framing legal matters to suit its ends, such as the idea that feeding hungry Muslims is less important than funding jihadis. Likewise, it has been documented that ISIS has used various media venues, such as Al-Hayat, Dabiq and Afnad, and social media (particularly Twitter) to promote the advantages of

life under the Islamic state (Farwell, 2014; Ingram, 2015), as well as to publicize its development projects such as road-building and/or school building (Khatib, 2015; Malet, 2013). And Andersen and Sandberg (2018) add that the media used by ISIS includes music, videos, video games, magazines – both electronic and printed – and pictures (Andersen and Sandberg, 2018). The combination of these media types is important in making it accessible to all levels of the population, whether literate or illiterate, young or old, in close proximity or in another country. While Bayat (2005) questions the effectiveness of the media in the Middle Eastern context due to the prevalence of repression, censorship and lack of resources, various successful media campaigns of Salafi-Jihadist groups have proven the opportunities that various media provide.

Some other scholars underline the control of natural resources, such as oil, among the factors that allowed ISIS to gain considerable income, contributing to their arms trade and recruitment and the higher salaries given to members (Bloem et al., 2017; McCarthy and Zald, 1977). Furthermore, it is argued that the use of left-over weapons supplied to Iraq by the US was a huge leap forward in securing their strategic advantage, alongside the human expertise of the recruited foreign fighters, including bomb experts and other specialists (Khatib, 2015).

Therefore, resource mobilization theory, underlining the rational and strategic attainment of a movement's goals (Husu, 2013), can also help understand the rise of jihadi groups. The problem with resource mobilization theory, however, is that it ignores emotions and ideologies and limits itself to materialist factors (Aminzade and McAdam, 2002; Taylor and Whittier, 1995; Perrow, 1979). Perrow (1979) also criticizes resource mobilization, on grounds of its neglect of political interests, is indifferent to ideology and has an overly rationalistic image of social movement actors. Likewise, Wiktorowicz (2004a) asserts that it is exogenous factors that lead to a movement's ultimate success or failure, whether it has resources or not. These critiques lead us to political opportunity structure theory, as outlined earlier in this chapter.

This brief review of the literature has shown that, the literature on jihadi movements involves various accounts related to both resources that they garnered and changes in the political opportunity structure. While these are grounded in facts and valid, they are all partial, bringing to the forefront one aspect while ignoring others. Thus, a theoretical framework that employs political opportunity structure, resource mobilization and framing theories will help to perform a more comprehensive and deeper analysis of the factors that have enabled the Salafi-Jihadi groups (specifically ISIS) to garner public support among the Kurdish and Sunni-Arab communities in Iraq.

## **A MODEL OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS OF ISLAMIST GROUPS**

ISIS, the largest Salafi-Jihadi movement, is reported to have recruited 30,000 foreign fighters from 85 different countries (Benmelech and Klor, 2018). Therefore, under-

standing the recruitment process of Salafi-Jihadi groups is pivotal for explaining their growing success. The process of recruitment to Islamic groups, according to Wiktorowicz (2004c), occurs in four phases: (1) the individual becomes open to new ideas and beliefs; (2) the individual seeks meaning through religion after being exposed; (3) the narrative of the religious group appeals to the individual and s/he sympathizes; (4) social-interaction with the group's members takes place.

It is argued that although jihadist movements are considered extreme and irrational by most people, once an external event triggers a person's openness to these ideas, they start to consider them (Wiktorowicz, 2004c; Stark and Finke, 2000). Some explanations assign the extensive appeal of Salafi-Jihadi groups to lack of economic opportunity, alienation from society, and excitement over the potential fame and glory to be gained – the last one being particularly prominent among young, unemployed people – while not discounting the cultural and religious framing and manipulation these groups use (Andersen and Sandberg, 2018; Impara, 2018; Lewis, 2004). In a similar way, Roel (2009) claims that Salafism's appeal lies in the fact that it reverses the 'ills of life' – sadness, loneliness, unemployment and mistreatment of immigrants – and provides the disenfranchised access to a caring group. While such explanations may be valid in terms of referring to the conditions that rendered people open to new ideas and belief, they are problematic as it is not always the young and disadvantaged who join (Alkhadher and Scull, 2019; Ibrahim, 1980; Ansari, 1984). Thus, Wiktorowicz (2004a) argues that it is not possible to tell the difference between a joiner and an abstainer without taking into account other stages.

The second and third stages in Wiktorowicz's (2004a) model can be better understood through the notion of framing. Snow and Benford (1988; 1992) argue that framing is more effective when the narrative appeals to the individual; when it resonates with their beliefs; and it is backed up with legitimate evidence. The prominent method in the case of Islamist groups is referencing the Quran and the Hadith; i.e. these texts are manipulated to fit the context and narrative of violence (Boutz et al., 2019; Sandberg and Anderson, 2018), and also to arouse emotions. Jasper (1998) highlights the importance of emotions, which involve "assumptions and beliefs" open to change. Thus, emotions such as hope and fear, which are neglected by political opportunity theory, also have a role in the recruitment process through framing. Snow et al. (1998), for example, argue that the fear of losing 'the ideal life' causes a feeling of being threatened, leading to unrest, and acting out in order to avoid an 'unideal' life, society and values. These stages also involve identity creation through framing of the old times and the heroic characters these new fighters could transform into if they join and fight for 'the cause'. As Boutz et al. (2019) state, not only will the recruits attain such 'ranks', but they will have eternally recognized feats to their names – which would appeal to any average individual. Considering emotions and framing which are crucial to ISIS' strategies in Iraq cannot be neglected.

Social interaction with the group's members – the fourth stage in the model – involves interpersonal ties, which is considered to be a very powerful means of

promoting recruitment due to bringing together likeminded individuals. Diani and Moffatt (2016) claim that Sunni mobilization was strongly communitarian, based on tribal structures and tightly knit communities. This was also the case in other parts of the Middle East, indicating that interpersonal ties/connections play a vital role in exposing people to extremist groups and facilitating their recruitment by them. However, McAdam and Paulsen (1993) disagree to some extent, claiming that the main factors are not interpersonal ties or organizational embeddedness but rather personal identification with the group, because if one is not convinced of the 'truth' of the message, interpersonal ties will not lead to recruitment. Wiktorowicz's (2004c) model, therefore, provides a framework to examine the factors that enabled ISIS to acquire public support in Iraq; as understanding the underpinnings of the stages of the recruitment process requires looking through the social movement theories discussed in this section.

### **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

This study relies on a qualitative research strategy to explore the factors that have contributed to the success/persistence of ISIS among the Kurdish and Sunni-Arab communities in Iraq. The research relies on primary sources; and the semi-structured elite interview is the main data-collection method. Other primary sources include the magazine published by ISIS such as Dabiq. Information on ISIS's framing methods and resources have been gathered from articles, books and news reports that directly engage with ISIS's publications. Furthermore, a library-based research of secondary sources on Salafi-Jihadi movements in general, and on ISIS in particular, was conducted.

### **DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLING**

As noted, the main data-collection method was through elite interviewing. While tribal leaders and families of people who have joined ISIS could have been interviewed, a more complete view encompassing political, religious and economic issues could only be achieved by interviewing elites from these three spheres. Thus, a total of 12 interviews were conducted with military personnel, politicians, religious leaders, experts and policy advisors.

The final sample included 10 Kurds and 2 Arabs – one female and one male. Due to security and physical difficulties (distance and access), only two Arabs were able to participate in this study. The interviewees included Abdulmanaf Ramazan Ahmad, Security Officer; Ali Bapir, Leader of the Islamic Group of Kurdistan (Komal Islamic Party); Salhaddin Bahaaddin, General Secretary of the Kurdistan Islamic Union Party; Abduleziz Waisi Azzulddin, General Commander of the Zeravani Forces; Abdullah Kharbit, a Member of Parliament; Alya Falih Owed Rashid (Al Amara), a Member of Parliament; Omed Abdulrahman Hassan, Head of the Majority Block (Kurdistan Democratic Party) in the Kurdistan Parliament; Safeen Muhsin Dizayee, Foreign Minister; Aziz Hasan Barzani, a University Lectur-

er; Rewaz Faiq, Speaker of Parliament; Kamil Mohammad Baqer, a Security Officer – General Directorate of Asaysh (Kurdish Security Apparatus) in the Directorate of De-radicalization; and Peshtivan Sadiq, Minister of Endowment and Religious Affairs (Further details about the interviewees can be found in Appendix - Table 1). The interviews were carried out in person at the interviewees' preferred location – usually their ministry or compound.

The non-probability snowball sampling method was used to select participants, as access to the elites was restricted due to the nature of their positions. In snowball sampling, one must adopt a cautious approach, as references based on personal opinions may bias the research in the direction of the referee's beliefs and opinions (Burnett, 2009). In order to avoid such a bias, and not to compromise generalizability, the sample was chosen to represent a wide range of positions, views and affiliations in the political, scholarly and military sectors from both Arabs and Kurds which the researcher outlined for the interviewees to understand what positions the researcher is seeking to be referred to. Some of the elites preferred to refer to certain experts and advisors for further information.

Given the 'privileged position' elites hold in society, they have access to information that is not found elsewhere (Richards, 1996, p.199); thus, they are assumed to have a better understanding of the factors that led to the birth and rise of ISIS. However, one must beware not to take the information collected at face value, since the elites may not have correct information and/or in any given interview environment they might refrain from not giving an answer that would reveal a lack of knowledge (Richards, 1996).

The participants were first asked basic questions to ease them into the interview atmosphere. Moreover, in order not to exhaust them during the interview process, they were given breaks from long discussions by way of shorter answer questions. Aberbach and Rockman (2002) note that the purpose of interviews is to understand what is not known to the public and highlight the importance of open-ended questions in interviews: as elites possess a lot of information and want to express this, confining them to simple 'Yes or No' types of questions can limit the scope and validity of a study. The combination of both long and short questions via a flexible interview method, therefore, allowed elites to relax in between, and also reduced the interview time to accommodate for their busy schedules.

## **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Measures have been undertaken to ensure that the participants: (1) have correctly understand the project; (2) have given their consent to participate; (3) have the right to remain anonymous; and (4) are under no obligation to start or continue the interview. Given the security nature of the topics discussed regarding ISIS, all of the interviewees had adequate security and protection against any possible harm, in addition to their secure compounds. Although all the interviewees agreed that their names could be used, the data collected were encrypted and stored in a pass-



word-protected computer.

Given the focus of the research, some interviewees may have been worried about the purpose of the data-collection (Rivera et al., 2002). However, the reputation of the University of Edinburgh (i.e. institutional credibility), as well as of the referees, who are well-known personalities, and the clear explanation of the purpose of the study given by the researcher, avoided such pitfalls.

#### **CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION**

A social movement can be defined in various ways. Alimi, Bosi and Demetriou (2015), based on the accounts of various scholars (Snow, Kriesi and Soule 2004; Della Porta and Diani 2006; Tarrow 2011) concisely define social movements as informal interaction networks between a plurality of individuals, groups, and/or organizations based on a certain shared purpose and solidarity; frequent, albeit not exclusive, use of non-institutional forms of protest; consequential claim-making directed at authorities and other elites and power holders; and a focus on political and/or cultural conflict, with the aim of either fostering or preventing social change (2015, p.40).

Groups always have grievances to varying degrees; yet what determines whether these grievances generate social movements are the changes in the opportunity structures, availability of resources, and the successful use of framing at a particular time.

Social movement theory can be employed to analyze Islamic movements in the Middle East despite the complexities of the socio-political context in these countries, characterized mainly by strict political control and limited communicative action (Bayat, 2005). Middle Eastern societies are advancing both economically and technologically, making communication networks effective – as witnessed in the Arab uprising, particularly in Egypt – and rendering extreme/overt political control destabilizing/risky for regimes. This chapter, therefore, will discuss the findings obtained from elite interviews in the light of the theoretical framework of social movement theory, by specifically addressing the framing strategies, rising opportunities, and available resources that have enabled ISIS to garner support among the Kurdish and Sunni-Arab communities in Iraq.

#### **FRAMING, COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND EMOTIONS**

Collective identity is defined by Polletta and Jasper (2001, p.285) as “an individual’s cognitive, moral and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution”, and they argue that actors seek to be recognized on the basis of their identity. It can be argued that the Sunni population wanted to be recognized and to exert political influence on the basis of its identity due to being marginalized by the Shiite-led government, and resorted to social movements such as ISIS once structures of opportunity and resources became available. Chong (2014), however, argues that reputational gains and benefits, such as fame, glory, wealth and women, are what motivate a participant to join a social movement. These benefits are mag-

nified and presented, or framed, by groups in such a way as to attract recruits and to gather support from various segments of society, particularly the youth. Likewise, as one of the participants, Abduleziz Waisi Azzulddin (2020) (General Commander of Zerevani Forces), expressed, ISIS identified social, political and economic grievances/problems as weak points for people and exploited them by “presenting itself as a safeguard force that could bring justice”. However, Teske (1997) suggests that both the self-interest of actors and group loyalty should be considered together, as they are not incompatible. In fact, both factors are manifest in the case of ISIS, as the group is based on ideological commitment and also offers material gains to strengthen the commitment and recruitment-efforts of its members.

Besides identity issues, ISIS addresses emotions as well. The presentation of Muslims’ struggles around the world is framed to provoke emotions of anger, sadness and contempt and so generate what Jasper (1998, p.409) refers to as “moral shocks”. Abdullah Kharbit (2020) (Member of Parliament) and Ali Bapir (2020) (Leader of the Islamic Group of Kurdistan-Komal Islam) also stated that anger and hatred drove ISIS at large. In fact, ISIS has often used the suffering of Palestinians to generate support (Andersen and Sandberg, 2018; Ingram, 2018).

Therefore, while grievances drive participation, they are not a strong enough factor to lead to participation. As Wiktorowicz (2004c) suggests, selective incentives are critical; and the way these incentives are presented and framed is what essentially attracts new recruits. With their extensive media networks focusing on the youth, as also mentioned by Safeen Muhsin Dizayee (2020) (Foreign Minister), ISIS portrays itself as a ‘force’ against oppression and injustice, thus redefining what is tolerable as unjust and immoral (Snow and Benford, 1992, p.137). In other words, it is not the grievances per se but their presentation that attracts new members to a social movement (Snow et al., 1986, p.466); and in the case of ISIS, this is performed through the framing and manipulation of the meanings of the Quranic verses and the Hadith, the two main sources of Islamic jurisprudence. More specifically, these texts are ‘read’ and presented through a narrow and literalist approach to justify the use of violence, and are also re-framed to duplicate the archaic rulings with a modern twist in order to suit the group’s ends (Boutz et al., 2019; March and McCants, 2015; Rashid, 2020). All the interviewees agreed that ISIS had political ends and used religious means to achieve them, noting that ISIS presented an image of ‘the righteous state’ and claimed to implement the ‘correct version’ of Islam, which was a convincing idea not only for the youth but for many others.

The use of the ‘injustice’ frame is critical as it identifies Muslims as victims and inculcates others (Gamson, 1992a, 1992b; Benford and Snow, 2000; McAdam and Aminzade, 2002). Such a ‘positioning’ also functions to reinforce group solidarity and strengthens ideology as it creates an ‘Us vs. Them’ narrative. Malet (2013) argues that ISIS justified its use of violence in its struggle to establish a state using this narrative of threat from an outside force, as depicted by ISIS in its Dabiq/Rumiyah magazines, using the ‘injustice’ frame and inciting the emotions of anger. In

this way ISIS has ensured its credibility/legitimacy – which is critical for the success of framing – by ‘using’ Islam and framing its purpose using notions of ‘justice’ and a ‘better life’, which potential recruits are likely to relate to (Benford and Snow, 2000; Snow et al., 1986), as highlighted by participants Rewaz Faiq (2020) (Speaker of the Parliament) and Kamil Mohammed Baqer (2020) (General Directorate of Security Office/Asaysh) during the fieldwork.

The frame of a ‘better life’ was supplemented by psychological and material incentives to sustain support both within the group and among the wider public: for its members, ISIS provided much higher salaries than other jihadi groups and made women available to men for sexual exploitation; while for the public, ISIS provided roads, infrastructure improvements and healthcare for all (Andersen and Sandberg, 2018; Oosterveld et al., 2017). The provision of public goods not only strengthened the legitimacy of ISIS vis-a-vis other Salafi-Jihadi movements but also gave people hope for a better life (Oosterveld et al., 2017). This was also pointed out by the participants. Ali Bapir (2020) (Leader of the Islamic Group of Kurdistan-Komal Islam), for example, affirmed that prolonged unemployment, especially among the youth, and state failure and lack of services, had already convinced many that a change for the better life was needed, and that ISIS exploited this situation. He said:

Many people became jobless, especially the Sunni Arabs, who were left without a salary and money. They were unable to feed themselves... This made ISIS surrounded with crowds and they exploited the anger and the needs of the people and they were giving good salary to those people.

The interviewees were unanimous that ISIS’s propaganda and imagery specifically targeted the youth, due to their circumstances: leading difficult and boring lives, and not fitting in, the chance of gaining fame, glory, wealth, women and more would be attractive for them, as the literature also highlighted earlier.

The importance of emotions in the process of framing is critical, as ‘frames’ must successfully stimulate emotions for both successful recruitment and mobilization. Peshtivan Sadiq (2020) (Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs) notes how, as a result of being deprived socially and politically, the youth went on to “destroy everything”. Tarrow (1998) points to religion as a very powerful and reliable source of emotions; religion, he says, “provides ready-made symbols, rituals and solidarities that can be accessed and appropriated by movement leaders [and] is a recurring source of social movement framing” (p.112). Salafi-Jihadi movements also employ beliefs and rituals such as prayer, the Friday sermon, paradise/hell, and rewards in the afterlife to motivate their members (Wickham, 2004). Jasper (1998) argues that emotions involve “assumptions and beliefs” that are open to change; emotions, he states, are tied to moral values, especially from perceived infractions in the moral order, which is why framing injustice as ‘Us vs. Them’ is used not only to rally support via this injustice narrative but to also evoke emotions. Stimulating emotions has played a vital role in ISIS’s mobilization and group dynamics. For example, symbolic acts by ISIS, such as beheadings, are intended to propagate the

image of ‘strength’ as well to as incite fear among the people (Impara, 2018). This rhetoric of oppression is also intended to trigger emotional responses such as anger, pity and sadness. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi’s speech in the Great Mosque of Mosul in July 2014, for example, described his followers as soldiers of righteousness bringing justice upon the ‘infidel’ other, which is a means to stir up emotions of hate and morality to fight this ‘injustice’ (Chulov, 2014). The nature of emotions, therefore, is such that they are beyond the boundaries of self-interest, and are usually driven by deeply held beliefs and moral understanding instilled via framing – which could explain the persistent membership, and hence partly the success of ISIS.

In sum, a vision of the world is constructed through framing, suggesting that the grievances felt in everyday life are solvable and addressable (Turner, 1969), that existing injustices will be eradicated by the ‘just-force’ of ISIS, and that any method moving toward this purpose is justifiable. Such a reading sheds light on several reasons why Kurds and Arab-Sunnis joined ISIS; that is, having already expressed their grievances towards central government or society to no avail, they saw this as an opportunity to engage in a social movement for desired change. Therefore, ISIS’ preference of extreme violence is built on the idea that, conventional, methods are incapable of yielding solutions, and that beyond-the-norm methods are needed. In this context, the extreme measures or actions of ISIS were not perceived as extreme. On the contrary, it can even be argued that the images of beheadings, which spread rapidly through the media, have enforced in-group identity and aided in the recruitment-process (Impara, 2018; Wiktorowicz, 2004a). As Jasper and Volpi (2018) assert, these tactics of violence have contributed to the growing symmetry between parts of society and reinforced identity. Therefore, networks of recruitment that stir emotions and address cultural norms seem to be even stronger and more effective than ideology (Munson, 2009 cited in Jasper; Volpi, 2018).

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

According to political opportunity theory, mobilization is only possible when there are favorable opportunities produced by conditions external to the movement (Jenkins and Perrow, 1977; McAdam, 2010). Political opportunity involves the “consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment or of change in that environment that provide incentives for collective action by affecting expectations for success or failure” (Tarrow, 2011, p.163; Gamson and Meyer, 1996). Tilly and Goldstone state that

Any changes that shift the balance of political and economic resources between a state and challengers, that weaken a state’s ability to reward its followers or opponents or to pursue a coherent policy, or that shift domestic or outside support away from the regime, increases opportunities (2001, pp.182-183).

In terms of potential effects, Tarrow (2011) states that opportunities “lower the costs of collective action, reveal potential allies, show where elites and authorities are most

vulnerable, and trigger social networks and collective identities into action around common themes” (p.33). Tarrow (1994) also argues that even weak and disadvantaged groups can take advantage of opportunities when they arise. However, in Iraq, due to the highly repressive nature of the regime, opportunities favorable for Islamic social movements were often limited. In other words, the opportunity structures that supposedly affect social movements – access to the formal political process, to civil society and the legal environment and to informal ties and networks (Meijer, 2005), the level of state repression, and the ability to find (elite) allies (Wiktorowicz, 2004a) – do not fully apply to the case of Salafi-Jihadi groups, which is why they are based upon informal networks and cultural and religious sites reinforcing Islamic identity (Singerman, 2004).

The literature suggests that ISIS exploited two critical external opportunities: the Syrian civil war and the internal instability of Iraq (Holbrook, 2015), specifically the “poverty, illiteracy, and wartime exigencies ... to curry favor with the population” (Hassan and Weiss, 2016, p.434). Firstly, the turmoil in Syria proved easier to exploit given that the government had lost control over large swaths of land, thus providing ISIS with an opportunity (1) to settle and grow its numbers there (Weiss and Hassan, 2016); (2) to capture resources, such as oil wells and various valuable artifacts that could be sold; and (3) as Khatib (2015) says, to take advantage of the cleavage between the Shiite (the ruling minority – Alawites/Alevis) and the Sunnis. Also, the Syrian takeover was what made Iraq possible for ISIS, as it changed the perspective of those who believed that such movements were doomed to fail. In Iraq, changes in the political opportunity structure, which allowed ISIS to emerge, occurred following the US-led invasion and occupation of the country and the exclusionary policies of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki (2006-2014) against the Sunnis, in particular Sunni Arabs. The resulting sectarian conflict in Iraq produced a crippled government, which not only failed to provide basic services for its citizens but also marginalized the Sunni community. Thus, the weakness of the state apparatus and marginalization of the Sunni population by the Shiite-led government/s marked the turning point for ISIS, as the movement could exploit this opportunity to gain followers with the promise of a better life.

These circumstances were identified by almost all of the interviewees. Ali Bapir (2020) (Leader of the Islamic Group of Kurdistan-Komal Islam) and Abduleziz Waisi Azzulddin (2020) (General Commander of Zerevani Forces), for example, argued that the divided government in the post-Saddam era, and the growing authoritarianism of Nouri al-Maliki, fostered the growth of groups like Al Qaeda and ISIS. Abdulmanaf Ramazan Ahmad (2020) (Security Officer), however, described marginalization as “a consequence not a cause” of the power given to the Shiites over Sunnis after the 2003 invasion. Abdulmanaf (2020) is right in the sense that, although there were grievances and a lack of resources and mobilizing structures, the potential achievements of social movements are limited (and also emboldened) by external events (possibly socio-economic) (Wiktorowicz, 2004a). This was

particularly evident, as Abduleziz Waisi Azzulddin (2020) (General Commander of the Zeravani Peshmerga) and Abdullah Kharbit (2020) (Member of Parliament) noted, for the Kurdistan region of Iraq, from which few recruits came, as there were not so many opportunities for ISIS to exploit as in Syria and Iraq.

Other changes in the opportunity structures that ISIS initially capitalized upon were the de-Baathification of the Iraqi army and the Arab Spring (Khatib, 2015). The de-Baathification of the state and particularly the army simply created thousands of unemployed and aggrieved soldiers who had nowhere to go. They saw ISIS as offering them an opportunity for a better life, as Rewaz Faiq (2020) (Speaker of the Parliament) said. The same point is raised by Oosterveld et al. (2017), who state that ‘abandoned’ members of the Iraqi army headed to Syria to take part in the Sunni vs. Alawite (Shiite) conflict. Similarly, Abdullah Kharbit (2020) (Member of Parliament) said: “those men were desperate and easily radicalized by ISIS leaders”. Thus, the conditions created by the disbanding of the Iraqi army, and the resulting grievances and sectarianism, brought ISIS many new members. Moreover, these new Sunni-Iraqi and Kurdish recruits already possessed expertise in the fields of intelligence and warfare (Levallois and Cousseran, 2017; Weiss and Hassan, 2016) due to having served under Saddam and some having fought in Afghanistan during the Soviet invasion of 1979. Thus, unlike the Afghans in Al-Qaeda, they had knowledge of the land, cultures and people. The same points were mentioned by Security Officer Abdulmanaf Ramazan Ahmad (2020) and Abduleziz Waisi Azzulddin (2020) (General Commander of Zerevani Forces) who underlined that these recruits were experts in their fields, such as intelligence, and that this had significantly contributed to ISIS’s success.

Safeen Muhsin Dizayee (2020) (Foreign Minister) mentioned the protests that took place in Fallujah in 2012, where people demanded their basic rights; he claimed that the way the Iraqi government responded to these events, i.e. by repression, led many to become extremists. Hence, this can be regarded as another possible external political condition contributing to the support and good recruitment that ISIS enjoyed. Similarly, the events that took place in the context of the Arab Spring created instability and a change in leadership (in Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen) which led to a power vacuum in Syria. ISIS managed to make use of this opportunity and chaotic environment to take control of important resources and appeal to a specific segment of discontented people who had lost out in these conflicts.

Overall, as Tarrow (1994) notes, weak states provide more opportunities for collective action than strong states. The tearing down of the state institutions in Iraq post-invasion and the failure of the state-building process led to a power vacuum and eventually social turmoil characterized by sectarianism. The distribution of rewards and spoils along ethnic, tribal and religious lines further deepened this sectarianism and created a void into which a group like ISIS could step in to alleviate the suffering (Gerges, 2017). Syria, on the other hand, as Gerges (2017) argues, is as important because it provided the group with an environment that enabled free movement

and organizational strengthening through recruits and resources, which eventually allowed it to inflict a much more devastating attack in Iraq in 2014.

## RESOURCES

According to resource mobilization theory, while grievances matter, they are constant and of secondary importance to the formation and success of movements; what matters are resources, organizations and opportunities (Tilly, 1977; Jenkins and Perrow, 1977). Resource mobilization theory concentrates on how and to what extent the acquisition of various resources (financial, human, natural etc.) affects the mobilization and prevalence of social movements. Resources differ in terms of importance; Freeman (1999), who distinguishes between tangible resources (e.g. space, money, ways to publicize a movement) and intangible (e.g. human) resources, deems the latter more important. ISIS has made extensive use of both, as without one, the other would not be possible to the same degree.

Contention with 'others' ('Us vs. Them') substantially increases when movements gain access to external resources such as oil, land and expertise that allow them to see how they might end the injustices and ills around them, and thus mobilize (Tarrow, 1994). Yet the success and persistence of a movement depend on the constant flow of resources (McAdam, 2010). As discussed in the previous section, the opportunities that presented themselves in Syria and Iraq allowed ISIS to seize substantial resources, thereby providing a continuous flow of financial and human capital. More specifically, ISIS financed its operations through the sale of oil, precious artefacts, and wheat and water, and also by executing kidnappings and imposing taxes on the population (Khatib, 2015).

These points were also raised by the interviewees. Rewaz Faiq (2020) (Speaker of the Parliament) said regarding the control of resources that it was "a reason for them to become stronger" and persist for a longer time. Similarly, Aziz Hasan Barzani (2020) (University Lecturer) stated that this was what "empowered" them. Thus, the difference between ISIS and the Iraqi government's capabilities demonstrates the importance of control over resources. In other words, while ISIS not only had a unified ideology but also the resources to promote/impose it, the government lacked them to a great extent (Levallois and Cousseran, 2017), which eventually led to the success of ISIS in 2014.

Resource mobilization theory is also important in terms of highlighting the importance of expertise and internal resources in a social movement's formation, tactics and strategies, which is evident in the case of ISIS, as the foreign bomb experts and former Baath intelligence personnel that were recruited by the group extensively strengthened its military capabilities. Apart from these resources, ISIS took advantage of the power of technology, especially social media, to disseminate its ideology all over the world. Safeen Muhsin Dizayee (2020) (Foreign Minister) pointed this out by saying, "they have networks of communication that portray the group as the only one standing against oppression and going beyond the boundaries of a country"

– which also highlights the framing strategies and relevant opportunities the group employed.

The importance of organization to a social movement is also discussed by resource mobilization scholars. McAdam (2010), for example, stresses that opportunities cannot be exploited without it. The case of ISIS illustrates how effective organization contributed to its success and continuity. In that regard, Aziz Hasan Barzani (2020) (University Lecturer) hinted at the government-like organizational structure of ISIS by identifying “the creation of the economic system by the Caliphate, which had a minister of economy and finance...”. McAdam (2010) enumerates resources that are critical to organization, and these include (1) membership, as members build the organization and help recruit other members; (2) solidarity incentives, which foster cohesion and recruitment; (3) communication networks, which serve the diffusion of ideas and aid mobilization; and (4) leaders, who direct the collective action. ISIS has demonstrated the importance of using these components effectively in terms of maintaining activity, adapting, recruiting and growing. Recruitment is performed by the existing members of ISIS through interpersonal and tribal ties – which various scholars see as critical (Diani and Moffatt, 2016; Diani and McAdam, 2003; Reynold and Hafez, 2019). Abdulmanaf Ramazan Ahmad (2020) (Security Officer) also noted that many tribal leaders provided resources to ISIS and welcomed them with gifts such as vehicles and money. Solidarity incentives mainly include group support, emotional support and ideology; yet material benefit can also be counted in this category (Wickham, 2004; Jasper, 2011). The material benefits, in the case of ISIS, include higher salaries, up to 1200\$ monthly and more (Khatib, 2015); women for single men; and a sense of pride and glory which reinforces motivation and satisfaction (Oosterveld et al., 2017; Khatib, 2015) – and all these were made possible due to the resources ISIS controlled. As McCarthy and Zald (1977) note, the more money is possessed, the more personnel can be hired; and ISIS was never short of money.

Communication networks spread via conventional media and other modern technological facilities, as the third element of organization, served a key role in ISIS’s management, operations and recruitment-processes, as discussed earlier. Given the power of the Internet and social media, mass communication has never been easier for social movements (Kernan, 2017). Not only did ISIS use media to gain followers, it also reduced the ideological and operational influence of its enemies. In fact, a former national security advisor suggested that it was Twitter and Facebook that made the Iraqi army leave Mosul (Weiss and Hassan, 2016).

Lastly, as noted, leadership and high-ranking personnel are of crucial importance to the organization of a group. The leading organizational resource for ISIS, as Reuter (2015) suggests, were the former members of Saddam Hussein’s intelligence service and army, who were partly responsible for the success of ISIS thanks to their expertise and knowledge. Thus, as noted by Sutton and Vertigans (2006, p.106), “the group relies on knowledgeable, educated and skilled recruits who provide com-



municative, technological, administrative and organizational qualities". In terms of leadership, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's creative thinking skills and his ability to rally his troops (Robinson, 2017) were especially evident when he declared himself a Caliph, as ISIS members immediately accepted him as a (religious) leader, suggesting the extent of legitimacy and power he enjoyed. Furthermore, strong leadership is a valuable resource for a social movement, as incentives received by members are facilitated by its leader(s). Accordingly, al-Baghdadi's image as a courageous leader who showed up at the Great Mosque in Mosul (Khatib, 2015; Andersen and Sandberg, 2018; Wiktorowicz, 2004c) proved to be significant in terms of gaining recognition, and thus recruits. Organizational factors, therefore, help get the group the resources and activism it needs, and are also a means to derive legitimacy and continued activism even when opportunities may be shrinking (Minkoff, 1997).

Another important resource was the mosque structure, as mosques were used for "teaching, socializing, organizing collective actions, building networks, recruiting" (Wiktorowicz, 2004a, p.10; Husu, 2013). Mosques facilitated the meeting of active and potential members, and thus the forming of networks. Groupthink and peer-pressure that emerge among gatherings of people with similar mind-sets and/or pre-existing relations based on repression or ideology help strengthen the resource base and recruitment capabilities of a movement, which, in turn, contribute to its success (Della Porta, 2013; Singerman, 2004). Interviewee Kamil Mohammed Baqer (2020) (Security officer) also pointed to this factor.

In terms of other revenue sources, oil wells in Syria were critical to ISIS's operations as it earned 1-2 million dollars per day (Weiss and Hassan, 2015). Moreover, oil smuggling to neighboring countries (Turkey, Iraq and Jordan) and religious alms earned ISIS millions (Weiss and Hassan, 2015); this in turn allowed the group to acquire and/or use other resources critical for its success, such as equipment, media campaigns, recruits, vehicles, public goods, social services for the population (Oosterveld et al., 2017) and weapons. Weiss and Hassan (2015) point to the importance of ISIS's tribal affiliations in terms of acquiring these resources, as its connections to and familiarity with local networks allowed it to gain secure passages for oil and travel which may otherwise have been difficult; this was confirmed by interviewees Rewaz Faiq (2020) (Speaker of the Parliament) and Abduleziz Waisi Azzulddin (2020) (General Commander of Zerevani Forces). This point is also raised by Levallois and Cousseran (2017), who state that ISIS fighters knew the local tribes, terrain, and familial and communitarian networks.

The importance of resource mobilization lies in its focus on the availability of resources, rationality of agents (calculating costs vs. rewards), and strategies to be implemented to realize goals (Jenkins, 1983; Husu, 2013). ISIS demonstrated strategic use of the resources it possessed – especially compared to the Iraqi government, which, even though it had received military equipment from the United States, did not have a strategy and lacked effective leadership, ensuring accountability, unlike ISIS (Khatib, 2015). ISIS has drawn on the issues of security, a good life, and means

of wealth, all of which invites a rational cost/benefit analysis on the part of ordinary people. In the case of Iraq, the cost of living under the rule of ISIS was too high, yet the benefits of joining/supporting it were also high; and this was a rational calculation made by the ordinary public, thus dispelling the myths of irrationality and madness. In other words, ISIS's actions were a means to an end, despite how immoral and illegitimate its actions may seem (Alimi et al., 2015). However, it should be pointed out that such calculations are often made in the context of emotional whims and desires, which leads us to question whether ISIS members are indeed rational given that there is emotional interference by higher ranking members of the group via religious ideology and framing.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This dissertation has attempted to analyze the factors that enabled ISIS to receive public support among Sunni-Arab and Kurdish communities in Iraq through applying political opportunity, resource mobilization and framing theories jointly. The theories of framing, political opportunities and resource mobilization, when used in conjunction, capture the full range of factors contributing to the rise and success of ISIS. It is possible to conclude that the success of ISIS can be accounted for by three factors. Firstly, the political instability in the region, particularly in Syria and Iraq, provided fertile ground for a movement to form given the discontent toward the government. The grievances resulting from the exclusionary politics of the Shiite-led governments in Iraq (against the Sunni minority) and in Syria (against the Sunni majority), accompanied by unemployment and poverty, led to internal conflict and civil war in the case of Syria, and thus weak governments. These conditions presented an opportunity structure for ISIS to emerge and sustain its existence. Secondly, ISIS managed to frame these issues in ways that appealed to large groups of people. Specifically, it built legitimacy through religious means – by establishing a state that it claimed was a 'just/Islamic state' and by manipulating the Quranic verses and sayings of the Prophet. Moreover, it framed religion to justify its actions as an 'Us vs. Them' narrative and depicted Sunni Muslims as oppressed. This narrative was disseminated through multiple media outlets, such as magazines, videos and the Internet, and successfully appealed to many people, particularly the youth. Finally, the resources it seized and controlled were essential for running military operations, providing public services, buying equipment and paying salaries to members – all of which, in turn, contributed to sustaining its appeal and support among the public.

With regard to future research, evidence based on interviews with former ISIS prisoners would provide insights into the inner organization of the group as well as the mind-sets of members. Such research could provide a detailed explanation of the rise of such extremist groups and so help prevent the rise of similar ones. Furthermore, more studies that can go beyond the Orientalist perspective and analyze the events and groups in the Middle East through the framework of social movement theory are needed.

## APPENDIX

TABLE 1 – CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INTERVIEWEES

	Participant	Occupation	Task/Position	Ethnicity	Gender
1	<u>Safeen Muhsin Dizavee</u>	Head of the Department of Foreign Relations of the Kurdistan Regional Government	Minister	Kurdish	Male
2	<u>Abdulmanaf Ramazan Ahmad</u>	Security Officer	Data Analysis and Research	Kurdish	Male
3	<u>Ali Banir</u>	Party Leader	Leader of the Islamic Group of Kurdistan	Kurdish	Male
4	<u>Abduleziz Waisi Azzulddin</u>	General Commander of the <u>Zeravani</u> Peshmerga in the Kurdistan Region	General Commander	Kurdish	Male
5	<u>Abdullah Kharbit</u>	Member of Parliament	Member of Parliament	Arab	Male
6	<u>Alya Falih Owed Rashid (Al Amara)</u>	Consultant Architect (Dr)	Member of Parliament	Arab	Female
7	<u>Omed Abdulrahman Hassan</u>	Members of Parliament (two rounds)	Head of the KDP Block, Kurdistan Parliament	Kurdish	Male
8	<u>Aziz Hasan Barzani</u>	University Lecturer	University Lecturer	Kurdish	Male
9	<u>Rewaz Faiq</u>	Speaker of Parliament	Speaker of Parliament	Kurdish	Female
10	<u>Kamil Mohammed Baqer</u>	Security ( <u>Asaysh</u> ) Officer	General Directorate of <u>Asaysh</u> /(Security) Directorate of De-radicalization Political Department	Kurdish	Male

11	<u>Salhaddin Bahaaddin</u>	General Secretary of the Kurdistan Islamic Union	Secretary General	Kurdish	Male
12	<u>Peshtiwan Sadiq</u>	Minister	Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs	Kurdish	Male

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