



# Social & Political Review

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# Preface

A warm welcome to this, the twentieth anniversary edition of the *Social and Political Review* of Trinity College, Dublin. As we mark this special milestone in student publishing, the committee has adopted the theme of ‘Twenty Years of Change’ for this year’s journal, and we have explored the theme through a series of engaging public events over the course of the year.

As any historian will note, however, all periods of time are characterised by change. Humanity, particularly in the social and political spheres, is constantly shaping, and adapting to, its environment. Nonetheless, some eras are particularly defined by these processes. Often, it appears that it is not the extent or pace of change which characterises a period as such, but participants’ self-perception as agents of change, and awareness of living in a time of transformation.

Our essays attest to this heightened awareness in Irish society and the global community at large. From those contributions outlining the divergent paths of democratisation across the world, to our ever-evolving interpretations of democratic theory itself; from an analysis of how East Germans conceive of themselves as part of a nation, to the challenges of constructing a broader, European identity – each of our essays reflects on the themes, processes, developments and setbacks which have determined the course of the last two decades.

This volume is the product of the insight and talent of undergraduate students from a wide variety of disciplines, and the efforts and commitment of a dedicated production team. The contribution of every individual involved formed an invaluable part of the whole, and I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of our authors, supporters, editors and production officers for their enthusiasm and hard work. As always, it is the goal of the *Social and Political Review* to provide a forum for vibrant, engaging debate among today’s students with the pressing social and political issues of our time. I hope you enjoy this year’s volume, and look forward to many more years of the SPR.

Caitriona Dowd,  
EDITOR

# Contents

<b>I. SOCIAL ISSUES</b>	<b>1</b>
The language of blame & the Columbine school homicide <i>Aine Ní Choisdealbha</i>	3
Challenges to the traditional nuclear family <i>James Kelly</i>	11
Surveillance in society: An alternative perspective on its relevance to criminology <i>Darragh McCashin</i>	19
<b>II. INTERNATIONAL</b>	<b>29</b>
Explaining the development of dictatorship & democracy: A comparative analysis of Costa Rica & Guatemala <i>Christopher McDyer</i>	31
Inheriting the burdens of colonialism: The residual impact of colonial socio-political structures on modern Fiji <i>Roisin Costello</i>	41
Shared background, different outcomes: A comparison between Mongolia & Turkmenistan's transitions from Communism <i>Hanna Persson</i>	49
<b>III. IRELAND &amp; EUROPE</b>	<b>59</b>
Ideology in Ireland: An investigative study <i>Daniel Philbin Bowman</i>	61
Lobbying regulation in the EU: A comparison with the USA & Canada <i>Paul Flannery</i>	69

Why is Russia not a democracy? The Putin era <i>Alena Kozina</i>	79
<b>IV. THEORY</b>	89
What is the maximally democratic extent of the franchise? <i>Michael Larkin</i>	91
Rousseau as 'totalitarian'; simply a case of a realistic democrat? <i>Joseph Curran</i>	99
Pierre Bourdieu on European identity: theories of habitus & cultural capital <i>Lillian Farrell</i>	107
<b>V. REVIEW</b>	117
Over the rainbow: An analysis of contemporary, post-Apartheid South Africa <i>Amandine Lobelle</i>	119
The Icelandic banking crisis: Causes, effects & implications <i>David O'Brien</i>	125
20 Years of German reunification & <i>Ostalgie</i> <i>Laura Heuvinck</i>	131
Europe after Lisbon: Who will run the EU once the dust has settled? <i>Nigel Smith</i>	137





SECTION I.

# SOCIAL ISSUES



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“It is always possible to bind together a  
considerable number of people in love,  
so long as there are other people left over  
to receive the manifestations  
of their aggression.”

SIGMUND FREUD (1856-1939)



# The language of blame & the Columbine school homicide

ÁINE NÍ CHOISDEALBHA

JUNIOR SOPHISTER

PSYCHOLOGY AND ENGLISH

On April 20<sup>th</sup> 1999, two Colorado teenagers killed twelve of their fellow students and one teacher before committing suicide. The Columbine incident, despite being only one of fifteen school shootings in the space of four years, was reportedly the most closely followed news story of 1999. (Aronson, 2004; Pew Research Centre, 1999) A decade having passed, sufficient interest in the attack has been sustained leading to the production of a book based on what occurred at Columbine, which subsequently became a bestseller. (New York Times, 2009) What is it that creates this fascination? This essay will carry out a textual analysis of the coverage of the Columbine incident, using three key articles as points of departure. Beginning with a reflection on the sustained fascination with the event, we will then go on to consider the common explanatory strands used in each of our three articles, before concluding by assessing the social and cultural consequences of these interpretations.

## A DECADE OF FASCINATION

Let us begin by considering the cause of the sustained interest in the shooting at Columbine. Muschert suggests that the case still fascinates because '[t]he Columbine event... has come to characterize the problem of youth violence and the general understanding of youth social problems.' (Muschert, 2007, p.351) Through a thematic analysis of articles covering the Columbine incident, Muschert notes that it contains most of the components of an allegorical crime narrative or 'myth,' and has thus entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century American psyche as a culture-defining incident. Present in the Columbine incident are helpless victims, brave heroes and a threat to a particular set of norms and values. The only component missing, or, as Muschert puts it, 'not within the scope of analysis,' (*Ibid.*, p.325) is the identification of a deviant population who were responsible for the act.

'Evil' has long ceded its explanatory power for acts of extreme violence; studies such as the Stanford Prison Experiment (1971) illustrate that cruel behaviour can be elicited by situational factors in people without any sort of psychological illness or tendency to 'evil.' Perhaps the pervasiveness of Columbine in the popular psyche is due to the absence of a firm locus of blame. Harris and Klebold were undoubtedly the killers, but the question of what led them to violence persists. Without a moral lesson about the detriments of bullying, violent video games or ignorance towards young males' mental health, a satisfactory parable cannot be constructed around Columbine. A decade on, both academic research and articles in the popular media fail to agree on what social and psychological conditions led to the deaths of fifteen Columbine students and faculty. Each article constructs a particular aspect of the students' world as the locus of blame, only for it to be situated elsewhere in the next major publication.

Heider (1958) proposed that this search for meaning in others' behaviour is a fact of the social relationship. The person perceives their own actions as motivated and thus seeks to construct causality by attributing others' behaviour to varying degrees of environmental and personal factors. Heider also stated that behaviour is praised or blamed more strongly if it is intentional; if it is motivated internally rather than by situational factors. Half a century later, these ideas are still widely accepted and elaborated upon (*see Malle, 2008, for a review*). Thus, the main explanations proposed for what was dubbed in the media 'the Columbine school massacre,' have honed in on factors such as a 'culture of fear,' and lax gun control. This was clearly seen in the approach of film-maker Michael Moore in his documentary concerning the incident,

*Bowling for Columbine*. (2002) These explanations focus less blame on Harris and Klebold themselves, locating causation in broader cultural and social conditions. This indicates a shift from many of the articles published in the month following the shootings which constructed the teenagers as juvenile super-predators who planned the attack and targeted victims in advance, rendering the boys personally culpable. (Muschert, 2007)

Finding a clear-cut explanation for the suicide-homicide in societal, medical or psychological terms is often the thrust of talk and text concerning the Columbine incident. The three following articles were published around the five and ten-year anniversaries of the school shooting. They illustrate a persistent trend in writing about blame for the Columbine event, which attributes responsibility for the attack to Eric Harris's supposed psychopathy. Harris is rendered personally culpable to a large extent, while Klebold's role is diminished and attributed largely to the environmental factor of being friends with a psychopath.

#### DEBUNKING THE MYTHS: 'THEY WEREN'T GOTHs OR LONERS.' (TOPPO, 2009)

All three articles begin by referencing past assumptions about the causes of the Columbine attack, and then stating that these assumptions are incorrect. Dave Cullen's 2004 article begins with two common attributions about the incident. One is that 'the pair of supposed 'Trench Coat Mafia outcasts' were taking revenge against the bullies who had made school miserable for them.' (Cullen, 2004) The other is that '[w]e can never understand what drove them to such horrific violence.' (*Ibid.*) Ideas of both bullying and inexplicability are undermined. By including quotation marks around 'Trench Coat Mafia outcasts,' and prefacing it with 'supposed,' the author suggests that this is an inaccurate label. The author thus implies that if the boys weren't miserable outcasts, they had no need for revenge. The extreme case formulation 'never understand' undermines the notion of inexplicability when teamed with the article's subtitle 'At last we know why the Columbine killers did it,' making this second conclusion seem unnecessarily hyperbolic. (*Ibid.*) Cullen also uses the term 'popular narrative' to describe the attributions made about bullying and cliques (jocks, Goth's, and Trenchcoat Mafia). Although a narrative is defined as a general account of a series of events, the Oxford English Dictionary privileges fictional accounts as narratives and thus the implication is made that these old accounts of causation are not trustworthy. The term 'popular' indicates how widespread they are, but when teamed with 'narrative' in this context of debunking also implies a kind of collective ignorance.

Similarly, Greg Toppo's 2009 article begins with a list of debunkings;

*They weren't goths or loners... weren't in the 'Trenchcoat Mafia,' disaffected video gamers who wore cowboy dusters... hadn't been bullied... the enemies on their list had graduated from Columbine a year earlier... weren't on antidepressant medication.*

*(Toppo, 2009)*

By committing two paragraphs solely to exposing the falseness of attributions made about Columbine, Toppo makes his article appear comprehensive insofar as it paves the way for a 'new' theory about Columbine.

In order to dispel fiction and myth in relation to their own work, the three journalists refer to expert sources of information in their articles. Cullen cites members of the FBI team of psychiatrists and psychologists, including psychiatrist Dr. Frank Ochberg and psychologist Agent Dwayne Fuselier, as well as psychologist Dr. Robert Hare. Lisa Belkin (2009) and Toppo both cite Cullen (who recently authored a book on Columbine) with Toppo also referencing psychologist Peter Langman and sociologist Katherine Newman. This is an extreme version of 'active voicing,' lending the authenticity of academic and medical research to the constructions of accountability in the texts. Toppo contrasts the conclusions of these experts with what Cullen termed the 'popular narrative.'

*Observers saw its genesis in just about everything: lax parenting, lax gun laws, progressive schooling, repressive school culture, violent video games, antidepressant drugs and rock 'n' roll, for starters.*

*(Toppo, 2009)*

These 'observers' are not only faceless and unqualified; they are seen as being unable to pinpoint one particular cause for the attack, citing a farcical amount of causes from chemical to sociological factors instead. Cullen's article speaks of 'diagnoses despite the fact that both culprits had been dead five years at the time of writing. This term lends credence to the conclusions of the aforementioned team, as well as locating causality firmly within the perpetrators' psyches and suggesting that the issue could have been tackled by medicine and psychology were it caught in time.

LEADER AND FOLLOWER: 'HARRIS DREW SWASTIKAS IN HIS JOURNAL; KLEBOLD DREW HEARTS.' (IBID.)

A further strand common to all three articles involves the prominent dichotomy made between Harris and Klebold, which facilitates the construction of the attack as the result of a single abnormal psyche. Belkin and Cullen both begin their discussion with Klebold before moving on to Harris. Belkin, in contextualising the family arrangements of both boys, begins two separate paragraphs with each boy's name, thus separating her assessments of the two. Cullen writes that Harris and Klebold were 'radically different individuals with vastly different motives and opposite mental conditions.' (Cullen, 2009) He classes Klebold as 'hot-headed, but depressive and suicidal.' (*Ibid.*) Harris, on the other hand, is described as at once well-spoken and sweet-faced and as calculating, homicidal and cold, 'a psychopath.' (*Ibid.*)

Listing Klebold first serves to minimise his role in the attacks and place more accountability upon Harris. Klebold is written out of the way as being a troubled child. With more space in the articles dedicated to Harris and his postulated abnormal psyche, his perceived dominant role is bolstered. Klebold is portrayed as a familiar character not quite capable of mass homicide without the encouragement of a psychopathic companion. Emotionality – hotheadedness, depression – is constructed as a state of being for familiar type students; it is those like cold, calculating and ultimately rational Harris who are to be feared. The contrast between the two is emphasised to a greater extent in Toppo's article.

*As he walked into the school the morning of April 20, Harris' T-shirt read: Natural Selection...Harris drew swastikas in his journal; Klebold drew hearts...Klebold also was paranoid."I have always been hated, by everyone and everything," he wrote...on the day of the attacks, his T-shirt read: Wrath.'*

(Toppo, 2009)

Klebold is associated with emotionality through his 'Wrath' t-shirt, his paranoia, sadness and anxiety, and the hearts drawn in his journal. Harris is linked to rational coldness – the tie to natural selection and Nazism suggest a desire for systematic and calculated erasure of others, not Klebold's act of despair. By referencing both t-shirts and journal doodles, Toppo contrasts these stereotypically teenage modes of self-expression with the sinister actions of the boys. For readers, Harris's swastikas are more taboo and associated far



more with evil than Klebold's love hearts, placing Harris and his supposed psychopathic tendencies at the fore of the attack.

**WHY IT HAPPENED: 'THERE IS ALMOST NOTHING THAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP PSYCHOPATHS'**

Constructed in each of the three articles is a sense of inevitability. Harris's posthumous diagnosis is used to bolster the assumption that there was no way to stop such an attack occurring. Toppo, (2009) citing Cullen, speaks of another attack. He writes that it was Harris who could have been 'like Tim McVeigh' had he not been limited by a teenage income, and that in carrying out the attack when he did 'probably' saved hundreds of lives. (Toppo, 2009) The claim that hundreds of lives might have been saved by Harris's death constructs Columbine as a kind of fortunate attack. The use of 'probably' tempers this idea slightly, but the emotive reference to the Oklahoma bombing, where 168 people died, overrides the speculative effect, especially given prior references to Harris' desire to replicate McVeigh's actions.

Belkin also cites Cullen's theory of inevitability, adopting a different approach:

*The problem, Cullen concludes, was that there is almost nothing that can be done to help psychopaths. They lie...do not have a moral centre that can be reached...'That' happened to 'them' because they were bad parents, we could tell ourselves. We will just do the opposite and everyone will be safe.*  
(Belkin, 2009)

The emphasis is on the parents' inability to control their children's behaviour and not on the inevitability of an attack from Harris. The phrase 'do not have a moral centre that can be reached,' is interesting; the idea of reaching is task-based, denoting parents' role in actively teaching morality to their children. (Belkin, 2009) Harris and other psychopaths are presented as having no moral centre within parental grasp and thus attempts to be good moral didacts to such children are futile.

## CONCLUSION

As an event supposed to be characteristic of youth violence, Columbine should supply a number of conclusions about this kind of violence, which could lead to the prevention of further attacks. (Muschert, 2007) A number

of preventative measures have been influenced by the attribution and construction of blame. Aronson, (2004) working off the hypothesis that bullying was a large factor in the Columbine attacks, suggested that interdependence in learning could increase empathy between students. Crepeau-Hobson and colleagues (2005) found that more than half of the urban and suburban Colorado schools in their study, hired security personnel after April 1999, fearing the ease with which the Columbine students had acquired and concealed guns. More generally, however, it is worth noting that the incident at Columbine is only the most high profile of a series of shootings of this kind in the US, rarely paralleled in Europe. The policy responses have differed significantly on both sides of the Atlantic, dictated in large part by the relative strength of the weapon lobby. Where UK legislation was introduced banning handguns in the wake of the Dunblane school shooting in 1996, similar regulation has not been introduced in the US. Sociological analysis must be better incorporated into wider debates concerning gun legislation in order to be influential in policy making.

The articles examined here reveal another possible trend. The tendency appears to be for analysis of the events at Columbine – journalistic and otherwise – to move away from social issues like media violence, negligent parenting and bullying, towards psychological abnormality. Through our textual analysis of these interpretations we can identify coded, emotive or biased language which subversively legitimates this understanding. This trend may in turn reduce calls for changes to teenage lifestyle in general, such as banning certain videogames, and move towards seeking, analysing and treating students with the potential to be criminally violent on a case-by-case basis.

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# Challenges to the traditional nuclear family

JAMES KELLY

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HISTORY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

Over the course of one hundred years it is unsurprising and somewhat expected that any society will experience change. The twentieth century is one perhaps more defined by change than any other. Change has infiltrated every area of society, from religion to travel, technology and communications, education and politics. This essay will set out to discuss the changing dynamics of the family. To begin, we will discuss the definition of what family is, and consider research into the decline of the traditional nuclear family and its causes. This will be done by considering, in turn, new forms of partnership and declining fertility rates in western society. Commentators have argued that these factors challenge the nature and survival of the traditional nuclear family. This essay will seek to show that the very notion of a traditional nuclear family is both elusive and a-historical. Rather, the family has always been an evolving and dynamic unit, and the rise of alternative forms of partnership, need not be seen as a challenge to the idealized institution of the nuclear family.

## DEFINING FAMILY, DECLINING FAMILY

First, let us understand the terms which will inform this essay. 'Family' has long been seen as a social institution that unites individuals to work co-operatively in the bearing and raising children. (Macionis and Plummer, 2008, p. 580) The family is built upon a mutual feeling of kinship, based on blood, adoption or marriage relations, and traditionally established around marriage. This definition has been challenged by critics arguing that families should not have to conform to the single standard of family, leading to the emergence of 'families of choice.' These units are not based on blood or legal relationships, but around individuals who nonetheless choose to identify themselves as family.

It is these 'families of choice,' which have formed the new types of partnership which challenge the traditional nuclear family. The nuclear family has traditionally been defined as a married man and woman with typically two children. The nuclear family became popularised in the 20th Century, with the 'baby boom' of the 1950's and the 'Golden Age' of marriage in the 1960's. With the rise of divorce in the 1970's, new partnerships began to take shape and challenged the nuclear model. Many countries across the world have begun to see a decline in the nuclear family as it is eclipsed by alternative family structures and partnerships. This is the case, for instance, in many Eastern Bloc countries. Meanwhile, other countries have seen these new forms of partnership become the majority, such as Northern European countries like Sweden. (Sobotka and Toulmon, 2008)

## THE CHALLENGE PRESENTED BY THE DECLINE OF MARRIAGE AND RISE OF DIVORCE

The most striking feature of modern society is the sharp decline of first-time marriages and the rapid rise of divorce, with divorce rates in Europe quadrupling from 1960 to 1992. (Giddens, 1993) In the U.K., divorce is found most commonly in young spouses, couples from lower social classes, professionally or economically successful women and finally, remarried people. (Macionis and Plummer, 2008) Sociologists have proposed a number of key explanations for this surge in divorce. Divorce, they argue, is now in a legal sense, easier to accomplish and is also socially acceptable. Similarly, individualism is increasing, with many people more interested in personal satisfaction than putting family first. In a parallel fashion, women are today less dependent on men and have expectations of careers, whereas in previous

generations, their aspirations and expectations may have differed. (*Ibid.*) All these elements have combined and contributed to the increased popularity of divorce.

Divorce has affected the nuclear family model dramatically and has led to a huge increase in single parent families, with almost one in five families with dependent children headed by a single parent. (Sobotka and Toulmon, 2008) Many researchers have found that divorce can have a serious psychological effect on children, with some sociologists claiming that divorce is linked to adolescent promiscuity. (Sturgeon, 2008) Divorce has also led to an increase in remarriages, with remarriage accounting for one third of all marriages in the U.K. (Macionis and Plummer, 2008) The decline of first-time marriages has led to the average marriage age increasing, causing women to have children later in life. In the EU, the average age of marriage was 28.5 years in 1993, a dramatic increase from the 1970's. (*Ibid.*) It is clear that the rise of divorce and the decline of first-time marriages are key components in the development of new forms of partnership. These in turn can be seen as challenging the traditional nuclear family, and creating what Stacey (1996) has referred to as the 'postmodern family.'

#### THE CHALLENGE PRESENTED BY NEW FORMS OF PARTNERSHIP

These new types of partnerships that have emerged are various and plentiful. To understand how these partnerships have challenged the nuclear family, it is important that we identify the most common forms and how they emerged. Many forms of partnerships act as alternatives to marriage and do not involve children. Possible alternative partnerships and families include co-habitation, same-sex partnerships, "living together apart," singlehood, one parent households and remarriages: which tend to create "blended families" of step-parents and step-siblings. We will look at two important new forms of partnership: co-habitation and same-sex partnerships.

Co-habitation is the most widespread of new partnerships. It is a partnership where an unmarried couple share a household. The number of co-habiting couples has more than doubled between 1985 and 2005 in the U.K. Co-habitation is perceived differently in different countries. In countries such as Albania and Poland, it is a marginal phenomenon, with co-habiting only accounting for 0.2 per cent of 15-29-year-olds' living arrangements in Albania. (Sobotka and Toulmon, 2008) In many European countries, co-habitation is seen as a step towards the marriage process, rather than an alternative to it. In this respect, co-habitation often leads to marriage, especially if the couple

have more than one child. (*Ibid.*)

In Nordic countries, specifically Sweden, co-habitation can be socially indistinguishable from marriage. Co-habitation has overtaken marriage as the most popular choice for first-time unions. Though co-habitation is the closest of new partnerships to marriage, it is by no means a complete substitute. Studies have found that co-habiting couples are more likely to split up, even with children. Moreover, this new form of partnership has legal implications, with the legal rights of fathers varying from country to country, not always sharing the same rights as married fathers. (*Ibid.*) Nonetheless, co-habitation has emerged as a considerable challenge to the nuclear family, with the percentage of people in co-habiting relationships on the rise across the world.

Same-sex partnerships have also become more widespread in recent times as homosexuality has become more socially accepted with many gay 'families of choice,' and many gay couples choosing to raise children of their own. According to Michael Kimmel, in the USA there are an 'estimated 1.5 million to 5 million lesbian mothers and between 1 million and 3 million gay fathers.' (Kimmel, 2000, p. 144) While most countries allow same-sex couples to register their partnership, such as France, very few countries actually legally allow gay marriage. Denmark and Spain are two of the few exceptions. (Sobotka and Toulmon, 2008)

Adoption by gay couples is allowed in many countries and there is a growing acceptance of same-sex partnerships as an alternative to marriage and the nuclear family. Currently, in countries where gay marriage is legal, a same-sex marriage has a better chance of lasting than opposite-sex marriages. While homosexual marriage challenges many traditional conceptions of marriage and family in Europe, the spread of same-sex adoption has seen an increasing number of gay couples seek the same rewards from child-raising as heterosexual couples. (Macionis and Plummer, 2008) It is a strange twist of fate in modern society that finds gay marriage gaining more support and leading to stable marriages, while heterosexual marriage decline and divorce increases. While gay marriage may challenge the traditional nuclear family, legal recognition for same-sex couples allows them to legitimise their families and reflect this increasingly popular choice of alternative partnership.

#### THE CHALLENGE PRESENTED BY DECLINING FERTILITY RATES

Declining fertility rates are a growing problem in modern times; in Europe they have fallen from 2.66 in 1960-65 to only 1.48 in 1995-2000. (*Ibid.*) The problem is even more severe in Japan, with a sharp drop from 3.65 to

1.38. (*Ibid.*) Children, traditionally, have been a key element of the family, with many people regarding partnerships without them as something other than 'real' families. A dramatic shift in the makeup of families has occurred, now that more and more partnerships do not contain children. Nevertheless, it is clear that the decline of marriage is not responsible for the decline in fertility rates. Many sociologists point towards women's greater social liberation, modern contraceptives, abortion, greater levels of sexual permissiveness and the advent of gay rights as factors that contribute to falling fertility rates. (*Ibid.*) The fact that fertility rates tripled in co-habiting couples points to a disconnect between declining marriage rates and declining fertility rates. (Sobotka and Toulmon, 2008) The declining fertility rates are sure to have long term effects for families. As the amount of children born gradually drops, new forms of partnership not centred around children will emerge in societies.

In China, the government has intervened in the makeup of family. From 1980, the one-child policy of the Chinese government has prevented an estimated 250 million births. More girls have been aborted than boys, leading to an imbalance in societal makeup which presents its own unique consequences and challenges for Chinese society. The one-child policy has led to a manipulation of the natural balance of births, and some families in China have even gone to extreme measures to have a second child secretly. The makeup of families in China has changed dramatically and new forms of partnerships have formed, with the traditional nuclear family almost non-existent.

These trends vary from country to country, and also over time. If we look briefly at the state of the family in the UK, we might observe a very different society than that of our grandparents or great-grandparents. With regard to marriage, first-time marriages have fallen from over 300,000 per year in 1950, to less than 200,000 per year in 2005. Meanwhile, remarriage has increased to account for almost 40 per cent of all marriages, compared to 21 per cent in 1971. (Macdonis and Plummer, 2008) There are currently an estimated 150,000 divorces per year in the UK with almost half of all marriages ending in divorce. Additionally, it is important to note, that the UK has the highest divorce rate in Europe. Gay families of choice have also become more mainstream and the life cycle has changed, as fertility rates fall and life expectancy has increased by an average of 25 years. (*Ibid.*) It is clear that the state of the family has changed dramatically in recent times and the UK is a prime case study for this.

It is clear that in recent decades more forms of partnership have emerged, but it could be argued that they do not in fact challenge the nuclear family.



The notion that the 'traditional' nuclear family of a husband and wife with two children has, historically, been rare. (*Ibid.*) At any given time in history, a plethora of family types are to be found. To assume that the nuclear family was the only form and is only now in recent times being challenged, is not a valid argument. As we move towards a post-modernist society, so too will the notion of what family is and it will grow to incorporate greater varieties of families. While the nuclear family will remain a popular form of partnership, it will not be the only one.

## CONCLUSION

Within this essay I have sought to examine the development of the family within society over recent years, drawing upon a wide variety of examples. I have attempted to show that the changing partnerships and new forms of family have not challenged the traditional family. My conclusion undermines the very basis of the argument that new forms of partnership or declining fertility form a 'challenge' to the nuclear family. This essay has attempted to show that although the nuclear family has existed throughout history, it has largely been a token or idealized institution. In reality, the complexities of family life have dictated that throughout history, individuals have inevitably sought to develop their own system, or niche, within which they interact with society.

With this proposal, one uncertainty remains. This essay has shown that the family has changed significantly over recent years, and as a system so fundamental to individuals and societies alike, there remains the question of where these developments will lead. Is it inevitable, for instance, that the pattern of individualisation and autonomy continues, thus alienating individuals from one another (leading to decreased fertility) or, will the rapid rise in dehumanising technology ultimately draw people back together in the familiar relationships and reverse the present trends of low fertility and marriage rates? This remains to be seen.

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# Surveillance in society: An alternative perspective on its relevance to criminology

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SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL POLICY

**T**his essay will set out to discuss the need to examine the increasingly relevant and surprisingly under-studied issue of surveillance in society today. I argue that, to do so, it is helpful and indeed necessary for criminology to adopt perspectives from other fields, such as cultural sociology and popular culture, when tackling this topic. To begin, I outline the essence of the key debates surrounding surveillance before briefly discussing the rationale behind the adoption of other perspectives. Following this, I will consider the ways in which the line between reality and non-reality is becoming more blurred as a result of the political and philosophical struggle to regulate data, and the social and cultural impact of the mass media. I conclude by suggesting a broader perspective be deployed by criminologists to allow for the full picture of these complexities to be encompassed in research, which will surely lead to more effective policy-making.

## SURVEILLANCE IN SOCIETY TODAY: THE DEBATES

*Nothing was your own except the few cubic centimetres inside your skull.*  
– George Orwell, *Nineteen Eight-Four* (1949).

This section will look at the nature of surveillance in society today (later, I will examine the thematic nature of it in popular culture), taking Ireland as an example. At its most basic level, one should remember that surveillance operates in different forms: it is, as Wood (2009) states: culturally, spatially and historically created. Everyday surveillance practices have come about due to the instruction of cultural and political institutions in a bid to provide security, including the security of rights and space. (Aas *et al.*, 2008) However, some commentators feel that it is a totalizing force with unlimited capabilities, which have not yet been realized, in their frightening entirety. (Laidler, 2008)

Laidler writes of the powerful subtleties in modern technologies, which create a surveillance map for the individual citizen of the given society. For example, uttering certain words on mobile phones ('Al Qaeda' is his example) or using satellite navigation systems among countless other technologies all plot this map, thereby contributing to the diversity of the individual's surveillance. This 'map' gives us an impression of a surveillance system which is many times more intricate than the layman's definition of a camera or CCTV, or indeed, the early uses of surveillance for policing. Today, the sociological, socio-political and technological developments of surveillance are now referred to by some as 'the new surveillance,' which also refers to the blurred lines between categorical mass surveillance and that of up-close, suspicious surveillance of the self. (Marx, 2002)

In 2007, the Irish government announced plans to introduce extensive CCTV schemes to an additional sixteen towns, a national DNA database (biometric surveillance), a mandatory registration of pre-pay mobile telephones, and an automatic registration plate recognition systems which will scan all passing cars automatically to ensure they are not stolen or untaxed. This is in addition to Irish law (since 2002) requiring all telephone companies to log details of all telephone calls made, all text messages sent, and the movements of every mobile phone for which they have information, for three years. Increasingly, European law extends this to the Internet, requiring ISP's to log details of users' emails, web use and instant messaging (possibly in response to the proliferation of social-networking use of the internet). The

uses of these government regulations have already come to the fore in testing situations. For example, the case of Joe O'Reilly and the murder of his wife gained widespread public attention. This attention was due in part to the use of digital footprints in Irish courts for the first time. The prosecution case mainly consisted of content in emails, text messages and CCTV footage. (McIntyre, 2007)

Criminologists will ask: does one (be it an authoritative political power or private institution) have the right to act upon any knowledge acquired from these surveillance tools? If minor suspicions of minimal criminal offending arise, does this signal a right to intervene? Considering the political, social, moral, economic and ethical issues attached to these daunting questions, who might regulate interventions, if anyone? Who appoints the regulator? Without doubt, these issues are of central concern, and raise a host of varying questions related to the human condition, morals, privacy and so on. We might ask, therefore, in developmentally intellectualizing surveillance, is society working under the assumption that there is an ideal society? For example, if surveillance is used in an Orwellian/totalitarian manner, we can suggest that the regulators hold a definition of utopia and dystopia in mind. To what extent is one able to interpret the manner in which surveillance is used in our society today, where private corporations can be larger than certain countries economies?

#### PRIVACY, REGULATION AND THE LAW

In response to such anxieties, viewpoints have emerged which, perhaps logically, call for a regulated protection of privacy to be applied in many ways, including legislative. However, such a simplistic response misses a basic paradoxical point identified by Taylor (2002): it is, in fact, the regularly granted demand for privacy (loosely defined as the private space an individual can exclusively control) that drives this need for surveillance and therefore greater privacy. To continue with paradoxes, it is widely accepted that the notion of privacy is utopian at its core, and simply does not work, not least because of its vague definition. (Stalder, 2002) Yet, at the same time, Taylor reports the passage of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the influence of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights in Britain, to include a 'right to respect private life.' Although this has been useful and in turn formalized the need for adequate regulation of surveillance, it remains too imprecise to assuage increasing anxieties associated with surveillance technology.

A similar argument is made by McIntyre (2007) when considering Ire-

land. The Law Reform Commission in 1996 identified a range of deficiencies associated with surveillance in Ireland, which went unaddressed and resulted in a legal vacuum. Moreover, McIntyre states there is no law governing the interception of emails, no law providing for criminal sanctions for the misuse of CCTV systems and no effective oversight of police surveillance. In short, the new surveillance has not been matched by new legal controls, which raise doubts as to whether many aspects of 'the new surveillance' are compatible with the right to privacy under the Constitution and under the European Convention on Human Rights.

Public anxiety regarding surveillance technology has been expressed vocally in the political arena. There are now a host of lobbying agencies supporting the aforementioned vague definition of privacy, such as the Electronic Privacy Information Centre in the United States. It is worth mentioning an interesting comment on politics by Ranciere in Hempel *et al.* (2009) that has a surveillance ingredient: politics is when you create a kind of stage where you include your adversary. This definition of politics refers to the silenced position of the excluded groups, and not institutions. This outlook characterises contemporary society as post-democratic. Nevertheless, the majority of the literature included in this essay calls for the extensive institutional mechanisms which characterise democracy to be put in place with regards to surveillance, to create and maintain accountability, and to punish those who abuse their power. The scepticism surrounding surveillance has made the task of political leadership and governance more difficult, although it is a commonly held view that society must make democracy work; despite the inevitable challenges it will encounter. (Stoker, 2006)

#### MEDIA AND POPULAR CULTURE: 'REALITY,' BLURRED LINES, AND MASS CYNICISM

Undoubtedly, the issue of surveillance controversially touches many areas. The previous section has attempted to explain why people have responded to this perceived threat. We now turn to how people have responded, focusing on the cultural domain. Culture can be said to be the beliefs, values, behaviour and material objects that constitute a people's way of life. (Macionis and Plummer, 2005) Studying culture allows one to grasp a people's interpretation of certain phenomena; in this case: surveillance and the many questions it raises. From the criminological arena, there have been calls for the incorporation of a focus on culture to enhance the discipline.

Although surveillance touches many spheres of social and cultural life,

from the mass surveillance systems on the streets (CCTV) to the advanced systems introduced earlier (in-house security cameras in private settings or biometric surveillance) among almost immeasurable others, I wish to focus on the knowledge or the supposed reality one learns of from surveillance in an alternative setting: surveillance communicated via the media – ‘reality’ television, its culture and so forth. A large quantity of this media communication contains themes of crime and criminal activity. The commercialization of surveillance in the mass media, and thereafter popular culture, has exploded in recent times with certain areas receiving cult status among audiences.

For example, the television show *Road Wars*, screened almost daily on British broadcaster Sky One, involves camera crews following real British police officers on duty. The show has a distinctly cultural slant to it, in that the voiceover has a judgmental tone (littered with British slang) when the narrator summarizes the arrest of citizens over editorialised music. The show has enjoyed considerable success, with close to one hundred episodes made and sold to over seven networks worldwide, and a DVD release planned. This is in addition to online charts of people’s favourite moments on the show and online forums. A social-networking page has also been created recently, gaining thousands of members instantaneously. The quality of such shows, reporting-wise is akin to, if not worse than, tabloid journalism, says Groombridge (2002), yet they are being consumed heavily. An exploration of the effects these media phenomenon are having, and their relevance to criminology, should not be underestimated.

Their significance is linked to Groombridge’s (2002) assertion that analysts and commentators can no longer sustain the separation between the rational/bureaucratic elements of surveillance in such mediums and the affective/aesthetic/entertainment. The author also reminds analysts that employing a psychoanalytic framework to media consumption would suggest that they should be categorised as voyeuristic or scopophilic in that this programming involves the subjection of people to a curious controlling gaze. The psychological allure of such surveillance is alluded to by one author who entitled a journal article, in response to society’s flirtations with surveillance: ‘Surveillance is Sexy’ (Bell, 2009)

Modern culture has glorified elements of these feelings, as can be seen through film. For example, the award-winning film ‘Minority Report’ was adapted from the story by Dick (2000) in which a society was presented where citizens were arrested for crimes they had yet to commit thanks to psychic-like crime-prevention technology. The obvious moral dilemmas



strike the viewer: should we prevent the crimes (and thus arrests from happening) by rehabilitating the soon-to-be criminals or should we assume they are morally evil and destined for criminal engagement? Perhaps the police should just intervene for 'serious' crimes – murder, rape or assault – and not J-walking or 'lesser crimes'?

Another film which directly addressed these questions was *The Dark Knight*. This film deserves mention due to one plot-altering scene related to the regulation of mass surveillance. In it, we witness a scene where Batman has the chance to find his opponent but is stopped by the moral questioning of Lucius Fox, the owner of the telecommunications network of the city who challenges Batman's plan to use his company's surveillance to catch his adversary. Lucius Fox resigns in protest at the implications of using his surveillance for this purpose. Populations, not necessarily regular filmgoers, flocked to see this film, leading to a worldwide gross intake of over one billion dollars. Thus millions of people across the globe were presented with a scenario whereby they, as an audience, have to consider whether the cost of catching the enemy is worth the threat of constant surveillance?

It is crucial that we recognize that films are extreme adaptations and creative interpretations of issues in our society. The questions outlined after each of the above films are the natural queries film-goers have, and despite the, by and large, informal nature of popular film culture, these very queries and the issues attached to them are the same as the queries raised and studied by famous social theorists and criminologists. People's emotional responses to these mediums are found across blogs, magazines, newspapers and radio shows; and help formulate young people's perceptions and opinions of their society. The point is that, for many people in society, it would appear that their engagement with popular culture is the only genuine way they will actually ponder these questions. The key issue in this debate is the entertainmentization of crime and surveillance. As was evident in the earlier *Road Wars* example, this trend can lead to crime holding more weight in the consciousness of the individual.

What we can interpret from the proliferation of surveillance in mass media culture is that there is an acceptance of the evidential credibility of surveillance, despite the unavoidable cynical concerns that go with it. (Fetveit, 1999) This section has attempted to show that there are further cynical questions raised by cultural spectators yet, at the same time, there is a consenting, an almost voyeuristic acceptance of the invasive nature of surveillance used in real life, 'reality' television and film. The overall consequence of this is, in my view, a contradictory and complex cultural stance on surveillance (which

now has a permanent place in the public's consciousness) and a blur between 'reality' and non-reality.

## CONCLUSION

This essay began by informing the reader of the current state of surveillance today before discussing surveillance as a cultural phenomenon, as communicated by the mass media, film and entertainment industry. These discussions illustrate a host of complex issues and questions, and indeed, paradoxes related to this topic. This essay has attempted to show how elucidatory an interdisciplinary and specifically cultural perspective can be in our consideration of crime, surveillance and society. Further research and criminology practice should attempt to incorporate these themes in studies and policymaking. This recommendation follows Groombridge (2002), who advises that studies of camera operatives and control rooms should borrow from film studies and other areas to explore the penetrative ideal of the system. Criminology, an area dedicated to improving crime policies and learning about public perceptions of crime, is only hindered by its refusal to incorporate cultural studies into research and practice, to produce a more informative, variegated discipline.

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SECTION II.

# INTERNATIONAL



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“I would rather belong to a poor nation  
that was free than to a rich nation that  
had ceased to be in love with liberty.”

WOODROW WILSON (1856-1924)



# Explaining the development of dictatorship & democracy: A comparative analysis of Costa Rica & Guatemala

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The relationship between economic development and democracy forms the context of this research paper. This relationship is examined in the context of a puzzle in Central America: why Costa Rica has consistently been a bastion of peaceful democracy in this politically turbulent region, while nearby Guatemala has experienced a long history of poverty and civil strife which continues to seriously undermine the viability of democratic institutions to this day. This paper will attempt to address this question by analysing the domestic variables which have contributed to the two states' distinct political trajectories. The focus on domestic variables is not to discount the considerable internationalisation of Guatemalan politics during the Cold War. We argue that it is these domestic factors which can help to explain the instability of Guatemala in



the twentieth century. It was this climate which facilitated the development of a serious communist political strategy, which in turn incited US involvement there.

In an attempt to solve this puzzle, the paper will be divided into three sections. The first section, "Preliminaries," will provide a brief outline of the relevant theoretical and empirical background information. Particular attention will be given to the issue of omitted variable bias in research design concerning this question. The following section, "Theoretical Framework and Empirical Analysis," adopts a tripartite design. First, Moore's classic thesis will be considered. Second, this thesis will be tested using Acemoglu and Robinson's basic model of repression. Third, in an exercise in theoretical speculation, this paper will consider the potential applicability of Luong and Weinthal's hypothesis to this context. The final section of the paper will provide a brief conclusion on the analysis of this study.

In sum, this study aims to form a loose theoretical synthesis consisting of the useful theorizing of Moore on the relationship of institutional mechanisms and class structure; the testing of Acemoglu and Robinson's less structural and more dynamic approach, which examines the nature of actor behaviour within this broader structural framework; and finally to encourage future consideration of Luong and Weinthal's innovative theorizing.

#### PRELIMINARIES

In his hugely influential 1959 article on the social requisites of democracy, S. M. Lipset discusses the empirical correlation between per capita income and democracy. This perspective has left a considerable mark on contemporary political science research. (Diamond, 1992, p. 93) Lipset assumes a certain linearity in the development of democracy, evident in his central statement that, 'the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy' (*Ibid.*) Despite the fact that Lipset only ever intended to illustrate a correlation between economic development and democracy, the connection Lipset identified is often reinterpreted as one of *causation* rather than *correlation*. (*Ibid.*, pp. 94-95)

Acemoglu and Robinson describe how Lipset's work parallels that of Moore. Despite the fact that Moore believed there were three distinct paths to modernisation, in which democracy was in fact only one (the others being fascism and communist revolution), both he and Lipset adopted a broadly "structural" approach, highlighting how underlying socio-economic factors ultimately shaped the emergence of democracy. Acemoglu and Robinson

build from the work of Lipset and Moore, but they aim to merge this actor-based and structure-based distinction by adopting models based on the political economy. (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006, p. 86)

Acemoglu *et al.* begin by critiquing the research design of Przeworski *et al.*, a much-cited work in this area in recent years. (Acemoglu *et al.*, 2008, p. 810) The authors point to the potential problem of omitted variable bias. Przeworski *et al.* focus on the relationship between monetary levels, or thresholds, of economic development and democracy. Nevertheless Acemoglu *et al.* point to possibly more fundamental factors which they claim are simply too important to assume away. They conclude from their broad analysis of the relationship between income and democracy over the last five-hundred years, that, although the two are positively correlated, there is in fact no evidence of causation. 'Instead, omitted – most probably historical – factors appear to have shaped the divergent political and economic development of various societies.' (*Ibid.*, p. 836) An objective of this research paper is therefore to consider how this issue of omitted variable bias could be mitigated. This paper contends that the structure of resource-ownership provides an interesting and fruitful variable for future research design in this area, in order to better explain both economic and democratic development.

Until the early nineteenth century, the histories of Central American states were, in general terms, quite similar. Both countries are former Spanish colonies, and both gained independence from Spain in the first half of the nineteenth century. This was achieved not by the native population, but rather by the culturally Spanish elite who agitated against the officials sent by the Spanish crown to rule the colonies in the name of the empire. The subsequent wars of independence and the conflict between the new states severely disrupted the development of political, administrative, and economic institutions. (Diamond and Linz, 1989, p. 4) As a result, the absence of large landed estates in Costa Rica, which encouraged the formation of a large class of small farmers, is a notable anomaly in Central America. In considering this omitted variable, or variables, in the assessment of the modern development of these two countries, the most fruitful area to consider may be geographical factors, following this period of transition. Both nations have a long history of agricultural production in which coffee was of central importance. Therefore, the following analysis section of this paper will be conducted by focusing on the resource of coffee, a major economic factor of these two nations from the nineteenth century onwards.

## MOORE'S THESIS: CLASS STRUCTURE AND THE NATURE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

Rather than providing a direct explanatory dimension to this paper, Moore's analysis offers some useful insights and hypotheses that may be applied to the present context. Moore develops a 'structural' approach which emphasises the underlying socio-economic factors which determine the viability of democracy, and highlights two basic interrelated conditions from his detailed analysis that shape democratic development.

The first is the 'development of a balance to avoid too strong a crown or too independent a landed aristocracy,' while the second is 'a turn toward an appropriate form of commercial agriculture.' (Moore, 1966, p. 430) Regarding the first condition, this "balance" refers to the adequate development of a middle class in conjunction with elite power. The middle class has long been considered a crucial determinant in the development of democracy, a hypothesis dating back to ancient Greek philosophy. This class has been described as acting as a 'buffer' between the rich and the poor. As a middle class's share of society grows, inequality between the rich and poor decreases, thereby making democracy a less costly strategy for the elites. (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006, pp. 277-78) The second interrelated condition concerns the nature of commercial agriculture. This condition reflects a widely-held assumption in modern political science: that industrialists are less likely to repress democratisation as they can more easily retain their wealth, in the form of capital, than landowners, who will face greater challenges to retaining their more tangible assets.

## ACEMOGLU &amp; ROBINSON'S MODEL

In an attempt to empirically test both of Moore's 'structural' hypotheses, Acemoglu and Robinson provide a very useful model of repression. Their approach, which focuses on relevant actors in the context of economic development, is heavily based on the work of Dahl. The authors describe how Dahl's theory of democratisation explains why incumbents decide to either democratise or to repress, which is based on a cost-benefit analysis of each strategy. This decision is shaped by factors, institutional and structural, that influence the calculation of these costs, such as income growth and industrialisation. (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006, p. 79) This basic model of repression constitutes a parsimonious three-class model of society, consisting of the rich elites, the middle class, and the poor. While a basic assumption of this paper is that

the broader 'structural' factors heavily shape the behaviour of the relevant actors involved, applying this political-economy model to the analysis will help to elucidate the dynamics that operate within this institutional framework.

Jeffery Paige's extensive study of coffee production in Central American societies reveals that the large scale of the middle class was indeed a crucial impetus in inducing the elites in Costa Rica to adopt democratic institutions. This was in large part seen by elites as an acceptable, low-cost strategy, as it provided the most practical medium to solving disagreements between the classes. In contrast to this, when the middle class is small or poor, as was indeed the case in Guatemala, repression is more attractive to the elites. (Paige, 1997, p. 87)

Paige also illustrates the industrial nature of the coffee elite in Costa Rica, and the absence of it in Guatemala. The nature of the ownership of coffee production seems to account for how the industrialisation of the elite in Costa Rica also resulted in the economic development of the middle class (an issue discussed in the next section). As previously noted, the more unequal a society is, the more the rich have to lose by conceding to demands from below for democratisation. Consequently, they choose to use repression to prevent this from occurring. This simple statement concisely encapsulates much of Guatemala's authoritarian history.

Moore's thesis has therefore been shown to be valid in this context by employing this basic model of repression. Both the relative size of the middle class, and the industrial organisation of coffee production, prevented, in Moore's terms, an 'aristocratic-bourgeois coalition against the peasants and workers.' (Moore, 1966, p. 431) The parsimonious model of repression helps to explain basic actor behaviour between the elites and the middle class in each of these countries.

#### LUONG AND WEINTHAL: RESOURCE CURSE AND THE STRUCTURE OF OWNERSHIP HYPOTHESIS

We now turn to consider the manner in which the structure of ownership of coffee cultivation can further help us to understand the development of socio-economic stratification in these two nations. As noted, coffee can be classified as a major resource of each country. (Paige, 1997) Throughout the political science and economic literature, resources are often described as a "curse," an obstacle to democratisation rather than a stimulant. This perception has been particularly influential in the academic discourse of African economic development. Luong and Weintal provide an innovative critique

of this common perception of the “resource curse” which is informative in the context of Guatemala and Costa Rica. They argue that social scientists have been largely misguided in analyses which attribute this “curse” directly to the generation of external rents from these resources in boom periods, which fuel corruption and hamper the development of a democratic society. (Luong and Weinthal, 2006, p. 241)

Instead, the authors make the simple, but previously ignored or unrecognised, contention that the presence of a resource itself does not lead to a curse, but rather that the ownership structure of these resources is an important determinant. The authors point out that ownership has been designated as a constant in previous studies, rather than a variable. (*Ibid.*) They posit that ownership structure will be a defining factor in the concentration of wealth, which will either lead to the impoverishment of the state, or in the diffusion of wealth, enriching the state as a whole. Bearing Lipset’s thesis in mind, the nature of this economic development will undoubtedly be an important determinant of democratic development. It must be noted that Luong and Weinthal focus solely on modern petroleum-rich states, but as we are considering the course of development over the last two centuries, broad patterns of ownership are of interest only. Regardless of the specific focus of their research, the authors’ general model provides a highly elucidatory framework within which these broad patterns of ownership can be analysed in a wide variety of circumstances.

Luong and Weinthal begin by explaining how large amounts of state ownership and control by foreign investors is expected to cause ‘incentives for building institutions’ to ‘diverge’ resulting in a “hybrid” institutional outcome. (*Ibid.*, pp. 247-50) The main reason for this divergence is that state elites will prefer discretion, in order to control the external rents that the production of resources create, and therefore extreme institutional flexibility, while foreign investors will desire stable and transparent institutions. The expected outcome of this division is for these states to develop compromise institutions designed specifically for the resource sector alone. One can make the logical inference that this underlies the institutional basis of the coffee aristocracy’s prolonged position of power and wealth in Guatemala. Indeed, Acemoglu and Robinson note how forced labour was used up until the mid-twentieth century in Guatemala, while government policies actively curbed labour mobility and stultified labour’s ability to organise itself collectively.

Both countries did experience large levels of outside investment from the nineteenth century onwards. However, while state and investor elites also developed in Costa Rica, and largely controlled the means of production, the

land remained privately owned by ordinary citizens. With such privatisation, the relationship between the various classes of society resulted in ‘incentives for building institutions’ to “converge,” resulting in a “strong” institutional outcome. (*Ibid.*, 2006, p. 248) The nature of this relationship encourages mutual incentives for creating stable and broadly applicable institutions, as these institutions reduce transaction and monitoring costs, and increase fiscal predictability by building formal guarantees, such as a stable tax regime. (*Ibid.*, 2006, pp. 248-49) This symbiotic relationship could well explain the pronounced civic and democratic culture, and in turn political stability, that Costa Rica has experienced since the nineteenth century.

While it must be admitted that the external application of the variable of structure of resource-ownership is an endeavour in theoretical speculation on the part of this paper, considering economic and democratic development within this framework has yielded interesting conclusions. Future research may further explore the development of models based on structures of resource-ownership in modern times, prior to the onset of the rapid technological and communications expansion in the operation of the world economy in the course of the twentieth century.

## CONCLUSION

Lipset’s thesis has been impressively robust, with almost all studies conducted since revealing a consistent and strong positive relationship between economic development and democracy. (Diamond, 1992, pp. 108-09) This is certainly what the analyses of Moore and Acemoglu and Robinson reveal. Diamond states that there is a strong conceptual and theoretical basis to infer that this relationship is in fact causal, and one should not rule out ‘the very real possibility of reciprocal causation’ between the two variables.

Although the conclusion of this essay highlights the importance of broad structural factors in shaping economic and democratic development, it also suggests the significance of specific forms of institutional structures, rather than broad levels of economic development. For example, an in-depth historical analysis of the structure of coffee ownership as an independent variable could help to explain, as indicated by this preliminary analysis, why Costa Rica produced not only an unusually efficient form of production, but also relatively egalitarian and cooperative relationships between the three major classes of society, namely the rich elites, the middle class, and the poor. One could logically infer that the spread of this practice throughout society as a whole was due to the central importance of coffee production as the prime

economic activity. Indeed, Costa Rica has long been noted for its vibrant civil society. (*Ibid.*, p. 127)

Of course, it must be stated that the issue of omitted variable bias is inherent in any social science study, yet to show an acute awareness of this has been a concern of this short paper, hence the focus on broad historical developments, a strategy proposed by Acemoglu *et al*, as discussed earlier. This paper may also help to guide future research in this exciting area, encouraging students to think carefully and creatively when designing their investigations into the origins of dictatorship and democracy.

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# Inheriting the burdens of colonialism: The residual impact of colonial socio-political structures on modern Fiji

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**T**he small Pacific islands of Fiji have seen four coups in the last twenty years, the most recent taking place in June of 2009. Although this latest coup was bloodless, the current 'interim' government is likely to retain power until the proposed 2014 elections. Following the June upheaval, self-elected Prime Minister Commodore Frank Voreqe Bainimarama expelled the world media, in addition to the ambassadors of Australia and New Zealand on the grounds of interference with internal affairs. President Ratu Josefa Iloilo proceeded to abolish the constitution and suspend all judicial appointments. These developments are characteristic of the social and political unrest that have marred

Fiji's political life since independence.

This article will examine how Fiji reached a state of chronic socio-political instability by considering the impact and legacy of colonialism. It is the contention of this essay that traditions of tribal segregation and race-based divisions established during Fiji's colonisation have contributed to the prevention of the establishment of a liberal democracy in the country. This essay will argue that the effect of these practices on Fiji has created a two-tiered citizenship and aggravated unstable political conditions. This essay will begin with a consideration of the three primary principles imposed under colonial rule, examining both the original goals and actual effects of these practices. Thereafter, the essay will address whether, in the light these factors, any foreseeable resolutions to the chronic unrest can be found.

#### NATIVE PROTECTION AND NATIVE POLICY

The United Kingdom conquered and subjugated the islands that comprise modern day Fiji in 1874. The United Kingdom's colonial interest in Fiji was primarily strategic, to expand British Empire into this remote part of the Pacific. Their attitude towards running and regulating this colony was that it should be maintained with as little administrative and financial expenditure as possible. Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon was the first Governor General of the island, imposing a plan to minimise the fiscal strain on Whitehall. His policies can be divided roughly into three categories: "indirect rule," "native policy," and "native protection." (May and Selochan, 2004)

The first, and perhaps most influential of all the policies adopted in the colonial era were the 'native protection' policies. (*Ibid.*) The goal of native rule was to secure long-term economic independence for Fiji. The policy essentially consisted of establishing a colonial system in which the British were not merely 'paternalistic governments...which gave little heed to the political aspirations of the native peoples.' (T.W. Wallbank, 1934, p.1) Sugar plantations were widely established by the English planters and administration. Gordon maintained that the use of Fijian labour undermined his goal of creating an economically equal and self-sufficient society, one of the proclaimed goals of the governor's "native rule" policy. His solution was to use the Indian sub-continent as a source of labour for the new plantations. The first indentured Indian labourers arrived in Fiji in 1879, and by the time they were granted freedom in 1916 Indo-Fijians comprised roughly 37 per cent of the population. The creation of what is commonly referred to as Fiji's 'plural society' is one of the principle causes of political and social strife. (Fraenkel and Firth,

2009)

In Fiji the two groups – Indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians – are viewed by much of the Fijian population as monolithic and distinct entities, with traditionally opposing political views. This opinion is reinforced by the acceptance in international circles of the 1987 coup as stemming from primarily racial conflicts. Despite the fact that most commentators have reported an array of socio-political reasons for this first collapse of the democratic structure, Fijian politics are essentially viewed as racially orientated and divided along ethnic fault lines. (*Ibid.*) The validity of this view is questionable; however, there can be no doubt that the explosive intermingling of race, politics and culture have and will continue to have a substantial effect on the political culture of the country.

The introduction under colonial rule of what was termed “native policy” was at the time innovative, creating a system where by lands not already ‘legally’ granted to white settlers were distributed among the native islanders. (May and Selochan, 2004) This policy was intended to make Fiji the exception to colonial rule’s tradition of native unrest, as an increased degree of economic equality was sought between the native Fijians and the English planters. However, the manner in which the land was distributed among tribal groups has led to a lasting inflexibility in Fijian land ownership. The policy resulted in a system which bears little resemblance to that of the pre-colonial state, in which land was divided on a tribal basis. (*Ibid.*) This policy can also be seen as partially to blame for the problems surrounding the efficient and equitable use of land resources on the island and for the difficulties that surround the transfer of land to persons who are not members of the tribe to whom the lands were originally granted. The constitution introduced at independence in 1970 entrenched the indigenous land rights of native Fijians over those of the Indo-Fijian population, adding an ethnic dimension to the land tenure conflicts which were already tribalised in nature. (Cottrell and Ghai, 2007, pp. 1-2) This issue of land ownership rights was brought to centre stage during the elections of 1987, as well as in the rhetoric justifying the subsequent coup.

Both the aforementioned policies have created imbalances in Fiji, which are accentuated by the long-standing “paramountcy of interests” doctrine, introduced by Gordon. (May and Selochan, 2004) This doctrine was instituted to promote the interests of indigenous Fijians above those of other races on the island. Though introduced primarily as a safeguard against the exploitation of the natives, the doctrine resulted in the institutionalisation of an Indo-Fijian second class. The Paramountcy doctrine also enabled the colonial

power to promote themselves as champions of the Fijian people and their rights. (*Ibid.*) In modern day Fiji, the doctrine has served as a rallying cry for the representatives of the eastern provinces, traditionally aligned with the Alliance Party (the most dominant political party in Fiji, largely concerned with the representation of indigenous Fijian interests). The party has also served as a political vehicle for native eastern Fijian chiefs, who maintain that equal rights for Indo-Fijians would contradict native Fijian interests. The basis for their claim is that the doctrine preserves the supremacy of the native Fijian rights, and its abolition would redistribute the land among the entire population, and not simply the small tribal groups which currently hold the majority of the land. (*Ibid.*)

Even after the Indo-Fijian population was enfranchised in 1929, the “paramountcy of interests” doctrine continued to bar them from land ownership. (Lawson, 1990, p. 183) They were not part of the tribal groups to whom the land had been granted – which led to a dependency on purely industrial activities. The result was an increasingly affluent, industrial Indo-Fijian population, while the indigenous population remained largely dependent on agriculture and other traditional primary activities. This abrupt reversal of status served only to further emphasise the development of parallel cultures and communities in direct opposition, rather than in symbiosis.

#### INDIRECT RULE AND ITS EFFECT ON POLITICAL PATTERNS

The third policy introduced under Gordon was that of “indirect rule.” In an effort to minimize administration costs, Britain created a Parliament system where the system of election was based on tribal voting areas, necessitating less manpower imported from England. (May and Selochan, 2004) However, institutionalising tribal structures from the eastern regions of Fiji as though they were uniformly applicable across the country proved problematic. The regions which had a foreign system of representation imposed on them became fragmented, often only electing a representative by a marginal majority. This in turn led to inaccurate representation of voter opinions in Parliament, instability in the governance of the affected regions and a decrease in their political influence. (Fraenkel and Firth, 2009)

By contrast, the eastern region was united, electing figures from a strong, relatively homogenous and coherent support base. Eastern representatives would later go on to create the Alliance Party, the foremost political group and most powerful political entity in the modern state of Fiji. The dominance of eastern-based representatives must be noted here. Gordon’s system of rep-

resentation meant that most of the candidates voted into office were either of indigenous or of European descent, and therefore often aligned with the Alliance Party. The Alliance Party has traditionally promoted the rights of native Fijians and those of European descent at the expense of the rights of the Indo-Fijian population. Indo-Fijians could generally expect to be elected only as a representative of the eight 'general members,' returned as representatives of the 'other races' on the island. (May and Selochan, 2004)

The constitution of 1970 reaffirmed the notion that any government other than one endorsed by the Alliance Party would not be supported, undermining the fundamental idea of representative democracy. Beyond the formal superficialities of the constitution, which claimed to endorse democracy, it can have little credibility as a representative document for a democratic state as it allows for the overthrowing of any Government which is not composed of an Alliance Party majority. While on the surface the constitution endorses the publicly agreed procedure for the transfer of power, in actuality it institutionalised a one party dominant system. (Lawson, 1991; May and Selochan, 2004)

#### THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION

The success of the Labour/NFP coalition in the 1987 election exemplifies how tribal divisions have enhanced rather than hindered political stability. The victory was not the result of a surge in coalition parties' popularity, but rather dissatisfaction with the Alliance Party, and the securing of the 'other races' vote by Labour/NFP. Only 10 per cent of their votes came from the indigenous Fijian voters in one of the lowest voting turnouts in a decade. (May and Selochan, 2004) A coalition founded on such an unstable platform was liable to crumble at the slightest tremor in public opinion. Moreover, the subsequent boycott of the parliament by members of the Alliance Party and the implicit consent signalled by the silence of their leader Ratu Mara provided the army with a rationale to instigate a coup d'état only six weeks after the election.

The election of 1987 and subsequent coup ultimately led to the recognition, in the new 1997 constitution, of equal ethnic rights. It must be emphasised, that the constitutional review commission came under severe pressure in the wake of its decision – a warning sign that such an abrupt and profound change from the previous constitution was not fully endorsed by the majority of the population. This once again highlights the fact that in Fiji any advance for the rights of one group of society is viewed as having a reciprocal, negative effect for the other group. Essentially, the ethnically divisive colonial policies

advanced under British rule have led to politics being highly ethnicised and tribalised in present-day Fiji. In addition, the politics of power, rights and influence are viewed as a zero-sum game, a perception which, unchanged, will continue to hinder the creation of a democratic political and civil culture.

## CONCLUSION

While Fijian credibility dwindles internationally, Prime Minister Bainimarama's domestic political position is coming under increasing pressure. In August his two most prominent rivals, Laisenia Qarase – who was deposed as prime minister in 2006 and continues to retain a strong support base amongst the native Fijian population – and Mahendra Chaudhry, leader of the Fijian Labour Party, united in opposition to his government. Both men want fresh elections by October 2010. (*The Economist*, 2009) This political alliance must be encouraged to explore the benefits of mutual respect and cooperation in an adversarial system of representation.

Despite this alliance, this article argues that in light of recent events, and the now entrenched interventionist role adopted by the army, it is unlikely that any such dispensation or subsequent election could provide more than interim relief from the current situation without a fundamental shift in the ethnicised and tribalised basis of political competition in Fiji. The lasting effect of the policies introduced by Gordon has been that little incentive was created for the indigenous Fijians to move towards real engagement or equality with their Indo-Fijian compatriots. The effect of colonial principles on Fiji has been to create a two-tiered citizenship and a political situation, which will continue to hinder the realization of stable, durable democracy in the region.

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# Shared background, different outcomes: A comparison between Mongolia & Turkmenistan's transitions from Communism

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HISTORY AND POLITICS

Most scholars of democratisation have considered the proximity to Western Europe, and the impact of the European Union to be crucial for a successful transition to democracy among post-communist states. Nevertheless, there is an exception to this perceived rule: the case of Mongolia. Mongolia is often forgotten in discourse about successful transitions among post-communist states, even though the country has been a relatively stable democracy since the Soviet collapse in 1990. At that time, Mongolia possessed few of the factors considered to be necessary for a successful democratisation and had been, for most of the twentieth century, a poor, single-party Soviet satellite. (Fish, 1998, p. 1) This essay will attempt to examine what factors favoured Mongolia's democratisation by comparing its transition with

that of Turkmenistan.

Turkmenistan and Mongolia shared several common features at the time of the Soviet collapse; yet, Mongolia became a democracy while Turkmenistan became one of the most authoritarian regimes in the world. In order to meaningfully compare these two cases, this essay will consult some of the theories concerning the process of democratic transition from communism. The focus will be on the importance of geographical location, an active civil society, the balance of power within the new state and the existence of natural resources. It will not examine transition theories' various components in detail, only in the context of post-communism. Finally, this essay will focus on the process of transition and not on consolidation, as consolidation has not yet occurred in the case of Turkmenistan.

#### DEMOCRATISATION THEORY

The fall of communism, beginning in the late 1980's and finishing with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, provided scholars with the perfect opportunity to analyze democratisation. Different theories emerged to explain why some post-communist states became democracies when others did not. Lipset's classical structural pre-conditions for democracy already existed in the Soviet bloc – education, urbanisation and industrialisation – therefore the importance of other factors became the focus of research. (Åslund, 2007, pp. 236-240)

Samuel Huntington considers the transition of the post-communist states to be a part of the third wave of democratisation. Nevertheless, there are several factors in the transition from post-communism which differ from previous experiences of the third wave of democratisation. As the transition was economic in addition to political, it has been suggested that it is unique. (Gill, 2002, pp. 197-201) Åslund suggests a correlation between political freedom and economic liberalisation; although it must be noted that the transition from central planning to market economy has been far more successful than democratisation among the post-communist states. (Åslund, 2007, pp. 207-215, 236-240) Capitalism has been considered an important factor in promoting democracy but far from a guarantee. An active civil society, an autonomous state, redistribution of resources, non-exclusion of classes and support from the international community are also important components to take into account. (Grugel, 2002, pp. 44-46)

It has further been suggested that norms, values and ideologies played little or no role in the transition from post-communism, and that the outcome

of transition instead came to depend upon the balance of power within the new states. An unequal distribution of power assured a more stable transition, and the dominant ideology decided the outcome: democracy or dictatorship. (McFaul, 2009, pp. 212-244) All these different theories illustrate the complexity of the study of transitions to democracy. Different theories stress the importance of varying factors, such as the rate of economic development, a strong civil society, external influences or an elite class who are supportive of change. (Grugel, 2002, pp. 56-67)

#### GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

Several scholars posited geographical location to be a crucial factor for democratisation among the post-communist states. A pattern was discerned by some scholars who argued that countries in the North-Western hemisphere became democracies due to close ties to the European Union and the Catholic Church, while Muslim countries South-East became authoritarian. (Gill, 2002, pp. 194-203) It has been suggested that the European Union provided the post-communist states in Eastern Europe with market access and promotion of wealth, democracy and justice, in the presence of a further enlargement of the European Union. (Åslund, 2007, pp. 307-311) However, the positive influence of European Union was restricted to the potential new member states in Eastern Europe and no similar force promoted democratisation further East, as in Mongolia. (McFaul, 2005, p. 5) Mongolia is often not included among the post-Soviet countries; perhaps, due to its ethnic makeup, it often ends up in the same category as China, North Korea and Vietnam. Scholars may also overlook this post-Soviet satellite because its democratic institutions belie its authoritarian past: in 2009, Freedom House designated Mongolia among the world's 'free' countries. (Freedom House, 2009) This pattern does not appear to conform to the theories of post-communist transition that stress the crucial impact of closeness in culture and geography to Western Europe. (Åslund, 2007, pp. 207-215)

This pattern is all the more striking when one considers that the country had been under Russian/Soviet protection since its independence from China in 1911. (Jeffries, 2007, pp. 1-3) Mongolia became an established communist state in 1924 and in the years following it became a Soviet satellite. The same programmes were implemented as in the USSR, promoting urbanisation, collectivisation and industrialisation. The USSR enjoyed cheap access to Mongolia's natural resources and promoted cultural features, such as the adoption of Russian as the second language in education, followed by special

privileges for the Russian population. (Rossabi, 2005, pp. 30-35)

Turkmenistan shared many geographically common features with Mongolia on the eve of the Soviet collapse in the early 1990's. Both countries were scarcely populated and characterised by large territories with a great proportion of the rural population engaging in nomadic practices. In addition, politically, neither of the two countries had any previous experience of democracy. (Fish, 1998, p. 2) Similar to Mongolia, Turkmenistan became independent in 1991, after being an autonomous Soviet republic since 1924. (Landau and Kellner-Heinkele, 2001, pp. 28-31) Today, Turkmenistan is considered to be one of the most authoritarian regimes in the world, scoring seven (the lowest possible score) both in terms of political rights and civil liberties by Freedom House. (Freedom House, 2009)

#### CIVIL SOCIETY AND BALANCE OF POWER

It has been suggested that alongside geographical considerations, there are two other crucial differences which could have affected the political trajectories of Mongolia and Turkmenistan. The impact of civil society was arguably crucial in Mongolia's transition towards democracy. The recent Soviet examples of *glasnost* and *perestroika* inspired peaceful student protests in Mongolia in December 1989, demanding fundamental changes to the current political system. Protests continued and opposition grew until president Khoral promised free and fair elections would be held in July. It is posited that the strictly non-violent practices of the opposition aided this successful outcome. Despite the opposition losing the country's first-ever open election, Mongolia's transition did not end. A close dialogue with the opposition continued when a new constitution was negotiated in 1992, and a reform program was adapted towards market liberalization. (Pomfret, 2009, p. 151) Further evidence of a successful transition was the change of name to 'Republic of Mongolia' on the 28 November 1991, and the peaceful transition of power after the opposition: 'Democratic Coalition' won the election in 1996. (Jeffries, 2007, pp. 12-15) The positive response from the Communist party towards the demand from the opposition suggests the importance of bargaining in the process of democratisation. (McFaul, 2005, p. 220)

Mongolia is an exception among post-communist states, in that an equal distribution of political power resulted in a relatively peaceful transition to democracy as opposed to an internal conflict. (*Ibid.* pp. 223-224) A strong national "father figure" did not exist in Mongolia in 1990, while in Turkmenistan the old Communist party leader Saparmurat Niyazov remained in pow-

er. (Jeffries, 2007, pp. 12-15) It has been suggested that no liberal parties had time to develop in Turkmenistan due to the sudden collapse of the USSR. (Åslund, 2007, pp. 206-207) In addition, there was no strong pressure from the opposition for change; therefore the old power structures were never abolished. While the 'Communist Party' changed its name to the 'Democratic Party,' the December elections of 1991 were neither free nor fair, as the opposition was suppressed and later banned. A new constitution was implemented in 1992 by Niyazov, which made the President both head of state and the government, and the same year he won the presidential election by 99.5 per cent. (Gill, 2002, p. 79)

It has been suggested that Mongolia enjoyed the advantage over Turkmenistan of already being a sovereign state, with established borders and a recognized national identity. (Pomfret, 2009, pp. 150-151) By contrast, in order to gain legitimacy in his recently-independent state, Niyazov relied on the development of an extreme personal cult, portraying himself as a national leader through symbols such as monuments and portraits in public places. (Olcott, 1993, pp. 97-99) Niyazov's personal rule was cemented in 1999 when he was elected president for life. Turkmenistan since its independence has remained an isolated, neutral state with a strict centrally-planned economy. (Landau and Kellner-Heinkele, 2001, pp. 28-310) The situation has not changed appreciably since the death of Niyazov in 2006, when the previous deputy Prime Minister Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov became president. (*Ibid.*)

#### NATURAL RESOURCES

Another important difference between the two countries is the presence of natural resources. In the case of Mongolia they are lacking, while Turkmenistan, on the other hand, is the second largest gas producer among the post-Soviet states in addition to being rich in oil. (Plater-Zyberk, 2007, pp. 3-7) Due to its rich natural resources, Turkmenistan is not as industrialised as other post-communist states, a factor which has been linked by some to less successful democratic transitions. (Landau and Kellner-Heinkele, 2001, pp. 28-31) More importantly, Turkmenistan never experienced the same desperate need of aid as Mongolia did in the early 1990's. In fact, Mongolia's lack of natural resources could explain its successful transition to democracy. (Jeffries, 2007, pp. 3-12) In the late 1980's, 30 per cent of Mongolia's national GDP consisted of Soviet support and there was rapid development of industries, especially mining. (Jeffries, 2007, p. 64)

The withdrawal of Soviet aid to Mongolia in 1990 caused the greatest ever decline in gross national expenditure a country ever experienced in peacetime. (Pomfret, 2009, p. 149) One would argue that the favourable support and soft line attitude towards change in the old communist establishment could be explained by the extremely difficult financial situation Mongolia faced at the time. Soon Mongolia started to redirect its foreign policy in order to find a substitute for Soviet aid. In 1991 Mongolia became a member of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Asian Development Bank. It has been suggested that the impact of these institutions has been favourable in fostering both democracy and a market economy. (Rossabi, 2005, pp. 35-40, 246-51) By contrast, Turkmenistan declined membership of the World Bank and engagement with the IMF, illustrating a clear lack of support for the democratisation demanded by these international institutions. (Olcott, 1993, p. 95)

#### ADDITIONAL FACTORS

There are further factors which could have affected Turkmenistan's non-democratic outcome. There are over one hundred different ethnicities within the country and there are tight tribal connections in the region. Mongolia on the other hand has an ethnically homogenous population. One might even speculate counterfactually that had it not been for the strong leadership of Niyazov, who practiced discrimination against the ethnic minorities, Turkmenistan might have entered an armed internal conflict as was the case in the civil war in Tajikistan. (*Ibid.*, 1993, p. 101)

The impact of religion, particularly Islam, has also been considered central in the literature. While the majority of Mongolia's population is Buddhist, the majority of the population in Turkmenistan is Muslim, though the practice of religion was suppressed both during the Soviet era and under the regime of Niyazov. (*Ibid.* p. 102) However, there has been little evidence to show conclusively that religion would foster specific political values in Central Asia, as it has been suggested to be just one among a multitude of social identities. (Rose, 2002, pp. 102-111)

#### CONCLUSION

The study of democratisation is incredibly complex. Different theories stress the importance of different factors as crucial in promoting democratisation. Mongolia and Turkmenistan are two countries which share several

common features – demography, geographical location, economy, and little or no previous experience of democracy. In addition, for the majority of the twentieth century, both countries were wholly or partially under the influence of the Soviet Union. By examining why two countries with such a similar background follow such drastically divergent political paths resulting in democracy or dictatorship, this essay has tried to identify those additional factors which may have affected the transition.

It is frequently asserted that the positive external influence from Western Europe and the European Union had a crucial impact upon the successful democratisation in Eastern Europe, as the former Soviet Union became increasingly influenced by internal factors. (Dimitrov, 2009, p. 78) Analysis of Turkmenistan shows how stable authoritarianism can be explained by weak ties to the West, a strong centralized regime in control of the economic resources and the absence of private enterprise. (Way, 2008, pp. 60-65) However, this theory does not explain Mongolia's successful transition to democracy. Mongolia's democratisation can be partially explained as a consequence of the economic collapse following the Soviet withdrawal of financial support. This situation made the Communist party more open to the reform demanded by the strength and vibrancy of organised civil society; and the country's openness to international agencies which further promoted democratisation. Mongolia's successful democracy serves as a positive example of how countries seemingly lacking most factors that promote democracy can, with the presence of just a few factors, make successful transitions.



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SECTION III.

# IRELAND & EUROPE



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“As long as the differences and diversities  
of mankind exist, democracy must allow  
for compromise, for accommodation, and  
for the recognition of differences.”

EUGENE MCCARTHY (1916-2005)



# Ideology in Ireland: An investigative study

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BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL STUDIES

Given that there are so many variables when comparing nation-states – geographic, historical, cultural, social, religious, political and economic – it is arguable that the starting point for any such comparison ought to be rooted in history rather than in political science. Are not most nation-states best understood in terms of their unique history? And Ireland – as has so often been observed – is an exception to all the rules as a political system ‘without social bases.’ (Mair and Marsh, 2004, p. 235) Historians have pointed to various periods in domestic history to explain why Irish politics has been comparatively devoid of ideology and ‘a left-right divide.’ This essay examines these competing arguments while also acknowledging the impact of global forces on Irish politics in recent decades. Finally the essay looks at how Irish politics, particularly the Labour Party, may be affected as both domestic and global volatility interact in the current time of economic crisis.

## A FREEZING MOMENT

Many scholars point to the seminal events that occurred between 1918 and 1921 to explain the lack of the left and ideological politics in Ireland. (Man-

ning, 1972, p. 7) In the 'crystallizing' 1918 election that replaced a generation of incumbents from the Irish Parliamentary Party with a new wave of politicians devoted to the National Question, voters were not given the option of voting on the class issue. (Farrell, 1999, p. 33) While 1918 removed the old-school nationalists, their successors and the citizenry they represented were to be split within three years over the Treaty of 1921. Carty, Whyte and Sinnott – all arguing from different perspectives – centre their theses on this 'freezing' moment in Irish politics which has determined the course of party politics ever since. (Sinnott, 1984; Byrne, 2009)

In discussing this 'freezing moment' Garvin argues that it is the chronology of Irish history, more than the events themselves, which has shaped the development of politics in Ireland. The second half of the nineteenth century saw the most rapid change mankind had yet experienced with the onset of the industrial revolution in Europe and the United States. This soon resulted in the political mobilization of the masses as capital and labour struggled for control of the new wealth and resources. However, Garvin points out that mass political mobilization had come to Ireland before such an ideological battle existed, aided by the leadership of O'Connell and later Parnell as Ireland sought political and cultural independence in the nineteenth century. (Garvin, 1981, pp. 1-6) In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century – when other nations were debating what kind of a state they should be – Ireland was still fighting for statehood itself. Ireland was also remarkable for its low level of industrialization, which was concentrated in soon to be separated Belfast. (Farrell, 1999, p. 33) Although the labour movement grew in prominence in Ireland, most notably during the 1913 strike and lockout (Gilmore, 2009), the pursuit of independence and sovereignty was deliberately and consciously prioritised ahead of it for these reasons. Indeed de Valera famously declared 'Labour must wait,' (Whelan, 2009) while the Irish state was established; and this obliged fielding no candidates in the definitive 1918 election. (Weeks, 2005)

#### A LONG TIME WAITING

The unfortunate truth for the Labour Party was that, whatever the reasons for its failures at this critical juncture, the dynamics of Irish politics in the 1920s were to remain constant for the best part of half a century. In exploring the dynamics in Irish politics in more recent years we must also ask why they did not change sooner. It could be argued that the establishment of the Irish state prioritised by de Valera took just over 40 years to complete. After the

violent struggle for independence led to the Treaty and the Irish Free State, W. T. Cosgrave and his government adopted a conservative stance as they sought to secure the stability and viability of the new state in the aftermath of revolution. (Manning, 2009) With a young and inexperienced cabinet facing extraordinary challenges, much of the day-to-day workings of the state were left to civil servants who had been trained in the fiscally conservative British system. (Byrne, 2009)

When Fianna Fáil came to power in 1932, de Valera embarked on a personal crusade to rewrite the Treaty until it resembled Document No. 2 – the name given to de Valera's preferred alternative to the Treaty in the immediate aftermath of its signing in December 1921. (Bowman, 1982, pp. 109-46) This ensured that nation-building remained the state's primary focus into the 1930s. Sean Lemass later acknowledged that de Valera's pro-labour, populist policies – such as social housing, farm subsidies and protectionism – offered a further explanation as to why Labour failed to progress in this period. Asked why there was such a weak labour movement in Ireland, he replied: 'Because Fianna Fáil is the Labour party!' (Whelan, 2009) De Valera's nation-building continued with the onset of World War II, as he sought to use the war to further assert Ireland's sovereignty through neutrality. (Bowman, 1982, pp. 207-8) After The Emergency, Ireland continued to struggle at the edge of a depressed Europe and it was only in 1959 when Sean Lemass developed a series of root-and-branch economic reforms that Ireland began to modernise and political dynamics showed signs of changing. (Farrell, 1999, p. 36)

#### A NEW WORLD ORDER

By this time, however, it was too late for Labour. A new explicitly capitalist western order had been solidified as both America's economic imperialism and fears about communism grew - leaving very little chance of a surge in growth for a historically socialist party. Not that the attempt wasn't made; in the 1969 election Labour stood on a platform that the Seventies would be socialist. (Gilmore, 2009) Fine Gael also tried; firstly through the Just Society programme proposed by Declan Costello (Mair and Marsh, 2004, p. 235), and most successfully in their positioning as a social democratic alternative to Fianna Fáil under Garrett FitzGerald. (Gilmore, 2009) Fianna Fáil meanwhile continued to be the definitive 'catch-all' party (Mair and Marsh, 2004, p. 238); simultaneously managing to enjoy the left-of-centre associations derived from de Valera's populism along with a pro-business reputation from the policies practiced by Lemass, Lynch and Haughey. (Whelan, 2009) The



passing of time had also made Labour's challenge infinitely more difficult at a local level, where their candidates faced better-resourced Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael TDs, with the incumbency factor in their favour.

As their attempts failed and the global political spectrum continued shifting rightward, the Labour Party, like other "labour" parties in the UK and France, gradually moved away from any socialist or communist origins towards 'progressive capitalism,' as free-market principles became assumed as a constant. (Gilmore, 2009) Indeed any aggregated ideological differences that may have existed between the policies of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael have too faded, as the Reagan and Thatcher philosophies that led into America's victory in the Cold War became perceived, for a period at least, as signalling the 'end of history.' (Fukuyama, 1992)

Thus Irish politics moved from being devoid of ideology due to historical circumstances to being consumed by one dominant ideology influenced by global economic forces. This is an important distinction to make; the dynamics of Irish politics have been changing over the last few decades – the majority of Irish voters no longer remember the Civil War, for one thing – however, these changes have been partly hidden by a global ideological consensus.

It is difficult to pinpoint an exact moment when it became apparent that the Treaty polarization was being eroded by more practical social and economic concerns, but the combination of factors which led to it were as a result, both directly and indirectly, of an increasingly globalised world in the second half of the twentieth century. Farrell and others point to the Lemass national planning programme in the late 1950s as the starting point (Farrell, 1999, p. 36); other important factors were the social liberalisation movements of the 1960s and Ireland's accession to membership of the European Economic Community in 1972. Other commentators noted that the acid test for social change was the voting behaviour of a new generation of young, urban, educated, middle-class women who now represented the mainstream in Irish society and demands differing from those of their parents and grandparents. Whatever defining moment is preferred, Ireland was urbanising and modernising, belatedly trying to keep up with the rest of the world, and along with many other changes this created new parameters for Irish politics including a growing trend in party detachment. (Mair and Marsh, 2004, pp. 240-1)

Not that they have been immediately obvious; up until 1980 four voters out of five still voted for either Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael. (*Ibid.*, pp. 236-7) Voters do not seek out change without a need to do so and that need did not arrive overnight. However the ascent of the Progressive Democrats (PDs) - and

with less radical results the Greens, Sinn Féin and Democratic Left - marked the end of decades of a two-and-a-half party system driven by historical factors. (*Ibid.*, p. 236) The more recent demise of the PDs has been used by some to indicate a return to the old party system, but this is to miss the point that the three founding aims of the PDs - economic liberalism, social liberalism and unity by consent - have since been integrated into the platforms of Fianna Fáil. (Collins, 2005, p. 4)

The societal battles over the socially controversial topics of divorce and abortion are one example of how Ireland was changing at this time. In 1980, for instance, only one TD in the entire Dáil publicly supported divorce - by 1995, not one party stood against the legalisation of divorce. (Bowman, 1995) Social conservatives and the Catholic Church may have opposed this change but there was no real ideological battle between left and right. A new politics, or what came to be known as the 'third way,' had arrived - indeed it arguably gained power in Ireland through the first coalition of Fianna Fáil and the Progressive Democrats before it came to prominence in the US and UK through the two men who have come to be most associated with it, Bill Clinton and Tony Blair. (Giddens, 1998)

## CONCLUSION

Clearly Irish politics has had an unusual relationship with class ideology in comparison to its Western neighbours. The dominance of The National Question and the subsequent Treaty polarization produced a freezing moment in Irish politics at a time when ideological issues were secondary. While the passing of time and societal modernisation have produced significant changes in the dynamics of Irish politics in recent decades - with many of the old certainties redundant (Mair and Marsh, 2004, p. 236) - the coinciding new world order of neo-liberal capitalism has minimised the political volatility that might have come to be expected with such changes. (Barring the exception of the election of 1987.) Indeed, the adoption of the Third Way has seen nations such as the UK and the United States - whose histories have been marked by polarizing ideologies - shift to the Irish dynamic based in the centre.

At least, this was the trend in political alignment until just over a year ago. The global economic credit crunch of 2008 shocked the world order and saw its free-market capitalist model pushed closer to the brink of total collapse than at any other time since the Great Crash of 1929. Suddenly ideological battles have been reopened as left-leaning groups around the world seize on

the crisis as evidence that the free-market principles accepted as a norm since the end of the Cold War do not work. The debate has re-opened.

Irish politics has been no different, and now the Labour Party has a realistic chance to create a three-party system. Indeed in recent opinion polls, Labour has overtaken Fianna Fáil for the first time in its history; opinion poll shows the Fianna Fáil core vote on 16% and Labour's core vote on 18%. (Collins, 2009) The perception that capital is receiving massive bailouts while labour is left to fend for itself has awakened the possibility of the first fundamental realignment of the political parties since the election of 1918. With favourable leadership popularity results compared to their main opposition counterparts and their two rivals on the centre left not in a position to capitalise, the next election represents the greatest opportunity the Labour Party may have to develop into a majority party in Irish politics. In theory of course this should create genuine ideological politics for the first time in the history of the state, as the left finally offers a viable alternative to the centre-right.

In practice this seems unlikely, however; despite recent events having rocked the economic boat the global rightward shift previously alluded to has not been significantly reversed. Indeed in last year's European elections left-wing parties actually lost public support while the recent ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, and perhaps most tellingly, Labour's support for it, confirms that the future direction of all EU countries will be based in fundamentally free-market economics. Ireland's electoral system also makes compromise and coalition likely no matter who is in majority. (Sinnott, 2009, p. 127) In so far as the injection of true ideological politics is concerned even Labour themselves acknowledge that they cannot live up to the original meaning of their name. This does not mean Labour's electoral advantage is diminished – Eamon Gilmore has been open about his willingness to embrace the centre in order to campaign and govern successfully, (Gilmore, 2009) and allied with this, the Labour brand is perceived as offering a break from the mistakes of the past and promising a fairer future. Thus, although the changing dynamics will not offer the Irish electorate a real break from the past, they do offer the Labour Party one – and Eamon Gilmore is working hard to seize it. After ninety years of his party waiting, who would blame him?

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# Lobbying regulation in the EU: A comparison with the USA & Canada

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Interest groups are perceived in a different light in every political system, and are therefore treated differently in every political system according to its experience with interest representation and its objectives. In essence, interest representation is a legitimate and integral part of democracy, effectively qualifying lobbyists as credible political actors. An interest group pursuing their goals in the political arena by lobbying, or attempting to influence policy-making, is ostensibly consistent with the spirit of democracy. Beyond a rich, open democratic dialogue between interest representatives and political institutions, interest groups are well-known for providing information and technical expertise to ensure enlightened policy formulation.

While theoretically consistent with the principles of democracy, in practice, interest group influence can sometimes lead to political corruption, the inequality of representation, and the overcrowding of political institutions. As a result, some political systems find it prudent to regulate interest representation. Such regulations are to be considered not simply as written or un-

written standards and practices, but legal statutes passed by the government that must be followed by interest groups when influencing government, with penalization for non-compliance. They seek to ensure accountability and transparency to the policy-making processes and legitimizing its practice by structuring and regulating the relationship of political actors and interest groups.

In examining the EU's lobbying regulations, it is useful to consider them within a comparative framework. A comparison enables us to explore whether the efforts of the EU to regulate lobbying are, in fact, comparatively weak, and to discern whether or not it would be prudent for the EU institutions to create more robust regulatory statutes in light of the information provided by the comparison. To do so, both a comparative qualitative and quantitative analysis will be done concerning each aforementioned political system. Qualitative analysis will consider the measures promulgated in legislation, while quantitative analysis will be based on Center for Public Integrity (CPI) scores to measure the strength of lobbying regulations in each system. (See NOTE at end of text)

#### THE EU AND ITS INSTITUTIONS

The complex multi-level system of policy-making in the European Union yields an equally complex system of interest representation. An actor attempting to influence policy in the complex system of the EU must deal with sub-national, member state, and the multiple supranational institutions. (Greenwood, 1997, p. 27) Complicating the system further is the rapid growth in the number of interest groups in the EU over the past ten to fifteen years. This trend in increasing interest group representation also seems set to continue, though perhaps at a slower rate, in the future. (Lehmann and Bosche, 2003, p. 53) It is for these reasons that difficulties arise when considering, prioritising, and structuring the plurality of interests in the EU. Despite the complexities and growth of lobbying in the EU, which undoubtedly create potential for complications, the EU has responded with a *laissez faire* approach to the regulation of lobbying.

When judging lobbying regulation, it is sensible to consider the nature of interest representation relative to the objectives of the system in interacting with interest groups. Indeed, the EU's approach to regulation may appear weak in comparison to countries with a richer history of lobbying, but the present rules and practices are perhaps consistent with the present *objectives* of the EU. (Chari et al., 2007, p. 422) We may find, however, that these objec-

tives change in the future, requiring a reconsideration of regulation policy.

The institutional actors of the EU responsible for the formulation and implementation of policy include the Council of Ministers, the European Commission, and the European Parliament. Each institution is responsible for a different function in policy formulation and implementation, and is therefore pursued by lobbyists in different ways and at different stages of policy formulation. Naturally, then, each institution has a unique relationship with lobbyists.

The Council is meant to represent the interest of the member states and has the ability to reject or amend proposals that are put forth from the Commission and to determine the long-term goals of the EU. (Chari and Kritzing, 2006, p. 21) It is often considered to be the least accessible of EU institutions because of its allegiance to the member states. It keeps no list of lobbyists and holds the position, according to an informal reply from the Council Secretariat in 2003, that 'all contact with lobbyists and NGOs is handled by the European Commission.' (Lehmann and Bosche, 2003, p. 42) If a lobbyist is to attempt to persuade the Council, it will be through national channels; therefore, it has no need for EU-level regulation.

The Commission is responsible for EU interests. It has the exclusive right to initiate EU legislation in a number of policy areas and is responsible for ensuring that members comply with such. (Chari and Kritzing, 2006, p. 25) As a result, lobbyists view the Commission as the primary institution where interest representation begins. (Lehmann and Bosche, 2003, p. 40) The Commission openly welcomes outside input, holding that the process of lobbying is fundamental to policy formulation, and placing a high value on an open dialogue with outside interests that offer specialised and technical expertise. (Greenwood, 1997, p. 2) It is now recognized that the Commission often concentrates on an 'inner core' of dominant interest, resulting in lobbyists directly targeting this inner core. (Malone, p. 11) The existence of this secondary lobbying tactic is evidence that there exists an inequality of access to the Commission, a result, in part, of an unstructured relationship between institution and interest representation.

The representative body of the European Parliament (EP) has the power to approve, amend or reject legislation in a number of policy areas, and influence the appointment of commissioners. In terms of lobbying, the Parliament has become a desired target for lobbyists since members of the Parliament became directly elected in 1979. (Malone, p. 11) The Parliament is seen by some as the most open of all European institutions and is considered a 'natural target for...non-business interests.' (Greenwood, 1997, p. 42) However-



er, some scholars have argued that direct lobbying of the Parliament in effect amounts to indirect lobbying of the European Commission, where it is perceived that the real opportunity to influence policy-making lies. (Lehmann and Bosche, 2003, p. 40)

#### THE EU AND THE PRACTICE OF INTEREST GROUP INFLUENCE

An extensive network of interest groups is involved in policy-making in the EU. It is estimated that there are 2,600 interest groups and 15,000 individual lobbyists based in Brussels. (ALTER-EU, 2009) The stakes for special interests include influence over regulation, promotion, integration, and funding. (Greenwood, 1997, p. 11) EU institutions are subject to outside influence and it stands to reason, then, that they are equally susceptible to the harmful consequences of unethical and unstructured lobbying. The EU is no stranger to concerns regarding equality of access to institutions, and lobbying abuse. It has experienced scandal, overcrowding, and aggressive styles of lobbying. (Lehmann and Bosche, 2003, p. 36) It therefore seems ironic that the target institutions of outside interests are, at best, feebly regulated.

The European Parliament is the only institution with formalised lobbying regulations. Due to concerns of lobbying abuse in the 1980s and 1990s, the Parliament began investigating lobbying across the EU institutions. These investigations prompted the Galle, Ford, and Nordmann reports, which called for minimalist standards of regulation ensured through a code of conduct, for both outsiders and members of the EP, and a registry. Its regulations mandate registration of lobbyists, although lobbyists are required to provide comparatively less information than in the US and Canada. Information that lobbyists must provide only includes limited details surrounding their lobbying activities. Further, lobbyists must abide by a code of conduct. Quantitatively, the low-regulated EP has been scored 15 CPI, a failing score on the CPI Index.

As the initiator of legislation, the Commission seeks specialised information from reputable interest groups, and has a reputation for being the most accessible of all institutions for lobbyists. (Malone, p. 11) **In response, however,** to the pressure for transparency prompted by the Ford report issued by the Parliament in the early 1990s, it began, and continues, to encourage a policy of self-regulation of interest groups, in order to forestall regulation and promote an open, structured dialogue as well as ethical behaviour. (Greenwood, 1997, p. 84) Despite having a reputation for being the most accessible institution, the Commission stands by its encouragement of self-regulation and only offers a voluntary lobby register, rather than formalising regulation. Sta-

tistics published by ALTER-EU suggest that the voluntary register has failed to ensure transparency: 'Only 593 out of the estimated 2600 Brussels-based lobby organisations have registered (22.8%).' (Olivier, 2009)

With such lax regulation governing interest representation to the Parliament, and no formalised regulation applied to the Commission, it is clear that interest group regulation across the institutions of the EU is markedly weak. Contrasting this practice with those found in the United States and Canada provides an interesting perspective on possible alternative strategies and approaches to lobbying and regulation which the EU might consider as its needs and objectives change over time.

#### THE UNITED STATES

The United States' government has the longest history of, and arguably the most experience with, lobbying regulation of all governing bodies considered in this essay, and even has a claim to the origins of the term. (Hansen, 2006) As a result, the US exists as an ideal base level example from which a comparative evaluation can be made. It has experienced the corruption associated with lobbying, its overpopulation of governmental institutions, and inequality of interest representation and consideration. Modern scholars of US politics and lobbying recognize not only a pluralism of represented interests in the US, but a 'hyperpluralism.' Some scholars argue that this has rendered the US institutions ineffective policy makers. In his book, *Government's End*, Rauch calls the result of this phenomenon 'demosclerosis', a literal clogging of the democratic institutions as if they were arteries. (Rauch, 1999) The US has been continuously challenged to strike a balance between the First Amendment rights of the billion-dollar lobbying industry and providing its institutions with a structured relationship with accountability and transparency. (The Center for Public Integrity, 2003)

Starting in the 1930s, the US Congress sought to ensure accountability in interest representation by legislating regulatory statutes in reaction to scandals concerning commercial lobbying. (Chari et al., 2007, p. 422) The legislation was widely considered deficient and required further legislation. To regulate further, The Federal Regulation of Lobbying Act of 1946 was enacted, covering anyone,

*who by himself, or through an agent, or employee or other persons in any manner...solicits, collects, or receives money or anything of value to be used principally to aid...the passage or defeat of any legislation by the Congress.*

In addition, the Act required the submission of financial records of lobbyists. (Malone, p. 21) Once more, the Act was rendered inadequate by its own loopholes and unenforceable conditions. It was not until 1995, however, that the act was repealed and replaced by the Lobby Disclosure Act, which was further amended in 2007. In these measures, regulations were strengthened by widening the definition of a lobbyist, requiring the registration to both the House and Senate of all individual lobbyists, and requiring semi-annual reports that list issues of interest, institutions contacted, the lobbyists involved, and the association with any foreign actor. Although the various attempts to regulate interest regulation over time were each in turn criticised for continuing to allow loopholes and reinterpretations, the presence of such formalised, legalised regulation is in stark contrast to the lax and informal approach of the EU.

This regulation, moreover, is evident throughout the various levels of American political society. To date, there is not only federal legislation, but state-level legislation in every state other than Pennsylvania. (Chari et al., 2007, p. 423) In many cases, this state-level legislation is considered stronger than its federal counterpart. For example, the state of Washington ranked first out of the fifty states with a CPI score of 87. Furthermore, over half of the states boast a score of over 60, a passing grade in the CPI scale. US federal regulations were given a CPI rating of only 36 after its 1995 reforms. In 2007, after the introduction of amendments under the Lobbying Transparency and Accountability act of 2006 and the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007, federal regulations scored 62.

The increased regulation further restricted the ability of lobbyists to offer gifts to government officials and provided further transparency through more frequent activity reports. Subsequent reforms were recently made under the Obama Administration in the 2009 Recovery Act by barring gifts from lobbyists and a 'revolving door' ban for as long as he is president. (Stolberg, 2009) Such measures would be anticipated to raise the US federal CPI score. Research indicates that the strengthening of lobbying regulations in the US has had a 'positive impact on the conduct of public policy,' and has created a 'new era of openness and professionalism in government,' but regulations have yet to ensure equality between interests. (Malone, p. 22) Nonetheless, despite the fact that interest group regulation in the United States remains flawed, its greater formalisation, and the consistent and continuous commitment of different administrations over time indicates its relative strength when contrasted with that found among EU institutions.

## CANADA

As does the US, Canada has lobbying regulations in place at both the federal and provincial levels. Regulations were introduced in 1989 in reaction to a consensus calling for legislation which would mandate the publically available registration of lobbyists as a means to promote transparency and accountability. (Chari et al., 2007, p. 422) **In response to this call, The Lobbyists Registration Act** was introduced, defining lobbying as direct communication with federal officials ‘for the purpose of influencing the formulation or implementation of public policy and mandating registration,’ which only required a very limited information set. (Malone, p. 8) The Act was amended in 1995 to require more information concerning lobbying activities and a code of conduct based on principles such as ‘integrity, openness, and professionalism.’ (Malone, p. 8) The act was amended further in 2003 in Bill C-15 to clarify the definitions of lobbying in order to close loopholes.

Quantitatively, Canada, on the whole, is moderately regulated. Under its most recent legislation, Chari, Murphy, and Hogan rate the Canadian Federal legislation with a CPI score of 50 and rate the regulatory statutes of the Provinces in a range from 33 to 48. The latter of these scores falls within the ‘failing’ category of the CPI index, although this categorisation is contentious. While Canada is widely considered comparatively more regulated than many other systems in the world, some hold its legislation is weak in comparison to US statutes. (Chari et al., 2007, p. 423) Nonetheless, as in the US, lobbyist regulation and the resulting transparency of professional lobbyist activities are seen as a ‘healthy development in governance.’ (Malone, p. 8) **When contrasted with the EU**, moreover, it is abundantly clear that even a moderately regulated system has several more stringent safeguards in place than those found in the European Parliament or the Commission.

## THE EU – A RE-EVALUATION?

When considered in this comparative framework, the European Union’s efforts to regulate lobbying do indeed appear weak. ‘Eurogroups,’ however, are also often considered quite weak in terms of their effectual influence. (Grande, 2001, p. 13) Understandably, in the present perception of interest groups, they could fairly be characterized as valuable assets to EU policy formulation and implementation who pose a relatively minor threat.

We might then conclude that the EU’s objective in relation to interest groups is to allow for the free flow of specialised information, so long as it

does not harm the integrity of the institution. It is plausible that the EU's current efforts to regulate lobbying are comparatively weak, but are consistent with the EU's objectives and goals. Because of the nature of the EU as a political institution, it could be argued that it is naturally insulated from the harms of lobbying that the US or Canada might not be. Firstly, the Commission is not selected by popular vote, thus, decision-makers do not rely on campaign contributions in the way that Congressmen and Senators might. Moreover, the EU does not have the same public finances to allocate that a conventional nation state might have. Instead, its function is to implement regulation that increases the efficiency of the market – a process which is facilitated by the flow of specialised information.

This is not to say that the EU would not benefit from stronger regulations. Experience in both the US and Canada suggests that regulations have promoted openness and professionalism in the practice of interest representation. Furthermore, both Canada and the US still allow for a rich democratic dialogue and may limit how one is to go about influencing policy, but have ultimately sought a balanced compromise which reflects the unique political circumstances in each respective state. As a result, we may conclude further that the EU would benefit from a more professional and transparent policy-making process and should therefore create more robust legislation to prevent lobbying abuse. This would in turn serve to promote ethical behaviour as the practice of lobbying inevitably grows and becomes more sophisticated.

NOTE: CPI scores (CPI 2003) range from 0-100, 100 being a system with the strongest regulatory legislation. These scores are based on a survey containing 48 questions addressing eight key areas including the definition of lobbyist, individual registration, individual spending disclosure, employer spending disclosure, electronic filing, public access to a registry, enforcement of regulation, and revolving door provisions. *Quantitative evaluations were originally based on the U.S. federal and state level legislation*, but authors Chari, Murphy, and Hogan (2007, pp.424-425) apply the CPI method to Canadian, German, and EU lobbying regulations, offering comparative insight.

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# Why is Russia not a democracy? The Putin era

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Less than two decades ago, the leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus signed the agreement that dissolved the USSR. After the collapse of Soviet Union, many Western political scientists argued that the new Russia would eventually democratize and become a free market economy. Indeed, some said that it was on its way toward civil society. Many believed that President Yeltsin would honour his promises of democracy, freedom and a better life. It appears, however, that Russia has failed to meet these expectations, and today remains the only authoritarian state in Europe.

Despite the recent success of the Russian economy and the changes in its domestic and international policies, Russia continues to be identified as undemocratic. Indeed, in Freedom House's most recent assessment in 2009, Russia remained in the category of 'not free.' This essay will seek to explore why Russia has been placed in this category and analyse the central factors preventing it from successfully transitioning to democracy. In doing so, it will look at the period from 2000 to 2008, the eight years in which Vladimir Putin presided as President of the country. It will furthermore outline the major democratic challenges that Russia faces today, such as international accountability, electoral fraud, and the violation of basic human rights and



freedoms.

#### DEFINING AND MEASURING DEMOCRACY

In assessing why Russian political conditions do not meet the criteria of a democracy, we must develop a framework in which we understand how the concept is measured. Joseph Schumpeter describes democracy as being '[an] institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote.' (1942, p.250) Schumpeter's definition suggests that countries differ only in terms of the degree to which institutional conditions are satisfied, rather than the specific 'method' in which decisions arise. An alternative measurement is put forward by Robert Dahl. In *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (1971), Dahl proposes what is now called the 'minimalist' classification of democracy, defining it by listing certain criteria that need to be satisfied, namely; the existence of free and fair elections, freedom of expression and association, inclusive suffrage, the right to run for public office and the existence of alternative sources of information in society.

This essay follows Dahl, Schumpeter and Przeworski (1999) in adopting a 'minimalist' classification framework, as this allows us to establish concrete, identifiable criteria against which the state apparatus can be measured. The most common measure of this kind is known as the Freedom House index. The index refers to two attributes: political rights (e.g. freedom to vote, compete for public office, and join political associations) and civil liberties (e.g. freedom of expression and belief, freedom of association and personal autonomy). These attributes are measured through the use of a five-point answering scale in which a total of ten questions are asked on political rights and fifteen on civil liberties. Countries are assigned an overall score, ranging from one to seven; a higher score indicating a lower degree of freedom. In 2002, Russia was in the category of 'partly free' countries but by 2009, it had dropped into the 'not free' category, scoring six out of seven in the overall evaluation (the political rights score was six and civil liberties was five).

#### THE PUTIN ERA

Following the unexpected resignation of Boris Yeltsin in 2000, Vladimir Putin appeared to be assigned the Presidency by his predecessor. Indeed, Lilia Shevtsova (2005, p.73) refers to the elections of 2000 as the 'elections without a choice.' In circumstances similar to the elections which took place

in 2008, it seemed that the public and the opposition knew that the candidate chosen by the President would inevitably hold the office. Indeed, in the 2000 elections, opposition parties received just 37.7 per cent of the total vote with the majority of votes (52.9 per cent) going to Vladimir Putin. (Centre for the Study of Public Policy, 2007)

Following Putin's election to the Presidency of Russia, many Western political scientists suggested that he would introduce a new era of democratisation. Certainly, 'the [2000] elections ... afforded Putin his golden opportunity to pull off a transition within the Russian transition,' (Colton and McFaul, 2003, p. 3) but not in the way that might have been expected. Instead, he pursued an agenda that would become known as the 'managed democracy,' (*Ibid.*) which sought to establish the government's control over all spheres of political and civil life. Indeed, it appeared to be characterized by the suppression of many democratic principles such as freedom of the media, the ability to form or join interest groups, and the absence of civil liberties. (Petrov and McFaul, 2005) It established full control of electoral process while corruption, both in government and the civil service, became prevalent. Putin appeared to be establishing a political system characterised by a strong presidency and weak institutions.

The executive strengthened itself with the removal of regional elections and direct appointment of the governors by the President himself, centralising the political power within the Russian state. This change in the political structure facilitated Putin in channelling views into the various regions of the country. (National Intelligence Council, 1999) Former KGB officials, also known as *siloviki*, began to dominate both federal and regional government, holding key political positions. Such was the extent of the increases in the powers of the President that the new system in place became known as a 'super-presidency', with top political offices reserved for the President's trustees. (Shevtsova, 2005, p. 17)

From the outset, it seemed that Putin was determined to crack down on media criticism of his regime. (*Ibid.*, p.77) National television and media as well as several television channels and big newspapers were overtaken by "Kremlin-friendly" organizations. It furthermore appeared that the few journalists who dared to criticize the performance of the government became increasingly unsafe. Some were forced into exile and others, such as Anna Politkovskaya, were killed. (Horsley, 2007)

However, rather than stir the public into a state of outrage, these developments seemed to underpin a sense of public alienation and indifference. As Eckstein *et al.* put forward:

*Public cynicism about the democratic process, especially the widespread corruption and unaccountability at all levels of government, as well as the transparent Kremlin infighting and manipulation of election campaigns on television, was reflected in broader and deeper mass apathy and atomization.*

*(Eckstein et al., 1998, p.131)*

#### THE SEPARATION OF POWERS

As Montesquieu argues in his famous discussion of the English Constitution in Book XI of *De Esprit des Lois*, a formal 'separation of powers' between the executive, legislature and judiciary plays a vital function in keeping 'checks and balances' (Dyson and Adams, 2003, p.67) that are widely considered to be an essential safeguard of a democratic system. It appears, however, that Putin's Russia has been characterised by a degradation of this system, with the legislative and judicial branches of government falling subservient to the executive.

In October 1999, before the resignation of Boris Yeltsin, United Russia (a party sympathetic to Putin), emerged and gained popularity. It has since dominated the parliament, and its support of the President has given him *de facto* control over the legislature. While opposition parties do exist, it seems that they do so under severe political pressure. In 2006, a new party, Fair Russia, emerged with a centre left ideology, but also adopted a pro-Putin stance. As Nikolai Petrov points out, the creation of the new party became indicative of a move away from independent and 'self-created' parties towards 'Kremlin projects', parties that many would argue were simply obedient subjects of the government. (Petrov, 2007) At present, United Russia holds 64.3 per cent of the seats in the Parliament, making it the majority party, reducing parties such as the Communist Party (11.57 per cent) and the Liberal Democratic Party (8.14 per cent) to minority status.

The issues highlighted by the fusion of powers between the executive and legislative branches of government are compounded by what appeared to be Putin's control over the judiciary. The call for reforms of the judiciary system began well before *Perestroika*, when courts were seen as mere machines to express the decisions made within the then-dominant Communist party. (Amsterdam, 2007) Putin made it clear from the outset that his goal was to establish a formal political presence in the court system. This was reflected in the President's direct appointment of a "chairperson" granted the power

to monitor judicial decisions. This allowed for the removal of independent-minded judges such as Alexander Melikov, who refused to follow the directive of the Moscow City Court Chairperson. With judges facing very real threats to job security, this exercise of control further facilitated Putin in his efforts to influence case decisions.

The effects of this development were illustrated in a report by Transparency International, in which it was observed that the judicial system in Russia was 'characterized by gross violation of individual rights and freedoms, failure to comply with Russian legislation' and the rule of international law. (Transparency International, 2007) Moreover, a further result of the politicization of the judicial branch manifests itself in low levels of public trust in the court system. In a survey by a Russian think-tank, INDEM, 78.6 per cent of the respondents believed that they would rather not resort to the courts because they did not expect to find justice. (Amsterdam, 2007) Bribery in courts is widespread, leading to judges making decisions on cases based on the financial asymmetry between the parties, favouring the higher bidder. (*Ibid.*) Moreover, due to judicial decisions, the Russian state controls a third of the country's oil industry, along with most resources and a large portion of the capital stock. (Rosefelde and Hlouskova, 2007, p. 222)

#### THE STATE, SERVICES AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Alongside widespread corruption of the state apparatus, corruption appears to be present in spheres of life ranging from medical services, police protection, schools and higher education, to obtaining landing property and passports. (INDEM, 2005) This prevalence of a bribery culture inhibited the equal distribution of services, with people on lower incomes unable to afford access to basic services.

Discrimination based on race, religion, gender, sexuality and ethnicity continues to persist within society as immigrants and women continue to occupy lower positions at the work place and the safety of religious minorities is uncertain. Religious discrimination often takes the form of hate crimes or the use of legal impediments to prevent minority religions from practicing their religion. (Dow, 2008) This manifested itself in the denial of permits to hold services and open churches unless the religion could demonstrate it had existed for at least fifteen years. This denial of freedom of expression is suffered not only by ethnic minorities, but organizations such as trade unions face reprisals for strikes and similar actions, further curtailing the independence and freedom of civil society. (Rosefelde and Hlouskova, 2007, p. 221) All of

these factors combine to deter the development of democratic practices and allow for the civil, political and social freedoms and rights which are a prerequisite to the development of a durable democratic system. Furthermore, this widespread corruption, coupled with the failure to meaningfully separate the powers of the state apparatus as discussed above, suggests the need to address the more profound issue of political culture in Russian society.

#### IS TRANSITION POSSIBLE?

Michael McFaul (2005) points out seven factors necessary for successful transition to democracy. He assesses that the presence of a semi-autocratic regime; an unpopular incumbent; united and organized opposition, capable of mobilizing masses; the ability to uncover falsified election results; an independent media; and the division among political forces all provide for the possibility of a country successfully becoming a full democracy. In assessing Russia, McFaul's criteria indicate that the transition is unlikely to take place without a radical change in political and civil society.

The extensive government control over all political institutions allows for the concentration of power in the hands of the majority party that can match policy outcomes to its needs, denying the opposition any influence over political practices. Putin's popularity as leader and his image of being 'Everybody's Man' allowed him to appeal to all strata of society. (Shevtsova, 2005, p. 70) Neither Communist nor Liberal Democratic parties have the ability to mobilize enough mass support to oppose the government because of the lack of popular leadership. Both Gennady Zyuganov (Communist Party of the Russian Federation) and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy (Liberal Democratic Party of Russia) have been representing these parties since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Indeed, it seems that their inability to show initiative during the years of turmoil reduced their credibility in the eyes of the public. It is difficult, however, to determine whether the disparity in popularity is a natural product of their performance, or whether the state's influence on the media facilitated this condition.

The elections in 2000 and 2008, which took place on both government and federal levels were widely considered to be fraudulent, increasing the uneven distribution of power among the competing parties, favouring the incumbents who supported the government. (Dalziel and Haslett, 2000) United Russia's control of Parliament allows for Presidential control over the legislature. Putin's control of both branches moreover affected his ability to appoint judges and combined with his ability to influence case decisions,

he effectively controlled the judiciary. As long as the media is subject to the threat of violence and hostile government actions, the public cannot be guaranteed the alternative sources of social and political information identified by Dahl as a necessary condition in free and democratic societies.

## CONCLUSION

This essay has argued that contrary to the projection of many Western political scientists several years ago, democracy has become an increasingly distant possibility since Putin took office in 2000. Indeed, the Freedom House indices from 2002 and 2009 indicate a worrying downward trend in the country's political trajectory, from 'partly free' in 2002 to 'not free' in 2009. Furthermore, Russia fails to meet the definitional criteria of democracy outlined by both Schumpeter and Dahl. The competitive struggle for votes, which Schumpeter outlines, could never take place without a free press and freedom to run for public office. Similarly, elections under these circumstances could never be considered free and fair, as described by Dahl.

Looking at McFaul's seven factors for successful transition to democracy, Russia fails to accommodate all of them. Thus, during his period in the presidential office, Vladimir Putin did not move the country toward democratization. Certainly, Russia does not appear to be reverting back to the Communism. Putin acknowledged himself that 'anyone who wants [the Soviet Union] restored has no brains.' (Parfitt, 2007) It seems, however, to be following its own way, that which Vladimir Putin once called, 'sovereign' or 'managed democracy.' (Colton and McFaul, 2003, p. 3) How long this trend will continue is unclear, but it is hoped that by identifying those critical factors which are preventing a meaningful transition to effective democracy, political scientists can not only learn from conditions in Russia, but also contribute to the debate with a hope to addressing these challenges.

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SECTION IV.

# THEORY



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“Theory helps us to bear our  
ignorance of fact.”

GEORGE SANTAYANA (1863-1952)



# What is the maximally democratic extent of the franchise?

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In modern democracies, the question of the franchise is not particularly controversial. The overwhelming thrust of modern democratic theory demands that, for a society to be regarded as ‘maximally democratic,’ voting rights must be extended to everyone subject to state authority, unless evidence of specific incapacity is produced. (Lively, 1975, p. 10) Thus, although contemporary franchises are relatively inclusive by historical standards, certain exclusions – children, criminals, non-resident foreigners, etc. – are tolerated. A consensus has emerged that such exclusions are not generally considered to diminish the ‘degree of democracy’ in society.

This essay aims to illustrate that this consensus is not only inaccurate, but simplistic and misleading. It will first focus on the issue of exclusion in an attempt to demonstrate the weaknesses of efforts to justify the withholding of voting rights in a democracy, focussing particularly on the ‘moral imperialist’ approach and on attempts to apply a doctrine of minimal exclusion. Thereafter, it will suggest an alternative approach for interpreting the question, one that does not presume that what is democratic must necessarily be equated with what is best. Finally it will illustrate the manner in which a full

exploration of the question of franchise informs our understanding of both the nature of democracy and the legitimacy of modern government. Thus, straight-forward as it might initially appear, the question of franchise is in reality very complex.

#### THE CONFLICT BETWEEN 'INTUITIVE' AND REAL-WORLD ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION

The first indication that the question is more difficult than might be assumed is the dichotomy that exists between what we might call an 'intuitive' response to the question and the consensus answer that has emerged based on experience. When asked what would be the *most democratic* policy of enfranchisement in a state, the natural answer is for *everyone* subject to the authority of that state to be included. On the other hand, experience tells us that no franchises will include *everyone*. Contemporary liberal democracies universally deny voting rights to children, but are nevertheless not considered 'incomplete democracies'. It would appear, then, that an 'intuitive' answer to the question is – perhaps unsurprisingly – unsatisfactory. Approaching the issue in this manner presents further questions. If exclusion based on age (or nationality, etc.) is compatible with democracy, why do we generally regard exclusion based on other characteristics – gender, race, economic status – as wholly illegitimate? The starting point of this essay's argument will be an analysis of the difficulties raised by the problem of justifiable exclusions. By confronting this question and others, the essay will attempt to illustrate that a more complete answer to the question of the 'maximally democratic franchise' is in fact closer to the intuitive response than we might suppose.

#### THE PROBLEM OF JUSTIFYING EXCLUSIONS

There are two obvious, if clearly problematic, means by which we might attempt to justify our accepted exclusionary policies. The first is what James Hyland – somewhat pejoratively – refers to as the 'moral imperialist' approach. (Hyland, 1995, p. 79) By this paradigm, it is assumed that there exist certain categories of people who are morally entitled to enfranchisement and others who are not. In a modern context, we might argue that it is self-evidently immoral to deny voting rights to people based on race, but that there is little wrong with denying such rights to the very young. Any serious probing into this approach, however, clearly demonstrates its philosophical paucity – for the question of what makes one set of moral principles 'right' and

another 'wrong' simply has no answer. The second approach we might utilise is the principle of qualification, by which only those who are considered sufficiently 'qualified' can exercise voting rights.

This paradigm provokes further questions. Most obviously, how 'qualified' must one be, and who decides? And of equal importance, by what right do the qualified exercise authority over the unqualified? Here again, the questions are unanswerable – and, as a consequence, both approaches are unsatisfactory. It therefore becomes clear that we require alternative justifications for any exclusion from the franchise.

Amongst the first to fully confront these conclusions was Joseph Schumpeter. Seeing that no definitive set of moral principles can exist, he argued that no franchise could be accurately called 'undemocratic,' as long as the exclusionary policies in use fell within the bounds of *that society's* moral principles. By this viewpoint, there is no substantive difference between the extent of democracy in a society like our own, which excludes children, and a society like that of, say, ancient Athens, which excluded – amongst others – women and slaves, since in both systems it simply wouldn't have occurred to the populations to broaden their franchises. (Field, 1963, p. 278) The important point for Schumpeter is not the extent of the franchise, but the extent to which the people as a whole considered the process of governance legitimate and beneficial. He asks, 'must we not leave it to every *populus* to define itself?' (Schumpeter, 1943, p. 245)

As appealing as Schumpeter's argument undoubtedly is, it runs into a number of important difficulties. Most problematically, when sufficiently explored, the logic underpinning his ideas points us in an absurd direction. If it is not the extent of the franchise that matters, but its popular legitimacy, then our analytic framework for differentiating between different types of government breaks down. If democratic legitimacy depends simply on the political culture of a population, then a medieval monarchy, legitimised in the eyes of its people by the 'Divine right of kings,' is just as democratic as the modern liberal state. Schumpeter is aware of the implications of his theory, arguing that it is 'naïve to believe that the democratic process completely ceases to work in an autocracy,' and that it is possible for the will of the people to be achieved under a host of differing systems of government. (*Ibid.*, p. 240) At its most extreme, then, Schumpeter's theory, demands acceptance of the proposition that even the rule of one person over an entire population might be entirely 'democratic'. This is self-evidently absurd. In *Democracy and Its Critics*, Robert Dahl argues that Schumpeter fails to distinguish between a 'state that is democratic in relation to its *demos* and a state that is democratic

in relation to the people it governs.' (Dahl, 1989, p. 122) This failure results in the destruction of any useful distinctions we can make between various forms of government, effectively equating liberal democracies and benevolent dictatorships and ultimately contradicting that most basic tenet of democratic theory – that there is some intrinsic difference between government by the many and government by the few.

A potential escape from the above problem is to take a second, more liberal approach. That is, to recognise the inevitably ideological nature of exclusion, and agree that any exclusionary principles enacted should be minimally restrictive. We might utilise the majority principle, though this is clearly hazardous. Or we might, as Dahl and others do, go further and stipulate that inclusion should be based on a lenient criterion of competence, with the qualification that 'competence should be assumed unless there are strong grounds in individual cases for exclusion.' (Lively, 1975, p. 12) Again, his argument is attractive. However, it ultimately fails to overcome the problem highlighted by Schumpeter – for liberal moral principles are still moral principles, as grounded in time and place as any other. Thus, while his criticisms of Schumpeter are robust, Dahl nevertheless fails to construct a rigorous alternative to his flawed paradigm.

#### AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH – ACCEPTING INCOMPLETE DEMOCRACY

We have arrived at a dilemma. Our instinct tells us that the exclusion of certain groups from the franchise does not diminish democracy. But such a conclusion compels us to devise some form of criteria for 'justifiable exclusions' – and clearly this cannot be done without the invocation of ideological principles which are surely just as biased as those which excluded racial groups or women in the past. James Hyland acknowledges this dilemma and attempts to develop a theory to escape from it. With reference to the concept of the 'domain of relevance,' he argues that certain exclusions do not affect the degree of democracy, not because they are 'justified' but simply because they are irrelevant to the issue at hand. Defining democracy as 'a system of decision-making in which all those who are subject to the decisions made have equally effective power to determine the political outcomes of decision-making,' identifies two criteria necessary to classify a person's inclusion as relevant to the extent of democracy in a group. (Hyland, 1995, p. 82)

First, only the exclusion of those actually subject to the decisions made affects the degree of democracy (which disregards non-resident non-nationals, for instance). And likewise, only the inclusion of those who can actually par-

ticipate in the decision-making process is necessary for the achievement of the 'maximally democratic franchise' (disregarding, for example, one-year-old children – who are clearly incapable of voting). This tactic postulates a workable and analytically useful definition of democracy that invokes neither the moral principles that permeate other theories nor the relativism that defines Schumpeter's. Additionally, however, it requires us to accede to further conclusions which might appear counter-intuitive, but in reality prove instructive as to a clearer and more complete notion of democracy as a concept.

Although a one-year-old child is plainly unable to participate in the democratic process in any meaningful way, the same clearly cannot be said for, say, a 14-year old. By the above criteria, then, the widespread exclusion of all those aged 17 and under (or at least those capable of comprehending a ballot paper) is 'undemocratic'. Equally, the exclusion of criminals – a common practice – limits the extent of democracy, since they too satisfy the above criteria. Are modern Western democracies, then, 'incomplete' in the extent of their franchise? Hyland responds that they are. Leaving aside the utility of extending the franchise to include children, it is undoubtedly the case that most people over the age of, say, 8 (and in many cases much lower) are capable of making electoral choices, rational or not – and it would be naïve to suppose that everyone deemed sufficiently qualified to vote exercises their vote rationally. The only conceivable justification for this exclusion is the invocation of an arbitrary criterion of competence (and one that is not tested on those aged 18 and over). Whatever your definition of 'democracy', it is difficult to argue that the exclusion of a large group of people in this manner is anything other than undemocratic.

None of this is to say, of course, that young children should be allowed to vote as soon as they demonstrate adequate understanding of a ballot paper. Hyland's central point, and the central argument of this essay, is that we should not necessarily conflate the 'maximally democratic' franchise with the 'normatively best' franchise. Given the generally positive connotations generated by the term 'democracy', it is easy to make the mistake of assuming that what is best is concurrent with what is most democratic, and therefore that the current (near unanimously favoured) extent of the franchise is also maximally democratic. This, as illustrated above, is simply not the case. There are eminently sensible reasons to deny voting rights to young children and others – on that few would argue. But it does not follow that the practice is consequently democratic. By this logic, the conclusion that a 'maximally democratic franchise' should include many children is inescapable. Furthermore, we are forced to confront the deduction that our current exclusionary



franchises are, despite our instincts, only partially democratic.

We might even go a step further than Hyland in our vision of this franchise. While theoretically enfranchising many children into a maximally democratic polity, the above-described theory nevertheless excludes the very young, whom it calls irrelevant due to incapacity to actually exercise power. But perhaps it is true to say that their exclusion – even though effective inclusion is probably impossible – is also undemocratic. Focusing, as to begin with we should, on democracy as a theoretical idea rather than a description of existing political systems, we are able to separate that which is democratic from that which is desirable. Likewise, we can also separate that which is democratic from that which is *actually conceivable*. In the absence of any mechanism to count the votes of the very young, the issue is probably academic, but nevertheless it is surely the case that a polity that included into its decision-making procedures the opinions of even the youngest over whom it ruled would be more democratic than one that did not. Given this, it is perhaps worth distinguishing between merely theoretical and actually conceivable franchises in any discussion.

#### CONCLUSION

The above discussion illustrates that the answer to the question posed at the outset of this essay is in reality much closer to our intuitive response than we might expect, and certainly much closer than several political scientists have realised. If democracy is the ‘rule of the people,’ it should not be so surprising to conclude that a maximally democratic polity is one that incorporates the greatest possible proportion of its people into its mechanisms for ruling – regardless of their social class, age, competence and perhaps even their actual ability to participate. As complex as the question might appear, then, its answer is quite simple. By recognising that pure democracy might not always produce the best outcomes – and at the same time accepting that modern liberal democracies might not actually be completely democratic – we can arrive at a conclusion that is suspiciously uncomplicated but ultimately enlightening. Although it may not even be possible – and it is almost certainly not desirable – a polity is only maximally democratic when *every-one* being ruled over can vote.

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# Rousseau as ‘totalitarian’; simply a case of a realistic democrat?

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Jean-Jacques Rousseau has been called both ‘the inventor of pseudo-democratic dictatorships,’ and ‘the great democrat of the eighteenth century.’ (Russell, 1961, p. 660; Sabine and Thorson, 1973, p. 524) This essay will argue that Rousseau advocated genuine popular control of political decision-making, and should therefore be considered a democrat. It will show that there is no evidence to suggest that he was advocating totalitarian solutions. It will also argue that Rousseau did not propose a regime devoted to achieving one ‘exclusive truth,’ a feature that Talmon thought central to totalitarian political theory. (Russell, 1961, p. 1) Nor, it will be shown, was his ideal the all-embracing state often considered the key feature of totalitarianism. (Sartori, 1965, p. 145)

This essay will show that Rousseau was merely proposing measures aimed at creating and safeguarding community cohesion, and preserving democracy. This will first be done by examining the aspects of Rousseau’s theory that most clearly show his democratic commitment. Thereafter, we will consider the elements of his thought that some have claimed reveal totalitarian intent, beginning with Rousseau’s views on sovereignty and popular involvement in

politics. The essay will then discuss three particularly controversial concepts of his; the General Will, the Legislator and the Civil Religion. It will be seen that these were designed simply to maintain effective self-rule and have no totalitarian implications.

#### THE DEMOCRATIC IDEAL

Rousseau's ideal community was not to be completely inclusive - he would not, for example, have granted citizenship rights to women. (Held, 2006, p. 48) However, while he therefore cannot be considered a democrat in the widest sense, his ideas were broadly democratic in form. In *The Social Contract* he recognised the citizen-body as Sovereign, the source of all political authority. (Rousseau, 1994, p. 91) He said that citizens should be entitled to make and to alter legislation: 'a people is always free to change its laws, even the best of them.' (Rousseau, 1994, p. 89) Such a community would not resemble a totalitarian regime! It should be noted that 'laws' here referred to constitutional legislation rather than everyday regulations. (Sartori, 1965, p. 294) Rousseau did not advocate a 'direct-democracy,' controlling every detail of political life. (Hampsher-Monk, 1995a, p. 188) Nevertheless, he was recommending genuine popular control over the shape of the political system, thus entrusting fundamental powers to the citizen-body.

'If there were a nation of gods it would be governed democratically. So perfect a government is not suitable for men.' (Rousseau, 1994, p. 102) Miller interpreted this line to suggest Rousseau was not openly advocating democracy in *The Social Contract*. (Miller, 1984, p. 65) However, government here referred to executive authority. Legislative power was to remain with the people. (Harrison, 1993, pp. 60-61) Rousseau's comments regarding the executive show that he favoured democratic control: 'the power it [the Sovereign] has deposited with them [government]....it may limit, modify or take back whenever it pleases.' (Rousseau, 1994, p. 92) Indeed, Rousseau argued that the best way to choose governments was by popular election. (*Ibid.*, p. 103) While he did not favour their involvement in every administrative act, he maintained that citizens should ultimately control the executive and be the source of all fundamental law.

Talmon suggested that Rousseau favoured a plebiscitary-democracy, a regime where citizens would be given the opportunity to 'acclaim' decisions that governmental leaders had already made, but would not exercise genuine political choice. (Talmon, 1961, p. 46) As Hampsher-Monk said, however, 'Rousseau had a horror of personal dependency extending well across

the boundaries of paranoia.' (Hampsher-Monk, 1995a, p. 183) This encouraged him to attempt to guarantee each citizen's effective participation. His comments regarding property highlight this. Rousseau considered private property to be at the root of much social inequality. (Rousseau, 1973, p. 85) He thought unequal property distribution restricted liberty by increasing an individual's dependence on others. He recommended controlling these inequalities because they interfered with citizens' political power. (Mason, 1995, p. 128) This indicates that he wanted to ensure that each citizen could freely express his or her views. The role of the individual was to be far greater than it would be in any plebiscitary-democracy. The fact that citizens in his ideal society were to hold only a modest amount of property indicates that he expected a large part of the populace to be involved in decision-making. He was advocating a regime where the ordinary inhabitant would have real control.

#### UNACCEPTABLE RESTRICTIONS OR REASONABLE BOUNDARIES?

Why, then, have some considered Rousseau a totalitarian? In answering this I will focus on three particular areas of controversy in Rousseau's thought. Firstly, the concept of the General Will must be discussed in order to analyse these allegations. This was not simply the will of the majority. (Hall, 1973, p. 77) Parry summarised Rousseau's intentions well, as follows: 'The general will... is embodied in the law when the public good has been uncovered by men who have voted in the assembly with the public good in mind.' (Parry, 1995, p. 108) Those involved must consider the whole community's welfare and not just their personal interests. (Rousseau, 1994, pp. 9-10) When discussing the General Will, Rousseau claimed, 'One always desires one's own good but one does not always see what it is.' (*Ibid.*, p. 66) This prompted Talmon to argue that Rousseau saw the General Will as an objective truth to which every inhabitant must be forced to conform. (Talmon, 1961, p. 45) While Rousseau did see it as having a kind of objective existence, it should not be viewed as a totalitarian device. (Rousseau, 1994, p. 135) This can be seen by considering Rousseau's reasons for introducing it. Rousseau thought that if common interests were ignored, only some people's personal preferences would be realised. He feared one group becoming 'big enough to triumph over all the others.' This fear of domination prompted him to introduce this concept. (*Ibid.*, 1994, p. 66)

However, Rousseau did not recommend it be imposed from outside the community. He thought it could only be realised if people actually expressed it. (Hampsher-Monk, 1995a, p. 187) Even the methods suggested for discov-

ering the General Will were basically democratic. Although he saw people as fallible, he maintained that voting was the best way to realise the common good. (Rousseau, 1994, p. 127) Suggesting that a community should consider their common interests was an attempt to prevent exploitation, not a way of ensuring conformity with one unique truth.

Secondly, the role of the figure known as "the Legislator" must also be analysed if allegations of totalitarianism are to be thoroughly refuted. The Legislator has been described as a 'would-be dictator' guiding the General Will. (Harrison, 1993, p. 60) However, his only task was to assist community formation. (Chapman, 1968, p. 78) He had no 'rights of making law.' (Rousseau, 1994, p. 78) He was not to be a permanent presence in the community. The concept reflects Rousseau's ideas about human nature. He believed moral values could only be formed within society. (*Ibid.*, 1973, p. 91) He had therefore to solve the problem of how man could decide what kind of a society to enter before he could understand social concepts: 'In order that a people ...should be capable of appreciating the principles of sound policy...before the existence of laws, men would have to be what the laws made them.' (Rousseau, 1994, p. 78)

The Legislator was Rousseau's solution to this problem. He was to use religious ideas to create an environment where people would become willing to enter society, and was to have no role once this task was completed. (*Ibid.*, pp. 77-78) As Bloom said, this showed Rousseau's 'dangerous impracticality.' (Bloom, 1997, p. 162) Allowing someone to behave like a prophet and assuming they will not seize power may seem incredibly naïve. However, Rousseau's intention was simply to solve the problem of how natural-man could be persuaded to enter society. Once this was achieved the citizens were to be permanently sovereign. Rousseau's solution may be unrealistic but its only aim was to provide a path to self-rule.

Thirdly, Rousseau recommended all citizens be required to adhere to a 'civil profession of faith.' (Rousseau, 1994, p. 166) Was he recommending a form of totalitarian mind-control? In reality, this proposal was limited in scope. Rousseau was not concerned with most of a citizen's personal beliefs. (*Ibid.*, 1994, p. 166) He would not tolerate atheism, but few at the time considered atheism acceptable. (Hampsher-Monk, 1995b, p. 274) Civil Religion was to consist of 'sentiments of sociability' and only dealt with matters affecting the community. (Rousseau, 1994, p. 166) Rousseau banned religious intolerance (except, of course, for atheists). (*Ibid.*, pp. 167-168) He was certainly not recommending the control of an inhabitant's every private thought. Nevertheless, why would a democrat propose a Civil Religion at all? Hampsher-

Monk claimed that Rousseau thought that 'to be capable of sustaining free political institutions,' a community must avoid 'certain political and social states of affairs.' (1995b, p. 282)

In insisting that citizens adhere to a code of values, Rousseau was attempting to create an environment in which self-government could survive. This is clear in his discussion of one of these values, religious toleration. He insisted on toleration because he thought it impossible to live at peace with people one believes to be 'damned.' (Rousseau, 1994, p. 167) He thought certain values, such as tolerance, must be accepted in order to avoid civil discord. As has been seen above, Rousseau feared division in the community would lead to exploitation. This was why he said that those who did not accept the Civil Religion were 'incapable of cherishing the laws and justice.' (*Ibid.* p. 166). He thought that citizens must adhere to certain basic values to prevent injustices that would otherwise threaten democratic participation and the community's very existence. He was not attempting to set up an all-embracing regime where people would be forced to believe one unique truth - he was merely attempting to preserve democracy.

## CONCLUSION

This essay has argued that Rousseau should be considered an advocate of genuinely democratic government. By discussing his comments on popular sovereignty and participation, it has been shown that he wanted citizens to have real control over their political affairs. It has been argued that his concept of the General Will did not imply that he recommended people be forced to conform to an 'objective truth,' imposed by an outside body. Rather, it has been shown that the concept was introduced to prevent exploitation and that it had to be willed by citizens to take effect. It was seen that even in this case, Rousseau maintained that the best way for a community to make decisions was to use democratic procedures. It was acknowledged that his recommendations regarding the Legislator and Civil Religion may seem dangerous. However, it has been seen that their roles were to be strictly limited. They were proposed with the aim of creating and maintaining democracy, not undermining it. It is reasonable to conclude that his proposals were a genuine attempt to 'Find a form of association' that would 'defend and protect...each associate, and under which each of them...remain as free as before.' (*Ibid.*, 1994, pp. 54-55)



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# Pierre Bourdieu on European identity: Theories of habitus & cultural capital

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This essay will argue that Pierre Bourdieu's theories of habitus and cultural capital explain not only how but why there has been a move towards a European identity. Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and cultural capital can help us gain a greater understanding of both why this identity is desirable and how one should attempt to construct it. This essay will begin by exploring the primary site of the creation of identity, the school, and its value in the history of EU policy-making. Thereafter, I will discuss Bourdieu's theory of habitus itself, and how it may be applied in policy-making, particularly in the areas of cross-national exchange trips and teacher-training. Thirdly, I will move on to a second relevant element of Bourdieu's thinking, that is, the different forms of capital which he describes. His theories are certainly not mutually exclusive, and are somewhat circular in their relationship to each other, as will be seen throughout the essay. Finally, I will argue that the creation of this cross-

national identity is important both for the continued success of the European Union project and for the economy. Throughout the essay I will be taking a broadly constructivist view of identity, which considers identity to be rather fluid; not so much fixed as changeable. It is also difficult to construct an exact definition of Bourdieu's theories and they are better understood as fairly flexible concepts, which is how I use them in this essay.

#### EUROPEAN UNION EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND THE SCHOOL AS THE POINT OF IDENTITY FORMATION

Bourdieu's theory of habitus allows us to see people's attachment to nation as learned and habituated; being open to modification and reconstruction through reflexive agency and educational practices. (Pollmann, 2009) Habitus should be seen as the product of social conditionings, it can be endlessly transformed. (Bourdieu, 1990a) For generations the school has been seen as the site of these social conditionings. In this sense education is used as the field to habituate a European identity.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the school was the point at which a sense of national consciousness was instilled through the teaching of national history, literature or civics. (Walkenhorst, 2006) It follows that today while the European Union is focusing on creating a sense of cross-national identity, the school would be an important site for this endeavour. There have been numerous policies that encourage schools to include a European dimension in their curricula. The Tindeman report in the 1970s suggested that education should be used as a means to create a 'Europe of the people.' (Hussen, 1993) Following on from this report, in 1976 further guidance was given as to how to achieve this goal. In the Resolution of Council and of the Ministers of Education it was suggested that in order to introduce a European dimension to education it was important that the Member states promote and organise short study trips and exchanges for teachers with special emphasis on those teachers teaching European languages. A change was also required within the national information and advisory services in order to promote the mobility and interchange of pupils and teachers within the European community. Greater contact between the authorities of establishments concerned with teacher training as well as the addition of European content in educational activities was also introduced. (Hussen, 1993) It is in changing the institution with initiatives such as the European dimension in learning that the habitus of the students within the schools changes.

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HABITUS AND THE FORMATION OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY: STUDENT INTERACTIONS AND THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS

Although they are relatively stable, habituated forms of national identity should not be considered as quasi-natural or given. By changing the habitus of the younger citizens of the European Union, a vague term describing their individual subjective experience of changing social structure, we can alter their way of being, seeing, acting and thinking. (Pollmann, 2009) Social identity usually refers to the processes of interaction by which one identifies 'others' and is also identified by them; these processes then become the basis of self-identification as well. (Kohl, 2000) This notion of 'other' often plays an important role in people's understanding of nationalism. (Pollmann, 2009) Consequently, teaching a sense of European identity can be very difficult, and it is only in encouraging greater interaction with other citizens, for example on exchange trips, that their forms of habitus can be altered and such an identity fostered. Through exchange trips the students gain the ability to relate to their fellow citizens of the EU and form a multicultural sense of membership.

*The more people have to do with each other in everyday life, the more likely they will be to identify with each other as fellow individuals rather than primarily by reference to their collective identifications.*

*(Jenkins, quoted in Pollmann, 2009, p. 537)*

This kind of interaction is important in overcoming an exclusively national identity and allowing students to relate to the citizens of the other Member states. In this way, a multicultural sense of membership is fostered, thereby making the cross-national identity more attainable. It is through changing the students' habitus with the introduction of greater cross-border learning, whether it be through exchange trips or the teaching of European languages, that a sense of European identity is learned. It is through this acquired system of generative schemes that the habitus makes possible the free production of all the thoughts, perceptions and actions inherent in the conditions of its production. (Bourdieu, 1990b) It is through this that the European identity can be further perpetuated.

However, it is at this point that socio-economics becomes a concern. Not all schools have the budgets to allow their students to take part in exchange visits or employ more foreign language teachers, and in these cases there is certainly a marked difference in the sense of European identity felt by the

students. (Faas, 2007) Bourdieu also suggests that those born into a higher socio-economic background will be more likely to accumulate more cultural capital, as it is linked with the amount of time needed for acquisition (years of schooling) of this capital. The length of time a person spends in school (time of cultural acquisition) depends on the length of time for which one's family can provide one with time free from economic necessity. (Bourdieu, 2001)

It is important for this issue to be redressed. This may be possible if we take a look at the role of teachers in creating this new habitus. The experience of teachers as well as their attitude towards the European project can have a major influence on the views of future generations. Their individual experiences are likely to have an impact on how they interpret and address certain topics. (Pollmann, 2009) European topics very rarely form a part of teachers' training, however. There is only one German university, the University of Oldenburg, which has provided a special scheme called the 'European dimension in teaching training' to instruct future secondary teachers on European integration issues. (*Ibid.*) For those students for whom travel with school is a financial impossibility it is important to supplement their learning with teachers who are committed to the European agenda and have intercultural experience.

#### THE CONNECTION BETWEEN HABITUS AND CULTURAL CAPITAL

There is a clear relationship between cultural capital and habitus within education. It is only through changing the students' habitus that the cultural capital required to make an effective workforce on the European level can be created. The habitus created within the institution of the school has a great impact on the cultural capital that can be accumulated throughout a lifetime. Bourdieu argues that the dominant habitus is transformed into a form of cultural capital that the schools take for granted and which acts as a filter in the reproductive process of hierarchical society. (Harker, 1984)

The theory of habitus is premised on the theory of a 'gift' (or cultural capital). This 'gift' is the feel for the game socially constituted by early immersion in the game. (Bourdieu, 1990a) I argue that it is this gift in the form of cultural capital that is being passed down by the dominant cultural group. This is done not only to perpetuate the European project by imbuing it with a sense of legitimacy through participation, but also because changing the habitus created in the school system is essential to creating a workforce capable of competing in the global economy. (de Beus, 2001)

## THE FORMS OF CAPITAL

The discussion of cultural capital may seem redundant when discussing economic topics, however, Bourdieu argues that the class of practices whose explicit purpose is to maximize monetary profit cannot be defined as such without producing the purposeless finality of cultural or artistic practices and their products:

*Capital is accumulated labour (in its materialised form or its incorporated embodied form) that, when appropriated on a private, that is exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labour.*

(Bourdieu 2001, p. 96)

As suggested in the above definition, capital is not merely economic. Although this is one of the forms Bourdieu mentions, he also discusses cultural capital as well as social capital, both of which are transferable into economic capital. Cultural capital, in particular, is convertible on occasion into economic capital and can be institutionalised through the education system as previously discussed. However, when talking about Europe, it is more appropriate to discuss the inter-cultural capital being institutionalised in the education system. (Pollmann, 2009) Cultural capital itself can be further categorised into three types; the embodied state, the objectified state and the institutionalised state.

The embodied state is the work one does for oneself; an effort that presupposes personal cost and an investment of time. This form of capital cannot be transmitted instantaneously. In fact, the social conditions of its transmission and acquisition are more disguised than those of economic capital. It therefore functions as symbolic capital, unrecognised as capital and seen rather as a legitimate competence. A cultural competence (such as being able to navigate working and living abroad) derives a scarcity value and yields profits of distinction for its owner. (Bourdieu, 2001) In the case of the European Union, encouraging this kind of capital through inter-cultural exchange among the member states creates a workforce with marketable skills. This, in turn, encourages employers to relocate to the area.

The objectified state as discussed by Bourdieu (2001) is a type of capital that is transferable by legal ownership but does not constitute the precondition for specific appropriation, for example, having possession of a physical painting but not of the means of 'consuming' a painting. The owners of the



means of production must therefore find a way of appropriating either the embodied capital that is the presupposition for the “consumption,” or else the services of the holders of this capital. Initiatives such as the Erasmus scheme go some way to institutionalising the objectified state of cultural capital, as they indicate to employers that certain conditions will be met by a future employee if they have partaken in a certain scheme. This aspect will be discussed in greater detail further on in the essay.

The final type of cultural capital described by Bourdieu (2001) is the institutionalised state, that which is seen in the form of academic qualifications. With an academic qualification comes a certificate of cultural competence. This certificate confers on its holder a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to culture. Social alchemy produces a form of cultural capital that has relative autonomy *vis à vis* its bearer and even *vis à vis* the cultural capital one effectively possesses at a given moment in time. By conferring institutional recognition on the cultural capital possessed by any given agent, the academic qualification also makes it possible to compare qualification holders and even to exchange them.

The concept of “social capital” is also relevant to identity-formation. One’s social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources that are linked to a durable network of somewhat institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintances and recognition. The association with this group provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital. The volume of the social capital held by a person depends on the size of the network of connections one can use effectively. The network of connections is the product of investment aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the long or short term. It is aimed at transforming contingent relationships into ones that are both necessary and elective, implying durable obligations subjectively felt or institutionally guaranteed. I would argue that the Erasmus scheme is yet again the field through which this kind of capital could easily flourish.

#### EVIDENCE FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF A EUROPEAN IDENTITY IN ACADEMIA AND BUSINESS

The attributes conferred upon those with academic qualifications who take part in schemes such as Erasmus or other exchange programmes, whether it be in the field of social or cultural capital, can be seen when we analyse the way these students are assessed after their exchange. By analysing the assessment, we can see what kind of qualities one is expected to attain

while taking part in an exchange programme. The academic institutions used in Deardorff's study (2006) had a range of ways of testing students who had returned from exchanges. These ranged from 'before and after' testing, interviews and presentations. In the case of using before and after testing in order to assess cultural competence, there was agreement on the other methods as well as what these tests should be aiming to assess. In fact, 80% or more of the inter-cultural experts and administrators were able to reach consensus on essential elements of inter-cultural competence. These key competences were primarily in the areas of communication and behaviour in intercultural contexts. The ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in inter-cultural situations is believed to be based on one's own inter-cultural knowledge and skill. (*Ibid.*) The analysis of returning students should study their ability to analyse, interpret and relate as well as to listen and observe. Of those tested in the study, cognitive skills emerged, including comparative thinking skills and cognitive flexibility. The general findings of the study were that study-abroad students were found to be armed with skills related to behaving and communicating appropriately and effectively in inter-cultural situations, where effectiveness is seen as the achievement of a valued object and appropriateness is the avoidance of violating valued rules. (*Ibid.*)

By looking at industries involved in a great deal of cross-border commerce, we can see how useful the accumulation of capital, whether it be cultural or social, is, and how this creates a stronger attraction among firms to the European job market. Kennedy's study on transnational friendships among professionals in the building design industry gives us a great insight into how these forms of capital affect working relationships. (2004)

It is apparent throughout the study that the experience of living abroad was highly prized. In one example, a global company was described as needing 'global champions'. These 'champions' were to ensure that tasks were accomplished. To do this they needed to demonstrate not only adaptability but also a capacity for cooperation. These attributes can certainly be by-products of living or studying abroad. Examples are given throughout the study of how respondents felt that those who had previously worked abroad were generally more adaptable to new work environments. The ability to adapt and work with new people from different backgrounds is invaluable in the work environment. Examples of the importance of the type of cultural capital that is acquired through exchange programmes, or the experience of living abroad, were given by respondents in Kennedy's study. One stated that 'cross cultural teams working and overcoming obstacles have become necessary to business....increasingly our work is about collaboration with people cross cultur-

ally,' while another noted that 'you work as a team...problems are "our" problems...and involve sharing, so work is pleasant.' (*Ibid.* p. 10)

Not only is cultural capital important in cross-border working relationships, but social capital is also important in developing economic capital. The investment used to create the social capital in a network of colleagues that is built up through work abroad can prove invaluable. These networks create advantages through practical help and learning opportunities. They also offer access to information and business contacts with respect to other employment prospects at later points in their career. (Kennedy, 2004) On a more international scale, transnational or post-national professional friendship networks, such as those within the European Union, also supply a framework of sociality and meaningful interaction that make the global economy run more smoothly by allowing it to operate more effectively. (*Ibid.*)

## CONCLUSION

This essay's reading of Bourdieu's forms of capital and theory of habitus has sought to develop a deeper understanding of how education can be used to foster a sense of European identity. It has also sought to demonstrate the importance of the formation of this communal identity for economic purposes. I have discussed Bourdieu's theory of habitus by using the education system as an example of how changing social surroundings can have an effect on the creation of identity. By including European content in the curriculum taught in schools, the habitus of the students can be changed in order to foster a European identity. Thereafter, I discussed the different forms of capital and how they can also influence the creation of a European identity. I argued that these forms of capital are closely connected with the habitus of a society and that they explain why the creation of a European identity is important, in particular through their effect on the increasingly integrated labour market.

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SECTION V.

# REVIEW



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“From this place, from this day on,  
a new era of world history begins  
and you can say, I was there.”

JOHANN WOLFGANG GOETHE (1749-1832)



# Over the rainbow: An analysis of contemporary, post-Apartheid South Africa

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*'Look at your hands—different colours representing different people. You are the Rainbow People of God.'*

*Archbishop Desmond Tutu, 1991*

When Archbishop Desmond Tutu dubbed South Africa the “Rainbow Nation”, he invoked a vision of ethnic diversity and harmony in a country that has eleven official languages, three capitals and two national anthems. It is true that, at the very least, the South African struggle for freedom and its consequences have been an inspiration to many and a beacon of hope for the African continent. Indeed, South Africa remains the most im-



portant African country in the global political arena. Yet fifteen years after Nelson Mandela won the first democratic presidential elections in the Republic, the scene has changed significantly. This article will highlight social and political instances where today that original harmony is marred by discord, and where the validity of Tutu's rainbow analogy is called into question.

Since the end of Mandela's Presidency in 1999, the political landscape and transition to democratic governance has been under scrutiny, from both a national and international perspective. From Thabo Mbeki's unstable period as President (which lasted close to a decade), to the public row with his main rival Jacob Zuma, to the recent controversial presidential elections, South Africa seems to have been knocked off the trajectory Mandela had spent 27 years in prison trying to establish.

Some of Mbeki's shortcomings include not taking a strong stand against Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe – some pundits even went so far as to call them friends. Being the President of the most prominent nation in Southern Africa, Mbeki was often assigned as the “mediator” between Mugabe and his main opponent Morgan Tsvangirai. One notable example of Mbeki's failing to facilitate international sanctions against Zimbabwe took place in 2008, when a cargo ship carrying millions of rounds of ammunition docked in Durban to deliver the arms to land-locked Zimbabwe. However, the South African transport union refused to accommodate the trade deal and the ship had to return to China. Mbeki claimed that it was not within his jurisdiction to obstruct the delivery, a stance which some commentators claimed violates the vision of peace and human rights as advocated by Nobel Laureates F.W. De Klerk and Nelson Mandela.

The presidential elections of 2009 saw the fourth consecutive (and comfortable) win for the African National Congress (ANC) since the first democratic elections in 1994. Any political scientist would argue that such voting patterns classify South Africa as a dominant party state. However, today the ANC has to worry about an unprecedented level of opposition. Not only did the share of the vote for the ANC fall significantly this time, but the main opposition parties appear to be moving towards a more cooperative and cohesive relationship. Furthermore, the ANC has been severely affected by internal party politics, which led to several high-ranking ANC personalities breaking away to form a new party altogether in 2008, the Congress of the People (COPE). Although COPE only secured a small fraction of the votes in these most recent elections, cooperation with the Democratic Alliance (DA), which is the official opposition party to the ANC, may provide a better platform for checks and balances and possibly even pave the way one day for a

more competitive multi-party state.

Despite these internal conflicts, however, South Africa remains a key player in the global political spectrum. This is a huge transformation given that it was a pariah of global diplomacy at the beginning of the 1990s. It is Africa's sole member of the G20 group which adds clout to South Africa's contribution to international dialogue. In the recent UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, South Africa was the only African country to broker the deal on deep cuts in emissions to prevent temperatures from rising more than 2°C. This agreement, although not legally binding, further emphasizes South Africa's role as a heavyweight in global governance, and sets an example for other African nations to follow.

In addition to these political conditions, South Africa suffers from social obstacles such as AIDS, crime, corruption, and inefficient handling of affirmative action, all of which undermine the vision of unity and harmony invoked by Desmond Tutu's idealistic rainbow concept.

On World's AIDS day 2009, the UNAIDS Executive Director was quoted as telling Zuma "What you do from this day forward will write, or rewrite, the story of AIDS across Africa". Indeed, South Africa has the highest rate of HIV/AIDS infection in the world (an estimated 5.7 million in a population of approximately 50 million). Much of the recent increase in AIDS has been linked to Mbeki and some of his Ministers disputing the scientific link between HIV and AIDS, suggesting that the epidemic is a conspiracy of Western drug companies. Mbeki's late Minister for Health even recommended that AIDS should be treated with garlic and beetroot rather than antiretroviral drugs. This anachronistic reaction may have cost South Africa up to 330,000 lives, according to a study carried out by the Harvard School of Public Health, and shows the extent of the attitudinal challenge facing South Africa today, even in élite political circles.

Zuma, however, recently announced a new policy to fight the pandemic and estimates that 80% of those in need of drugs will have them by 2011. The initiative should patch up Zuma's reputation on the issue after his infamous courtroom claim to have lowered the risk of infection by showering after allegedly raping an HIV-positive family friend in 2005. Nevertheless, the stigma surrounding HIV-positive individuals also needs to be broken at a grassroots level through educational campaigns, TV and radio programmes; initiatives that have gained ground since Mbeki's early and forced departure.

In addition to the AIDS pandemic, crime rates have significantly increased over the last decade and a half and are now a serious cause for social concern; 50 murders and 99 reported rapes occur each day. Rumours and

myths, including claims that AIDS can be cured by raping a virgin, further contribute to these statistics. Crime rates have also undoubtedly contributed to a “brain drain” phenomenon, which puts a strain on the labour force and the economy at large as skilled workers emigrate. In particular, and as a result of the ever-present wealth gap in addition to the wider legacy of apartheid, a “white flight” phenomenon is becoming apparent as more and more white South Africans settle in Britain, Australia, New Zealand and some parts of North America.

A more internal, and subtle, illustration of crime in South Africa is the exorbitant level of corruption. Over the past few months the spokesman for the ANC, the head of South African Airways, the head of the South African Broadcasting Corporation and the Environment Ministry’s Director General have been dismissed, suspended or forced to step down over allegations of financial dishonesty. Government employees reportedly stole nearly 22 million *rand* from the state in 2007-2008. Jacob Zuma himself was accused of corruption in a multi-million-dollar arms deal and was only just acquitted in time for the elections in April 2009. Although South Africa is the fourth least corrupt of all 53 African states, such a reputation will definitely hinder any social and political progress at home and could seriously harm South Africa’s attempts to lure more foreign direct investment. Hopefully, a stronger opposition and a transparent media will be able to deal with these issues.

Another social policy breaking the harmony of the “Rainbow Nation” is the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) affirmative action movement. Justified by years of racial oppression, these policies failed to produce the results promised to the masses and merely led to the enrichment of an ANC-connected élite. To reinstate the integrity of BEE, the old exploitative mindset should be replaced with a meritocratic system that sees individuals appointed to jobs in both the private and public sector based on their talents rather than the colour of their skin. Grassroots programmes should be used to motivate talented teachers to teach in underprivileged areas and promote equality of opportunity.

It is said that if you want a rainbow you have to put up with the rain. Over the course of the past fifteen years, South Africa has had its fair share of rain. Perhaps social and political shortcomings were unavoidable, and simply a result of the unrealistically high expectations for the fledgling democracy? We must remember that many other developed economies took centuries to progress to a state of mature democracy; South Africans as well as the international community should extend the same patience towards the nation during this transitional period.

That said, the beginning of this new decade in the 21<sup>st</sup> century could be an opportunity for South Africa to realign itself with the rainbow. In the run-up to the April 2009 presidential elections, Archbishop Desmond Tutu declared that he was not voting for the ANC. This could be a sign that allegiances to the old revolutionaries are starting to crumble, and that individuals in South Africa are beginning to vote for political parties with the best policies regardless of past loyalties. As time progresses and new generations are eligible to vote, they will have less recollection of apartheid and will therefore feel less indebted to vote by default for the dominant party and “liberators of freedom,” the ANC.

Of course, much of this new opportunity depends on President Jacob Zuma’s ability to lead his country. He has undoubted political credentials, and his populist persona seems to be winning him sympathy across political lines while his pragmatist approach may end up being a great asset for the future of the country. The upcoming FIFA World Cup, a source of well-deserved national and continental pride, appears to have set a deadline for visible change needed in areas such as crime and corruption; the exposure and goodwill earned from the tournament could have a positive impact on foreign investment and tourism.

After a period of 15 years, it is still inspiring that all members of the rainbow nation shop in the same mall and go to the same beaches, when a mere two decades ago it seemed inconceivable to many that the policies of apartheid would ever end. Unfortunately, several controversial government policies and questionable social priorities have led to divergences from the initial vision of harmony and unity. If the issues listed in this article are not addressed in a timely manner, it will be an offence to an ageing, 90-year-old Mandela’s long walk to freedom.

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# The Icelandic banking crisis: Causes, effects & implications

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For the greater part of this decade, Iceland has been ranked as the best place in the world to live, according to the UN Human Development Index. However, in 2008 Iceland was devastated by a liquidity crisis that arose from the global financial crisis. Over the preceding five years, Iceland's banks transformed into huge financial entities, controlling amounts of money far greater than the country's own wealth. Now, Iceland is a state in turmoil; the country's first ever riots forced the resignation of the government which oversaw the unchecked growth of Icelandic banks. The Prime Minister, Johanna Sigursdardottir, was elected on a mandate to bring Iceland into the EU and seek the protection of Euro-zone participation. Now she faces increasingly vehement anti-EU protests every Tuesday outside the Parliament building in Reykjavik's main square. The Icelandic state avoided bankruptcy by becoming the first developed state in thirty years to seek International Monetary Fund (IMF) assistance. Its citizens are massively in debt and an estimated 50% of its young people are considering emigrating.

This article aims to explain some of the social and political factors which

brought about this state of affairs. It will look in particular at the specific characteristics which led to financial insolvency and the move towards Europe. Lastly, it will examine the political consequences of the crisis, and the diplomatic ramifications of the collapse of the “Icesaver” accounts for relations with Britain and the Netherlands.

Iceland is a small nation, in which 300,000 people are spread across an area the size of Ireland. Of these, nearly two thirds live in the capital, Reykjavik. Icelanders have always relied on their two principal natural resources; the geothermal energy beneath their land, and the fish products of their seas. Since 2000, Iceland has embraced market capitalism and the deregulation of the country's financial markets. Within the space of a decade, the Icelandic stock market grew 900% and its banks considerably expanded their operations overseas. Foreign wealth poured into the country and raised the cost of living alongside the standard of living.

An even more marked example of Iceland's transformation was the acquisition of foreign assets using new-found Icelandic wealth. Major Icelandic investors, referred to as “Vikings,” acquired such well-known brands as Woolworths and West Ham United. Ordinary Icelanders, buoyed by their countrymen's success, began to choose sophisticated financial investment options of their own. Families obtained foreign currency-denominated loans and mortgages, unheard of in most other states, which used interest rate differentials between Iceland and other economies to incentivise borrowing.

A fundamental weakness of the Icelandic financial sector, however, was that the small population made the nation's bankers and regulators an exceedingly close-knit group. For example, the positions of Prime Minister and Central Bank Chairman have both been held by one man, David Oddsson. This situation could easily lead to corruption and malpractice. Indeed, no one raised the alarm when banks began lending to investors to invest in the bank stocks. The Central Bank did not intervene while the foreign-denominated debts of the three largest banks – Kaupthing, Landsbanki, and Glitner – grew to eight times the nation's GDP.

All this was to change when the Icelandic *krona*, which had been steadily declining in value since the start of 2008, nose-dived in late September with the collapse of Lehman Brothers in the US. Suddenly, the three largest Icelandic banks, with their huge accumulated debts in foreign currency, found themselves unable to meet or renew their maturing short-term obligations with their weakened Icelandic currency. They moved to draw money from their overseas subsidiaries but the UK responded by invoking anti-terrorism legislation to freeze the Icelandic assets and protect the deposits of the

more than 300,000 Britons availing of Landsbanki's high interest Icesaver accounts. Starved of cash, the illiquid banks were forced towards bankruptcy, all three being nationalised by the government over the course of a week in October.

Over a year on from the peak of the crisis, the situation seems little improved. Many Icelanders are now trapped in foreign-denominated mortgages they can never hope to pay off with their *krona* pay packets. Importers are finding it difficult to obtain the foreign currency needed to buy from abroad. The Land Rover, a status symbol of the boom times, has become rarer as more and more are reported stolen and burnt out in return for euro-denominated insurance payouts. The current government was voted into power with a strong mandate to seek EU membership and membership of the Eurozone, despite what such a move would mean for the territorial fishing rights that Iceland has aggressively guarded for decades. In July, a bill to join the EU was successfully put through parliament for the first time in Iceland's history. The EU accepted the application and the long accession process began, although it was soon to run into difficulties.

In Britain and the Netherlands, Landsbanki subsidiaries had offered the aforementioned high interest Icesave accounts. When Landsbanki collapsed, the British and Dutch governments who had guaranteed their citizens Icesave deposits totalling €3.9bn had to pay out. The current diplomatic impasse stems from the fact that Britain and the Netherlands maintain that, under EU law, Iceland is liable for this expense. Iceland's government argue that they were not the ones to offer a guarantee, and thus bear no responsibility for the costs of fulfilling it. Given that Iceland is reliant on the IMF and its fellow Nordic countries for the debt-aid it needs to function, and that a condition of this aid is that it pays all its debts, including the Icesave debts, the Icelandic government cannot refuse to reimburse the British and Dutch governments.

The terms of repayment have been altered considerably over time, however. What the three governments agreed on in negotiations last summer was not what passed through the Icelandic parliament, as elected representatives have made amendments to make the bill easier for the electorate to accept. Even with the new terms agreed and passed through Parliament in December 2009, a further obstacle to repayment emerged as the Icelandic President, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, refused to sign the bill upon receipt of a petition signed by one-fifth of Icelandic citizens. Despite this, the "Icesave Act" has become law in accordance with the constitution, and will remain so unless it is repealed by a referendum (which would be the first in Iceland) held before the deadline of March 6<sup>th</sup> 2010.



As can be seen from this brief overview, four specific characteristics of Iceland made it vulnerable to the fate that befell it. As a small country with its own currency and limited fiscal capacity, Iceland was unable to circumvent the downfall of its banking sector, which was oversized in relation to its economy. States with limited spare fiscal capacity can only put the appropriate policies in place and then wait for them to take effect. Having an oversized banking sector was a boon for many countries over the past decade, providing thousands of well-paid service industry jobs.

Economically, Eurozone membership could help Iceland avoid a recurrence of the financial meltdown when the business cycle hits its next, inevitable trough. This may prove difficult to carry through politically, however, given a vocal opposition within the country to EU membership. On the one hand, while Euroscepticism has historically been a strong part of Iceland's political culture, the existing links between Iceland and Europe are more extensive than might be initially presumed. As well as the established cultural links, it is already part of the European Economic Area and a Schengen zone member. Finally, it is estimated that two thirds of its laws are already compatible with E.U. rules.

Nevertheless, the people of Iceland would still have to vote to join Europe, and there are two possible issues that may discourage citizens from voting "yes". The first is the fishing territory that Iceland has protected from foreign intrusion for decades. Few Icelanders would be happy to see this fall under the EU's Common Fisheries Policy. However, there is always the possibility that Iceland could secure some concessions in this area, given its importance to the Icelandic economy. The second major hurdle stems from the Icesave debacle. Many Icelanders are angry at the UK's use of anti-terror legislation against their government, and feel that the British and Dutch are exerting their influence in Europe to bully their nation into submission, which only provokes hostility towards the EU.

Iceland has long prided itself on the self-sufficiency of its people. In the boom years, its citizenry appear to have been collectively blinded by the bright future international finance promised them. In the aftermath of the financial crisis, it seems almost inevitable that they will have to continue looking to the international community for support in the years ahead as it struggles with the political fall-out of challenging financial conditions.

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# 20 Years of German reunification & *Ostalgie*

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Last year witnessed huge celebrations not only in Berlin but across the world to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. This article considers the effects of the fall of the Wall on German society, culture and identity. 20 years on, we ask what the consequences of the collapse of this structure were, and whether it resulted in the rights and freedoms which so many East Germans imagined.

The celebrations last year provide an interesting parallel for our starting point. On the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2009, U2 played a 'free' concert at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate, although those without a ticket were left outside the two-metre-high barrier constructed around the concert. They could hear the music but see nothing, just as the East Berliners experienced when Michael Jackson and Pink Floyd played next to the Wall in 1988. According to concert organisers, this temporary barricade was erected to ensure the safety of those inside, a justification which sounds eerily familiar. Another name for the Berlin wall, coined by East German officials, was the 'Anti-Fascist Protection Wall.' One of the more plausible explanations as to why Berliners awoke to find a wall separating them on the morning of 13<sup>th</sup> August 1961 was the exodus of young people leaving the East for what they hoped would be a better life in the West. By 1961, 3.5 million people of a population of 17.5 million

had fled the German Democratic Republic (GDR). To address the economic problems the GDR faced, the East Germans built a concrete wall transecting the city. Entire streets and houses were demolished and destroyed. Even the underground metro lines were divided between east and west, as metro stops on the opposite side would be blocked off and trains would pass through these “ghost stations.”

When, on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 1989, the Wall was finally brought down, thousands of people began to celebrate, hoping to soon enjoy the freedoms of the Western world many East Germans had imagined from behind the Iron Curtain. Reunification and adjustment, however, proved to be a difficult and complex process, as many more political, social and economic challenges arose than were initially expected. This was partly due to cultural preconceptions and expectations on both sides of the divide.

By and large, the West perceived the GDR as an economically underdeveloped and dreary place, constrained by the oppressive political ideology of the USSR and still scarred – literally and metaphorically – by the Second World War. Western propaganda from this era sought to portray East Germans as caught in a dictatorship from which they desperately wished to escape. In the 1967 James Bond spoof, *Casino Royale*, a scene depicts a bomb in West Berlin blowing a hole in the Wall. Suddenly, a crowd of frantic ‘Ossis’ (East-erners) streams through the gap – men, women and children with prams and suitcases. Such preconceptions coloured West Germans’ views about East Germany and the reunification process, and made the subsequent nostalgia and difficulty adjusting on the part of East Germans even more difficult to comprehend.

Meanwhile, over years of isolation and during the euphoria of 1989 and 1990, many East Germans dreamed of political and economic equality, not anticipating the complex process of transition which lay ahead. In reality, although democratic freedom progressed, economic and cultural adjustment proved much more challenging.

The economic stability many East Germans had grown accustomed to was shaken as former Soviet companies closed down. The *Treuhand* organisation was founded to privatise state enterprise, reinstating Western companies and owners of the property they had possessed prior to the establishment of the GDR. This led to thousands of East Germans being removed from the land and houses that they had occupied for decades. East German identity, or *Ostidentität*, had developed in the context of a socialist ideology which maintained that the state provides jobs, childcare, low rents, low living costs and healthcare. East Germans were thrown into the deep end of the capitalist

system, unsuited to the economic and social difficulties relating to unification. Unemployment rose in many areas to 20% in spite of huge state investments in infrastructure and businesses. Many East Germans felt themselves to be under-represented in the reunified Germany and felt like second-class citizens dismissed by West Germany. The economic miracle many Easterners anticipated after unification never materialised and they soon became disenfranchised by their unrealised hopes of liberty and equality.

The challenge of adjustment to life in unified Germany also had a strong cultural dimension. The relationship between the East and the West Germans and their different cultural backgrounds was brought into sharp focus as familiar cultural symbols were transformed almost overnight. Street names were suddenly changed from *Karl-Marxstrasse* to *Schillerstrasse*, and the city of Chemnitz's name was changed back after 40 years from *Karl-Marx-Stadt*. Easterners were expected to accept and adapt to West German norms. However, in those decades of isolation, East Germans had developed their own social norms and unique identity, albeit ones which were often defined in terms of the state. East German identity was created in the GDR through common thought-patterns and shared experiences. When the GDR collapsed, this identity broke down, to be replaced by Western democratic and free-market views. In the transition, many East Germans felt their norms, values, experiences and traditions were devalued and even ridiculed as the GDR was labelled a dictatorship and an unjust state. The Chancellor at the time, Helmut Kohl, admitted that he was struck at how 40 years of separation could create such profound segregation between people who share the same language, the same history and the same cultural past.

A combination of the romanticization of the GDR, and the social, cultural and economic difficulties many Easterners faced during reunification resulted in many feeling that their lives in the GDR had been better than in the newly reunified Germany. In July 1995, *Der Spiegel* reported that 37% of East Germans expressed a desire for the return of the GDR, while up to 75% of East Germans claimed to be proud of the life they had lived in the GDR. They felt that the GDR would have protected them from the harms of the capitalist economic system and that the East German state had created a sense of communal solidarity which had now been lost forever. For these people, the benefits that unification brought were outweighed by the challenges of the process and what they had lost.

The persistence of an East German identity and *Ostalgie* – a portmanteau of the German word for east and nostalgia, referring to nostalgia for life in the former East German Republic – prove that although the physical wall

has been broken down, many of the psychological walls remain between East and West Germans today. In the 2009 federal elections, The Left Party (*Die Linke*), which succeeded the ruling party of East Germany (the SED), gained 12% of the vote, up from 2.6% in 1990. The loss of the East German social welfare system and the state's responsibility to provide a minimum standard of living is an increasingly important part of their political manifesto. As certain parts of East Germany struggle with unemployment figures of up to 16%, it seems likely that older generations will continue to express nostalgia for the economic stability of the lost GDR.

*Ostalgie* has also fuelled a considerable cultural revival, perhaps one of the strongest indications of the persistence of the East German identity. In Berlin today one can find a wide range of memorabilia on offer commemorating the GDR. One tourist attraction in the city even includes a ride through Berlin in the quintessential symbol of East Germany, the *Trabi* or Trabant. In a truly modern twist, in 2010 an eco-friendly Trabant running on electricity will be launched. East German foodstuffs are also being made widely available again, marketed with the phrase 'From the East, hence it's good!' In Berlin you can now stay in *Ostalgie* hotels and hostels, which offer the GDR 'experience.' Four decades of isolation in the GDR has left clear marks of a lifestyle and culture which persist to this day.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, Mikhail Gorbachev has commented that with the global recession, it is clear that Western forms of capitalism also have shortcomings which they will need to address with their own form of *Perestroika*. The Nobel Peace Prize winner also asserted that the fall of the Berlin Wall initiated the formation of a single world civilisation resulting in today's global interdependence. Images from the anniversary celebrations showed statesmen and women walking through the Brandenburg gate together; the German Chancellor and former GDR citizen, Angela Merkel, in tears, with the leaders of the former four occupation zones. These celebrations and symbolic acts were designed to show Germans' triumph over a brutal symbol of oppression and conflict. But across the world, from the US-Mexican border to Palestine, walls and fences are being built faster than they are being dismantled. There are still lessons to be learned from the events in Berlin. If one day the reunification of North and South Korea is realised, they will at least be able to learn from the German experience. Unification is more than just a political process; isolation and segregation have long-term effects on economic, social and cultural practices also.

The bipolar world order crumbled as the Soviet Union fell, leaving a sin-

gle superpower on the world stage as emerging states battle for world influence. Many of the former Eastern Bloc and Soviet states have been integrated into the European Union, although the process of unification, integration and transition both within the countries themselves and on the international stage has been characterised by some of the same challenges that Berliners faced and continue to face today. The effects of German unification on Europe were far from the disastrous predictions of Margaret Thatcher and François Mitterrand, who claimed that a united Germany would dominate the continent. From the German example, however, it must be recognised that even with the demolishing of walls, the consequences, which cannot always be solved through subsidies, take decades to solve.



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# Europe after Lisbon: Who will run the EU once the dust has settled?

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The latest process of reform of the European institutions has been a long and arduous one. Beginning as early as 2001 with a meeting of European leaders in Laeken in Belgium, the eventual Constitution which emerged from these talks in 2004 was ultimately rejected the following year in France and the Netherlands. The proposals were redrafted in 2007 as the Lisbon Treaty, but were rejected again – this time by the Irish electorate – only to be eventually approved in a second referendum and finally come into force on 1<sup>st</sup> December last year.

Now that Lisbon has finally entered into effect, what kind of changes can we envision for the future of European integration? One of the possibilities raised by the Treaty is that a single individual could preside over both the Commission and European Council for up to five years. Such a post would be much more powerful than any current position within the structures of the European Union. Similarly, the Lisbon Treaty could change the nature of European elections, by linking their results to the election of the Commission president, and creating a pan-European race for the top job in Europe. Much depends on how the European Council wishes to proceed within the

institutional parameters set down by the new treaty and what is envisaged for the new posts of Council President and High Representative for Foreign Affairs. This article will explore some of the possible paths the EU may take in the years to come, and point out some of the benefits and pitfalls of the new institutional arrangements created by the Lisbon treaty.

The European Council has been the scene of much of the most recent attention and it seems an appropriate place to begin assessing potential future changes. Since the meetings of heads of state and government were formalised into their current bi-annual structure in 1974, the premier of whichever country held the presidency of the EU would also preside over the European Council. However, as the Council gained importance, the rotating nature of the presidency was criticised as undermining its effectiveness; during George W. Bush's term of office, he dealt with 17 individual presidents, each representing the collective voice of the European Union.

Under the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, this presidency became a fixed position, with a 2 ½ year term, renewable once. After intense negotiations, this position has been given to Herman van Rompuy, the relatively unknown former Belgian prime minister. His appointment took place in the context of ardent debate over what role this new permanent Council President should have. While the role is, officially, relatively low-key, with tasks such as chairing summits of European leaders, reporting on such meetings to the European Parliament and acting as a face for the EU, some commentators have envisaged the new position as having the potential to become a strong leadership figure in European and global politics. This is perhaps best exemplified by the much publicised, though ultimately unsuccessful, candidacy of former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair.

To have a high-profile figure such as Blair as Council President would have made a strong statement that the job was to be a powerful one, with the expectation of a chief who would 'lead from the front'. A European representative such as Blair, with his level of recognition in the international media, would perhaps have been a stronger advocate on the global stage. However, the EU has decided against such a leader, at least for the moment, in favour of a figure who will not intrude too far into the limelight of his fellow Council members. Despite being quick to voice potentially divisive opinions on the delicate issue of a Europe-wide tax, it seems that, in essence, van Rompuy will be an unobtrusive president.

The Treaty of Lisbon does in fact provide for the creation of an even stronger post which has received relatively little attention, particularly in the Anglophone world. Article 15 (6) of the new Treaty on the European Union

(TEU) states that the President of the European Council shall not hold a national office, but there is no legal basis to preclude him or her from holding a European-level office. Given that this President can now serve for up to 5 years, it is possible that the same individual could preside over both the European Council and the Commission. The amount of power that such a 'dual-President' would wield would be considerable, bridging the gap between the supranational Commission and the intergovernmental Council.

Such a move is unlikely in the immediate future, given that the Council has just passed up an opportunity to elect a strong leader for itself; it seems implausible that at the next opportunity they will elect an even more powerful, overarching, dual-President. However, the Lisbon Treaty is intended to be the last major treaty to revise the institutional structure of the EU for quite some time, and its architects deliberately left the door open for the selection of a single, powerful chief executive, without the need for treaty revisions and the arduous ratification process that this involves. As Europe progresses towards an "ever closer union," it is a possibility that should be kept in mind, particularly in consideration of the new role which the Lisbon Treaty has granted to the European Parliament in the selection of a Commission President.

Article 17 (7) of the TEU specifies that the Council shall be guided by the European Parliamentary elections in making their nomination for Commission President. In other words, if socialist parties across Europe win the European elections, then the Commission president should have a socialist background. It is a delicate balance between who the Council is willing to propose and who the European Parliament is willing to endorse, but the nominee is ultimately elected or rejected by the Parliament. Thus, there is now a link, enshrined in treaty law, between what the voter does at the ballot box and the election of the head of the institution which proposes all European law. This could pave the way for (albeit indirect) Europe-wide elections for the position of Commission President.

The main European parties could select 'their' candidate for the presidency in advance of the European elections. The individual national parties who make up the Euro-parties could campaign with the nomination of this candidate as one of their central platforms; the battle for the Presidency of the Commission would thus form part of the European election campaign. To some extent, this occurred last year with the European People's Party (EPP) throwing their weight behind the incumbent José Manuel Barroso before the elections; a vote for any national party which was part of the EPP group in Europe was effectively a vote for Barroso as Commission president. However,

the EPP's main rival, the Party of European Socialists, was less explicit in its support for their most likely candidate, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, and there was little understanding among ordinary Europeans that there was a contest for the job between these two men. This potential new link between the European parliamentary elections and the nomination of Commission President could help to address the criticism, so often levelled at the EU, that it is populated by "faceless bureaucrats."

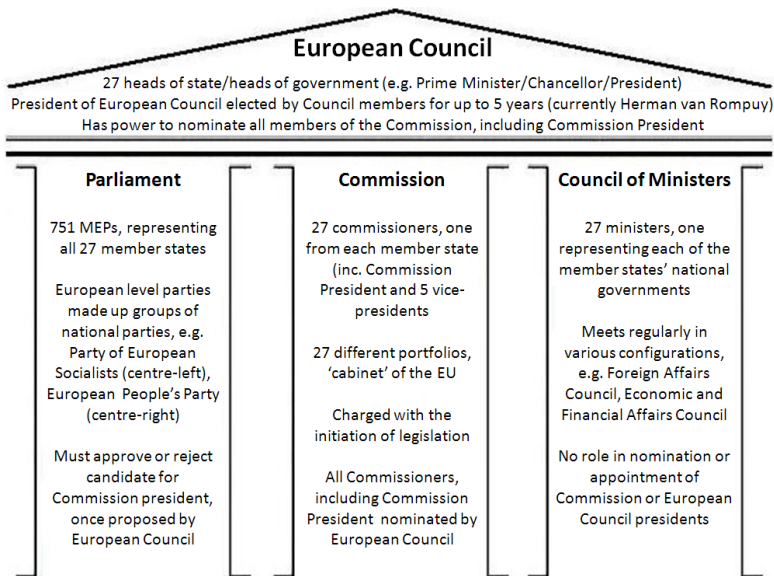
Of course, such a Europe-wide contest may be some way off. The second-order nature of European elections has been well documented as voters tend to make their decision through a national prism, rather than on the basis of pan-European concerns. Many are unaware which European-level party their chosen candidate is a member of, or indeed that such parties exist. As turnout levels throughout Europe continue to fall, generating interest in a European election may be easier said than done.

It also overlooks the fact that first and foremost the job of proposing a candidate for the Commission presidency lies with European heads of state and government within the European Council. Considerable uncertainty remains about whether these national politicians would be willing to automatically give their seal of approval to whomever their colleagues in their Euro-party wish to see as Commission President. While a Europe-wide election for a presidential figure might seem appealing to those in favour of further integration, the voices around the Council table opposing such moves only stand to grow louder if a Conservative Prime Minister is elected in the UK next year.

Nevertheless, with the introduction of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Parliament has more power and it could assert itself more forcefully than in the past, when it tended to quietly accept whomever the Council proposed. If the Euro-parties in the Parliament have greater control over candidate selection, and orchestrate the 2014 European Parliament elections as proxy elections for the Commission president, then pressure will be on the Council to approve of the candidates put forward. If people vote in European elections with a Commission candidate in mind, it would undermine the democratic legitimacy of the Union if such a candidate were to be blocked by the Council. For the moment though, despite the gains made by the European Parliament under the Lisbon Treaty, the European Council clearly remains the most decisive forum for deciding who will get the top jobs in the EU institutions as demonstrated by the intense political horse-trading at last November's European Council summit for control of the new positions of European Council President and High Representative for Foreign Affairs.

2014 will be a test for the new institutional possibilities created by Lisbon, when the next round of negotiations take place, as two new posts and the Commission presidency will all be under review simultaneously. Will the European Council be willing to cede their right to nominate the Commission President and simply rubberstamp the candidates proposed by the Euro-parties? With three big jobs on offer, will the two largest parties be able to keep control of all three positions or will they have to contend with sharing the electoral spoils with a growing Liberal or Green party? Further down the line, will there be a move to unify the presidencies of the Council and Commission into a more powerful President of Europe? If so, what would be the role in this for the Parliament and the pan-European parties? For the moment, European leaders can content themselves that the process started in Laeken eight years ago is finally over, and they can proceed with exploring the potential opportunities for institutional development created by the Lisbon Treaty.

#### INSTITUTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:



## Further Reading

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