

*(Cover photo) Haedong Yonggung Temple in Busan, South Korea.
Photo by Stuti Shah, Senior Business Administration and Public Policy Major.*

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The publication of JFAC's Spring 2023 issue would not be possible without each of these people.

FROM THE EDITOR

As Carolina's campus fully blooms, I am reminded of all the hopeful turning points in world history that have happened in the spring. There is something inspiring about the warmer weather, conversations in nature, and longer, sunnier days after winter. To me, this particular change in season is a reminder that even in a world with chaotic and often tragic events, there are reasons to hope that people, including students, have agency to improve lives around the world.


In this Spring 2023 issue of the Journal of Foreign Affairs at Carolina, our undergraduate authors and editors have yet again collaborated to bring fascinating and thoughtful analyses of global affairs to our campus readership. The articles analyze lasting legacies of history ("Power, Ideology, and Human Rights," "The Strength of Democracy in Argentina"), recent political and economic trends ("The Power of the Press," "Brexit"), and contemporary debates ("Two Perspectives on Civilian Nuclear Energy").

As usual, this journal is a product of many people's hard work and collaboration. Thank you to the leadership of the Carolina International Relations Association — especially President Mikhal Ben-Joseph, Vice President Rohan Rajesh, and Treasurer Rishi Kulkarni — for supporting JFAC's operations. Thank you to the talented student authors and photographers whose submissions are featured throughout the journal. And, thank you of course to the JFAC editorial team, including the executive team: to Jay, Stuti, Robert, Michelle, Phe, Mariana, and Emma, I have greatly appreciated the chance to work with you all this year.

I am particularly grateful to this semester's entire editorial team for making my last semester at the journal such an enjoyable one. Being a part of the editorial team in various ways for the past four years has been an incredible opportunity. I am excited to watch the journal continue to grow next year, led by the extraordinary editing duo of Michelle Liu and Phe Sorensen. Our editors and contributors have taught me so much, and I am confident that because of them, the journal will flourish in the coming years.

Sincerely,

Hannah Rubenstein



Editor-in-Chief

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Power of the Press: State Capture of the Media in Poland and Hungary Since 2010 By Jordan Mundy	8
Two Perspectives on Civilian Nuclear Energy in the United States By Sophie Bresnicky	18
The Strength of Democracy in Argentina and Where it Stands Today By Jake Wallihan	26
Brexit: More Harm than Help for the United Kingdom's Economy By Jessica Walker	34
Power, Ideology, and Human Rights: The Cold War at the United Nations By Ariela Leventhal	42

The Power of the Press: State Capture of the Media in Poland and Hungary Since 2010

Jordan Mundy

Jordan Mundy is a third year at UNC double-majoring in Political Science and History. She wrote "The Power of the Press: State Capture of the Media in Poland and Hungary since 2010" for her Politics of East-Central Europe course. Her article reflects her ongoing interest in and advocacy for global press freedom.

Freedom of the press is essential to a vibrant, liberal democracy. In Hungary and Poland, where democratic backsliding is prevalent, government power over the media is one of the many reasons these countries are “illiberal” democracies. Since 2010, these governments have increasingly controlled the press. The governments of Poland and Hungary both engage in media capture by selectively distributing state advertising and packing media boards, although Hungary implemented stricter government controls on media during the Coronavirus pandemic than Poland. The Hungarian government leverages its control over private media while the Polish government focuses on consolidating state media. Both these methods hinder freedom of the press, and state capture of the media in these nations has grave implica-

tions for the fate of their democracies.

To begin, it is vital to understand the troubled histories of the media in these nations and the danger of media capture. Media capture is when political parties control the press to have power over information, change public opinion, and gain votes.¹ Since the time of communism in Hungary, the media landscape has been troubled, most recently by international ownership and government attacks on media. Under communism, there was a lack of free media, but when the communist power crumbled in the late 1980s, media freedom increased. Some Hungarian journalists and media analysts view the late 1980s and early 1990s as a “golden age” of media freedom.² Hungary embraced liberal media reforms and a lax approach to media privatization, which led to a great deal of

foreign ownership of the press.³ In 1993, the government commenced a “media war” by establishing a new public service television channel and taking control of “Hungarian Radio” and “Hungarian Television” and purging their staff to replace them with pro-government management and workers.⁴ From 1994 to 1998, under Gyula Horn, the government reversed its course on media by increasing media freedom and through collaboration “with parliamentary parties as well as professional and civic organizations.”⁵ However, these changes would be reversed with a “second media war” under Viktor Orbán’s first government beginning in 1998.⁶ Fidesz, Orbán’s party, sought to use state funding to build right-wing media during its first government.⁷ Between governments, Fidesz built a “loyal media empire” by continuing to place members in important me-

dia positions, creating its own news television and radio, and increasing its network within media and business.⁸ Orbán's second government began in 2010, and it quickly altered the media landscape.

Poland has experienced both restrictions on the press and a push for freedom since the period of communism. During the communist era, the Polish government censored media, though there were a number of intellectual movements, protests for freedom, and, over time, a level of civil liberties not seen in other communist countries.⁹ With the transition away from communism, constraints on the press were lifted.¹⁰ The government led privatization of the press, which allowed for early party capture of the media, as seen in instances like when the government sold 104 of the 178 formerly state-owned newspapers to political organizations.¹¹ The government also restricted the amount of foreign ownership of media.¹² Despite these setbacks, immediately after the transition came an "explosion of publications" before readership declined a few years later.¹³ Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, there were varying periods of both media growth and setback as the government sought to control the press, and Poland's media freedom score, according to Freedom House, increased in the 1990s before falling in the next decade.¹⁴ In particular, the governments of both Miller-Belka and Marcinkiewicz-Kaczyński

made use of media capture, with the latter being more intense in its efforts.¹⁵ In 2010, Poland was on the brink of an increasingly controlled media environment.

Turning to current approaches of media backsliding, one method both Polish and Hungarian governments use is selectively distributing state advertising to fund media outlets that support the parties in power. Hungary's Fidesz party uses this method extensively. Hungary uses state advertisers who favor companies loyal to the government, which hurts independent companies.¹⁶ In 2011, sixteen state institutions, ranging from the Prime Minister's Office to the atomic energy station in the city of Paks, advertised on the commercial radio station Class FM. The station's rival Neo FM, associated with the Hungarian Socialist Party, did not receive such treatment.¹⁷ Additionally, the state-owned National Lottery Company spent over 10 million euros in 2011 on advertisements in the pro-Fidesz newspaper Magyar Nemzet and stopped advertising altogether in the left-leaning newspaper Népszava.¹⁸ In a stark example of selective advertising, journalists from one right-wing paper organized a pro-government rally in 2012, and the next day, National Lottery Company advertisements appeared in the paper.¹⁹ This situation is only getting worse. A 2021 memorandum by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human

Rights cited recent research demonstrating that the government is increasingly channeling state advertising to pro-government media. In 2020, the government gave 86% of state advertising to pro-government outlets.²⁰

In Poland, the Law and Justice party, known as PiS, is the ruling party that employs state advertising to support pro-party media. Since the PiS gained power, the government has stopped advertisement purchases and subscriptions by all major public companies to outlets that do not support the party.²¹ "Polish Television," a channel watched by 50 percent of Poles according to a study conducted in 2009, is owned by the State Treasury and relies on government funding.²² As of 2021, the PiS continues to attack the press by withdrawing public sector advertising and subscriptions from independent media and funneling public money into state television and radio.²³ Government ministries and agencies increased spending on advertising by 40% from 2020 to 2021.²⁴ Almost half of state-owned companies' spending went to pro-government magazines, whereas magazines with more viewers but more critical stances on the government received less or no money from the state through advertising in 2021.²⁵ The PiS uses state advertising so much that in 2021 the prime minister's chancellery was the second biggest advertiser in the public sector.²⁶ A senior representative for

the League of Polish Families highlighted this phenomenon by saying, “Polish Television is surrounded by a network of companies, which earn big money on production using the money of Polish Television... It is a big enough business, and by observing it from within I have the impression that these networks are primary to the parties...”²⁷ Using advertising as a means of funding pro-party media enables the Polish government to damage competition and create an uneven media landscape that favors organizations that support it. The practice contributes to the illiberal democracy within the country, as it limits the sources voters might see by weakening media critical of the party.

A second key method governments use is employing and appointing party supporters to state press boards and staff. This quickly creates media biased toward the party in power. In Hungary, this is another prevalent method of media capture, exemplified in the country’s Media Council. Since Orbán’s second government took power in 2010, state news outlets hired Fidesz supporters and appointed pro-Fidesz individuals to supervisor positions.²⁸ In 2010, Parliament passed legislation that created the National Media and Telecommunications Authority and the Media Council to control the press.²⁹ All the appointees for the Media Council were nominated by Fidesz—the chair was a former Fidesz MP, and both the members and

the chair had nine-year terms.³⁰ The Media Council oversees all of Hungary’s public service outlets and has power over the funding of state media.³¹ In order to align with Council of Europe recommendations, in 2013 the Hungarian government passed a law that the president must approve the prime minister’s nominations for the chair of the Media Council, but the law has not created much change nor has it deeply protected the press.³² Instead, the main supervisory body over Hungarian public media is controlled by party members. In a recent example of the dangers of this phenomenon, the European Commission referred Hungary in July 2022 to the European Union’s Court of Justice for refusing to allow an opposition radio station, Klubradio, to operate. The Media Council blocked Klubradio’s application for renewal of its radio frequency, and the European Commission found this violated EU law and sent Hungary to court after a year of unsuccessful negotiations.³³ Thus, with party members at the helm, the Media Council gives a great amount of control over the press to the government.

The PiS in Poland also packs media boards and staff to achieve its own means. The state-owned Polish TV, called TVP, is one case study of the increasing bias of state-owned and controlled media. In the late 2010s, the new chairman for TVP was a former MP for the PiS, and he replaced a large number of

TVP’s staff. TVP launched smear campaigns against opposition parties and civil society organizations, and the corporation devoted 66 to 79 percent of its political broadcasts to those who support the government.³⁴ Using similar ideas, the PiS used its majority in parliament to replace the boards of public companies and fill vacancies with loyalists.³⁵ Management positions for the Polish Television and Polish Radio outlets are generally motivated by politics and party loyalty.³⁶ In 2015, the PiS pushed a law through Parliament that fired the board members and the management of national television and radio shows to replace them with direct appointment by the treasury minister. In protest, many leaders of the press resigned before the law could go into effect.³⁷ The Polish Constitutional Tribunal declared the law unconstitutional, but once the law expired in 2016, the PiS legislated a new law that created a National Media Council similar to Hungary’s. The National Media Council appoints the management and supervisory boards of the public media, and the majority of the members are pro-PiS.³⁸ The Council’s 2017 statement on its first year of work mentions the importance of “public media owned by the nation” and how “the only purpose of public broadcasters is to provide all of society with real information... through a carefully selected programme.”³⁹ These are worrisome changes for the state of liberal democracy and

freedom of the press in Poland. One scholar describes the situation as PiS having “turned the state owned media into a mouthpiece of the government to a degree not seen since party-state rule.”⁴⁰ When the government appoints party loyalists to advisory boards in this way, it damages the press.

Fidesz enacted new laws during the Coronavirus pandemic that restricted media freedom to a degree not yet seen in Poland. This third method of state captured media is devastatingly powerful in Hungary. In March 2020, the Hungarian government decreed a state of danger and passed several decrees and laws to alter the media landscape.⁴¹ Hungary’s “Coronavirus Law” gave Orbán power to rule by decree and impose further limits on media freedom in the country. Poland has not gone as far.⁴² The Hungarian government also centralized information about the pandemic with journalists submitting questions online for a daily press conference given by the “Operational Staff Responsible for Defence against the Corona Virus Pandemic.” The Operational Staff includes members of the government, healthcare leaders, and police and secret service leaders, and this method of submitting questions allows the government to choose questions that do not scrutinize their actions.⁴³ These are some of the key ways the government has tightened controls of the media beginning in 2020, and they are not

the only changes.

Another major alteration to Hungarian media law during COVID-19 was an amendment to the Criminal Code that widened the scope of the crime of “Scaremongering” to include the “impediment of defence against pandemic situation.”⁴⁴ With this addition, the Hungarian government limits freedom of speech under the guise of targeting “fake news” sites. The alteration was unnecessary from the standpoint of actual public safety. One scholar found the code’s previous statutes were sufficient to limit media that would harm government efforts to protect citizens during a pandemic.⁴⁵ Police and the government employed pre-existing statutes to shut down sites spreading false information about the pandemic. The government investigated such sites’ creators in the early stages of the pandemic, citing public endangerment, not “scaremongering.”⁴⁶ In practice, the new amendment has scared journalists from reporting on sensitive aspects of the pandemic, especially given that merely being accused leads to lengthy legal proceedings.⁴⁷ In April 2020, the Operational Staff revealed there had been 78 proceedings for “scaremongering,” though there is no public information about cases against professional journalists and media outlets. Instead, most of the law is being applied to social media users not affiliated with media organizations.⁴⁸ The police detained a sixty-

four-year-old man to question him about a Facebook post he had made that criticized the government and labeled Orbán as a dictator. Yet, the post contained no false information. The prosecutor dropped the case, but the law has created a dangerous environment for free speech.⁴⁹ The vagueness of some of these laws has also limited investigative journalists who fear straying too close to criminal activities.⁵⁰ Given that emergency measures launched due to the 2016 migration crisis are still in place, scholars worry about the lasting power of the changes that were intended to be temporary.⁵¹ Now, the Hungarian government uses the excuse of helping its country during the pandemic to enact changes that harm citizens’ freedom of speech and a free press.

Likewise, Poland has made changes to its media laws, but they have not been as far-reaching nor as damaging as in Hungary. In 2021, the Polish government made a series of moves to limit freedom of the press, such as a proposed “pandemic tax” on media advertising revenue and a bill targeting foreign owners of media outlets. Another major development was the purchase of Polska Press, one of the largest newspapers, and Ruch, a major press distributor, by PKN Orlen, a state-owned petrol company led by PiS party members.⁵² However, these changes were met with resistance. The office of the Polish Human Rights Ombudsman argued for freedom of the

press and challenged the purchase of Polska Press, but a Polish court rejected the office's effort in June of 2022.⁵³ Although their advocacy for media freedom failed, it was an important step toward limiting attacks on the press. Additionally, many scholars saw the bill limiting foreign ownership of media as an attack on TVN24, a US-owned media channel and Poland's largest private broadcaster, given that it was the only major broadcaster set to be impacted by the bill.⁵⁴ The Polish parliament passed the bill, but widespread protests and backlash caused President Andrzej Duda to veto the law. In the same vein, after the national broadcasting council delayed renewing the license of TVN24 for over a year and a half, a Warsaw court found this move to violate the law and fined the national broadcasting council.⁵⁵ Thus, while Hungary has increased the power of the ruling party and extensively damaged media freedom, government limitations on the media in Poland have not been as severe and have even failed.

A second way Poland and Hungary diverge in their methods of media capture is because Hungary's media control is deeply tied to private, pro-Fidesz conglomerates whereas Poland employs nationalized consolidation to take power in the press. In November 2018, pro-Fidesz media owners transferred the rights of their media holdings to KESMA, the "Central and Eastern

European Media Foundation," a Hungarian media conglomerate.⁵⁶ KESMA has a board comprised of Fidesz MPs, and 476 media brands merged into KESMA, signifying a major control of the media by the government through private avenues.⁵⁷ Wealthy Fidesz-allied business owners buy up financially weakened press organizations and turn them into pro-government media. As seen in the example of TV2, a broadcaster sold by its foreign owners to a Fidesz-allied businessman to become a "government mouthpiece."⁵⁸ KESMA is an enormous way that the Hungarian government exercises great power over the media without officially taking control.

In contrast, the Polish government focuses on capturing media through public means. This difference is due in part to the country's economic transition away from communism, which saw less oligarchical control over key industries and thus gave the PiS less wealthy business allies. A lack of investors to purchase media caused the failure of private oligarchic control of the press, so the PiS turned to public methods of capturing media.⁵⁹ Poland's unique technique of media capture occurs when it nationalizes private media through a state-owned company. The PKN Orlen purchase of Polska Press, which was previously German-owned, is an example of this method, giving PiS power over the media compa-

ny and twenty of Poland's twenty-four regional newspapers. Since the sale, PKN Orlen has pursued the acquisition of other media.⁶⁰ Not long after acquiring Polska Press, PKN Orlen altered the company's management board, purged chief editors, dismissed journalists who had published articles unfavorable to the government, and introduced structures to stop the publication of content criticizing the government or casting it in a negative light.⁶¹ In this way, government control of the press through public means has had detrimental effects, though both PiS and Fidesz maintain power over media through their differing methods.

Poland and Hungary are countries with historically long struggles for the freedom of the press. After transitions away from the restrictions of communism, both countries could have forged new, liberal democracies complete with free media. Instead, the past thirty years have been fraught with protests, international backlash, and ever-encroaching government power over the media. Both Hungarian and Polish governments have participated in media capture by allocating state funds to pro-government outlets and packing boards with government supporters, which are very powerful ways of taking control. In a recent development, Hungary has been much stricter in its COVID-19 controls of media than Poland. Since 2010, a pattern has arisen in which Hungary con-

solidates and controls media using private companies whereas Poland does the same with public organizations. These key developments con-

tribute to media backsliding. The future of the media landscape in Poland and Hungary appears dire. However, as long as a small num-

ber of citizens stand against illiberal democracy and work towards a free press, there is hope for a better future.

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(Right) Haedong Yonggung Temple in Busan, South Korea.
Photo by Stuti Shah, Senior Business Administration and Public Policy Major.





(Above) Taken while on a trip to southwestern Germany, August 2021. Rooftops of Heidelberg, DE, as seen from the overlook at the castle ruins on the hill above the town.

Photo by Brenner Cobb, First-Year Peace, War, and Defense and Contemporary European Studies Major, Minor in German.

(Right) Taken July 1, 2019 in Ha Long Bay Vietnam. The picture depicts the beginnings of a boat and fishing community. Many families live on the boats and travel to the land to sell products from their fishery. It is an area rich in culture, but faces poverty in such an environment, especially as climate change leads to an increase in environmental storms that threaten their lifestyle.

Photo by Emma Thomas, Sophomore Global Studies Major.



Two Perspectives on Civilian Nuclear Energy in the United States

Sophie Bresnicky

Sophie Bresnicky is a junior at UNC Chapel Hill pursuing a double major in Political Science and Global Studies and a minor in Entrepreneurship. Her article, “Two Perspectives on Civilian Nuclear Energy in the United States,” was written for her Nuclear Security in the 21st Century course in the Peace, War, and Defense Department. She chose this topic to better understand the benefits and shortcomings of nuclear power as a sustainable energy source and foreign policy tool for the United States, as the industry grows globally.

Nuclear power as a civilian energy tool has been a thoroughly debated subject for decades, as nations across the globe seek to expand their nuclear energy sectors and develop a strong presence in this emerging market. Those in favor of nuclear energy point out how it is able to provide large-scale, reliable electricity that emits no carbon dioxide, making it an appealing option for nations looking for sustainable energy.¹ On the other hand, skepticism of the implications of expanding nuclear energy and fear of its potential use as a military weapon have steered many away from supporting its usage.² While the United States initially led the development of nuclear technology in the twentieth century, public safety concerns coupled with strict regulations have resulted in the

decline in the United States’ nuclear industry in recent decades, thereby reducing the nation to a minor competitor in the market.³ Nevertheless, many nations are implementing nuclear technology as both a sustainable solution and a strategic foreign policy tool, making a discussion on the subject immensely relevant.

This leads to the historical question of this paper, which asks whether the United States should expand its usage of civilian nuclear energy. This paper will examine two attempts to answer this question. The first thesis argues that making more use of civilian nuclear power is a national security imperative for the United States because of its geopolitical implications and the need to maintain influence over nuclear security protocols. The second thesis that will be explored is that the perils of civilian nuclear power

– including its economic costs and unfavorable perception among the American public – outweigh its potential benefits, so it should not be a priority of the United States to expand it. This paper will first closely examine the main arguments within both of these theses and the scholars who defend them. Furthermore, the evidence used to support these arguments and the logic derived from this evidence will be evaluated, in order to compare and contrast the relative worth of each thesis. Finally, this paper will present a synthesis of the two theses and defend it using logic and reasoning.

To evaluate the first thesis which argues that the United States should expand its civilian nuclear sector as a matter of national security, this paper will investigate two journal articles. The first was published in 2018 in *The Washington*

Quarterly by Laura Holgate and Sagatom Saha, and is titled, “America Must Lead on Nuclear Energy to Maintain National Security.”⁴ Laura Holgate is an American diplomat who serves as the United States’ Ambassador to the Vienna Office of the United Nations and to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). She has decades of experience in national security, including serving on the U.S. National Security Council, being the coordinator for cooperative threat reduction at the Department for Defense, and directing the U.S. Department of Energy’s Office of Fissile Materials Disposition. Sagatom Saha is an Adjunct Research Scholar at the Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University, specializing in global energy transition and United States competitiveness in clean energy technologies. He has written over 50 policy papers in journals such as *Foreign Affairs* and *Scientific American*, worked for the US Department of Commerce, and served as a special advisor in the Office of the U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate. The second article on the side of this thesis was published in *Strategic Studies Quarterly* by David Gattie and Joshua Massey in 2020, and is titled, “Twenty-First-Century US Nuclear Power: A National Security Imperative.”⁵ David Gattie is a professor at the University of Georgia (UGA) and a Resident Fellow at the University’s Center for International Trade and Security.

He specializes in research on energy systems and environmental issues, power generation, and energy policy. Joshua Massey is the Director of the Masters of International Policy program at UGA, and specializes in civilian nuclear power, the global nuclear market, and national security. All four of these scholars have a plethora of experience regarding the various aspects of this debate.

These articles make two primary arguments to defend why expanding civilian nuclear energy is necessary for the United States. The first is that civilian nuclear energy has pertinent geopolitical implications. As stated previously, public skepticism of the dangers of nuclear energy as well as strict regulatory requirements have led to a sharp decline in the United States’ nuclear energy sector in recent decades.⁶ Simultaneously, some of the nation’s biggest adversaries, China and Russia, have been rapidly expanding their nuclear energy sectors, becoming the new leaders of the market. In fact, since 2000, 54% of the nuclear reactors under construction, 71% of reactor deployment, and 65% of reactor construction in half of the countries where nuclear power is being used have all been associated with China or Russia.⁷ Meanwhile, the United States only accounts for approximately 13% of new reactors globally.⁸ According to the authors, the unique strategic relationships China and Russia are able to formulate as the leaders of

the civilian nuclear energy market pose a significant national security threat to the United States. Currently, more and more nations are looking to implement nuclear technology as an alternative to fossil fuels, and to do so, they need to acquire materials and funding. If China and Russia supply these nations with the materials they need to implement nuclear technology, then they can project their influence, which will, “...inevitably lead to foreign governments using nuclear energy as a foreign policy instrument.”⁹ The authors point out how this is already happening; nations such as Finland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic all have contracts with Russia to build nuclear reactors in the near future, and in exchange for the investment, Russia seeks to have these countries represent its interests during European Union talks.¹⁰ Further, China is constructing its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to interconnect itself to the developing Asia Pacific, and as of now, 41 BRI countries are partnering with China to develop nuclear power.¹¹ The authors argue that China and Russia being the leaders in the nuclear industry leaves nations who want to implement nuclear power with few suppliers, thereby, “...affording China and Russia the ability to project their respective geopolitical influence in countries that will be dependent on them for nuclear technology and services.”¹² They argue this directly undermines United States national security, as it

is displacing the nation as a reliable partner in strategic regions.¹³

In addition, both articles make the argument that without a strong presence in the market, the United States will not be able to maintain influence over nuclear security protocols. When the United States began advancing nuclear technology in the twentieth century, the nation quickly became the front-runner of the industry, and thus was able to set standards for how the rest of the world developed this technology.¹⁴ This was primarily done through agreements such as the Agreements for Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation – more widely known as the 123 Agreements – which sought to lay out IAEA safeguards, direct how nuclear technology could be transferred, and mandate high physical security protection.¹⁵ The United States was able to enforce standards for nuclear power because it was the dominant exporter of nuclear technologies, and if a nation wanted to expand its nuclear capabilities, they would have to abide by United States sanctioned protocols to receive the appropriate investment and materials.¹⁶ However, the authors note how, “...the 123 Agreements are only effective if countries import from the United States.”¹⁷ According to the authors, if the United States does not remain a main supplier of nuclear technology, then they will not have the ability to, “...establish nonproliferation-focused international control over

atomic energy, to share the science and technology for peaceful purposes, and to project security guarantees for allies against the inevitable development of atomic weaponry by illiberal, authoritarian nations.”¹⁸ This leaves the nation vulnerable to threats such as increased likelihood of nuclear terrorism, misuse of nuclear technologies, and diversion of civilian nuclear energy materials for military use.¹⁹ To guarantee strict protocols that promote nuclear security, deter nuclear theft, and prevent weapons development, all of which are crucial to national security, the authors argue the United States must be a leader in the market.

After examining two main arguments defending thesis one, this paper will now pivot to focus on the arguments made in support of the second thesis, which argues against the expansion of United States civilian nuclear energy. On this side of the debate, two articles will be assessed. The first was written in 2009 by Harold A. Feiveson for the MIT Press, titled, “A Skeptics View of Nuclear Energy.”²⁰ Feiveson is a senior research policy scientist at Princeton’s Center for Energy and Environmental Studies, and has decades of experience conducting research in the fields of nuclear weapons and nuclear energy policy. His background in both physics and public affairs has made him an expert regarding nuclear history, materials, and proliferation. A second source

that defends thesis two was written by Peter Van Ness in 2017, and is titled, “Lessons from Fukushima: 9 Reasons Why.”²¹ Van Ness is a Visiting Fellow in the Department of International Relations at The Australian National University. He has spent numerous years conducting research in areas including Chinese foreign policy, Sino-American relations, human rights, nuclear power, and Asia-Pacific security. Similarly to the four authors defending thesis one, these two authors are highly qualified to weigh in on this debate.

The first main argument that defends thesis two is made by Feiveson, who claims expanding civilian nuclear energy is not in the best interest of the United States due to its enormous costs and public hostility. He first points out how the costs of constructing a nuclear reactor are high and continuously rising; while overnight costs for all forms of electricity generation have been on the rise in recent years, they have been increasing most for nuclear technology since expenses such as capital and overnight costs are difficult to foresee and reactor building is an extensive process with much uncertainty.²² For example, Finland’s construction of the Olkiluoto-3 plant is already three years behind schedule and two billion dollars over budget, and Westinghouse Nuclear’s construction of two AP-1000 reactors in Florida have met many unforeseen costs leading the total to be \$13.6 billion.²³ These costs directly

drain funding from American companies and institutions, which is not in the nation's best interest. Feiveson further points out how developing civilian nuclear energy is unfavorable among the American public, much of which stems from fears of accidents like Chernobyl in 1986 and Fukushima in 2011. According to IAEA surveying, less than one third of the public favors building new reactors, and only 38% of those surveyed expressed support for nuclear power even to fight climate change.²⁴ He argues how despite advancements in nuclear technology, the United States' population still does not favor its expansion; moreover, the United States needs to act in its best interest, and for Feiveson that means avoiding exceedingly high costs and abiding by the will of the people.

A second defense of thesis two is made by Van Ness, who argues the expansion of the United States' civilian nuclear sector will lead to an increased risk of nuclear proliferation. He notes how nuclear technology has the duality to be both a military weapon and a civilian energy source; moreover, developing nuclear power as a civilian energy source comes with a higher need for security compared to other sources of energy such as coal, gas, or renewables.²⁵ Even though the usage of nuclear energy does not equate to the existence of nuclear weaponry, Van Ness argues that even the slightest possibility of an entity em-

ploying nuclear physics to produce nuclear weapons should not be taken lightly.²⁶ Van Ness cites the example of Japan, a nation that many analysts refer to as having, "a bomb in the basement," due to its highly developed nuclear energy sector.²⁷ Japan possesses all the technology necessary to develop nuclear weapons, including enough plutonium to create 1,000 nuclear warheads.²⁸ Cases such as Japan are threatening to the United States according to Van Ness because if more nations begin developing nuclear power, they will be theoretically equipped with the technology necessary to construct dangerous weapons. If this occurs in unstable regions with weak institutions or those that are aligned with United States adversaries, there may be detrimental consequences to United States national security. Van Ness's argument contends that the United States should be a leader in inspiring nations looking to incorporate sustainable technology to use other energy sources such as renewables.

This paper will now conduct an evaluation of the evidence used to support each thesis, starting with the two articles that defend thesis one. Holgate and Saha include a full bibliography with 52 sources to support their claims about how expanding civilian nuclear energy is crucial for United States national security. Much of this evidence comes from databases such as the United Nations Energy Statistics

Database and the Global Nuclear Power Database provided by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists which have the sole purpose of conducting unbiased research, as well as gathering and presenting accurate data. Additionally, this article consists of primary evidence that is directly from the treaties, international organizations, and agencies concerning nuclear technology, such as direct quotes from the 123 Agreements and protocols set by the IAEA. Similarly, Gattie and Massey's article contains a bibliography with 55 sources. Among these are mainly agencies such as the United States Department of Defense and the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which publish factual information regarding national security. Think tanks that study nuclear security and publish accurate, scholarly research in the field such as the Pew Research Center, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and Center for Strategic and International Studies, are cited frequently throughout this article as well.

The articles that defend thesis two also contain a plethora of credible evidence. Feiveson includes a bibliography with 37 sources, which mainly consist of peer reviewed texts written by other scholars who have conducted extensive research and analysis in the realm of national security. Additionally, he cites a number of agencies and institutions including the Nuclear Energy Agen-

cy, the International Energy Agency, and the United States Department of Energy. These serve to provide accurate data regarding subjects such as nuclear security. Van Ness includes strong sources in his publication as well. He cites 12 sources, almost all of which are peer-reviewed journals published by nuclear security scholars, as well as research institutions such as the Nuclear Energy Institute and the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.

Beyond just evaluating evidence, this paper seeks to assess the logic and reasoning employed to defend each thesis, beginning with thesis one. Holgate and Saha clearly demonstrate how the evidence they gathered supports their claims. For example, they use data collected by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists that shows how the United States decreased its nuclear exports in recent decades while China and Russia have increased theirs, to draw the conclusion that the United States is not maintaining its status as a major player in the nuclear market while its adversaries are. Furthermore, this goes to show how civilian nuclear energy has geopolitical implications. Gattie and Massey's conclusions are derived in a similar manner. For instance, they directly cite the IAEA and the 123 Agreements to show that the United States has spent decades establishing nuclear protocols. One area where all four authors could improve upon is in the reasoning for

their second major argument about the importance of preserving high standards for nuclear technology. Neither article provides evidence of the major market players China and Russia disregarding United States nuclear protocols or proving to be less adherent to safety standards. To make the claim that nuclear standards will deteriorate if China and Russia run the market, there should be evidence of this trend provided. Other than this critique, the authors of both articles make compelling arguments defended by clear evidence and reasoning.

The authors defending thesis two use strong logic and reasoning in their articles as well. Feiveson provides the capital and overnight costs of nuclear energy, and includes examples of reactors going over budget or having unforeseen high costs, in order to conclude that nuclear energy is expensive. This argument could have been stronger if Feiveson included data regarding the costs of other forms of energy so that these high numbers could be contextualized. To defend his argument that the United States should act in the public's best interest, Feiveson uses data collected directly by the IAEA about public sentiments towards nuclear power to draw the conclusion that the public does not support its expansion. This is a strong argument; however, this data is from 2005, and as nuclear technology has advanced, an updated public opinion poll should be included to reflect po-

tentially updated opinions. Overall, Feiveson's logic is well founded, and one could easily understand how he derived his arguments from the presented evidence. Van Ness presents a compelling argument that nuclear proliferation is a risk when developing civilian nuclear energy; having said that, the relationship between his evidence and the reasoning here is inadequate. Much of the evidence used to draw the conclusion that expanding civilian nuclear energy in the United States will inspire nuclear proliferation globally appears hypothetical. Van Ness cites Japan's robust nuclear industry as an example of the potential for nuclear proliferation. However, there is no direct evidence presented that countries like Japan are taking the steps to develop weapons, or that civilian nuclear power can be transformed into a weapon. Furthermore, there is no evidence linking how the development of the United States' civilian nuclear sector is causing other nations to develop their own industries. If anything, expanding the United States' civilian nuclear sector will allow the nation to continue exporting nuclear materials under the condition the recipients abide by comprehensive safety standards. It is not unfounded to speculate a link between expanding civilian nuclear power and proliferation; but, the argument would be much stronger if there was direct evidence connecting this sequence.

Nuclear power is a complex

topic for numerous reasons; it can be a civilian or military tool, the technology is rapidly evolving, and the long term nuclear landscape can be difficult to predict. As a result of these complexities, there are a range of opinions about whether the United States should expand its civilian nuclear energy sector. On one side of the debate, authors like Holgate, Saha, Gattie, and Massey argue that expanding civilian nuclear energy is crucial for the United States, and is a matter of national security because of its geopolitical implications and the need to uphold existing nuclear protocols. Conversely, scholars such as Feiveson and Van Ness point out the risk of nuclear proliferation, high costs, and widespread public skepticism of civilian nuclear energy as reasoning for why expanding is

not in the United States' best interest. On balance, both theses present compelling arguments that are supported with credible evidence. The strongest argument made in this debate is the geopolitical implications of civilian nuclear energy. The most harmful thing for the United States's national security is for its adversaries to gain influence in new regions, benefit from lucrative markets, and advance technology as potentially dangerous as nuclear power. Thesis two presents various arguments that should not be ignored; civilian nuclear energy does present high costs, potential public backlash, and a theoretical risk of proliferation. However, these articles lack the evidence needed to support their reasoning. On top of that, it is for these reasons that the United States

should continue expanding, in order to develop the safest and most efficient nuclear technology, and reap the most benefits geopolitically, economically, and environmentally. It is most important to note how, regardless of what the United States chooses to do, China and Russia are continuing to expand their nuclear power sectors, and as long as this lead goes unchecked, they will keep growing influence and power. To ensure a strong global presence and a continuation of ethical safety standards, the United States must become a major market player, and it is for this reason that after careful analysis of both theses, the United States should expand its civilian nuclear power sector.

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*(Above) An evening view of the Neckar River looking East from the Heidelberg bridge.
Photo by Brenner Cobb, First-Year Peace, War, and Defense and Contemporary European Studies Major, Minor in German. Taken while on a trip to southwestern Germany, August 2021.*

*(Right) Photos taken from his time in Napoli, Pompei, and Sorrento this past summer. Capturing the spirit of these three Italian cities.
Photos by Antonio Preziuso, Sophomore Public Policy Major, Italian Minor.*



The Strength of Democracy in Argentina and Where it Stands Today

Jake Wallihan

Jake Wallihan is a junior at UNC Chapel Hill majoring in Political Science and Global Studies. He wrote "Democracy in Argentina and Where it Stands Today" for his Democracy and Development in Latin America course in the Political Science Department. Jake wrote about democracy in Argentina because he's passionate about the spreading of democracy.

The topic of this paper is the democratic transition of Argentina from authoritarianism to democracy in the 1990s. I will be using Latin America scholar Kenneth Roberts' framework on Latin American dual transitions outlined in the book, *Parties, Movements, and Democracy in the Developing World*¹. Specifically, I will argue that of Roberts' three types of democratic transitions—Institutionalized Pluralism (IP), Hegemonic Popular Sovereignty (HPS), and Oligarchic Restoration (OR)—Argentina's transition throughout the 1990s and early 2000s best falls into the category of Hegemonic Popular Sovereignty. I will organize my argument into three sections: contestation and participation, presence of a left-right axis, and careening. Then, I will shift focus to modern-day Argentina and argue that HPS no longer applies to

the country, analyzing the country under the same three dimensions.

Roberts identifies a few factors to classify democratic transitions². Contestation is the level of competition between parties in electoral politics and the associated rights that enable it to occur in a democratic fashion. Participation is the extent to which the population participates in elections and political issues. Ideally, a regime-transitioning country will possess both high contestation and participation for democracy to flourish. A clear left-right axis is the presence of distinct parties with differing ideologies and their adherence to these ideologies. Again, the presence of this factor is ideal in democracy following a transition. Careening occurs when the population loses faith in established parties and no longer identifies with any of them, leading to the rise of political outsiders not asso-

ciated with the established political system, and the emergence of new parties. Careening worsens democratic conditions and demonstrates that a country has become a case of Hegemonic Popular Sovereignty or Oligarchic Restoration rather than the ideal Institutional Pluralism. I will argue that in the 1990s and early 2000s, Argentina was a case of HPS because it lacked high levels of contestation and a clear left-right axis. While there are some events in Argentina that point towards careening, the factor isn't as relevant in this case as it is in other countries with HPS.

Contestation and Participation

Prior to dual transition and the market-based reforms, throughout the 1980s and early 90s, Argentina demonstrated high levels of political participation, with citizen engagement being centralized around unions and workers. How-

ever, the neoliberal reforms implemented throughout the 90s greatly weakened labor power in Argentina; as a result, unions became less politically relevant. Instead, the informal sector became much more important in electoral politics, with the Peronist Partido Justicialista (PJ) shifting their platform to appeal towards the heavily impoverished. As Leandro Gamallo put it, collective action shifted from taking place in the factory to taking place in the neighborhood³. This transition brought an informal transformation in social mobilization as impoverished people expressed their dissatisfaction with the economy through destructive protests, highway blockages, and uprisings. These forms of social conflict persisted all the way to the end of the 90s and the start of the 21st century. The dual transition in Argentina did not decrease the high levels of participation in Argentina; it changed how participation and collective action occurred⁴.

While these new forms of social mobilization were successful in calling attention to the failure of the neoliberal model, they did not lead to the rise of a new hegemony because there was a lack of a popular alternative to the established PJ and Radical Civil Union (UCR). Beginning in 1993 and persisting through the 2000s, the PJ dominated the political scene⁵. From 1989 to 2015, the PJ was in power for all but two years: 2000 and 2001. During this brief period, UCR member Fernando de la

Rúa held the presidential office but he was quickly forced to resign due to widespread protests over the economic crisis. Despite the UCR's brief stint in power in 2000 and 2001, the PJ maintained a powerful grip on the country throughout the 90s and 2000s. One example of this was the Olivos Pact. Formed between PJ President Carlos Menem and UCR leader Raúl Alfonsín, this was a mutually beneficial agreement where Menem would be granted the ability to run for reelection, while the UCR would gain control over the mayoralship of Buenos Aires. This is because the amendment also allowed for elections for the mayor of the city, whereas it was previously decided by appointment from the president. While this may seem to have benefited both parties, in reality Alfonsín agreed to the amendment out of fear that had he not, Menem and the PJ would push for term limit reform through undemocratic means. Because of the PJ party dominance, Argentina lacked the competition between institutionalized parties required of a strong democracy⁶.

Left-Right Axis

Compounding the issue of a lack of competition was the absence of a clear difference in ideologies between the PJ and UCR in the 1990s. It is important that the established parties in democracies possess distinct ideologies and policies so that the population may be adequately represented by parties that best match their position. Unfortunately,

the PJ took positions more associated with the right during the 1990s rather than the leftist positions of their constituency. Historically, the PJ was a leftist, populist party with statist policies commonly seen in Latin America during this period. However, the party leader, Carlos Menem shifted the party away from this ideology and toward neoliberal policies. Primarily, the rise of Carlos Menem led to the deinstitutionalization of the party and the blurring of the political axis in Argentina⁷.

Menem ran his presidential campaign largely independent of the party, as he was ideologically disparate from most of the PJ in his ascendance to power. Thus, his independence from the party carried over into his administration with him mostly appointing those he had personal ties with to cabinet positions and even going so far as to appoint avid anti-Peronists⁸. These ties to anti-Peronist conservatives represent a clear affinity for conservative ideologies in the Menem administration. More importantly however, they represent his growing hegemony, refusing to be bound by checks or compromises, whether that be from the opposition or his own party⁹. By the early 1990s, the PJ no longer held accountability over Menem, but was more so a tool under Menem as it shrank and lost all its power. Thus, the values of the PJ were bound to Menem's values, which in this period were market-based, neoliberal policies.

Careening

In 1999, Menem was no longer allowed to re-run, and due to a growing economic crisis, UCR member Fernando de la Rúa was elected to presidential office. However, this economic crisis continued to grow throughout de la Rúa's term, which heightened dissatisfaction with the political system. Disapproval from the public culminated in the 2001 midterm elections, which occurred at the height of the economic crisis. Under de la Rúa, unemployment rose to 21.5 percent and poverty rose to 35.9 percent, as a result of de la Rúa's removal of Menem's Convertibility Plan. The plan collapsed the banking system and spurred massive capital flight.¹⁰ These poor economic conditions led to another massive wave of protests and uprisings, signaling the height of careening in Argentina's HPS.

During this time, protests included widespread roadblocks, lootings, riots, yelling in the streets, and more. Despite the UCR's removal of the Convertibility Plan as the catalyst for the crisis, dissatisfaction with the political system was no longer solely directed at the ruling party. Rather, both the UCR and the PJ received flak for their failure to govern in an effective and democratic manner. The sentiment of protest chants at the time prove this, with protesters chanting "Out with them all!"¹¹ and "Everyone should go!"¹² Furthermore, blank and spoiled ballots cast rose to an all-time high that

midterm election, with 24 percent of voters casting such ballots¹³. Clearly, there was a strong dissatisfaction with both of the major parties, and a desire for an alternative to the two established parties.

Argentina most closely relates to Hegemonic Popular Sovereignty in the 1990s because of Menem's undemocratic means of governance. Menem blurred the distinction between the left and the right through his implementation of bait-and-switch neoliberal reforms. Alongside this, he eroded party institutionalization through his appointment of patrimonial officers and leaders, which contributed to the low levels of contestation at the time. Left or right, PJ or UCR, one had to be loyal to Menem to gain power. An illiberal style of governing combined with neoliberal reforms led to mass protest against both parties and a call for a restructuring of the political class. However, as I'll discuss in the next section, HPS did not run its full course, and instead resided on low contestation with Peronist domination throughout the 2000s.

Hegemonic Popular Sovereignty Throughout the 2000s

Argentina began to diverge from other examples of Hegemonic Popular Sovereignty starting in the early 2000s. Although there was widespread discontent with the entire political system, the massive social uprisings at this point did not lead to the rise of a populist outsid-

er or the creation of a new powerful party. Rather, this only led to further dominance by the PJ and the utter decimation of the UCR throughout the 2000s. While the PJ still faced much backlash at the height of the crisis in 2001, substantially greater ill will was channeled toward the UCR, resulting in it becoming majorly unpopular. Meanwhile, the PJ still possessed enough popularity to stave off the defeat from a non-establishment newcomer. From here, the traditional HPS trajectory remained partially complete, with the alternative HPS pathway allowing the Kirchners and their leftist wing of Peronism to govern throughout the 2000s and up to 2015.

The election of Néstor Kirchner as president in 2003 led to the rise of a wing of the PJ that was ideologically distinct from the PJ of the 1990s, which possessed many neoliberal and market-oriented ideals. Instead, he implemented many social reforms to raise living standards and appeal to the demands of the people, including lowering unemployment, poverty, and inequality. Kirchner was able to do so because of the favorable economic conditions from the commodity boom that had just begun¹⁴. These favorable economic conditions also allowed for the re-strengthening of labor power and the reinstitutionalization of social conflict, with the Kirchner government encouraging negotiations with unions. The oppositional voter base was thus weakened during this

time as union membership grew alongside employment. The PJ continued to perform well throughout the commodity boom, with Néstor's wife, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, taking over as president in 2007 and serving for two terms up to 2015. It is at this point that HPS finally begins to dissipate as in 2015, a non-Peronist is elected as president and for the first time in 14 years, Peronist supremacy is called into question.

Modern Day Argentina: Left-Right Axis

The decline in support for the PJ can be attributed to the end of the commodity boom in 2013, where inflation rose to thirty percent and GDP growth declined to almost zero percent¹⁵. These declining economic conditions allowed for Mauricio Macri, a center-right member of the Republican Proposal (PRO) party, to gain office. For the first time in over a decade, a markedly conservative candidate had been elected as president.

Macri's administration towed the line between centrism and conservative policies, operating under a guideline of tweaking previous statist policies for improved economic performance without undertaking structural adjustment¹⁶. In this sense, the Macri administration is less conservative than other Latin American counterparts, but they remain ideologically distinct from Peronism. The Macri administration decided not to remove Kirchner's

conditional cash transfer programs or minimum wage policies, which would have certainly been very unpopular. Instead, their main policies were the implementation of a floating exchange rate, the removal of export duties, the reduction of household subsidies for public utilities, and the compression of further wage increases¹⁷. With the election and successful completion in office of Macri's administration, one can argue there has been a re-establishment of a clear left-right, where the PJ fell on the left side of the political spectrum and PRO fell on the right (a facet that was somewhat evident in the 1980s but not present in the 1990s).

Modern Day Argentina: Contestation and Participation

Today, Argentina has also improved on contestation and participation measures, with contestation improving from the previous two decades. As previously mentioned, the PJ faces considerable competition with the PRO party and their coalition. Macri was able to win against the Peronist candidate in 2015. However, he did not win as a populist outsider overthrowing the hegemonic party. Instead, Macri and the PRO party formed a coalition, known as the Cambiemos, with the UCR and the relatively new Civic Coalition ARI party (ARI) to present a powerful center-right alternative to the Peronists. Although PJ regained control of the executive in 2019 where former presi-

dent Alberto Fernández was once again elected president, this coalition remains a threat to the Peronists today. The Peronists achieved a majority in the Senate and an approximately even control in the Chamber of Deputies, with the Peronists possessing 120 seats and the Cambiemos possessing 119. This distribution of congressional seats is much more competitive than the supermajorities that the Peronists maintained throughout the 2000s. With this large number of seats in Congress, the Cambiemos can present checks on the Peronist authority.

While the 1990s mainly saw informal means of social mobilization and the 2000s formal means, the 2010s has seen both, with street protests frequently occurring, along with a continuation of union activity from the 2000s. For example, Argentina's Women's Movement led mass mobilizations to protest gender violence in 2015 and thousands of protesters took to the streets in 2017 to protest a Supreme Court ruling that reduced the sentence of those convicted of crimes against humanity, a ruling that was later reversed. Meanwhile, unions remain a powerful form of collective action, with the General Labor Confederation carrying out two massive strikes in 2017 and 2018¹⁸. Additionally, informal workers are now better represented with the formation of the Confederation of Popular Economy Workers, a union that represents informal workers¹⁹. Overall, participa-

tion is still a strong facet of Argentinian democracy today.

Modern-Day Argentina: Careening

Careening has not been present in the 2010s to any extent due to Argentina's improving democratic conditions.. Contemporary Argentinian politics operates in a formal manner, where the PJ, the UCR, and PRO are the major established parties, and are not threatened by the sudden emergence of new parties or by populist outsiders. In the past two Argentinian elections, all of the major presidential candidates have been from one of the established parties while the Peronist coalition and the Cambiemos have won a supermajority of congressional seats. Discussion and Conclusion

The state of democracy in Argentina today is more stable than it was both at the height of Menem's power in the 1990s, as well as during Kirchners' dominance during the

2000s. That being said, democracy in the country still faces challenges. One of the most important issues still plaguing Argentina today is the presence of presidentialism in governance. For example, according to V-Dem, judicial checks on the executive have fluctuated throughout the past 20 years, and now reside lower than they did in 1987. The horizontal accountability index, which measures checks and balances between state institutions, has fallen from .99 in 2016 to .69 in 2022, the largest decrease seen in the country since President's Menem term in the 1990s. This decrease represents an Argentinian government more likely to abuse its power without oversight²⁰. Thus, improving horizontal accountability by strengthening institutional checks and balances, specifically within the judicial branch, would be one of the best ways Argentina could further bolster their democracy.

Argentina has improved on all three of the factors relevant to Roberts' classification of dual transitions. For one, there is a distinct left-right axis in represented ideologies which was not present during the Menem era. Contestation has vastly improved as well, where the previously dominant PJ now faces considerable challenge from the other side. It is therefore evident that Hegemonic Popular Sovereignty no longer applies to Argentina, nor are any of Roberts' paths for dual transitions relevant to modern-day Argentina. Democracy in Argentina is not without flaws as specific measures certainly need improvement, but analyzing the state of democracy under Roberts' features is no longer important nor relevant. This is because distinctions within Roberts' framework are defined by the three features analyzed throughout this article, factors that are now stable within Argentina.

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(Next page and above) *Studying abroad in Seoul, South Korea, summer 2022.*
 Photo by Ler Hser, Junior Health Policy and Management Major, German Minor.

(Next page on the right) *A monkey hanging out at the steps of the Batu Caves in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.* Photo by
 Stuti Shah, Senior Business Administration and Public Policy Major.





Brexit: More Harm than Help for the United Kingdom's Economy

Jessica Walker

Jessica Walker is a junior at UNC-Chapel Hill majoring in Journalism and Global Studies with a concentration in International Relations in Western Europe. She wrote her article on the economic ramifications of Brexit in POLI 438: Undivided Europe and was inspired by her strong interest in British politics and the European Union.

For the past six years, Brexit caused significant political and economic instability in the United Kingdom. Since the Brexit Referendum in June 2016, five different prime ministers have governed. Most recently, Rishi Sunak took over as prime minister following Liz Truss' resignation after 45 days in office — the shortest tenure in British history. Between the economic ramifications of leaving the European Union (EU), the COVID-19 pandemic, and Russo-Ukrainian War, the British economy is struggling, leaving its citizens wondering if there will be an effective, feasible solution to stabilize post-Brexit Britain. Regardless of the person in power, there does not seem to be an end in sight.

Today, Britain faces a possible economic recession. But how much of the current economic crisis can be attributed to Brexit, and has public opinion of Brexit changed since the referendum? COVID-19 battered many industries in recent

years. Moreover, Russia's invasion of Ukraine affects the global economy with inflationary pressures that have driven up food and energy costs. To what degree is the pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine or Brexit responsible for the UK's current economic situation? The UK exemplifies what can happen when member states leave the EU — an increasingly popular line of rhetoric in other countries where the refugee crisis and factors influenced Euroscepticism, or the criticism of European integration¹.

In this paper, I argue that Brexit has led to the UK's current economic crisis. The consequences of Brexit outweighed its hypothesized benefits, a sentiment that might influence other European nations' decisions on whether to leave the EU. The UK's economy, and more specifically GDP levels, underperform those of other EU member state economies that have been affected by similar factors. Clearly, there is another unique factor that is con-

tributing solely to the UK's economy — Brexit.

The rest of this paper is divided into five main parts. In the first part, I write about the origins of Brexit, the significance of former Prime Minister David Cameron's referendum, and the influence of the Leave Campaign. The second part analyzes how much of the current economic situation in the UK is attributed to Brexit. Here, I also discuss information on alternative factors including Russia's war on Ukraine, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the prime ministerial instability. Third, I assess public opinion on what led to the referendum and the current economic crisis. Here I focus on the negative domestic impact of Brexit on the British economy. Fourth, I focus on any future projections or predictions of what could happen in the next decade after Brexit, in the UK, and Europe. Finally, I offer plausible solutions to the economic crisis in the UK.

What factors led to Brexit?

On June 23, 2016, the United Kingdom European Union membership referendum altered the history of European relations. After the World Wars, Europe attempted to foster economic relations throughout the continent, with the idea that nations which traded together, would not go to war against each other². The most prominent manifestation of this idea is the European Union, created in 1993 by the Maastricht Treaty. The UK has always been a unique case regarding relations with Europe. The UK is a physically separate island that is economically independent with its own currency. Thus, the notion of leaving the EU or any other European organizations is not an immense surprise for the UK. During former Prime Minister David Cameron's leadership, he proposed the Brexit Referendum.

Cameron's government focused on the challenges of European relations and he was the first prime minister of the UK to veto an EU treaty. At the same time, the right-wing, populist United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) gained popularity among anti-EU voters³. Founded in 1991, UKIP was a single-issue Eurosceptic party that campaigned for the UK to leave the EU. The party gained relevance during the 2004 European Parliament election, winning 16.1% of the vote⁴. In 2006, Nigel Farage became the party leader, using xenophobia and nationalistic sentiments to

antagonize groups and gain British supporters who believed that the UK's money went into a system benefiting non-British citizens. When citizens of the UK were faced with economic insecurity, UKIP seemed to appeal to their demands, create a common enemy, and offer solutions. Cameron could not ignore this rising sentiment and called for the infamous referendum.

Cameron offered the Brexit Referendum to appease Brexiteers within his Conservative Party, though he did not expect it to pass. He said in an interview with NPR that he strongly regretted losing and not working on a campaign to reach Remainers⁵. The Remain Campaign focused on how membership in the single market and the benefits of EU-UK trade outweighed the costs of EU membership. Ultimately, Remainers argued that leaving the EU would negatively affect the British economy. Areas in Britain that voted to remain had lower levels of voter turnout⁶. The low turnout in anti-Brexit areas could be explained by the underestimated Leave voter turnout. The areas that did vote to leave were mainly rural, in the countryside⁷. Research shows that mostly white, elderly populations with relatively less education, who were unemployed or employed in manual labor and possibly saw themselves as the "losers" of globalization voted to leave⁸. UKIP's rhetoric that non-white migrant groups are taking British jobs appealed to those nega-

tively affected by globalization. Additionally, more of the English voted to leave compared to the Welsh and Scottish. This has to do with the ideals of the English as the primary decision makers and overall English nationalism, another UKIP sentiment. Besides UKIP supporters, political partisanship was not strongly correlated with either campaign. The Labour Party voted mostly to remain, while the Conservative Party was divided⁹. Voter rationales had much to do with the economy, mostly related to their opinions of the NHS and Welfare State and refugees¹⁰. Although mainly unemployed, poorer, or rural populations voted to leave, there were a significant number of wealthy retirees who also voted against Brexit. The higher income population possibly voted to leave because they believed that the EU did not benefit their lives directly and the national government could do a better job¹¹. Ultimately, there were many areas of Brexiteers that based their decisions largely on Britain's economic standing.

After the referendum, the UK's separation from the EU was complicated. This paper focuses on the aftermath, but it is important to note the No Deal Brexit phenomenon. Difficulties agreeing on a deal led the UK to leave the EU initially without securing one. The eventual deal put an end to procedures like freedom to work and live between the EU and UK¹². If one is a UK citizen, they could still work in the EU

and vice versa. Most significant to this paper is how the UK must now negotiate its own trade deals, which many consider the real economic start of Brexit¹³.

Analysis of the post-Brexit economy

The UK's economy experienced political tensions and prolonged Brexit negotiations, followed by a global pandemic, and the geopolitical and economic consequences of Russia's war on Ukraine. However, what's unique to the UK is its exit from the EU. Those against Brexit see it as a turning point for the UK, exposing the structural weakness of its economy¹⁴. After the UK's official departure from the union, GDP fell by 0.4% in February 2020¹⁵. Domestic changes such as high import costs and consumer prices ensued¹⁶. The separation from European markets has affected the British economy immensely as the UK is no longer leading with FDI inflows and GDP levels. Between 2017 and 2020, the average level of FDI inflows as a share of GDP was the lowest level since the 1980s¹⁷. By restricting the domestic market, Brexit is stifling workforce diversity and competition for domestic firms, ultimately limiting innovation. Brexit has reduced the UK's trade openness, foreign direct investment inflows, immigration growth, and increased border frictions, transportation costs, tariffs, and customs barriers¹⁸. Brexit is the most significant factor resulting in the current economic crisis, as it

is the sole domestic factor affecting the UK's market and ability to interact with the international market. However, it is important to note that COVID-19, Russia's war on Ukraine, and the role of the UK's many prime ministers also hold weight.

COVID-19 on the UK's economy

In early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the economy as many people were not working, hiring, or consuming as much during the pandemic. Without market activity, the global economy experienced loss and decreasing GDP levels in major economies like the UK, which dropped lower than all the EU member states¹⁹, emphasizing an alternative domestic factor contributing to the extent of the UK's GDP decline. Currently, the UK is the only G7 country that has not returned to pre-pandemic economic output levels²⁰. Additionally, the UK has lost its ranking among the world's top financial and economic powers to, ironically, its former colony, India²¹. The UK's Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) estimated that Brexit will reduce the UK's GDP by four percent, while the pandemic will do so by only two²². It is evident that both the pandemic and Brexit are prominent factors in the current crisis, with Brexit being the stronger.

The pandemic has affected UK businesses domestically. For example, an electronics company in Cheslyn Hay, England is still experiencing problems with the supply

chain because COVID closed down the semiconductor plants in Taiwan²³. However, some other businesses have no clear connection to COVID on the markets or supply chain disruptions. Some UK-based businesses are suffering directly from Brexit-related tariffs and customs, and newly limited trade with the EU²⁴. When a country is within the EU, trade and businesses are allowed to somewhat bypass borders. Now that the UK is outside those borders, businesses with an international consumer base or European suppliers, must pay for higher tariffs and customs checks²⁵. These additional fees affect the UK's revenue and ability to be competitive in the market.

Since the UK's post-pandemic recovery has lagged other developed and advanced economies, experts believe that a non-COVID factor also brought on the UK's declining GDP²⁶. It is implausible that only the pandemic contributed to the UK's economic crisis because COVID affected all of the world's economies. There must be a factor unique to the UK—such as Brexit—causing it to fall behind. However, in 2022 Russia's war on Ukraine affected much of Europe's economy.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the UK's economy

In June 2022, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) predicted that the UK's economy would be the most affected by Russia's invasion

of Ukraine in Europe. The OECD attributed this to higher interest rates and taxes, reduced trade, and more expensive energy²⁷. Laurence Boone, the OECD's chief economist, emphasized that Russia and Ukraine are major sources of energy for the world, and sanctions are causing market prices to skyrocket²⁸. Since inflation in the UK is at its highest in 40 years²⁹, the UK has been largely affected by the market prices. In October 2022, the rate of inflation was double the level of a year ago at 11.1%, five times higher than the Bank of England's target³⁰. However, the Bank claims that these levels are high because of the impact of the energy shock from Russia's war on Ukraine³¹. Although the war affects the EU too, the UK's levels are different from the union's because energy influences market prices in the EU, and Brexit factors, like labor and the supply chain, affect prices in the UK. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has affected inflation levels, but Brexit worsened the crisis by adding burdens to the economy. Restricted trade and job opportunities throughout Europe, and limited access to supply chains are just some of the additional pressures in the UK as a result of Brexit. The OECD predicted that the UK would go from the second-fastest-growing economy in G7 nations to the slowest-growing in 2023³². And among G20 nations, only Russia's economy will decline more than the UK's³³, due to its invasion of Ukraine. Rel-

ative to members of the EU, the UK seems to be underperforming due to the Russo-Ukrainian War, just as with COVID. Again, the UK's unique crisis proves that the common factors that contributed to other countries are not the only contributors to the UK's situation. The OECD further supports this by not only attributing the UK's poor economic status to the war in Ukraine, but also to the market turbulence during Liz Truss's time as prime minister.

Prime ministerial instability on the UK's economy

Prime ministerial instability in the UK is a plausible factor contributing to the economic crisis. Former Prime Minister Boris Johnson left the UK with an economic deficit and Liz Truss' growth plan triggered a strong stock market reaction. Instability can set off a reaction from the economy, but in this case Brexit led to instability³⁴. Without the political parties and the governments' inability to govern after Brexit, there would not have been as many alternating prime ministers. Brexit is still affecting the current government with current Prime Minister Rishi Sunak being encouraged to raise taxes and cut public services. Other economies similar to the UK have not had to make these adjustments. If not for Brexit, these adjustments would not be necessary. Prime ministers and their governments play a role crucial to the economy, even though Brexit has made the job

more difficult. Former Prime Minister Johnson had issues with Brexit deals, Truss' economic plan shocked the market; despite Sunak's closer relations with the EU than his predecessors, Britain's financial crisis isn't improving. Now, the public is displaying their concerns.

Regretting Brexit

There is no hiding the UK's steady slip from its place as a global, economic power, and British citizens are noticing. Newspapers have even coined the term "Bregret." Only 32% of the British public still support Brexit, while the majority, 56%, believe it was the wrong decision³⁵. Previously, public opinion towards leaving the EU hovered around 50%. The lack of enthusiasm and support for Brexit has likely deterred other European nations from following suit. Frexit was a small phenomenon in France of citizens wanting to leave the EU. However, there was a deficiency of support for France's departure during national elections and the movement lacked political supporters. Similarly, the Netherlands voted against Nexit in 2016³⁶. These movements are not nearly as popular as Brexit. Most countries are averse to holding membership referendums after watching Brexit, and it is doubtful that any will soon, especially with recent factors—Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic—affecting global economies. Since the Brexit Referendum, immigration as the issue that sparked Brexit, has

become less salient of a political issue³⁷, with public opinion on immigration turning more positive as the economy takes precedence³⁸. There is much to be remedied in the UK regarding their economic crisis now that public opinion has changed.

What's next for the UK?

The UK's lowering position in the world economy depends on the UK's government and their response. Now that the UK is not as economically powerful as it once was pre-Brexit, it must adapt and adjust to prevent increasing economic consequences. The UK's Office for Budget Responsibility predicts that because of Brexit, long-term productivity will decrease by 4%, exports and imports will decrease by 15%, new signed trade deals with non-EU countries will not have an impact, and the government will reduce migration during labor shortages³⁹. All of which are unfavorable outcomes for the future of the UK. To prevent the worsening of the UK's economic situation, there are

discussions of possibly rejoining the EU. A 57% majority of British voters would like the UK to rejoin the EU⁴⁰. However, the government largely rules this out because the UK would join in a likely worse position, with less political power and decision-making ability. Besides the economic situation, the UK must find a compromise with the Northern Ireland Protocol and re-enter certain financial services, cultural exchanges, etc⁴¹. A more plausible solution could be tightening relations with the EU, much like Switzerland⁴². The Swiss government currently has access to the single market, and limited border and custom checks, while following some EU rules and regulations⁴³. This type of relationship will appease those who mistrust EU governance, while also giving the UK a fighting chance in helping their economy grow with international markets and relationships.

Conclusion

This paper argues that Brexit

was the most significant factor that has led to the UK's economic crisis and decreasing FDI and GDP levels on a global scale. This is evident in the comparisons to other nations that have experienced the effects of the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine on their economies. The strong encouragement and support of Brexit seems to have dissipated as the UK struggles to return to pre-pandemic levels and public opinion of Brexit has turned into regret. It seems as if other countries' exit movements have watched Brexit carefully and are not considering a departure from the EU. In the next four years, marking a decade since the original referendum, the UK will have a lot of work ahead of them regarding trade deals and economic relationships on an international level. The most evident solution is to form a relationship with the EU, similar to Switzerland, or the end of the UK's economic crisis will not be in sight for quite some time.

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(Above) A gondola ride in Venice, Italy, July 2021. You can see one of the bridges as well that connect the multiple islands that make up Venice.

Photo by Caroline Prout, Master's student in Global Studies with a concentration in Russian, Eurasian, and Eastern European Studies

(Right) A gondola ride in Venice, Italy, July 2021. You can see one of the bridges as well that connect the multiple islands that make up Venice. P

hoto by Caroline Prout, Master's student in Global Studies with a concentration in Russian, Eurasian, and Eastern European Studies



Power, Ideology, and Human Rights: The Cold War at the United Nations

Ariela Leventhal

Ariela Leventhal is a History and Public Policy double major in her second year at Carolina. Her paper, "Power, Ideology, and Human Rights: The Cold War at the United Nations" was written for HIST510H, Human Rights in the Modern Era. She chose this topic because of her interest in the intersection of practical politics and lofty humanitarianism, a passion she currently pursues as a lobbying intern for the ACLU.

The devastation and horrors of the Second World War created a worldwide imperative to foster lasting peace through international cooperation and the establishment of common principles. This concern, both moral and practical, manifested in the creation of the United Nations (UN) and the International Bill of Rights. Though hopes were high that the new organization could produce remarkable change, postwar cooperation quickly dried up. Cold War tensions penetrated the UN and turned the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) into a contest between superpowers to create an institutional foundation for ideological supremacy. Soviet and American efforts to protect their interests domestically and internationally through both concurrent and opposing action at the UN helped bring about a legally weak and profoundly western Declaration.

WWII illustrated the need for an international security organization. The process of defining such a body began in Washington DC at the 1944 Dumbarton Oaks conference led by the U.S., the USSR, the UK, and the Republic of China. At Dumbarton, the four nations developed a postwar plan almost entirely focused on security concerns.¹ Each nation reviewed the plan domestically and presented their edits at the 1945 San Francisco Conference which finalized the UN Charter. The Charter established, among other things, the UN General Assembly (UNGA), the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the last of which was concerned with human rights issues.² A fourteen-member Executive Committee, including the U.S., formed immediately after the San Francisco conference to make recommendations to the UN Preparatory Commission, whose role was to cement UN machinery in

preparation for the first session of the General Assembly at Westminster in 1946.³ ⁴ At this first session the ECOSOC established a temporary United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) tasked with the drafting of an international bill of rights. The UNCHR decided its agenda and membership at a preliminary meeting in New York in 1946, began to draft the UDHR at Lake Success in 1947 and completed it in 1948 at its second and last meeting.⁵ The resulting Declaration was presented to the ECOSOC and the UNGA later that year in Paris, where it was approved with no dissenting votes and seven abstentions.⁶ This process was guided by the efforts of the 51 founding member states and hundreds of non-governmental organizations, but the often competing and occasionally aligned interests of the United States and the Soviet Union were responsible for some of the most consequential decisions to shape the UN Charter

and UDHR.

The U.S. was ultimately responsible for human rights becoming a UN concern, an impact it would soon struggle to contend with and control. It was not a given that the UN would concern itself with human rights. In fact, the Big Three wanted to avoid the matter entering into negotiations at Dumbarton Oaks. The inclusion of such issues could dilute the efficacy of any peacekeeping efforts and reduce the likelihood that sovereignty-conscious nations would ratify any resulting organization. The Allies had used the language of human rights to galvanize domestic support for WWII, but as the postwar period dawned, the leaders of the U.S., the UK, and the USSR turned away from high-minded rhetoric and toward the practicalities of peace.⁷ Security concerns were paramount for the Big Three in the shadow of WWII; with the potential for a third world war looming, “all proposals for a global bill of rights took on a secondary importance to Roosevelt, met with indifference from Churchill, and generated opposition from Stalin.”⁸ Roosevelt’s plans for an international peacekeeping body, submitted to the Allies at the 1944 Dumbarton Oaks Conference, focused on peace attained through military cooperation rather than any lofty goals of human rights oversight or enforcement.⁹ The Soviets entered the Dumbarton negotiations tentatively, aiming to use

the process to cement themselves as a world power. George F. Kennan, a U.S. embassy official in Moscow, judged that any weight Stalin gave to the UN negotiations was “in the expectation that the organization would serve as the instrument for the maintenance of a U.S.-UK-Soviet hegemony in international affairs.”¹⁰ This assessment was true for all the great powers, not just the Soviets. This practicality fought against a global tide of support for the institutionalization of human rights as international bodies like the World Health Organization and the International Labor Organization were rewriting their charters to include mentions of human rights. Human rights permeated the postwar dealings of other states; peace treaties signed with Romania, Italy, Hungary, and Finland all mentioned human rights.¹¹ The Big Three did not seem eager to follow in their footsteps. The UN presented an opportunity to cement themselves as the dominant powers of the postwar era both militarily and ideologically, and the U.S. had significant fears that wading into the muddy waters of human rights could doom the UN to the fate of the League of Nations. As the Soviet delegate at Dumbarton pointed out: “the one reason for the League of Nations’ failure was that three-quarters of the issues it took up were extraneous, non-security items.”¹² Churchill too wanted to avoid questions of human rights that could threaten the

already unstable British Empire.¹³ So it was that the human rights language, which had been useful Allied propaganda during the war, fell by the wayside as the conference drew to a close.

Though the U.S. was as opposed to the inclusion of human rights issues in the principles of the UN as the UK and the USSR, strong domestic lobbying that appealed to American exceptionalism eventually led to the introduction of such issues at Dumbarton. American Secretary of State Edward Stettinius was lobbied relentlessly by NGOs that “urged the United States, in keeping with its best traditions, to show leadership on the issue.”¹⁴ To appease these groups, Stettinius put forward a weak proposal for human rights principles that hamstrung any potential intervention in the same sentence. It read: “the international organization should refrain from intervention in the internal affairs of any state” and member states should ensure that their domestic affairs do not invite intervention by “[respecting] the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all its people.” The UK and USSR delegates rejected even this neutered proposal; Stettinius only secured its inclusion by blackmailing the other countries with threats to publicize their reticence.¹⁵ This hard-won appeasement of domestic human rights groups was not enough.

U.S. officials faced domestic backlash after their middling stance

on human rights at Dumbarton became public. When trying to sell the public on the UN, Stettinius was met with a wave of feedback from religious, civil rights, and internationalist groups that demanded the organization have a greater focus on human rights. This dedicated grassroots movement, dubbed the “second chance” campaign after the failed attempt to adopt the League of Nations, reflected a short-lived but intense wave of domestic support for international human rights oversight that superseded sovereignty. There were significant legislative efforts at state and federal levels to lower the bar for treaty ratification so U.S. isolationists could not demand a weaker UN and even famed isolationist Senator Vandenberg gave a speech in 1945 advocating for a strong and moral UN guided by the “maximum American cooperation.”¹⁶ This popular mandate put U.S. delegates in a compromising position: while the American public demanded strong human rights clauses, other world powers rejected any infringement on their sovereignty. Additionally, U.S. officials foresaw significant ‘dangers’ posed by enforceable human rights commitments ranging from the upending of segregation to the creation of a powerful source of anti-U.S. propaganda for the Soviets.

Human rights issues, so reluctantly introduced at Dumbarton, were expanded upon haltingly at San Francisco. Advocates for human

rights celebrated the eight mentions of human rights that made it into the UN Charter, especially the “promise to promote human rights.” This policy shift was made possible by “lobbying from consultants, the increasing knowledge of the Holocaust, pressure from mostly Latin American nations, and the concurrent passage of provisions protecting national sovereignty.”¹⁷ To put that small victory in perspective, “the phrase ‘international peace and security’ appears in the Charter no fewer than thirty times.”¹⁸ Nonetheless, as the superpower that had brought human rights to the UN (however unwillingly), the U.S. raced to capture the moral high ground. After the San Francisco conference, Stettinius boasted about the role of American NGOs in the creation of an Economic and Social Commission and disingenuously lauded it as a powerful and effective force for spreading and enforcing human rights ideas, something he and the State Department worked to prevent.¹⁹ Though the U.S. publicly seized upon the inclusion of human rights in the Charter as an American victory, it, along with the Soviets, had substantial domestic and international motivations to keep such provisions weak and ineffectual.

U.S. advocacy for human rights issues at the UN was hampered by concerns about sovereignty and international embarrassment. The American delegation feared that human rights commitments made on

an international stage would overturn or publicize the domestic racial hierarchy. American recalcitrance on human rights was amplified by the demographics of the delegation: segregated employment practices produced an almost entirely white State Department that was disinclined to press racial issues. Only 15 of the 6,700 G-7 level State Department employees were black, and their limited influence on UN policymaking meant racial issues could easily be swept under the rug—and there was certainly strong pressure to do so.²⁰ The Truman administration feared domestic perception that UN actions could enforce racial equality would lessen already limited senatorial support for an international organization. Additionally, there was a danger that such a legal clash would be a source of international embarrassment, especially as propaganda in the hands of the Soviets, who readily employed U.S. civil rights failures as propaganda throughout WWII.^{21 22} What little human rights language made it into the UN charter was already having strong domestic consequences: *Oyama v. California* would not be decided until 1948, but the public petitioner’s brief and an amicus brief filed by the ACLU in 1946 argued against the racially discriminatory Alien Land Law on the basis that it violated the UN Charter. A decision on this basis was directly linked to the Communist threat.²³ The Truman administration stepped in to

support the plaintiffs while limiting the legal power of the Charter, providing amicus briefs that argued against the Alien Land Law based on conflicts with the Constitution, but making no mention of the UN Charter.²⁴

This policy of containment, both of Communism and racial equality, was central to U.S. attitudes at the UN from the start. When Truman nominated Eleanor Roosevelt as the U.S. delegate to the UN, the single vote against her in the Senate was from Senator Theodore Bilbo of Mississippi, who cited concerns over her supportive record on racial equality.²⁵ Bilbo need not have worried. The American delegation working under Roosevelt produced a legally impotent draft Declaration that was essentially a restatement of the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth and Thirteenth Amendments, which the Supreme Court had already ruled did not conflict with segregation.²⁶ Nonetheless, the Americans sought to limit the humanitarian power of the UN at every turn. Non-governmental petitions flooded the UN, many of which came from civil rights groups in the U.S. that sought international redress for domestic discrimination. But U.S. officials at the UN fastidiously tried to make their efforts “invisible or fruitless.”²⁷ The U.S. and the Soviet Union passed a joint declaration of inaction, a moment of cooperation that reflected a narrow but powerful partnership that would have strong

consequences on the human rights machinery of the UN.

The actions of the Soviets at the UN betrayed their insecurity on the world stage and their instability as a world power. Their incursions into Poland, in violation of their democratic promises at the Yalta Conference, and their insistence upon German reparations, which caused significant tension at the San Francisco proceedings, were part of paranoid efforts to build a bulwark of Communist states on their western border.²⁸ The Soviets suffered massive casualties and damages in WWII and, at the time of the UN’s founding, they were entering a two-year famine.²⁹ Unwilling to relinquish sovereignty to an international body, the Soviet recommendations at the UN often belied fears about Western interference both ideological and literal. They emphasized state sovereignty and proposed “restrictions on misuse of freedom of speech for ‘wrong’ ideas” out of an abundance of precaution “against the use (or misuse) of the human rights law against the Soviet state by its ideological rivals.”³⁰ A strong and enforceable UDHR could force the West to take action against human rights violations that were already taking place in Stalin’s Russia.³¹ As a voice at the UN, and a particularly strong one due to the several Soviet bloc votes they could count on, the Soviets had the power to create a weak Declaration in order to protect their sovereignty. The

reticence and evasion of the American UN delegation was matched only by that of the Soviets.³²

This surprising American-Soviet partnership proved successful at protecting sovereignty in the proceedings. The plasticity of the newly formed UN presented many opportunities for the world powers to control the process. The newly established UN created an 18-nation Economic and Social Council, and beneath it, a temporary Human Rights Commission whose first task was to create its own agenda and membership qualifications. The question of membership qualifications would have a significant impact on the recommendations of the commission—a UNCHR made of national representatives would be subject to the political considerations of their governments, but their recommendations would be more likely to receive eventual ratification. Conversely, a commission composed of independent experts would lead to apolitical and unbiased recommendations that would be far less likely to find traction with governments. Many nations, including the British, preferred an independent Commission that would be “free to raise questions which might embarrass governments.”³³ The Soviets and the Americans distinctly preferred the former option, which provided the best opportunity to safeguard sovereignty and offered the greatest control over the work of the commission. The Soviets put

forth a proposal for a nation-based council and the governmental appointees on the ECOSOC passed it with American support.³⁴ The newly established UNCHR was directed by the ECOSOC to draft, for their consideration, a recommendation of an international bill of rights. The American and Soviet delegates, in their very narrow alliance, pushed for a general document without any mechanisms for enforcement.³⁵ Most of the smaller nations at the UN pushed for a binding convention that larger nations could not just walk away from. In a rare split between the Allies, the pro-convention side was supported by Australia and the UK. Soviet-American unity against this possibility was in full force at the first session of the Commission, during which Eleanor Roosevelt suggested the commission prioritize the drafting of a non-binding bill and, when considering implementation of such a bill, USSR representative Valentin Teplakov argued that the UNCHR had no authority to consider enforcement or implementation.³⁶ Though both countries went on to change their positions multiple times over the next several sessions, U.S. and USSR delegates largely stuck to proposals that would limit the duties imposed on states by any possible Declaration, thus protecting state sovereignty. To the extent that their competing ideologies could coexist, the U.S. and the Soviet Union aimed to “build protective walls around

conflicting ideas so they could each flourish side by side within their own spheres.”³⁷ The extent of this coexistence proved to be quite limited.

The U.S. and the USSR could further protect their international and domestic interests by drafting declarations compatible with their ideologies—a goal that would end their short-lived cooperation. As the Cold War moved into ideological territory, with the Long Telegram’s release and Churchill’s Iron Curtain speech in 1946, the battle for the soul of the Declaration had increasing importance. Presenting a stance that would shortly become American foreign policy, the Long Telegram countered popular beliefs that Communism and the USSR could be dealt with diplomatically, arguing that the Soviet threat had to be contained ideologically.³⁸ This shift in American foreign policy raised the stakes of the UN Proceedings, a high stakes international stage where this new dimension of the Cold War could be waged. The Soviets came to a similar conclusion. Stalin’s pre-election speech in 1946 blamed capitalism and individualism for the devastation of WWII and offered Communism as a solution to the destructive cycles of Western ideology.³⁹ The Universal Declaration held potential as an international megaphone from which the promises of Communism might be announced to the world, incentivizing Soviet bloc delegates to

push for a Declaration in line with communist principles. Likewise, American delegates, under orders from an increasingly alarmed State Department, pushed for an individualist Declaration in line with Capitalism. The contents of the Declaration could legitimize one ideology or the other on the international stage, in addition to protecting domestic interests. The politically incautious first draft of the Declaration, produced by Canadian law professor John Humphrey in 1947, immediately stumbled into this ideological exclusivity.⁴⁰ Humphrey’s draft included political, social, economic, civil, and cultural rights, which conflicted in some ways with the ideologies of all the powers at the table. To name just a few examples, there were contradictions between political and civil rights and the Soviet system, between cultural and universal rights and British imperialism, and between socioeconomic rights and strict interpretations of American free markets. Thus began the fight of each superpower to create a Declaration in their own image and validate their own primacy within the world order.

A deeper examination of American and Soviet disagreements over human rights is required to understand their aims at the UN. To simplify two complex philosophical traditions, the U.S. prioritized civil and political rights such as freedom of speech and freedom of the press, while the Soviets prioritized

social and economic rights such as the right to work and the right to healthcare.⁴¹ In addition to these priorities, both the U.S. and the USSR had provisions for the rights they deemed as secondary. The bulwark of U.S. human rights law was focused on civil and political rights, freedoms of religion, speech, and press to name a few. However, during the Roosevelt Administration, the American government began to recognize the need for economic and social rights and develop a means of securing these entitlements. Roosevelt's Four Freedoms, which formed the foundation of the Atlantic Charter and the American push for an international human rights document, melded civil, political, economic, and social rights: "freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from want and fear."⁴² Eleanor Roosevelt underscored this ideological overlap in a newspaper column where she asserted that "freedom without bread... has little meaning."⁴³ Via New Deal programs, the U.S. was beginning to provide for economic and social rights, though their tradition was nowhere near as established as that of the civil and political rights that underpinned America's founding documents.

Likewise, though the Soviet system was based on economic and social rights, it had some provisions for civil and political rights. Rights relating to "law and politics were not regarded as important as

the very 'basis' of the functioning society – economic system.⁴⁴ However, the Soviet Union under Stalin had strong anti-discrimination laws prohibiting unequal treatment on the basis of race or gender. Additionally, the Soviet legal code had a "quite effective system of protection against abuses of human rights by local authorities." However, these protections did not functionally extend to the central leadership, which was isolated by their control of the legislature.⁴⁵ Despite the acknowledgement of some civil and political rights, their protection was inconsistent at best and most often completely ignored in the face of the "extra-constitutional" power of the party apparatus.⁴⁶ In sum, the Soviet and American traditions of rights had significant overlap and inverse weaknesses: the American government had a strong system to protect political freedoms, while the Soviet government had a traditional focus on material entitlements. Each system was only just beginning to provide for the rights the other was built upon.⁴⁷ Contemporary legal scholar Harold Berman remarked of the two philosophies that, "in the protection of human rights, the Soviet system is strong where [the American system] is weak, just as [the American system] is strong where [the Soviet system] is weak."⁴⁸

The declaration also had to contend with a rift between eastern and western conceptions of the ideal relationship between states and

individuals. As Lebanese delegate Charles Malik put it at Lake Success, "the ultimate political question of the day, and thus the question for the [UNCHR], was whether the state was for the sake of the human person or the person for the sake of the state."⁴⁹ This basic distinction does not capture the complexity of Soviet-American divergence on this issue. Western law was founded upon the "reasonable man," an intelligent individual who must be protected from the State and resides in a "morally neutral separate sphere of personal autonomy."⁵⁰ Soviet law was founded upon the community, within which resides the "immature, dependent child or youth, whose law-consciousness must be guided, trained, and disciplined" by the State.⁵¹ This paternalistic approach wields both more power and duties than the western state, facilitating the Soviet state's many violations of civil rights. For example, the Soviet government violated the right to freedom of speech under the belief that the right to speech may be infringed upon to shape the immature individual and protect the community.⁵² This rhetoric became a shield for countless abuses, but this perception of state duty also formed many of the most interesting and cutting edge objections by the Soviet-bloc delegates. Their "criticism was in more concrete, specific provisions regarding social rights (and associated individual rights)...[For example, the Soviets] argued that

freedom of press should be supported by provision of all necessary equipment and resources for creating new mediums of information.”⁵³

A Declaration that combined Soviet and American human rights traditions would have had strong provisions for economic, social, civil, and political rights, alongside individual protections and strong duties upon the state. The American tradition of liberty and limited government could be combined with the paternalism and entitlements promised by the Soviet government. But ideological concerns got in the way: a Declaration that melded Capitalism and Communism in such a way would yield ground in the Cold War contest for ideological supremacy. Soviet Official Andrei Zhdanov’s 1947 Report on the International Situation to the Cominform divided the world in two: non-democratic imperialists on one side and democratic anti-imperialists, led by the USSR, on the other.⁵⁴ There was no room for compromise between the camps. The Cold War created a climate at the UN that made a truly universal Declaration impossible—the Declaration could only represent one world order.

The U.S. emerged the undisputed victor of the battle for ideological supremacy in the Declaration. The UDHR largely reflected the aforementioned legally impotent State Department draft presented by Roosevelt; the “UNCHR approved more than 80 percent of

the almost 50 recommendations offered by Roosevelt.” Final edits to the document removed all duties of the state to meet economic and social obligations, and the Soviet proposal to hold states entirely unaccountable for the provision of social and economic rights was roundly defeated.⁵⁵ That pair of losses completed the UDHR’s rejection of Soviet rights tradition, with the document that remained drawing almost entirely from the Western canon; it avoided significant embarrassments for the Americans while providing an ample foundation to criticize Soviet infractions. When the UNCHR voted to approve their final draft, it passed unanimously save the unsurprising abstention of four Communist states.⁵⁶ The deepening Cold War prevented a more nuanced Declaration, and its exclusivity instantiated the UN’s susceptibility to global ideological entrenchment.

The days between the UNCHR’s vote on the Declaration and its passage in the General Assembly defined the UDHR as much as the drafting process did. The U.S. seized upon the UDHR as an ideological weapon before it had even been formally adopted, when Eleanor Roosevelt gave a triumphant address at the Sorbonne in September 1948 celebrating the Declaration’s passage. Her original speech conceded the U.S.’ less than flawless human rights record and showed sympathy to the Russian people. State Department interference, reflecting

the all-or-nothing policy of Cold War containment, turned it into a diatribe against the USSR that acknowledged no moral wrongdoing.⁵⁷ This tone would define the Declaration’s future usage, as the Soviets and Americans employed it as both a sword and shield.⁵⁸ Efforts by the U.S. to employ the UDHR as a tool of propaganda showed its potential as a weapon of ideological warfare, but its usage in the assembly also imbued the document with unintended power. Worsening U.S.-Soviet relations had enabled mass human rights abuses in Soviet countries no longer bound by discretion, and the U.S. was eager to employ the Declaration as more than a mere rhetorical tool.⁵⁹ At the so-called “Humanitarian Session” where the Declaration was ratified, the U.S. pushed for ECOSOC to censure the Soviets for marriage laws that violated “Articles 13 (freedom of movement and exit) and 16 (right to found a family) of the Declaration.”⁶⁰ The Soviets countered by attempting to expand the debate to include all prohibitive marriage laws (such as the interracial marriage laws of the U.S.). The resulting ECOSOC resolution frowned upon laws prohibiting interracial marriage but condemned only the laws of Soviet states. This initial usage of the Declaration’s principles established that not only could ECOSOC censure nations for their domestic human rights record, it could do so based on the principles of the Dec-

laration, power which the U.S. had previously argued against.⁶¹ The Declaration certainly had ample soft power, more than the U.S. or the USSR had intended to endow it with. But the sovereignty-conscious efforts of both nations had been successful in limiting the UDHR to that soft power—the Soviet marriage law remained unchanged.

The superpowers at the UN, eager to protect their sovereignty and cement themselves in the world order, sought to keep human rights policies out of any international institution they might join. Yet, domestic forces brought the U.S. to introduce human rights as a foundational principle of the UN in an

effort which pitted the U.S. against the UK and the USSR. Once human rights entered the scope of UN concern, the U.S. and the USSR had to reckon with the consequences of any engagement with the concept of human rights, which had severe implications for the domestic politics of each of the Big Three and their international aims. This reckoning led to Soviet and American efforts to limit the efficacy of UN human rights machinery as they blocked the individual right to petition the UN and negated any power of the UN to respond to such petitions. Their efforts extended to the UDHR, which became a non-binding declaration rather than a stronger covenant due

to American-Soviet interference. As the Cold War intensified, the chances of U.S.-USSR collaboration on such a declaration evaporated. The UN's international stage offered an opportunity to institutionalize each country's preferred ideology, and thus the UDHR became an all-or-nothing battleground for political supremacy. The history of human rights at the UN was undoubtedly shaped by the disputes and the alliances of these two superpowers; the U.S. and the USSR hamstrung what potential existed for a powerful multi-cultural beacon of human rights and delivered a legally weak and profoundly western Declaration.

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(Right) Looking through a keyhole, August 2021. This picture was taken through the Aventine keyhole (of a door) which coincidentally provides a perfect view of the Vatican.

Photo by Caroline Prout, Master's student in Global Studies with a concentration in Russian, Eurasian, and Eastern European Studies







(Above) "Dance with Suicide Cliff" (2021) I took this photo of my friend posing on a hike called Suicide Cliff in Hong Kong. The name of the hike comes from the treachery of the climb itself rather than the implication of its name. The views were astounding as we looked into the bustling city below us. All of the skyscrapers look so compactly organized, and knowing how small we were made us all the more grateful to be there.

Photo by Emily Dawson, Political Science Student.

(Left) Panjshanbe Market: Just outside the Panjshanbe Market, sellers gather at their stalls of food and other goods. Panjshanbe translates to "Thursday" in Tajik, and this weekly market is the largest covered market in Central Asia and Tajikistan's most esteemed. Opposite the market, in the distance, sits the Sheikh Muslihiddin Mausoleum, a memorial that holds the tomb of Muslihiddin Khudjandi, the ruler of Khujand and a twelfth-century poet.

Photo by Matthew Pierro, Senior Global Studies and Peace, War, and Defense Major. Matthew captured this photograph during a Persian language immersion program in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, in Summer 2022.