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## **Preface**

This issue of the *Tsinghua International Relations Review* comes after a complete restructuring of our team and a revamping of the look of our journal. We grew into social media and event planning with the intention of increasing our space of learning and dialogue on global affairs. At our core, however, we aim to provide students with the experience of conducting academic research and going through the process of publishing in an academic journal. Our main editions, Spring and Fall, contain articles recommended by professors at Tsinghua University. Through weeks of working with editors, authors got to review their ideas, improve their sources, and polish their prose. Our team also got to reflect on what constitutes a strong argument while preserving diverse voices and styles.

On the following pages you will encounter three different themes. First, a series of perspectives on historical dynamics that shaped the landscape of ideology today; these are a reminder of how great power politics is often played in “small” arenas. Second, studies on China’s perception and strategy in the global south, a subject that will continue to elicit interest and debate as we ask whether we have truly transitioned to a multipolar order. Third, evaluations on the European Union that offer insight into its future and may be particularly apposite during this year when parliamentary and national elections are occurring.

Many editors in the past surely characterized their times as turbulent, so I may sound redundant when I do it too, but I imagine we all invoke the same sentiment: the importance of knowledge and critical analysis to peacefully address the pressing challenges of our world. I invite you, then, to enter into conversation with the authors, to agree or disagree, and engage didactically in the advancement of the field of international affairs.

It is in such spirit that this Spring Issue honors our 同学 (tongxue), Hassan Saeed Alminhali, who spurred the kind of exciting and passionate discussions only possible when speaking to an open and respectful mind. If there were more Hassans in our governments and organizations, the world would certainly be better at mutual understanding and cooperation.

Thank you to my team, to the authors, and to the professors who participated and encouraged this intellectual exercise. I hope you join us too and that the articles within this issue serve as catalysts for further research for all of us.



Daniela Mora Savović  
Editor-in-Chief

## **In Memoriam**

In this insightful case study, Hassan S. Alminhali delves into the intricate complexities of the Lebanese Civil War spanning over 15 years. This conflict significantly reshaped the Middle East beyond religious boundaries to encompass wealth distribution and educational disparities. Through a meticulous phased analysis, he reexamines the roots of this pivotal chapter in Lebanon's history, shedding light on the often-overlooked Black September events in Jordan.

This essay is being published in loving memory of Hassan. Even though he left us all too soon, his words are meant to keep his scholarly passion alive. Through his work, I hope you will know the scholar who wanted to make a positive difference, even if it meant going slow and taking small steps, the son who cherished his parents, his siblings, his family, the friend we learned from and trusted, and the man I adore.

May our souls reunite at the gates of heaven, without ever having to say goodbye again. I will tell you how the world felt empty when you stopped laughing Hassan.

**Bisma Ahmad**

Alumni, Tsinghua University



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## **The Lebanese Civil War 1975-1990: Causes and Reflection**

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### **Abstract**

The Lebanese Civil War is one of the most significant events in the contemporary history of the Middle East; not only Lebanon but also the entire region still suffers from the implications and struggles to overcome it. It introduced new players and eliminated others. In this case study, I look at the initial gunfire, the root causes of the war, and what fueled it to continue for a decade and a half. While the dominant academic explanation for the civil war is the sectarian nature of the Republic of Lebanon, relying on census data to showcase the various religious and ethnic groups and examine the wealth distribution and education level in order to highlight the divisions that ignited the crisis, this study proposes that the fundamental cause stemmed from the actions of Palestinian commando forces and groups that acted as a 'state within a state,' repeating the same mistake as in Jordan five years prior. However, unlike the tribal nature of the Kingdom of Jordan, Lebanon's aggressive sectarianism exacerbated the conflict, leading to widespread devastation and a decade-and-a-half-long struggle. Therefore, sectarianism is identified not as the initial spark, but as the fuel that sustained the fire of war. This conclusion is drawn from an analysis of events preceding the war and dividing the conflict into phases to exhibit its causes and fuel.

## Introduction

In order to create a complete narrative of the Lebanese Civil War, a minor event must not be overlooked, which occurred in Jordan five years prior to the crisis in Lebanon— Black September. Many scholars consider it a civil war, however, Black September lacks the fundamental elements of a civil war. This is because, while it was indeed a violent conflict, it may not fit the conventional definition of a civil war for several reasons. Firstly, Black September primarily involved the Jordanian government's suppression of Palestinian guerrilla organizations, notably the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), rather than multiple internal factions vying for control over Jordanian territory or government. Secondly, the conflict was more limited in scope and duration compared to typical civil wars, and it did not result in widespread upheaval or fragmentation of the Jordanian society, making it rather difficult to label it as a full-scale civil war.<sup>①</sup>

### Black September: From September 15 to September 25, 1970

Black September, spanning from September 15 to September 25, 1970, marked a significant period of violent confrontation in Jordan. During this time, the Jordanian military clashed with a coalition comprising Palestinian insurgents and radical Jordanians. These tensions stemmed from various factors, including the PLO's increasing influence and military activities in Jordan, which the Jordanian government perceived as a threat to its sovereignty and stability. The conflict was further exacerbated by regional dynamics, such as the Arab-Israeli conflict and the involvement of external powers, contributing to a complex and volatile situation that eventually erupted into violence in September 1970. The clashes, characterized by intense fighting and political upheaval, had profound implications for both Jordan and the broader Middle East region. It ended in a Jordanian triumph, and among Palestinians, it became known as Black September, symbolizing a significant setback in their struggle for self-determination and national liberation.

In the spring of 1970, there were sporadic skirmishes between the 55,000 Jordanian solid military and the growing number of armed Palestinians in Jordan.<sup>②</sup> When King Hussein bin Talal agreed to the Rogers Peace Plan in early August, the Arab League-mediated cease-fire between them seemed shaky. Relations between him and the PLO deteriorated since his move went against the position on peace with Israel that was taken by the fourth Arab League summit in Khartoum. Following the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine's (PFIP) breaking up of three Western airplanes at a field close to Amman on September 12, in response to Israel's refusal to free its Palestinian captives, tensions increased.<sup>③</sup>

On September 15, Hussein assembled a military cabinet while the US dispatched ships and aircraft to the area. The two factions started fighting right away in Amman and northern Jordan. Irbid was taken on September 19 by the tank battalions of the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) stationed in Syria. Hussein asked for American action, but Washington decided to align itself with

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<sup>①</sup> Paul, C., Clarke, C. P., Grill, B., & Dunigan, M. (2013). Jordan, 1970–1971: Case Outcome: COIN Win. In *Paths to Victory: Detailed Insurgency Case Studies* (pp. 331–339). RAND Corporation. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt5hhsjk.39>

<sup>②</sup> Hiro, D. (2003). *The essential middle east: A comprehensive guide*. Carroll & Graf.

<sup>③</sup> Paul, C., Clarke, C. P., Grill, B., & Dunigan, M. (2013). Jordan, 1970–1971: Case Outcome: COIN Win. In *Paths to Victory: Detailed Insurgency Case Studies* (pp. 331–339). RAND Corporation. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt5hhsjk.39>

Israel instead.<sup>①</sup> The Jordanian troops, however, stopped the approach of the Palestinian tank. Hussein used his air force to attack the Palestinians in the Irbid region, knowing that the United States and Israel would support him. The Palestinian armored battalions fled to Syria after General Hafiz Assad's air force declined to act on their behalf. On September 25, a cease-fire that the Arab League brokered became effective.<sup>②</sup>

Furthermore, there was a lot of fighting in the camps and a high death toll due to Palestinian militia forces frequently stationed there and using them as bases. Around 4,000 Palestinians perished. The United States increased its financial help and airlifted weapons to Jordan. With his position strengthened, Hussein applied pressure on the Palestinian commandos and eventually drove them out in July 1971 after destroying their final strongholds in the hills surrounding Ajloun.<sup>③</sup>

When the Palestinian commandos and the PLO arrived in Lebanon in the early 1970s, the long-standing conflict between right-leaning Maronite Christians and left-leaning Muslims was further exacerbated. Additionally, by March 1975, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy to advance the Middle East peace process had run out of steam. The Arabs being involved in a civil war to divert their attention from US diplomatic failure served the interests of the US.<sup>④</sup> The start of a Civil War was heralded by a Phalange militia attack on Palestinians in East Beirut on April 13, 1975. This continued through the subsequent phases and ended on October 13, 1990.<sup>⑤</sup>

### **Phase 1: April 1975 to May 1976: Ascendancy from the coalition of reformists**

The nation was overrun by violence. The principal legal opponent of the Lebanese national movement (LNM), Lebanese soldiers under Bashir Gemayel's leadership, faced opposition from various factions. This included Shiite Muslims led by Kamal Jumblatt and the Lebanese Front led by Camille Chamoun and supported by its militia. Amidst escalating sectarian tensions, the PLO and LNM forged an alliance, establishing a unified command. The LNM advocated for an end to the confessional political system, which disproportionately favored Christians, in order to create a fairer political landscape for the Sunni and Shiite Muslim communities, who together formed the majority of the population.<sup>⑥</sup>

Before discussing political and constitutional reform, the Lebanese Front insisted on the departure of the armed Palestinians from Lebanon. Both sides decided to remove hostile pockets within their enclaves at this phase. The Lebanese army was disbanded due to violent country-wide warfare in January 1976 that damaged important governmental institutions and public structures. The LNM-PLO coalition had gained control of two-thirds of the nation by early April. In a state of desperation, the Lebanese Front, led by President Suleiman Franjeh, turned to Syria for

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<sup>①</sup> Paul, C., Clarke, C. P., Grill, B., & Dunigan, M. (2013). Jordan, 1970–1971: Case Outcome: COIN Win. In *Paths to Victory: Detailed Insurgency Case Studies* (pp. 331–339). RAND Corporation. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt5hhsjk.39>

<sup>②</sup> Ashton, N. J. (2006). Pulling the Strings: King Hussein's Role during the Crisis of 1970 in Jordan. *The International History Review*, 28(1), 94–118. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40110724>

<sup>③</sup> Hiro, D. (2003). *The essential middle east: A comprehensive guide*. Carroll & Graf.

<sup>④</sup> Hiro, D. (2003). *The essential middle east: A comprehensive guide*. Carroll & Graf.

<sup>⑤</sup> Makdisi, S., & Sadaka, R. (2005). *The Lebanese Civil War, 1975–90*. In P. Collier & N. Sambanis (Eds.), *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis* (pp. 59–86). World Bank. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep02484.7>

<sup>⑥</sup> Hiro, D. (2003). *The essential middle east: A comprehensive guide*. Carroll & Graf.



support.<sup>①</sup> Apprehensive that extremist elements within Lebanon might take advantage of any void created by the withdrawal of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and escalate the conflict with Israel, Syrian President Hafez al-Assad decided to back the Lebanese Front, primarily composed of Maronite Christians.<sup>②</sup>

### **Phase 2: June 1976 through February 1978: Syrian hegemony and interference**

During Phase 2, spanning from June 1976 to February 1978, Syria exerted hegemony and interference in Lebanon, preventing any single faction from achieving complete victory. Syrian military action thwarted the ambitions of various contenders. Subsequently, diplomatic efforts led by Libya facilitated a ceasefire, laying the groundwork for a presidential election. In September 1976, a Syrian-backed candidate was elected and sworn in as president.<sup>③</sup> Meanwhile, Syrian influence expanded, with a military presence establishing itself across the nation. However, pockets of resistance persisted, particularly in southern Lebanon, where Christian militias, supported by Israel, impeded the PLO's actions against Israel.<sup>④</sup>

### **Phase 3: From March to October 1978: The first Israeli aggression**

Following a gorilla attack by Palestinians against the Jewish state on March 11, 1978, South Lebanon was attacked by Israel. Maronite leaders Pierre Gemayel and Camille Chamoun travelled to Israel in May to procure weapons. A Phalange team murdered Tony Franjieh, the son of Suleiman Franjieh, on June 13 in order to eliminate any potential opposition to Bashir Gemayel and his presidential campaign.<sup>⑤</sup>

### **Phase 4: November 1978 through May 1982: The idea of a Christian mini-state**

The Phalange and a militia from the National Liberal Party (NLP) started fighting in May and June of 1979. The Phalange's victory against the NLP combatants in July 1980 marked the end of the fighting. Israeli forces fired upon and shot down two Syrian helicopters during the action in late April 1981 between the Phalange and its Syrian adversaries for control of Mount Sanin, northwest of Zahle.<sup>⑥</sup> Three months later, a cease-fire in southern Lebanon resulted from a three-way agreement between Israel, Syria, and the PLO that the United States mediated. Israel began its arms shipments to the Maronite militias after Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon met with IDF commanders in January 1982 to discuss plans for an Israeli invasion of Lebanon.<sup>⑦</sup>

<sup>①</sup> Hudson, M. C. (1978). The Palestinian Factor in the Lebanese Civil War. *Middle East Journal*, 32(3), 261–278. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4325767>

<sup>②</sup> Lawson, F. H. (1984). Syria's Intervention in the Lebanese Civil War, 1976: A Domestic Conflict Explanation. *International Organization*, 38(3), Lawson, F. H., 451-480. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706467>

<sup>③</sup> Hudson, M. C. (1978). The Palestinian Factor in the Lebanese Civil War. *Middle East Journal*, 32(3), 261–278. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4325767>

<sup>④</sup> Lawson, F. H. (1984). Syria's Intervention in the Lebanese Civil War, 1976: A Domestic Conflict Explanation. *International Organization*, 38(3), Lawson, F. H., 451-480. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706467>

<sup>⑤</sup> Hiro, D. (2003). *The essential middle east: A comprehensive guide*. Carroll & Graf.

<sup>⑥</sup> Hudson, M. C. (1978). The Palestinian Factor in the Lebanese Civil War. *Middle East Journal*, 32(3), 261–278. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4325767>

<sup>⑦</sup> Lawson, F. H. (1984). Syria's Intervention in the Lebanese Civil War, 1976: A Domestic Conflict Explanation. *International Organization*, 38(3), Lawson, F. H., 451-480. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706467>

<sup>⑧</sup> Lawson, F. H. (1984). Syria's Intervention in the Lebanese Civil War, 1976: A Domestic Conflict Explanation. *International Organization*, 38(3), Lawson, F. H., 451-480. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706467>

### Phase 5: June 1982 through February 1984: Second Israeli War and its consequences

Israel attacked Lebanon on June 3rd after an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Shlomo Argov, the Israeli envoy to Britain.<sup>①</sup>

On September 13, incoming president Bashir Gemayel was killed in an explosion that destroyed his Phalange party headquarters. Israeli troops moved into Beirut to uphold the peace and avert reprisals. The Phalange militia slaughtered some 2000 Palestinian refugees between September 16 and September 18 in the camps of Sabra and Shatila in Beirut. The US, British, French, and Italian battalions that make up the Western Multinational Force (MNF) started to deploy on September 20. Amin Gemayel was chosen as president by the parliament the next day. The Israelis departed Beirut on September 29.<sup>②</sup>

After being unanimously approved by the Lebanese parliament on May 17, 1983, Israel signed the Lebanese-Israeli peace treaty, but President Amin Gemayel refused to do the same. The Phalange militia and the Lebanese army occupied the Israelis' outposts in the Shouf region after they withdrew on September 3.<sup>③</sup> As a result, they clashed with the Druze-PLO coalition. Two warships and aircraft carriers from the United States and France intervened on behalf of the Lebanese army. On September 25, Saudi Arabia brokered a cease-fire. However, the United States kept conducting reconnaissance flights over west-central Lebanon from its aircraft carriers.<sup>④</sup> On October 23, a truck bombing at the military headquarters of the US and France killed 241 US soldiers and 59 French soldiers. After the Lebanese army and the Lebanese forces LF attacked West Beirut's Shia suburbs on 3 February 1984, fighting broke out between the military and the LF on one side and the Amal-Druze alliance on the other. The first national reconciliation conference was held in Geneva in early November. US warships engaged in combat with Muslim forces. The Amal-Druze alliance drove out the Christian army from West Beirut when Muslims left the Lebanese army. The United States deployed its troops on February 7, 1984. The Western MNF's other members did likewise.<sup>⑤</sup>

### Phase 6: March 1984 to January 1986: Syria regaining its hegemony

Assad gave President Gemayel encouragement to abrogate the Lebanese-Israeli peace deal draft. On March 5th, the Lebanese parliament did so. A national reconciliation government was established in the middle of March following the second national reconciliation summit in Lausanne, Switzerland (Hiro, 2003).<sup>⑥</sup> Israel handed over its posts in southern Lebanon to the Christian militia it controlled on June 6, 1985, completing the penultimate stage of its withdrawal from Lebanon but still leaving 1000 Israeli soldiers behind. The national accord to end the

<sup>①</sup> Siklawi, R. (2017). The Palestinian Resistance Movement In Lebanon 1967–82: Survival, Challenges, and Opportunities. *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 39(3), 923–937. <https://doi.org/10.13169/arabstudquar.39.3.0923>

<sup>②</sup> Paul, C., Clarke, C. P., Grill, B., & Dunigan, M. (2013). Lebanese Civil War, 1975–1990: Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents). In *Paths to Victory: Detailed Insurgency Case Studies* (pp. 383–393). RAND Corporation. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt5hhsjk.45>

<sup>③</sup> Paul, C., Clarke, C. P., Grill, B., & Dunigan, M. (2013). Jordan, 1970–1971: Case Outcome: COIN Win. In *Paths to Victory: Detailed Insurgency Case Studies* (pp. 331–339). RAND Corporation. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt5hhsjk.39>

<sup>④</sup> Hiro, D. (2003). *The essential middle east: A comprehensive guide*. Carroll & Graf.

<sup>⑤</sup> Makdisi, S., & Sadaka, R. (2005). The Lebanese Civil War, 1975–90. In P. Collier & N. Sambanis (Eds.), *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis* (pp. 59–86). World Bank. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep02484.7>

<sup>⑥</sup> Hiro, D. (2003). *The essential middle east: A comprehensive guide*. Carroll & Graf.

Lebanese problem was signed by the commanders of Amal, the Druze militia, and the LF before the end of December and described political reform and ties between Lebanon and Syria, but the deal has yet to materialize. The LF commander was unsuccessful in getting his executive committee's support.<sup>①</sup>

### **Phase 7: February 1986 through September 1988: Syrian power's limitations**

Syria sent its forces, which were removed in September 1982, to West Beirut in response to fighting between Amal and the Druze militia in February 1987 to restore peace. However, tensions persisted, and in April 1988, clashes erupted between Amal and Hezbollah in southern Lebanon. The conflict between the two groups stemmed from a power struggle and ideological differences, with each vying for influence and control in the region.<sup>②</sup> Meanwhile, efforts to address political change in Lebanon were underway, with Syrian President Hafez al-Assad and US Secretary of State George Shultz agreeing on a coordinated policy in the middle of April.<sup>③</sup>

On September 22, 1988, when parliament could not choose a new leader, outgoing president Gemayel gave his chief of staff, General Michel Aoun, the order to establish a temporary military government. Three Muslim officers declined to join the other five officers he appointed to his cabinet.<sup>④</sup>

### **Phase 8: from October 1988 to September 1989: the Aoun method of campaign and liberation**

Aoun proclaimed a war of liberation against Syria in March 1989 after attacking and suppressing the LF in the Christian enclave. The Christian enclave was placed under a land and sea embargo by Syria.<sup>⑤</sup> A committee made up of the leaders of Algeria, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia was established by the Arab League summit on May 25th to resolve the Lebanese conflict within six months. 14 Lebanese factions created an anti-Aoun Front in the middle of August.<sup>⑥</sup>

### **Phase 9: October 1989 to October 1990: The Taif Accord**

In Taif, Saudi Arabia, between September 30 and October 22, 58 of the 62 still functioning Lebanese parliaments discussed and modified the national reconciliation charter. The Maronite Lebanese front endorsed it, but Aoun rejected it. The Taif Accord was ratified on Lebanese soil in Qulayaat on November 5, and Rene Muawad was chosen as president by the Lebanese Parliament.

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<sup>①</sup> Makdisi, S., & Sadaka, R. (2005). The Lebanese Civil War, 1975–90. In P. Collier & N. Sambanis (Eds.), *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis* (pp. 59–86). World Bank. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep02484.7>

<sup>②</sup> Paul, C., Clarke, C. P., Grill, B., & Dunigan, M. (2013). Lebanese Civil War, 1975–1990: Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents). In *Paths to Victory: Detailed Insurgency Case Studies* (pp. 383–393). RAND Corporation. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt5hhsjk.45>

<sup>③</sup> Hiro, D. (2003). *The essential middle east: A comprehensive guide*. Carroll & Graf.

<sup>④</sup> Makdisi, S., & Sadaka, R. (2005). The Lebanese Civil War, 1975–90. In P. Collier & N. Sambanis (Eds.), *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis* (pp. 59–86). World Bank. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep02484.7>

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<sup>⑥</sup> Hiro, D. (2003). *The essential middle east: A comprehensive guide*. Carroll & Graf.

He was murdered on November 22. Parliament selected Elias Hrawi to serve as president two days later.<sup>①</sup>

There was fierce fighting between Aoun supporters and the LF from January to March 1990. As a result, Aoun only obtained a third of the Christian neighborhood. Hrawi was labeled the LF's ally (Hiro, 2003). The Taif Accord's revised constitution was approved by parliament on August 21. The LF supported Hrawi's decision to isolate Aoun's Enclave with land a month later.<sup>②</sup> By this point, Syria had joined the coalition led by the US against Iraq during the crisis brought on by Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait. The Lebanese and Syrian forces beat Aoun's fighters on October 13 and ended the Civil War with a coordinated air and ground battle.<sup>③</sup>

## Conclusion

Dissecting the Lebanese Civil War brings a new perspective to the table. The fundamental cause of the civil war could easily be attributed to the Palestinian commando forces and groups that acted like a state within a state—repeating the same mistake as in Jordan five years before. However, despite the tribal nature of the Kingdom of Jordan, it lacks the aggressive nature of sectarianism that Lebanon is infamously known for. Therefore, The Palestinians made the same mistake but with entirely different outcomes. The latter was deadlier and pushed an entire country to absolute detestation.

Sectarianism is not out of the picture; it is not the spark; it is the fuel that kept the fire of war lighting for a decade and a half. The same fuel that handicaps every attempt to make Lebanon stand on its feet again. The same players who wore camouflage and held rifles are now wearing suits in the parliament while maintaining the ownership of aggressive militias waiting for orders to finish what the Taif Accord stopped them from doing.

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<sup>①</sup> Ghosn, F., & Houry, A. (2011). Lebanon after the Civil War: Peace or the Illusion of Peace? *Middle East Journal*, 65(3), 381–397. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23012171>

<sup>②</sup> Siklawi, R. (2010). The Dynamics of Palestinian Political Endurance in Lebanon. *Middle East Journal*, 64(4), 597–611. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40926502>

<sup>③</sup> Hiro, D. (2003). *The essential middle east: A comprehensive guide*. Carroll & Graf.

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## **How did Chinese Foreign Policy Vis-à-Vis Other Communist States Evolve between the 1954 Geneva Conference and the 1957 Moscow Conference?**

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### **Abstract**

The period from 1954 to 1957, known as the "Honeymoon" of Sino-Soviet relations, witnessed robust collaboration between China and the Soviet Union within the communist bloc, despite emerging disagreements. Diplomatic historians Shen and Xia contend that by the 1957 Moscow Conference, China was already contemplating challenging Soviet leadership in the global communist movement. This study scrutinizes their assertion by examining whether Chinese foreign policy towards other communist states became more assertive between the 1954 Geneva Conference and the 1957 Moscow Conference. The chosen conferences serve as crucial reference points: China's attendance at the 1954 Geneva Conference at the Soviet's request suggests that China was a subservient partner in the relationship at the time, whereas the country's proposal of the 1957 Moscow Conference signifies a more equitable partnership. Utilizing Chen and Pu's classification of assertiveness in 21st-century Chinese foreign policy, the research investigates instances of offensive, defensive, and constructive assertiveness, focusing on interactions with North Korea and North Vietnam. The analysis indicates a progression from primarily constructive assertiveness in 1954 to defensive and even offensive assertiveness by 1957. By assessing the level of assertiveness within interactions with other communist states, this paper contributes to our understanding how China's rising power reshaped the dynamics within the communist bloc during this pivotal period.

## Introduction

With some dispute around dates, the period between 1954 and 1957 is often referred to as a “Honeymoon” of Sino-Soviet relations. During this time period, China strongly supported the Soviet Union’s role as leader of the communist bloc, but the differences of opinion that eventually led to the Sino-Soviet split had already begun to materialize. Although there is a lack of consensus among scholars about when the strongest period of the Sino-Soviet alliance began and ended.<sup>①</sup> Scholars generally agree that the period 1954-1957 was a time of very strong Sino-Soviet cooperation, hence the moniker “Honeymoon” period.

Much attention has been paid to the evolution of Sino-Soviet relations during this “Honeymoon”, with scholars analyzing the comparative differences in ideology and vision that the two countries had for the direction of the communist bloc. Diplomatic historians Shen and Xia argue that the Chinese government was already contemplating contending with the Soviets as alternative leaders of the global communist movement by the time the 1957 Moscow Conference was held.<sup>②</sup> They point to Mao’s growing resentment of Khrushchev’s leadership, the success of China’s early economic policies, and the loss of confidence in the Soviet policy that occurred in the wake of the Polish and Hungarian crises as factors that gave China impetus to consider itself a potential alternative leader of the Communist bloc.<sup>③</sup> If they are correct, it should be possible to detect a change in Chinese foreign policy towards other communist nations during this time, with China attempting to display more assertiveness and leadership in its interactions with other states.

This paper will investigate Shen and Xia’s claim to see if it is corroborated by the historical record. This will be done by exploring whether or not Chinese foreign policy vis-à-vis other communist states evolved to become more assertive between the 1954 Geneva Conference and the 1957 Moscow Conference. These two conferences have been selected as appropriate reference points because China attended the 1954 Geneva Conference at the request of the Soviet Union, and, in that sense, can be considered a subservient partner in the relationship at that time.<sup>④</sup> Meanwhile, the 1957 Moscow Conference was convened at Beijing’s suggestion, indicating that a change in the relationship had already taken place, with China now acting as a more equal partner.<sup>⑤</sup> By mapping China’s interactions with other communist states at the conferences and during the intermediate period, it might be possible to distinguish whether or not China did indeed begin to take a more assertive stance towards other communist nations, which would support Shen and Xia’s argument that China had already begun to contend with the Soviets for leadership supremacy. As such, the paper poses the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis:** *Chinese foreign policy vis-à-vis other communist states became more assertive between the 1954 Geneva Conference and the 1957 Moscow Conference.*

Due to the assumption that China was a rising power within the communist bloc at this time, this paper will borrow its framework for assessing the assertiveness of Chinese foreign policy from modern scholarship on Chinese assertiveness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – where China is also a rising power, but this time on the global stage and contending with the US for supremacy. Namely, this

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<sup>①</sup> For instance, Urbansky (2012) considers the period 1950-1960 to be one of continuous Sino-Soviet alliance; Zhang (2010) favors 1954-1962; Shen and Xia (2009) argue that the friendliest stage was from October 1954 to late 1957; while Ringger (2023) argues that the Sino-Soviet split began in 1956 and escalated in 1960.

<sup>②</sup> Shen and Xia, “*Hidden Currents*”, p116-117

<sup>③</sup> *Ibid*, p114-115

<sup>④</sup> Qiang, “*China and the Geneva Conference*”, p107

<sup>⑤</sup> Shen and Xia, “*Hidden Currents*”, p78

paper will use Chen and Pu's categorization of Chinese assertiveness in early 21st-century foreign policy to identify instances of 1.) Offensive assertiveness, 2.) Defensive assertiveness, and 3.) Constructive assertiveness.<sup>①</sup> Using this categorization, the paper will use case studies to evaluate the validity of the central hypothesis, focusing on North Korea and North Vietnam, as these countries were prominently involved in both conferences. By mapping China's interactions with communist states other than the USSR, this paper hopes to enhance our understanding of the dynamics changed within the communist bloc as China increased its standing during this so-called "honeymoon" period. The paper finds that China mostly displayed Constructive assertiveness in 1954, which intensified and also extended to include defensive and even offensive assertiveness in 1957.

### Literature Review

Shen and Xia base their argument on an examination of the 1957 Moscow Conference, using declassified archival records and memoirs to show how China was already displaying leadership and contending with the Soviets to guide the agenda in the lead-up to and during the conference.<sup>②</sup> Following the dissolution of the Coniform in 1956, communist parties around the world agreed on the importance of continued cooperation and international solidarity.<sup>③</sup> For the purpose of strengthening solidarity and increasing unity, Mao suggested the convening of a conference to sort through differences.<sup>④</sup> Shen and Xia argue that China's initial suggestion of the conference and later consultation with foreign communist parties to draft a pre-agreed declaration are evidence of China's capability and willingness to take on a leadership role within the international Communist bloc.<sup>⑤</sup>

At that time, China benefited from the confidence accrued from economic growth, having successfully realized rapid industrialization during the first five-year plan (1953-57).<sup>⑥</sup> Moreover, due to the crises in Poland and Hungary, the Soviet Anti-Party Group's attempt to challenge Khrushchev's authority, and the process of de-Stalinisation, Shen and Xia claim that many foreign communist parties no longer trusted Soviet leadership and were open to China assuming greater responsibility.<sup>⑦</sup> Lüthi corroborates this assertion, noting how de-Stalinization policies and the condemnation of Stalin's personality cult magnified the USSR's emerging policy differences with China, especially since China had just completed the Hundred Flowers campaign and was preparing for the launch of the Great Leap Forward.<sup>⑧</sup> Lüthi notes how from 1958 onwards, each country attempted to demonstrate to the rest of the Communist bloc that its policies represented "real Marxism-Leninism", desiring to persuade foreign communist parties to adhere to their vision and understanding.<sup>⑨</sup>

During the 1957 conference, although China supported the USSR's role as the leader of the Communist bloc, there was already clear disagreement on some key policy areas.<sup>⑩</sup> For example, the Soviets desired to insist on a "peaceful transition" to communism, which the Chinese

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① Chen and Pu, "Debating Chinese Assertiveness", p177

② Shen and Xia, "Hidden Currents", p74

③ Shen and Xia, "Hidden Currents", p79

④ Shen and Xia, "Hidden Currents", p80

⑤ Shen and Xia, "Hidden Currents", p83

⑥ Hsia, "China's Industrial Growth", p71

⑦ Shen and Xia, "Hidden Currents", p84

⑧ Lüthi, "Visible Cracks", p155

⑨ Lüthi, "Visible Cracks", p156

⑩ Shen and Xia, "Hidden Currents", p96



reworded to “peaceful road” in the final draft with the caveat that “the road to socialism in each individual country depends on the actual historical circumstances.”<sup>①</sup> Additionally, Shen and Xia also cite primary sources that show sentiment among Chinese Communist Party (CCP) members increasingly favored a Chinese-led socialist bloc, with statements like “The development of Marxism in the Soviet Union is behind that in China. Why does China still say ‘the Soviet Union as the leader?’”<sup>②</sup> So, although China supported Soviet leadership in principle, through Chinese interactions with other communist parties at the conference, particularly with parties attempting to promote socialism in capitalist countries, it is possible to sense that China was sometimes pushing the Chinese vision for the socialist movement over the Soviet one.<sup>③</sup>

In contrast to the ideological splits seen at the 1957 Moscow Conference, scholars have argued that China’s policy towards other communist states was in line with Soviet foreign policy during the 1954 Geneva Conference. First of all, as Weathersby argues, the Chinese still looked to the Soviets to resolve issues on the international stage.<sup>④</sup> While Qiang, in his study of China’s relations with Indo-China, also notes how it was Russian Foreign Minister Molotov who proposed that a conference be held to restore peace in Korea and Indochina, with China announcing its support for the Soviet plan.<sup>⑤</sup> Qiang records how the Chinese government had close consultations with the Soviets ahead of the conference so that they could coordinate Chinese-Soviet-North Vietnamese policies and align on their diplomatic goals.<sup>⑥</sup> The Chinese delegation even travelled to Geneva via Moscow in order to rehearse with the Soviets.<sup>⑦</sup> Therefore, it can be assumed that the Chinese approach to the conference was pre-approved by the USSR, if not designed by the Soviets themselves. As such, one would expect China’s relations with other communist parties involved at Geneva to be deferential to Soviet foreign policy designs and not overly assertive of Chinese interests.

According to Chen and Pu, assertiveness in modern Chinese foreign policy can be divided into three types: 1.) Offensive assertiveness, which involves the use of coercion to expand China’s own interests, 2.) Defensive assertiveness, which is the willingness to defend existing interests, and 3.) Constructive assertiveness, which is the assumption of an international leadership role to solve global problems.<sup>⑧</sup> These three types of assertiveness should be distinguished from aggression – with the exception of offensive assertiveness, which can, at times, be considered aggressive – and may be used simultaneously or separately depending on China’s foreign policy objectives.<sup>⑨</sup> Chen and Pu used this framework to analyze the territorial disputes in the South China Sea, as well as issues arising from China’s peaceful rise on the world stage. They conclude that China, despite being a rising power, mostly displayed defensive and constructive assertiveness in its interactions with other states during the 2000’s.<sup>⑩</sup> Given that China was also a rising power in the period 1954-1957, albeit one whose growing influence was largely constrained within the socialist bloc, the same modern categorizations of assertiveness could be applied to China’s interactions with other communist states during the “honeymoon” period of Sino-Soviet relations,

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① Shen and Xia, “*Hidden Currents*”, p92

② Shen and Xia, “*Hidden Currents*”, p100

③ Shen and Xia, “*Hidden Currents*”, p91

④ Weathersby, “*The Soviet Role*”, p445

⑤ Qiang, “*China and the Geneva Conference*”, p107

⑥ Qiang, “*China and the Geneva Conference*”, p108

⑦ Qiang, “*China and the Geneva Conference*”, p109

⑧ Chen and Pu, “*Debating Chinese Assertiveness*”, p177

⑨ Chen and Pu, “*Debating Chinese Assertiveness*”, p177

⑩ Chen and Pu, “*Debating Chinese Assertiveness*”, p180

revealing how Chinese foreign policy changed in response to its rising influence as a leading communist country.

Chen and Pu proposed their three-part categorization of China's assertiveness in response to Johnston's 2013 article, which contends that assertiveness is not a new trope in Chinese diplomacy. At the time, commentators like "Swaine (2010) and Twining (2012)" had begun to describe Chinese foreign policy actions as "newly or increasingly assertive", in part due to a conscious reaction to the 2008 financial crisis.<sup>①</sup> Dismissing these claims about a "newly assertive" form of Chinese diplomacy, Johnston argues that an increase in assertive rhetoric and use of offensive policy could only be found in China's interactions over maritime disputes.<sup>②</sup> Johnston contends that in the early 2000s, China displayed a similar degree of assertiveness regarding sovereignty and territory issues as it did after the 2008 financial crisis, indicating that the assertiveness observed in foreign policy was a continuation rather than a change.<sup>③</sup> Chen and Pu agree with Johnston that Chinese assertiveness is not a new phenomenon, but object to the narrowness of his definition and his decision not to classify China's involvement in international forums, such as the 2009 Copenhagen Summit, as a type of assertive behavior.<sup>④</sup> Chen and Pu find that in addition to the "defensive assertiveness" China displayed in maritime and territorial disputes, the country also frequently engaged in "constructive assertiveness" by demonstrating leadership, such as during humanitarian crises and international conferences.<sup>⑤</sup> Their three-part categorization of Chinese assertiveness reflects China's multi-faceted approach to protecting its national interests and ensuring its voice is heard on the world stage.

### 1954 Geneva Conference

The 1954 Geneva Conference took place against the backdrop of the Korean War (1950-1953) and the First Indochina War (1946-1954) with the aim of finding long-term solutions for both conflicts. The conference did not result in any meaningful decisions on Korea, but constructive efforts were made to address the ongoing conflict in Vietnam, marking a pivotal moment in the decolonization of Southeast Asia.<sup>⑥</sup> To analyze the assertiveness of China's interactions with other communist nations during the 1954 Geneva Conference, it is first necessary to establish what China's interests were. Aside from the goal of achieving an acceptable settlement of the Korean and Indochina wars, China wanted to establish itself as a legitimate player on the world stage and a reliable ally for other communist nations – the 1954 conference was the first major international conference the PRC had ever attended, so it was China's first opportunity to demonstrate these qualities in a conference setting.<sup>⑦</sup>

As mentioned previously, China was invited to the conference at the behest of the Soviets – at the time, the US did not recognise the PRC, the DPRK, or the CPV of North Vietnam. In this way, the Soviets practiced "defensive assertiveness" on behalf of China to ensure that they maintained a comparatively equal seat at the table, with China mostly deferring to the USSR to perform this function.<sup>⑧</sup> Vyacheslav Molotov, one of the three individuals eventually selected to chair, acted as the primary spokesperson for communicating the communist position when it came

<sup>①</sup> Johnston, "How New and Assertive Is China's New Assertiveness?", p7

<sup>②</sup> Johnston, "How New and Assertive Is China's New Assertiveness?", p45

<sup>③</sup> Johnston, "How New and Assertive Is China's New Assertiveness?", p9

<sup>④</sup> Johnston, "How New and Assertive Is China's New Assertiveness?", p14

<sup>⑤</sup> Chen and Pu, "Debating Chinese Assertiveness", p178

<sup>⑥</sup> Asselin, Pierre, "Choosing Peace: Hanoi and the Geneva Agreement", p98

<sup>⑦</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, "Document Number 121144"

<sup>⑧</sup> Tokola, "The 1954 Geneva Conference on Korea"

to the question of Korea.<sup>①</sup>As such, China was not a principal negotiator during the sessions on Korea but assumed a supportive role, with the Soviets and the DPRK leading the discussion. In an April 26<sup>th</sup> telegram to Chairman Mao, Liu Shaoqi and the Central Committee, Zhou Enlai states that “we have agreed with the Soviet comrades that we should let the Korean delegation speak first” to present the plans for a ceasefire and peaceful reunification of Korea and then, one day later, China would “express their support for the Korean delegation's positions”.<sup>②</sup> By stepping back to grant the floor to the North Koreans, China is displaying supportive rather than assertive policy towards the smaller communist nation within the framework of the USSR’s plan for their coordination at the conference. There is no evidence of Chinese attempts to undermine the Soviet position by criticizing the USSR, attempting to coerce the North Koreans, or abandoning the plan by speaking out of turn. Rather, Zhou Enlai repeatedly consulted with the Soviet delegation to confirm China’s stance, even for minor periphery meetings, such as a last-minute morning meeting with Anthony Eden arranged the night before.<sup>③</sup>As a result, scholars have observed that the level of coordination of the communist side during these sessions was far superior to that displayed by the 16 other countries at the conference, leaving little room for China to display defensive or offensive assertiveness in its interactions with North Korea.<sup>④</sup>

Nevertheless, it is still possible to observe “constructive assertiveness” in China’s interactions with the North Korean delegation. Much of the North Korean position was pre-agreed by the Chinese and Soviets, involving lengthy meetings that China helped coordinate. This administrative role continued during and after the Korean sessions had concluded. For example, according to a June 21<sup>st</sup> telegram to Mao Zedong, China hosted the farewell party for North Korean Foreign Minister Nam Il before he returned home following the conclusion of the sessions on Korea, inviting the “four delegations from our side” to the get-together who then discussed the “two proposals presented by the delegations from Laos and Cambodia”.<sup>⑤</sup> Here, China is taking the initiative to show itself as a facilitator within the communist bloc, not only supporting but also caring for its allies, which would, in turn, elevate China’s status among fellow communist nations.

When it came to the Indochina negotiations, China’s goal was the same as with Korea. Although the Soviets still had a considerable influence during these negotiations, the Chinese did not defer to the Soviets on all matters, often taking the lead when discussing matters with the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV). Prior to the conference, the Soviets relied on the Chinese to communicate with the CPV, requesting that they pass on the invitation to attend.<sup>⑥</sup> Zhou Enlai telegraphed Ho Chi Minh to express his opinions about where a demarcation line could be drawn and to request that he “come to Beijing at the end of March or in early April, and then go to Moscow to exchange opinions with the Soviet Party Central Committee”.<sup>⑦</sup> Such travel arrangements make sense logistically, but they also show that the Chinese wanted the CPV to reach an agreement with them first before presenting ideas to the Soviets, which would be an example of “defensive” assertiveness. Mid-conference, the Chinese also effectively ordered “Comrades Ho Chi Minh, Truong Chinh, and Vo Nguyen Giap to rush to Nanning, Guangxi, by 28<sup>th</sup> June to wait for Comrade Zhou Enlai” to have discussions ahead of the resumption of negotiations in July.<sup>⑧</sup> In

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<sup>①</sup> Tokola, “*The 1954 Geneva Conference on Korea*”

<sup>②</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, “*Document Number 110601*”

<sup>③</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, “*Document Number 110615*”

<sup>④</sup> Tokola, “*The 1954 Geneva Conference on Korea*”

<sup>⑤</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, “*Document Number 111861*”

<sup>⑥</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, “*Document Number 111961*”

<sup>⑦</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, “*Document Number 121142*”

<sup>⑧</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, “*Document Number 110860*”

these interactions, it is clearly China and not the Soviet Union that is taking the lead in coordinating with the CPV, demonstrating “constructive assertiveness” via this leadership role. Though, as with Korea, Zhou Enlai travelled to Moscow ahead of landing in Geneva for the July sessions.<sup>①</sup>

The opening session on Indochina was conducted in the same way as the first session on Korea. The CPV presented a five-point proposal, and Molotov spoke to rebut US criticism and request that all participants acknowledge that “resolving the political issue should restore each country's [Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia] unification under the condition of holding general elections.”<sup>②</sup> China did not play a prominent role in the session, once again sitting back so that the CPV and the USSR could take the lead. However, during the private meetings between the USSR, China, and North Vietnam delegations, the Chinese applied pressure to get the CPV to change their positions, often with Soviet support. In a June 26<sup>th</sup> meeting, the three sides agreed upon the maximum (a line along Route 19), medium (the 15<sup>th</sup> parallel), and minimum goals (the 16<sup>th</sup> parallel) when negotiating the dividing line in Vietnam, but disagreed on the division line for Laos.<sup>③</sup> During this conversation, Novikov of the USSR weighed in to say rather bluntly that Pham Van Dong “has no clear ideas on the plan for the division of zones”, agreeing with Premier Zhou's opinion that the “bottom line is to adhere to maintaining a part of upper Laos, neighboring on Vietnam and China”, implying that the CPV should come around to supporting China's recommendation.<sup>④</sup> China was also critical of settlements proposed by the CPV, with Zhou remarking in a telegram to the Central Committee that CPV's proposed settlement “failed to hit the important points” while their unwillingness to make concessions was making it “difficult for the negotiation to continue”.<sup>⑤</sup> However, instead of trying to force the CPV to change their position in an act of “offensive” assertiveness, Zhou proposes that China instead “take the initiative to make concessions” in order to “ask for more gains in Vietnam as compensations to us”, displaying “constructive” assertiveness in China's treatment of their Vietnamese counterparts.

Finally, as with Korea, China also assumed an administrative role, arranging meetings between the communist delegations, introducing the Laos, Cambodian, and North Vietnamese representatives over a banquet, and hosting the celebratory dinner for the Soviet Union, Vietnam and China after the conclusion of negotiations on July 22<sup>nd</sup>.<sup>⑥</sup> Though often overlooked, the act of bringing people together in an informal setting away from the negotiation table is an important part of diplomacy, enabling people to build person-to-person connections that ease the negotiation process.<sup>⑦</sup> Here, we see Zhou Enlai executing this aspect of “constructive” assertiveness with finesse, cementing China's place in the upper echelons of the communist bloc.

### 1957 Moscow Conference

The 1957 conference signaled the continued commitment of communist parties to collaboration and coordination in the face of global political challenges, namely the deepening Cold War with the US, and it reflected the ongoing efforts to maintain unity within the broader communist movement despite ideological divergences and geopolitical complexities. As mentioned before, China, the proposer of the conference, arguably wanted to not only strengthen its position within the communist bloc, but also to position itself as an alternative voice of authority

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<sup>①</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, “Document Number 112964”

<sup>②</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, “Document Number 111495”

<sup>③</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, “Document Number 110145”

<sup>④</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, “Document Number 110145”

<sup>⑤</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, “Document Number 121156”

<sup>⑥</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, “Document Number 121156” and “Document Number 121168”

<sup>⑦</sup> Morgan, “Diplomatic Gastronomy”, p146

to the Soviets.<sup>①</sup> During his speech to the assembled representatives, Mao referenced both the Korean and Vietnamese wars to argue that the East is not being dominated by the West, and declared that in “15 years, within our camp, the Soviet Union will have overtaken the United States and China will have overtaken Great Britain.”<sup>②</sup> Although it is clear that Mao still considered the Soviets the leading communist country, he wanted China to be perceived as a close second.

China’s relations with the DPRK had deepened in intensity since the 1954 Geneva Conference. Kim Il Sung had visited the PRC twice since the Korean War, and Chairman Mao took the opportunity at the 1957 Conference to be constructively assertive and propose that China return the favor.<sup>③</sup> As a result, Kim Il Sung formally invited Mao and confirmed his plans to send another delegation to China in 1958.<sup>④</sup> Mao then raised the issue of withdrawing the Chinese People’s Volunteers from the DPRK to force the US to withdraw troops from South Korea.<sup>⑤</sup> This suggestion came from China, rather than the Soviets, and show China trying to coerce North Korea into agreeing with their defence strategy, arguably an example of offensive assertiveness. Kim Il Sung agreed only to study the matter, but later, during a Presidium meeting on December 4th, stated that it would be “advisable to make wide use of Mao Zedong’s suggestion,” saying:

*“If the Chinese friends agree, we ought to address letters to the Chairman of the PRC about the withdrawal of the people’s volunteers from the DPRK and to the UN about the withdrawal of American troops from South Korea.”<sup>⑥</sup>*

The DPRK defers to China without asking the Soviets for their opinion, representing a change from the 1954 Conference. By the time the 1957 Conference took place, China had already begun advising the DPRK on their first five-year plan – a North Korean delegation was present in Beijing from 13<sup>th</sup> September to 6<sup>th</sup> of October 1957 to discuss the five-year plan and trade issues.<sup>⑦</sup> During these talks, the Chinese agreed to supply specific quantities of goods to the DPRK, including coal, soybeans, and cotton. On the matter of cotton, due to shortages, China only agreed to deliver 8,000 tonnes rather than the 12,000 tonnes the North Koreans desired.<sup>⑧</sup> During the DPRK’s visit to Moscow for the Conference, the first request they made of the Soviet government was for 5-6,000 tonnes of cotton to compensate for the shortfall from China.<sup>⑨</sup> This highlights the success of Chinese constructive assertiveness, with the DPRK prioritizing seeking assistance from China first, turning to the Soviets only when Chinese support was unavailable. However, on matters of defence, the Soviets still played a dominant role. Hence, the DPRK’s second request was for military supplies.<sup>⑩</sup>

Meanwhile, the Chinese insistence that the Soviets allow for nonpeaceful transitions to socialism within the final draft of the 1957 Conference Declaration was also a successful example of defensive assertiveness, winning the praise of the North Vietnamese.<sup>11</sup> When Mao arrived in

<sup>①</sup> Shen and Xia, “*Hidden Currents*”, p91

<sup>②</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, “*Document Number 121559*”

<sup>③</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, “*Document Number 115932*”

<sup>④</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, “*Document Number 115932*”

<sup>⑤</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, “*Document Number 115932*”

<sup>⑥</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, “*Document Number 115953*”

<sup>⑦</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, “*Document Number 115944*”

<sup>⑧</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, “*Document Number 115944*”

<sup>⑨</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, “*Document Number 115932*”

<sup>⑩</sup> Wilson Center Digital Archive, “*Document Number 115932*”

<sup>11</sup> Shen and Xia, “*Hidden Currents*”, p92; and Ang, “*Vietnamese Communists’ Relations with China*”, p68

Moscow, Ho Chi Minh was there to greet him at the airport, where Mao “embraced Ho... and told Khrushchev that he and Ho were relatives, implying they were very close.”<sup>①</sup> Following the conference, Ho Chi Minh spent a month in Beijing before finally returning to Vietnam on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December.<sup>②</sup> The Chinese alternative to the Soviet “peaceful” route to socialism was wholeheartedly embraced by the Vietnamese. On December 7<sup>th</sup>, Le Duan, who had also attended the conference, announced to 1500 Vietnamese party officials that the Moscow Declaration had “not only... created the conditions for North Vietnam to advance towards socialism, they had also shown the path of struggle for the liberation of the South.”<sup>③</sup> Once again demonstrating constructive assertiveness, China also began to pay greater attention to Vietnamese affairs, sending its first ambassador, Luo Guibo, to North Vietnam two weeks after the conference ended.<sup>④</sup> Chinese relations with Vietnam strengthened, with North Vietnam sending trade delegations to Beijing and China committing to fund 18 industrial projects between 1958-1960.<sup>⑤</sup> In April 1958, the two sides even reached an agreement regarding the Sino-Vietnam boundary.<sup>⑥</sup>

### Conclusion

Following the Moscow conference, both North Korea and North Vietnam grew closer to China, allowing Chinese influence to permeate their domestic policy to a greater extent. There was an increased frequency and intensity of diplomatic relations, with delegations from the DPRK and CPV regularly traveling to Beijing and vice-versa. Moreover, Chinese leaders were directly suggesting alternatives to Soviet policies, such as the DPRK’s five-year plan and non-peaceful routes to socialism. China also stepped-up aid and the delivery of trade goods with North Korea and Vietnam, often exceeding the USSR in this regard. Whereas during the 1954 conference interactions were mostly supportive and characteristic of “constructive” assertiveness, with China relying on the Soviets when it came to their “defensive” assertiveness, following the 1957 conference there are clear examples of China practicing defensive assertiveness and even offensive assertiveness. This supports the argument that Chinese foreign policy vis-à-vis other communist states had become more assertive by the end of the “honeymoon period” of Sino-Soviet relations as witnessed by the changes in behavior towards North Korea and North Vietnam between the 1954 and 1957 conferences.

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<sup>①</sup> Ang, “*Vietnamese Communists’ Relations with China*”, p99

<sup>②</sup> Ang, “*Vietnamese Communists’ Relations with China*”, p69

<sup>③</sup> Ang, “*Vietnamese Communists’ Relations with China*”, p104

<sup>④</sup> Ang, “*Vietnamese Communists’ Relations with China*”, p104

<sup>⑤</sup> Ang, “*Vietnamese Communists’ Relations with China*”, p110

<sup>⑥</sup> Ang, “*Vietnamese Communists’ Relations with China*”, p111

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## Analyzing Sino-Soviet Relations in the 50s and 60s through the Balance of Threat Theory

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### Abstract

Sino-Soviet relations during the 1950s and 1960s were arguably one of the most complex bilateral relations during the Cold War period. The frictions between these two major powers, however, were often hidden under the banner of their alleged common ideology and complementary role inside the International Communist Movement. As a multi-faceted phenomenon, most of the available scholarly works examine it from diverse angles, without seeking to use an overarching theory that can be applied to the Sino-Soviet case. Therefore, this research paper suggests a theory should be found in order to explain such a drastic change in bilateral relations in a relatively short period of time. We understand that a shift occurred in Soviet foreign policy regarding China: the cooperation and alignment seen in 1954 escalated to armed conflict in less than two decades. Using Stephen Walt's Balance of Threat Theory as the analytical framework, this research examines the People's Republic of China (PRC) through the criteria defined by Walt—aggregate power, proximity, offensive capabilities, and offensive intentions—from a Soviet perspective to determine if changes in these areas would justify two specific points.<sup>①</sup> First, the increase in threat perception from the USSR towards the PRC and, second, the USSR's actual reaction. As the paper will demonstrate, this theoretical framework can be applied to understand the reasons why the Soviets saw China as a threat to itself, but the Soviet reaction was not the reaction the Balance of Threat Theory would predict, namely alignment and alliance forming to contain the PRC.<sup>②</sup>

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<sup>①</sup> Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power", 25

<sup>②</sup> Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power", 27

## Introduction

Scholars constantly seek new theories, models, and rules that explain or help predict past events, policy decisions, and future conflicts. In the complex world of international politics, these general frameworks take time to come by, as a plethora of factors will be responsible for the actual outcome of a given situation. From the individual personalities of the people involved in the decision-making process to domestic politics and the international environment, geopolitics is a complex affair that cannot easily fit into any pre-determined set of rules. That being said, it is still essential that international relations scholars continue to search, improve, and adapt existing and new theories in the field, helping us better understand the forces that move each state and, consequently, the entire world.

This paper aims to go beyond existing materials and evaluate if the Balance of Threat Theory is appropriate for understanding the Sino-Soviet fallout from the 1950s to the end of the 1960s. With a comprehensive research scope, this paper aims to confirm if the theory can effectively explain the Soviet Union's threat perception of the PRC and if the USSR's actual foreign policies towards China during this period align with the prediction of Walt's Balance of Threat Theory. The paper anticipates making a significant contribution to existing literature, either by confirming the theory's successful application in explaining the Sino-Soviet fallout and thereby enabling its use in other historical cases, suggesting adjustments to Walt's definitions for its use, or even discarding it entirely.

## Literature Review

There are extensive scholarly works on the evolution of Sino-Soviet relations during the 1950s and 1960s that explore the fallout from different angles, such as the PRC's domestic environment, the USSR's change in its foreign policy, ideological differences, or international factors.

Lorenz M. Luthi, in his 'The Sino-Soviet Split',<sup>①</sup> argues that there were three factors for the fallout in the late 60s, namely: China's domestic situation with the failure of the Great Leap Forward policy, which generated increasing criticism and subsequent purge of opposition voices inside the Chinese Government; Mao Zedong's response to the Tibetan Uprising, which was perceived as clumsy by the Soviets and the main cause to the Sino-Indian border conflict; and Sino-American rapprochement in the late 60s that was against the Soviet interests.

Christensen approaches the question from another angle, bringing in the domestic Soviet situation to explain the USSR's position on several issues that would differ from the Chinese and the building up of these differences over time as a cause for the fallout.<sup>②</sup> For example, Christensen highlights Mao Zedong's dissatisfaction with the speed of Soviet help to Chinese and Korean troops on the ground in Korea during the Korean War (1950-1953), which then caused the Chinese to push for a cease-fire agreement that they might otherwise not have pursued.

In addition, Christensen also argues that there were radical differences in Chinese and Soviet positions during the Indochina settlements that would end up dividing North and South Vietnam.<sup>③</sup> Due to internal affairs, a new drive to pursue appeasement with the Americans, and the necessity to reduce spending because of its domestic economic situation—particularly in a conflict perceived as secondary due to its distance from Soviet borders—the USSR advocated for a ceasefire and distanced itself from the Vietnam issue. Meanwhile, despite its own economic

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<sup>①</sup> Luthi, "Visible Cracks 1959" in *The Sino-Soviet Split*

<sup>②</sup> Christensen, "Threats, Assurances, and the Last Chance for Peace", p122-154.

<sup>③</sup> Christensen, "Worse Than a Monolith"

struggles, China actively supported the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) communists. According to Christensen, the USSR's dilemma of reconciling communist prestige with geopolitical interests drove it away from some key players in the international communist movement, especially the DRV.<sup>①</sup> The vacuum created by Moscow's absence in Vietnam would be filled by Beijing, which vastly increased its own influence in Southeast Asia and its prestige among the International Communist Movement vis-à-vis the USSR.

Shen and Xia argue that the fallout had substantial ideological reasons behind it, which well exemplified in the Moscow Conference of 1957, the largest gathering of world Communists since the birth of Marxism.<sup>②</sup> During the conference, China and the USSR disagreed over the viability of a peaceful transition to socialism. At the same time, China advocated for including the possibility of war and class struggle in the conference's final document; the USSR was more reluctant to use such language. Shen and Xia further contend that beyond ideology, the two powers' dispute for influence could be seen in the very conception of the event. It was well accepted that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) headed the conference. Still, historical evidence presented by Shen and Xia shows a very active Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the Chinese even being the side that brought up the idea of a conference in Moscow.<sup>③</sup>

After the end of the former Comintern and Cominform, both Moscow and Beijing recognized the need to create a new channel of information exchange between the communist parties. The Moscow conference had a shared goal of establishing a mechanism to resolve the movement's internal issues, but there were sharp disagreements on how that goal would be reached.

The aforementioned authors are examples of the usual approaches used to analyze the Sino-Soviet fallout: China's domestic issues, the USSR's domestic issues, international factors, and ideological reasons. Although they are undoubtedly pieces of this complex puzzle, the gap of a major theory remains, and that is what this research proposal is about.

## Methodology

The paper primarily adopts qualitative reasoning with the support of historical documents and data. As the theory comprises four different elements that constitute the variables through which states perceive threats from other states, each variable must be examined to determine how it will be measured. After understanding the variables and how to measure each one, this research will move on to collect data and historical evidence and try to understand how Soviet leaders perceived the PRC at each of the selected historical moments.

The decision to select specific historical moments to conduct this analysis aims to facilitate data collection by stipulating a specific point in time and, therefore, arriving at more specific sources than it would be possible if the period were to be analyzed as a whole. It is also important to point out that numerical data such as GDP and military spending measure factors like 'aggregate power' and 'offensive capabilities.' Given the difficulty in obtaining data from the Soviet Union and proving its accuracy, this paper utilizes multiple documents from the World Bank and other relevant specialized literature to corroborate the arguments and add credibility.

The paper focuses on three historical events: the Geneva Conference of 1954, the Moscow Conference of 1957, and the Sino-Soviet border clashes of 1969. The Geneva Conference was arguably a moment of great Sino-Soviet cooperation, with both sides aiming for common goals,

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<sup>①</sup> Christensen, "Worse Than a Monolith"

<sup>②</sup> Shen and Xia, "Hidden Currents During the Honeymoon", p74-117.

<sup>③</sup> Shen and Xia, "Hidden Currents During the Honeymoon: Mao, Khrushchev, and the 1957 Moscow Conference," 74-117

albeit for different reasons, in implementing the cease-fires in the Korean Peninsula and Indochina. The Moscow Conference in 1957 was chosen as it demonstrates the struggle between China and the USSR inside the International Communist Movement. It shows that the PRC is willing to behave more aggressively on the diplomatic front, both complementing and criticizing the CPSU during the conference and occupying a more prominent position among the world's Communists. In this event, it can be argued that there was a significant change in how China was perceived by the Soviets, especially concerning the fourth pillar of the Balance of Threat Theory, namely aggressive intentions. Finally, the Sino-Soviet border clashes of 1969 will close the research as the *de facto* military confrontation between the two states, which ended contributing to pushing China towards rapprochement with the United States, a strategy that was being pursued by the USSR in the early 60s under Khrushchev and despised by Mao Zedong. As these three events respectively represent historical moments in which the relations were 'good,' 'deteriorating', and 'hostile', we believe they will allow us to portray a solid picture of the evolution of Sino-Soviet relations during this period.

### Concepts

The Balance of Threat Theory of Stephen M. Walt advocates that states decide on alliance formation strategies based on their threat perceptions of other states.<sup>①</sup> In other words, it predicts that states will align against other states that are perceived as threats.

In order to explain how states measure threat perception, Walt came up with a framework composed of four variables: aggregate power, proximity, offensive capabilities, and offensive intentions. The paper offers a definition for each of the four variables:

1. *Aggregate power*. According to Walt, "The greater a state's total resources (size, population, latent power, and economic capabilities), the greater a potential threat it can pose to others."<sup>②</sup> Size and population can be measured by very objective measures, but as Walt doesn't provide a way to weight latent power and economic capabilities, we decide to use both nominal GDP and GDP growth between 1950 and 1970. Nominal GDP is understood to be an adequate measure of economic capabilities as it gives us a general understanding of the overall output of any given economy. GDP growth will be the indicator of latent power, as big economies facing a recession (negative GDP growth) demonstrate more solid economic capabilities but lack latent potential as their overall economy is shrinking.

2. *Proximity*. This variable is divided into three categories: shared land border, same landmass, and different landmass. Threat perception increases with proximity, being highest in the first category and lowest in the last.

3. *Offensive capabilities*. Measured in terms of both nominal military spending and growth in military spending as a percentage of GDP, both for the PRC and the USSR. This is admittedly an oversimplification, as further analysis into technical specifications of a given country's arsenal, military personnel and logistics capabilities are all important factors for understanding the so-called 'offensive capabilities'. As data on the PRC and USSR on this matter is hard to come by due to both secrecy measures and lack of records, the paper uses military spending and its growth rate as indicators of 'offensive capabilities'.

4. *Offensive intentions*. This is a perception of intentions and, therefore, a subjective factor. To measure this variable, the paper turns to historical documents, records of conversations,

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<sup>①</sup> Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power", 3-43

<sup>②</sup> Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power", 3-43

speeches and academic work to better grasp how Soviet leaders perceived the PRC in each of the three historical moments mentioned before.

## Research

As previously mentioned, this paper will analyze the PRC through the lens of the four variables as perceived by the Soviets. Given the importance of changes in each variable across the three selected periods, the research will proceed on a variable-by-variable basis. After presenting data for each of the four pillars of the Balance of Threat Theory,<sup>①</sup> the article will discuss the implications for Soviet threat perception regarding the PRC. A conclusion will follow, discussing the overall threat perception and the strategies actually employed by the Soviet Union in its dealings with China.

## Aggregate Power

Aggregate power will be measured in territory length, population and both nominal GDP and GDP growth over the selected period. For territory length, we used current sources as China's territories have not suffered any changes since the 1950s.<sup>②</sup> The source for population will be the Trading Economics database.<sup>③</sup> The PRC's GDP information is based on both the World Bank<sup>④</sup> and Chinese domestic sources.<sup>⑤</sup> As the studied period (especially the early 50s) presents conflicting information, more than one source was needed to ensure higher data accuracy. The USSR's economic information is based on the work of William Easterly and Stanley Fischer.<sup>⑥</sup>

*Table 1 – Nominal GDP and GDP growth*

-	<b>China's GDP</b>	<b>USSR's GDP</b>	<b>China's GDP growth</b>	<b>USSR's GDP growth</b>
<b>1950</b>	22.32	304.29	-	-
<b>1955</b>	35.00	441.60	57%	45%
<b>1960</b>	59.72	629.00	71%	42%
<b>1965</b>	70.44	803.59	18%	28%
<b>1970</b>	92.66	1000.00	32%	24%

*Sources: World Bank, Xueqiu, Easterly and Fischer*

*Table 2 – Aggregate power variables*

-	<b>1954</b>	<b>1957</b>	<b>1969</b>
<b>PRC's Size</b>	10.45 mi km <sup>2</sup>	10.45 mi km <sup>2</sup>	10.45 mi km <sup>2</sup>
<b>PRC's Population</b>	552 million	654 million	822 million
<b>PRC's GDP growth compared to previous period</b>	57% since 1950	71% since 1955	32% since 1965
<b>PRC's GDP as a percentage of USSR's GDP</b>	8%	9%	9%

*Sources: Trading Economics*

<sup>①</sup> Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power", 3-43

<sup>②</sup> University of Washington. "A Visual Sourcebook of Chinese Civilization"

<sup>③</sup> Trading Economics, "China Population"

<sup>④</sup> World Bank. "GDP current US\$ - China"

<sup>⑤</sup> Xueqiu, "【数据】中美苏经济总量三国演义 (1950-2021)"

<sup>⑥</sup> Easterly and Fischer. "The Soviet Economic Decline", p341-371

Table 1 shows the nominal and GDP growth rates of both the PRC and the USSR during the 1950s and 1960s. In Table 2, the PRC's GDP never reached 10% of the total USSR's GDP, even though it showed higher growth rates for most of the period analyzed. From an economic perspective, that can also be attributed to a lower basis for calculation, meaning that countries coming from a lower comparative base tend to demonstrate higher growth rates than more industrialized and developed economies. Table 2 gives an overall assessment of the four variables within *aggregate power* over 1954, 1957, and 1969.

The PRC's size, as in territory size, remained the same throughout this period, but since China possesses a massive territory, this factor can contribute to perceptions of threat, as big countries usually have access to vast resources and manpower. When it comes to population, China can also be perceived as a threat since, not only did it have the world's biggest population throughout the 1950s and 1960s, its population also grew at a staggering rate in 20 years.

Latent power can be seen in tables 1 and 2 through China's GDP growth, which presented much faster growth rates throughout the 1950s than in the following decade. This fact in itself conflicts with historical facts, since the period that showed the slowest Chinese economic growth is the same period when China and the Soviet Union engaged in military confrontation. In theory, higher growth rates would mean higher latent power which would predict higher threat perception.

Lastly, we come to economic capabilities, the fourth pillar of aggregate power. This can be seen in tables 1 and 2 through China's nominal GDP and its GDP when compared to the USSR's economy. As mentioned before, the PRC's GDP never surpassed 10% of the USSR's in this period. Following the Balance of Threat Theory logic, that should mean a low threat perception from the Soviets regarding China when considering its economic capabilities.<sup>①</sup>

In conclusion, by analyzing the 'aggregate power' variable alone, it is not possible to predict an increase in threat perception from the USSR regarding the PRC. Out of the four pillars, 'size' and 'population' would increase threat perception. 'Economic capabilities' would decrease threat perception as the PRC's GDP never surpassed 9% of the Soviet Union's GDP. The only pillar that showed changes throughout the 50s and 60s was 'latent power', and it should have increased threat perception in the first two historical entries (1954 and 1957) but decreased it in 1969, mostly as a result of China's domestic struggles with the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. Since the sub-variables inside 'aggregate power' pose both positive and negative coefficients to measure threat perception, this variable alone can explain China's relative importance on the world stage but not the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations.

### Proximity

In terms of proximity, the PRC and the USSR shared two land borders, separated by Mongolia. One is in northeast China, in the Manchurian region, and the other in the northwest, in Xinjiang. Countries that share a land border are more prone and sensitive to each other's actions, as they are direct neighbors and what one side does might directly affect and spill over the shared border. So, proximity can be understood as a constant factor contributing to threat perception from the USSR regarding the PRC, as they are immediate neighbors with two separate border sections in two very sensitive regions. In fact, the Sino-Soviet border clashes, the third historical event analyzed in this paper, precisely happened in one of the aforementioned regions, the Chinese northeast in 1969. This only goes to show that Sino-Soviet proximity did increase the threat perception of the USSR vis-à-vis the PRC.

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<sup>①</sup> Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power", 25



### Offensive Capabilities

The third variable in this equation, offensive capabilities, will be measured in terms of military spending, as explained before. The source for PRC data was obtained through the ‘Our World in Data’ database,<sup>①</sup> while the USSR’s information came from Gomulka and Schaffer<sup>②</sup> as well as Ofer.<sup>③</sup> It is important to point out that Soviet military spending information was not available for all the years analyzed, namely 1954, 1957 and 1969, but instead only for parts of that period; so, the closest data available will be used as an approximation.

*Table 3 – Military spending as a % of GDP*

	China	USSR	China growth	USSR growth
1950	15.08%	9.00%	-	-
1960	11.34%	12.00%	101%	176%
1970	26.03%	13.00%	256%	72%

*Source: Ofer and others*

China’s military spending showed an average decrease in the 50s and an upward trend throughout the 60s. It remained higher than the USSR’s for most of this period by percentage of GDP ratio. However, since the PRC’s GDP was roughly 10% of the USSR’s during this period, the Soviet Union had much higher nominal military spending and even showed higher spending growth from 1950 to 1960.

Hence, this paper concludes that, based on military spending, ‘offensive capability’ could have been a factor in increasing Soviet threat perception vis-à-vis China during the analyzed period, as the PRC’s military spending more than tripled over 20 years. On the other hand, it is also important to highlight that even with a higher than 300% increase, it still remained well below Soviet figures, as China had less than 10% of the USSR’s GDP.

### Offensive Intentions

As the only non-numerical factor in the threat perception equation, offensive intentions were measured based on historical documents, speeches and other academic papers that focused on the Soviet Union’s foreign policy.

Starting with the Geneva Conference of 1954, it is important to understand Stalin’s foreign policy towards China. Although the conference took place one year after Stalin’s death, Stalin’s foreign policies dominated throughout the Geneva Conference as Khrushchev still struggled to consolidate his power. Stalin’s foreign policy was highly focused on increasing the USSR’s unilateral defense, especially after 1947, by creating a security zone around its borders. This would mean support for the PRC’s and Mao’s revolution. But according to Zubok, Stalin learned a lesson in Asia: “You can make the revolutionary process serve your foreign policy, but only at your own risk and with serious, unintended consequences.”<sup>④</sup> Under these circumstances, Stalin was cautious with regards to full support for the Chinese Communist Party. He had main ideological differences with Chairman Mao, regarding him as “excessively independent, with his roots in peasant revolt rather than proletarian revolution.”<sup>⑤</sup>

<sup>①</sup> Our World in Data. “Military expenditure as a share of GDP”

<sup>②</sup> Gomulka and Schaffer, “A New Method of Long-Run Growth Accounting”

<sup>③</sup> Ofer, “Soviet Economic Growth: 1928-85”, p1767-1833.

<sup>④</sup> Zubok and Pleshakov, “Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War”

<sup>⑤</sup> Zubok and Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, p46

Besides the PRC, Stalin also refrained from openly supporting other Communist movements in order to get concessions and deals from the West. As Zubok summarizes the situation in 1949: “Stalin’s decision to shake Mao’s hand in 1949 was one of hard-boiled realism, but once it happened, the partnership between the Kremlin and the leader of the Chinese Revolution inevitably became a test between the Soviet paradigm and a no less exceptionalist Chinese revolutionary nationalism.”<sup>①</sup> Based on the evidence provided by Zubok, we conclude that the moment of Sino-Soviet rapprochement, which includes the 1954 conference, saw the relations between the PRC and the USSR evolve to high levels of cooperation. Stalin’s decision to wait for Mao’s response before giving the North Korean leader Kim Il-Sung the go-ahead to invade the South serves as additional proof of this.<sup>②</sup> The same evidence also shows that Stalin and the Soviets never perceived Chinese intentions as friendly; quite the opposite is true, but Chinese offensive intentions were not enough to deter Sino-Soviet rapprochement in this case.

The 1957 Moscow Conference of world Communist parties saw a change in Soviet leadership, with Khrushchev now firmly in power and advocating for his ‘peaceful coexistence’ doctrine, which sought greater rapprochement with the West. Ideological differences between the two sides increased during this period, as Khrushchev himself recalled: “Everyone joined the chorus of speeches on how to avoid war, but here came Mao Tze-tung saying we shouldn’t be afraid of war.”<sup>③</sup> In another passage, he mentioned, “Mao considered himself God. Karl Marx and Lenin were both in their graves and Mao thought he had no equal on Earth.”<sup>④</sup> Khrushchev’s personal accounts of the Chinese leader show that, although there was a reshuffle in Soviet leadership with his consolidation of power since 1954, trust failed to build up and Chinese intentions were still perceived as unfriendly and a barrier to the development of Khrushchev’s ‘peaceful coexistence’ doctrine.

The nature of Stalin’s and Khrushchev’s mistrust regarding the Chinese is a matter for scholarly debate, but that the USSR continuously perceived Chinese intentions as dangerous and aggressive is confirmed by the historical evidence. However, in both instances, *realpolitik* played a bigger role. Under Khrushchev, assistance to China increased 100-fold and the USSR supported the PRC in both the Taiwan Strait crisis (1954 and 1958), even with speeches of both Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai stating that the PRC was willing to drag the Soviet Union into a nuclear war with the US over Taiwan.<sup>⑤</sup>

Fast forwarding to 1969, China was in the middle of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and the Soviet Union was under the leadership of Leonid Brezhnev (since 1964). Given the USSR’s domestic situation and the risks it posed for its own stability, the USSR increased criticism of the PRC during this period.<sup>⑥</sup> The border demarcation, which was an issue on the bilateral agenda since at least the beginning of the 1960s, saw both sides conduct provocations and minor border violations. Robinson stated: “The picture that emerges shows not much more than minor harassment between two unfriendly powers who disagreed upon some specifics of border demarcation and who found the border a convenient place to express the general tension.”<sup>⑦</sup>

A survey that was conducted with 306 periodical articles and radio broadcasts from October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1968, through the end of February, 1969, highlights the overall Soviet comments about

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<sup>①</sup> Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War*, p58

<sup>②</sup> Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War*, p58

<sup>③</sup> Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War*, p210-235

<sup>④</sup> Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War*, p210-235

<sup>⑤</sup> Zubok and Pleshakov, “*Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War*”, p210-235

<sup>⑥</sup> Robinson, “*The Sino-Soviet Border Dispute: Background, Development*”, p1175-1202

<sup>⑦</sup> *Ibid.*

the PRC: criticism of Chinese internal politics during the Cultural Revolution, rejection of the Maoist ideological line, opposition to Chinese foreign policy towards both socialist and capitalist countries, and defense of the Soviet policy toward China.<sup>①</sup>In a speech from 1968, Brezhnev emphasized the responsibility each Communist party had, not only to its own national movement, but also to the world Socialist movement as a whole, and that their action should refrain from damaging other Socialist countries: “This means that each Communist Party is responsible not only to its own people but also to all the Socialist countries, to the entire Communist movement. Whoever forgets this, in stressing only the independence of the Communist Party, becomes one-sided. He deviates from his international duty.”<sup>②</sup>

As seen on the assessments of both the 1954 and 1957 Soviet threat perception on the PRC, 1969 demonstrated the same pattern. In the Soviet eyes, not only did these perceptions become a reality during the border clashes, but mistrust had been building up throughout the period analyzed in this paper. Regarding ‘offensive intentions’ then this paper concludes that Soviet leaders always perceived Chinese intentions as dangerous, and this was a constant factor on all three historical periods. Since there were no changes in this variable, it alone cannot explain the change in behavior from the USSR towards the PRC from 1954 to 1969.

## Conclusion

After analyzing both numerical and historical evidence concerning the four pillars of the Balance of Threat Theory for the three selected historical periods, this paper concludes that Walt’s theory can only be partially used to understand both the Soviet perception of threat and its reaction regarding the PRC.<sup>③</sup>

The theory predicts two things: that the perception of threat is based upon four pillars (aggregate power, proximity, offensive capabilities and offensive intentions) and that when countries perceive another country as a threat, they will balance against it.

*Table 4 - Conclusions*

Threat perception (+/-)	1954	1957	1969
Aggregate power	+/-	+/-	+/-
Proximity	+	+	+
Offensive capabilities	-	+	+
Offensive intentions	+	+	+
<b>Conclusion</b>	+	+	+

Table 4 summarizes this paper’s findings, attributing positive (+), negative (-) or both coefficients for each pillar in each historical data. The bottom line shows the research’s conclusion regarding the threat perception of the USSR regarding the PRC as positive for all three periods.

As the ‘aggregate power’ variable is further divided into sub-variables, it retains both coefficients as sub-variables; ‘size’ and ‘population’ would have a positive coefficient, whereas ‘latent power’ would be positive for 1954 and 1957, but negative in 1969, and ‘economic capabilities’ would be negative in all entries.

Since few variable changes were detected throughout the analyzed period, meaning that most factors remained constant, it is reasonable to infer that Soviet leaders continuously saw China

<sup>①</sup> Ibid.

<sup>②</sup> ISN, “Brezhnev Doctrine – Speech by First Secretary of the Soviet Union Leonid Brezhnev”

<sup>③</sup> Walt, “Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power”, p3-43

as a potential threat in all historical periods. Although this conclusion is supported by the historical evidence provided earlier, the theory would also predict that if the USSR saw the PRC as a threat, it would have balanced against it, forming alliances to contain the threat.

Even though Soviet leaders never fully trusted the PRC and its leader Mao Zedong, relations with China became closer and warmer in the first two chapters of our historical series (1954 and 1957). Due to factors not included in the Balance of Threat equation, the Soviet Union chose or had no option but to improve Sino-Soviet relations, even against its leaders' wishes. This concludes that the theory cannot be fully used to understand Sino-Soviet relations. Although it did explain the threat perception, it failed to predict Soviet foreign policy towards the PRC.

Furthermore, this research suggests two possible improvements to Walt's theory: either the conclusion can be further discussed, meaning that consideration should be given to the possibility that states do not necessarily balance against another state perceived as a threat, or there are other elements that need to be factored in when evaluating threat perception. To discuss whether states might not react as predicted by the Balance of Threat theory, the theory's framework should be applied to other historical cases. This would allow scholars to establish a comparison base and evaluate how the theory behaves in other scenarios.

Regarding the possibility of adjusting the theory's pillars, this paper raises two suggestions. First, the theory should clearly define what measures can be used to weigh the four pillars in the Balance of Threat theory, particularly 'latent power', 'economic capabilities' (both sub-items of 'aggregate power'), and 'offensive capabilities. As Walt did not explicitly point out how these items should be measured, it is natural that different studies use different methods and arrive at different conclusions. The second suggestion would be the addition of extra variables in this equation, as the theory in its current form does not include factors outside the bilateral relationship of two given states. Ideological alignment and heads-of-state personality traits can also be considered; both these factors played a significant role in the Sino-Soviet case.

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## **The Unraveling Bond: Sino-Soviet Relations 1950-1970 as Seen in Korea and Indochina**

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### **Abstract**

The early years of the post-World War II era gave rise to a bipolar world that was characterized by an ideological tussle between American-led liberalism and Soviet-driven communism. The ideological battle took place in a practical sense, such as the Korean and Vietnamese Wars, but also in the domain of diplomatic alliance politics. The rise of the People's Republic of China in 1949, led by the Chinese Communist Party, became a new front for the Soviet Union to increase its influence and alliance structure. However, in the ensuing years of the 1950s and 1960s, this seemingly natural ideological alliance soon became strained by differing world views based upon each country's communist ideologies ; Nikita Khrushchev's 'De-Stalinization' efforts, following the death of Joseph Stalin, and Mao Zedong's revolutionary ideology to deal with issues drove the wedge between the two communist countries. This paper will examine how the variance in communist ideology affected regional conflicts in East Asia and Indochina and broader Sino-Soviet relations from 1950-1970.

## Introduction

The defeat of the Axis Powers by the Allied Powers in World War II was undoubtedly the most preeminent shift in the global order until the fall of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1991. Emerging as the unrivaled superpowers after the Second World War, the United States and USSR, once allies, became bitter and mistrustful enemies following the culmination of the global conflict. The ensuing forty-five years, following 1945, marked a broad diplomatic struggle between liberalism and communism for gains in global alliance structures and ideological influence.<sup>①</sup>

On the border of the USSR, a new power emerged that would one day outlast the union itself, – the People’s Republic of China (PRC). In 1949, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) defeated the Chinese Nationalist Party and obtained power over the country with assistance from the USSR. At the cusp of the CCP victory, a potential problem arose over the invasion of Xinjiang by the Chinese People’s Liberation Army. Joseph Stalin, Premier of the USSR, had alerted Mao Zedong, Chairman of the CCP, that the victory in Xinjiang could leave an opportunity for entities hostile to the vision of the CCP to foment the continuation of civil war through social strife. To avoid this problem, Mao requested assistance from Stalin, writing, “We acutely need and hope that you will help us with 30-50 transport aircraft to shift food, clothing, key personnel, and some of the troops.”<sup>②</sup> Stalin’s willingness to provide the services requested by Mao was a precedential symbol of the budding Sino-Soviet alliance that would appear under the leadership of Stalin and Mao following the CCP victory of the Nationalist Party later in 1949.

In February of 1950, the USSR and the PRC signed a general agreement that became the basis for the relationship between the two countries: the Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance. The road to a new alliance was predicated upon the prevailing ideological Marxist beliefs of both the ruling parties of the two countries; as Mao wrote to the Central Committee of the CCP in January 1950, “To sign a new Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance... Sino-Soviet relations will be solidified on the basis of the new treaty; in China, workers, peasants, intellectuals, and the left wing of the national bourgeoisie will be greatly inspired.”<sup>③</sup>

The signing of the 1950 Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance cemented the solidarity of revolutionary Marxist ideological sentiments between the PRC and the USSR. In the eyes of the United States, this breakthrough of ideological influence by the USSR, despite U.S. efforts,<sup>④</sup> legitimized the challenge liberalism faced throughout the world. However, the ensuing fifteen years, fraught with regional turmoil and leadership changes, drove a wedge in what could have been an unbreakable ideological alliance between the USSR and PRC. At the crux of this divergence was the death of Joseph Stalin and the installation of a new Premier of the USSR, Nikita Khrushchev, in 1953, due to different ideological interpretations of Marxist-Leninist theory; as Mao stated, “Khrushchev does not understand Marxism, but is easily duped by imperialism.”<sup>⑤</sup> As time began to pass and regional conflict in East Asia and Indochina developed over the 1950s and 1960s, the ideological split widened, and the Sino-Soviet alliance began to splinter at its core.

<sup>①</sup> Thompson, Kenneth “U.S. and U.S.S.R.: Confrontation of Interests”, *Great Decisions*, no. 138 (1959): 40-91.

<sup>②</sup> Kraus, Charles. “How Stalin Elevated the Chinese Communist Party to Power in Xinjiang in 1949”, *Wilson Center*, May 11, 2018. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/how-stalin-elevated-the-chinese-communist-party-to-power-xinjiang-1949>

<sup>③</sup> Telegram, Mao Zedong to the Central Committee of the CCP, 2 January 1950.

<sup>④</sup> Westad, Odd Arne. “Losses, Chances, and Myths: The United States and the Creation of the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1945-1950”, *Diplomatic History*. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997): 105-115.

<sup>⑤</sup> Lüthi, Lorenz. *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008): pg. 151.



As the development of the bipolar world order dragged on, Asia became an increasingly active ground for the ideological battle.<sup>①</sup> There were many theaters of the Cold War; however, this research will focus on Sino-Soviet approaches and engagements in Korea and Indochina, specifically in both Laos and Vietnam, to examine the changing nature of the communist alliance between the two countries under different leadership.

### Literature Review

Early signs of the Sino-Soviet split began to appear in the period between Joseph Stalin's death in 1953 and Nikita Khrushchev's transition as Premier of the USSR. The existing literature mainly consists of three dominating schools of thought regarding the erosion of relations between the two countries: national interest, differing Marxist-Leninist ideologies, and domestic politics. A national interest approach, as explained by Robinson,<sup>②</sup> suggests that during the period between 1949 and 1959 the USSR and PRC developed increasingly different and conflicting national interests. These interests reflected the two countries' different approaches to settling issues with the United States, the nature of transitioning to socialism, and the influence wielded by each country in Asia. Another issue of contention were nuclear weapons that underpinned security in the post-World War II nuclear era. Based on Morgenthau's primacy of national interests theory,<sup>③</sup> Robinson claims that the possession of nuclear weapons by only one member of the alliance transformed the relationship and led to a shifting position on security strategies between the USSR and the PRC.

Other scholars, such as Shen and Xia,<sup>④</sup> discuss the reasoning behind the rift by identifying Mao's early dissatisfaction with Khrushchev's understanding of Marxist-Leninist theory. As the 1957 Moscow Conference unfolded, Sino-Soviet relations were publicly perceived to have reached a peak of cordiality; however, underlying tensions in the approach to political issues became apparent. Though minor in measurable impact, the declaration signed by the USSR and PRC resulting from the 1957 Moscow Conference became a decisive symbol of the future strategic relationship between the two countries. The desired rhetoric in the resolatory declaration, specifically on the issues of 'peaceful transition' to socialism, was evidence of the ideological divergence between Mao and Khrushchev, Shen and Xia contend; they write, "The CCP, for its part, had gained prestige and influence in since the Twentieth CPSU Congress. Mao believed that he was much more theoretically refined than Khrushchev, and many CCP leaders shared this view."<sup>⑤</sup>

Other scholars, such as Luthi,<sup>⑥</sup> further develop the ideological reasoning of the strained relations between Moscow and Beijing in the post-Stalin era. Luthi cites the disagreement over the concept of peaceful coexistence regarding the Second Taiwan Strait crisis and issues pertaining to Khrushchev's willingness to engage U.S. President Eisenhower on nuclear weapons negotiations. At the heart of this divergence was Mao's adoption of the Great Leap Forward, which made

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<sup>①</sup> McMahon, Robert J. "The Cold War in Asia: Toward a New Synthesis?", *Diplomatic History*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988): 307-327.

<sup>②</sup> Robinson, Thomas, "A National Interest Analysis of Sino-Soviet Relations", *International Studies Quarterly*, Volume 11, no. 2 (1967): 135-175.

<sup>③</sup> Morgenthau, Hans J. "The Primacy of the National Interest". *The American Scholar*. Volume 18: 207-212.

<sup>④</sup> Zhihua Shen and Yafeng Xia, "Hidden Currents during the Honeymoon: Mao, Khrushchev, and the Moscow Conference", *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Volume 11, no. 2 (2009): 74-117.

<sup>⑤</sup> Shen, Zhihua and Xia, Yafeng, "Hidden Currents during the Honeymoon: Mao, Khrushchev, and the Moscow Conference", *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Volume 11, no. 2 (2009): 74-117.

<sup>⑥</sup> Luthi, Lorenz, *The Sino Soviet Split*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008): 80-113.

significant, radical developments in the summer of 1957, signifying the Chairman's ideological view of Marxist-Leninist theory as a 'continuous revolution' to thwart imperialist influence in Asia. Scholars, such as Huang,<sup>①</sup> identify differences in military cooperation and Asian security, as a means of the broader shifting basis for the deteriorating relationship between the PRC and USSR. In 1958, the USSR and China reached serious disagreement over the ownership rights of naval facilities in China; the USSR desired joint ownership and the PRC sole ownership as the base would be in China. Such subtle frustrations and differences grew into policy differences, as exemplified by the Jinmen Islands and US-Japanese security treaty.

A final strand of literature examines the split of Sino-Soviet relations through a domestic lens. Scholars such as Ringger argue that the PRC's differing policy and attitude towards the USSR resulted from Mao's attempt to shore up political control within China.<sup>②</sup> As the PRC began to develop in its first decade of rule, the domestic situation faced by Mao had never been so uncertain. As a result, Mao's turn to the left, through the Great Leap Forward initiative, was to be an anti-right domestic campaign to purge challenges to his authority and bolster his domestic support. As the campaign faced challenges, foreign policy was used as an instrument to quell domestic resistance, which led the foreign policy of the PRC to be even more aggressive than that of the USSR.

Overall, the existing literature provides a plentiful body of work on the broad deterioration of relations on the basis of differences pertaining to ideology and national interests between the USSR and the PRC, especially over issues such as the Second Taiwan Strait, nuclear engagement with the United States, and broader regional Asian conflicts. The research of this paper will seek to examine if "deterioration" of relations based on ideological differences between Khrushchev and Mao led to direct competition between the USSR and the PRC, and its effect on the communist alliance structure, in dealing with developments in Indochina between 1950-1970.

### Proposed Question

How did Marxist-Leninist ideological differences in the USSR, under Nikita Khrushchev, and the PRC, under Mao Zedong, influence competition in Sino-Soviet regional Asian policy strategies toward Indochina during the years 1950-1970?

### Methodology

The research centered on historical accounts, and the analysis was conducted through a case studies based qualitative approach. By using both primary and secondary sources, the research seeks to compare foreign policy cooperation between the USSR and PRC in the mid-19th century to provide a descriptive analysis. Primary sources will be gathered from digital archives, such as publicly available governmental records and institutes provided by the Wilson Center and United Nations on issues pertaining to the Korean, Vietnamese, and Laotian situations. Secondary sources will stem from available literature that are relevant to the theory of alliance politics, the aforementioned case studies, scholars of the Cold War, Soviet Union, and early periods of the People's Republic of China.

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<sup>①</sup> Huang, Yuxing, "East Asia: 1955-1965", *China's Asymmetric Statecraft: Alignments, Competitors, and Regional Diplomacy* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2023): 56-77.

<sup>②</sup> Ringger, Caleb, "The Sino-Soviet Split: A Domestic Ideology Analysis", *Journal of Political and International Studies*, Volume 40 (2023): 107-124.

The case studies will center upon the Korean and Vietnam Wars to examine Sino-Soviet foreign policy interaction, cooperation and competition. The dependent variables, competition or cooperation in Korea and Indochina, will be operationalized by the independent variables of this research, Soviet foreign policy under Nikita Khrushchev and Joseph Stalin, to test the theory of alliance politics and examine if competition became apparent in the relationship between the USSR and the PRC.

### Case Studies

The signing of the 1950 Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance between the USSR and the PRC publicly marked the warmest ties of international communism, appearing to cement the national interests between the two largest communist countries in the world. The agreement of 1950 not only replaced the 1945 Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance, but also reinvigorated the solidarity between the countries; the 1950 signing marked the first time both China and Russia were fully governed by communist parties. Of the highest importance within the 1950 Treaty, the two countries agreed to mutually defend the other against Japan, as well as any other states who incurred in aggression. This was just the groundwork for the broader agreement, which sought to solidify the international interests of the USSR and PRC to have a coordinated communist approach; “The contracting Parties shall consult together on all important international questions involving common interests of the Soviet Union and China, with a view to strengthening peace and universal security,”<sup>①</sup> states the 1950 Treaty.

The cooperation this Treaty sought to increase resided not only on a security premise, but too “to render each other all possible economic assistance and to affect the necessary economic cooperation.”<sup>②</sup> A mere four months passed before the new 1950 Friendship treaty was to be fully tested; tensions along the Korean Peninsula had been building over the five years prior to the official start of the war on June 25, 1950.

The outbreak of war on the Korean Peninsula was the first challenge to determine the weight of legitimacy each side placed upon the new treaty of friendship. In the early post-World War II years, Joseph Stalin’s attitude toward Korea sought to maintain a balance of power; a divided Korea maintained Soviet strategic policy goals so that the North Koreans remained reliant on Soviet assistance, and in return the USSR could benefit economically with due ease. Moscow’s hesitation over the outbreak of war on the peninsula was far more prolonged compared to the Chinese, evidenced by a 1949 telegram from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gromyko, to General Shtykov; “It was forbidden to you to recommend to the government of North Korea that they carry out active operations against the South Koreans without approval of the Center.”<sup>③</sup>

Moscow’s resistance to full-scale military involvement, though military assistance had been rendered to North Korea through the 1945-1950 period, remained so throughout the outbreak of the war. However, North Korea, under the leadership of Kim Il Sung, would not have been able to support warring efforts without not only the Soviet Union, but also that given by the PRC. For

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<sup>①</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, “Conclusion of the “Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance”.

<sup>②</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, “Conclusion of the “Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance”.

<sup>③</sup> “Background Report on the Korean War,” 9 August 1966, in Kathryn Weathersby, “The Soviet Role in the Early Phase of the Korean War: New Documentary Evidence,” *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, vol. 2, no. 4 (1993), pp. 446.

these efforts to be effective, the USSR and PRC were required to collaborate to possibly strengthen the position of Kim Il Sung on the Korean peninsula.

Bordering the PRC, the issue of the Korean peninsula, especially the issue of the threat of the advancement of the United Nations forces north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, was of acute concern to the security policy aims of Mao Zedong. The threat of a unified Korea, under the control of the Republic of Korea and backed by the United States, in the view of Mao, was an existential threat to the PRC. Though the ambitiousness of engagement in Korea persisted between Moscow and Beijing, coordination between Stalin and Mao emerged prior to the Chinese intervention. In a cable to Stalin in May of 1950, Soviet Ambassador to the PRC Roshchin wrote relaying Mao's desire for Soviet clarification before proceeding on deliberate actions regarding Korea, "In the conversation with comrade Mao Zedong, the Korean comrades informed about the directives of comrade Filippov... that North Korea can move toward actions. In connection with the abovementioned comrade Mao Zedong would like to have personal clarifications."<sup>①</sup>

Mao's ambitions to enter the Korean War were met with reservations by Stalin, but the 1950 Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance, underscored by their common international communist ideals, helped merge the two leaders to ultimately support the other. On the eve of the outbreak of war on June 25, 1950, following Stalin's approval of the North Korean invasion of the south, Stalin flatly rejected Kim Il Sung's request for Soviet military assistance. Stalin wrote in response to Sung's request for ten military advisors to use to administrate the North Korean naval purposes, "Your proposal is rejected. It gives grounds for interference."<sup>②</sup> Stalin had postured and conveyed that the Soviet policy would be one that coordinated North Korea's reliance upon the Chinese for military support in the war. Stalin's resolve to refrain from offering military personnel assistance, however, slowly dissolved as the war continued and American involvement began to shift the balance of play. In July of 1950, Kim Il Sung sent an additional request to Stalin soliciting advisors; this time Stalin approved the request, contingent upon the advisors posing as *Pravda* correspondents. On the other hand, in Beijing, Mao became increasingly willing and desirous to support the efforts of North Korea. In light of American victories that had led troops to cross the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel after the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division landed at Inchon, Mao wrote to Zhou Enlai, who was in Moscow to discuss the Korean conflict with the Soviet, "In summation, we recognize that we should enter the war, we must enter the war; entering the war will have great benefits; the harm inflicted by not enter the war would be great."<sup>③</sup>

The Chinese intervention in the war was made without guarantees from the Soviets regarding air support. However, the Chinese entry across the Yalu River changed the way Stalin viewed Soviet policy, not just that of the Korean War but also that regarding China's position in the greater international communist struggle. From the October entry by the PRC into Korea, Soviet military and economic assistance into the PRC rose over the ensuing 5 years;<sup>④</sup> this satisfied and bolstered the 1950 Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance by demonstrating the commitments made by the Soviet Union to the PRC in time of conflict. Furthermore, Stalin began providing direct military assistance during the war; this provided for military training of

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<sup>①</sup> Telegram, Nikolai V. Roshchin to Joseph Stalin, 13 May 1950.

<sup>②</sup> "Background Report on the Korean War," 9 August 1966, in Kathryn Weathersby, "The Soviet Role in the Early Phase of the Korean War: New Documentary Evidence," *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, vol. 2, no. 4 (1993), pp. 434.

<sup>③</sup> Thomas J. Christensen, "Threats, Assurances, and the Last Chance for Peace: The Lessons of Mao's Korean War Telegrams," *International Security*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1992): pp. 153.

<sup>④</sup> Huang, Yuxing, "East Asia: 1955-1965", *China's Asymmetric Statecraft: Alignments, Competitors, and Regional Diplomacy* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2023): 58.

Chinese troops and air cover and combat operations. The Korean War demonstrates that despite the complicated push-and-pull alliance, ultimately cooperation existed between the USSR and PRC during the years of Mao and Stalin. However, the cracks began to widen as the years advanced and new conflicts emerged in Indochina.

The budding conflicts in Indochina, particularly in Vietnam and Laos from 1955 to 1965, offered additional tests to the relationship between the leadership of the USSR and PRC, based upon the 1950 Treaty of the Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance. Of primary concern was the first war in Vietnam. By the start of conflict in Indochina, Nikita Khrushchev had gained power in 1953; his ability to consolidate power within the Soviet Union was challenged by competing domestic and international factions. Khrushchev sought to distance himself from the reign and theme of Stalin. At the Twentieth Party Congress, in 1956, Khrushchev made his opposition to Stalin's tactics and policy priorities public, announcing to the conference of international communist leaders, "Stalin, on the other hand, used extreme methods and mass repressions at a time when the revolution was already victorious, when the Soviet state was strengthened, when the exploiting classes were already liquidated, and Socialist relations were rooted solidly in all phases of the economy... In practice Stalin ignored the norms of party life and trampled on the Leninist principle of collective party leadership".<sup>①</sup> As the conflict between the North and South Vietnamese deepened during the 1955-1961 period, domestic factors in the PRC, such as Mao's Great Leap Forward initiative, spurred on a period of continuous revolutionary struggle both internally and externally against "imperialist" influences in China. Meanwhile, Khrushchev's communist variance from Stalinism, through his 'De-Stalinization' efforts anchored by a lack of new international revolutionary enthusiasm, spurred on disagreement over North Vietnam and was used by Mao not only to critique the Soviet engagement in Vietnam, but also to solidify his domestic objectives through revolutionary sympathies of the North Vietnamese.

Furthermore, during the time of the Vietnamese conflict, two other major events took place, exacerbating the tension between Khrushchev and Mao. A Sino-Indian conflict emerged in 1958 and came to a head in 1962; this dispute unveiled the Marxist-Leninist ideological divergence between Mao and Khrushchev. In a 1959 discussion between Khrushchev and Mao, the issue of India was discussed and each side addressed their respective perspectives. A glaring statement made by Mao, which underpinned his general view of Khrushchev's 'De-Stalinization' measures, highlighted his opposition to the Soviet engagement with non-aligned and western powers. Mao said, "You attached to us two labels – the conflict with India was our fault, and that the escape of the Dalai Lama was also our error. We, in turn, attach to you one label time-servers... TASS announcement made all imperialists happy."<sup>②</sup> Mao's dissatisfaction with Khrushchev's perspective of communism and the efforts made for international communism were reflected in the sentiments of this conversation and carried over into the Sino-Soviet ideological competition in Vietnam, even as Hanoi publicly sought socialist unity. Nevertheless, despite this public call for unity amongst the socialist countries, Hanoi still used the opportunity to exploit the competition between the USSR and PRC.

The USSR, in the early 1960s, began encouraging Hanoi to engage in peace negotiations with the United States. As Hanoi was a great beneficiary of Soviet aid during this time, the North Vietnamese began appeasing the Soviet desires. However, the PRC stood in opposition to this posture and concluded that it was through the revolutionary struggle that the North Vietnamese

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<sup>①</sup> Speech, "On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences, Delivered at the Twentieth Party Congress of the Communist Part of the Soviet Union", Nikita Khrushchev.

<sup>②</sup> Minute, Mao Zedong's Talk with Nikita Khrushchev, 2 October 1959.

should continue their aims; Enlai, in a 1968 conversation with Pham Van Dong concerning the matter of negotiations with the United States said, “I said many times last year... negotiations could take place during the war. Comrade Mao Zedong also reminded Comrades Le Duan and Pham Van Dong of negotiating, but from a stronger position.”<sup>①</sup> This comment reveals the PRC's position that the North Vietnamese should not yet halt their war efforts and negotiate, but rather continue through war to gain a strengthened negotiating position.

The final study of this research focuses upon the early parts of the civil war in Laos as a spillover effect from the war in Vietnam, and the subsequent responses from the USSR and PRC. In the late 1950s, political factions splintered in Lao between Prince Souvanna Phouma, a right-wing general, and Phoumi Nosavan, the left-wing Pathet Lao. The outbreak of civil war drew the attention of American foreign policy and was quickly engaged by the PRC. In an effort to encourage revolutionary struggle not just in Laos, but also in Vietnam, the PRC began equipping the Pathet Lao forces with weapons and supplies. In 1961, Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia called for an expanded Geneva Conference to address the Laos crisis.

During this conference, the Soviet Union had insisted that the Pathet Lao, and advisors from North Vietnam, accept a cease-fire during the conflict. The PRC officials, led by Chen Yi, grew weary of the USSR's attempts to dissuade action in Laos; over the ensuing year, the PRC had urged the Pathet Lao not to cease their fight, so as to negotiate from a position of strength. Throughout 1962, the USSR decided to suspend military, primarily air, assistance to the Pathet Lao. The PRC, made aware of this decision, promptly initiated an inquiry to Moscow regarding this decision. The puzzlement of the PRC is reflected through its policy intentions during a 1962 conversation between Enlai and the President of Laos, Souphanouvong. Enlai stated, “You must be prepared to carry out a struggle within the coalition government. In any case, to increase your own strength is the most important matter. The final settlement will be decided by force.”<sup>②</sup> The Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, Kuznetsov, responded in kind to the PRC, noting that the military assistance would negate its international commitments made at the 1961 Geneva Accord.

## Conclusion

The 1950 Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance was a public display of alliance to the West, but, in reality, the relationship remained complex and ultimately weak enough to create an environment of competition in Indochina over Marxist-Leninist ideological understandings and implementation. As exemplified in the Korean War, Stalin and Mao had difficulties, though ultimately efforts were supported and alignment achieved on policy related to military intervention. Following the death of Joseph Stalin and Nikita Khrushchev's ascension as the new leader of the USSR, the foreign policy objectives of the USSR and China became increasingly splintered. Driving this divergence were the ‘De-Stalinization’ efforts that the Khrushchev regime drove throughout the communist world and Mao Zedong's domestic political environment, which allowed him to capitalize on his revolutionary ideology. Mao's communist ideology drove the PRC's engagements and support in Vietnam and Laos to increase China's influence relative to that of the USSR; these ideological aims tried to address security concerns that were of great importance to the PRC in its engagements in Korea and Indochina. Ultimately, the relations of the USSR and PRC were never in true accord with one another and often in

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<sup>①</sup> Minute, Zhou Enlai's Talk with Pham Van Dong, 13 April 1968.

<sup>②</sup> Zhai Qiang, *China and the Vietnam Wars: 1950-1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), pp. 104.

open competition; this competition culminated in an open dispute in 1969 as the USSR and PRC entered into a border conflict along the Sino-Soviet border.

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## **The Roof of the World: Comparing Nepal's Role as a Buffer State to US Interests in Tibet During the Cold War**

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### **Abstract**

The concept of buffer states arose from the balance of power theory in the 18th century, and played an important role in many of the major conflicts occurring throughout the Cold War. Nepal is one of the lesser-known examples, acting as a safeguard between China and India. Nepal has held this role since the Qing dynasty, but there were arguably attempts to create another buffer state by the United States. This paper argues that during the Cold War, the US sought to create a buffer state out of Tibet, and uses Nepal as a counter to reveal key issues in Tibet's international status that would prevent the region from operating in such a capacity. Two key dilemmas arise that prevent Tibet from ever filling such a role, the first being the international community's lack of recognition of Tibet as an independent state, and territorial disputes that would greatly reduce the ability of neutral existence.

## Introduction

Discussions of the Cold War are often centered on the major players, the United States and Soviet Union duking it out with the globe serving as their chessboard. The Vietnam War, the Korean War, the Afghanistan War, and the Sino-Indian War are some of the Cold War-era major conflicts that today have extensive academic literature written about them, their battles even living on through cinematic and literary adaptations. So often, the silent battles of the Cold War are overlooked, the clever strategic moves that, while at times born from paranoia, permanently altered the modern geopolitical landscape.

Buffer states are a shining example, stemming from the balance of power theory of the 18th century. Defined as a “small independent state lying between two larger, usually rival, states (or blocs of states),”<sup>①</sup> buffer states play significant roles in reducing the likelihood of direct conflict between the great powers, as seen during the Cold War. Some notable examples include West and East Germany (buffers between NATO and the Warsaw Pact), Mongolia (buffer between China and the Soviet Union), and North Korea (buffer between China and the Soviet Union and South Korea, Japan, and the United States).

There was another key buffer state during the Cold War, often overlooked despite its importance in South Asia. Nestled between China and India, Nepal acts as a barrier between the two as both debate territorial lines, a role it has filled since the Qing Dynasty and the time of the British raj. But there were attempts by the United States to create another buffer state in the Chinese territory: Tibet. While this ended up being unsuccessful, this history brings up a myriad of questions which can be answered by comparing Nepal’s role as a buffer state during the Cold War and the United States’ aspirations for Tibet as a buffer state. What was the difference in their role, why was Nepal able to operate as a buffer but not Tibet? Furthermore, if US aspirations in Tibet had been fulfilled, could the region even successfully act as a buffer state given Tibet’s role in the Sino-Indian war?

## Background on Tibet

The Tibetan region is cradled within the Kunlun Mountains to the north, the Karakoram range to the west, and the Himalayas to the south. With only its eastern border as somewhat traversable, for much of its existence Tibet has been isolated.<sup>②</sup> Even today there is only one railway reaching Tibet in China, the Qinghai-Tibet Railway, which was completed only just in 2006 and requires trains that are turbocharged to power through extreme altitude over railways permanently coated in permafrost.<sup>③</sup> The five airports present in the region required consistent trial and error before they were fully operational; the Lhasa Gonggar Airport for example is known as one of the world’s highest airports and it took nearly 9 years after it was first built in 1955 for a consistent and relatively safe flight path to the airport to be established.<sup>④</sup>

This isolation affected much of the Tibetan region’s interactions with the outside world, with Tibet largely overlooked by the international community until the Cold War. That’s not to say the region didn’t possess rich relations; take for example Tibet’s long and complex relationship with India dating back to the spread of Buddhism from India in the 7th century. Religious exchange was not the only dynamic bringing the two close, there were also a number of trade routes connecting them. Take for example the Tibet–Nepal salt trade route which passed between the

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<sup>①</sup> Partem, “The Buffer System in International Relations”, p4

<sup>②</sup> Barton, “Tibet and China: History, Insurgency, and Beyond.”, p2

<sup>③</sup> Tibet Travel and Tours, “Qinghai Tibet Railway: How and Why Build Tibet Train?”

<sup>④</sup> Aruo, “Engineering at the Top of the World”

Tibetan Plateau and the Middle Hills of Nepal on through to India, or the informal trade that existed between families of the Ladakh region and Tibet.<sup>①</sup>

Much later on, when the East India Trade Company successfully established trade with India, they sought to expand further north with Tibet capturing its attention. This eventually resulted in the emphasis of the Ladakh route and trade in tea, salt, and British textiles, with the signing of the Convention of Lhasa in 1904.<sup>②</sup> This convention was revised with explicit recognition of China's possession of Tibet in 1906 through the Convention Between Great Britain and China Respecting Tibet.<sup>③</sup> While the trade present between British India and Tibet never reached a significantly large scale, it did put in place significant movements of merchants and pilgrims between the Tibetan region and India.<sup>④</sup>

The treaties signed in 1904 and 1906 significantly shifted the Qing dynasty's attitude towards Tibet. They realized that should the Qing not enact explicit control, Tibet could easily be brought under British influence, in turn, giving them the high ground over the valuable Sichuan province.<sup>⑤</sup> This highlights the strategic value of Tibet for China; it serves not only as a gateway into South Asia, but also as a gateway into the country.

China's political relationship with Tibet began in the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE following the unification of the region under King Songtsen Gampo.<sup>⑥</sup> There was a time when the boundaries of Tibet stretched into what is today known as Xinjiang and Sichuan, and many of the territories brought under Tibetan rule during Gampo's dynasty were also subordinate to the Tang dynasty.<sup>⑦</sup> While Tibet existed as a separate entity during this time, this changed during the Mongolian Empire (not yet the Yuan Dynasty), when in 1207 Tibet submitted to Ghengis Khan. The death of Ghengis Khan in 1227 led to Tibet ceasing tribute to the Mongols, and a relationship of religious teaching blossomed instead.<sup>⑧</sup> The Mongols provided protection and the Tibetans provided religious instruction. When the Yuan Dynasty was established in 1279 under Kublai Khan, Tibet was labeled as a part of its territories; however, Tibet's isolation led to weak control over the region. For example, in 1358 there was political strife in Tibet and the Yuan dynasty did not have resources to intervene.<sup>⑨</sup>

This disconnect between the ruling dynasty and the Tibetan region continued into the Qing Dynasty, with the Qing intervening at times in conflict but overall remaining distant until the shift in attitudes following the Convention of Lhasa. This administrative distance is a major point in the modern debate over Tibet's identity, and was a point taken advantage of during the Cold War when the strategic value of Tibet was realized by the Americans and the CIA.

When the CIA's Far Eastern Division turned its attention to Tibet, according to officer Sam Halpern the primary objective was not aiding the Tibetans but rather harassing and impeding the Chinese Communists. The decision of support was made in 1956, but US interactions with Tibet go back further.<sup>⑩</sup>

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① Bir; Good Gill, "India's Trade with Tibet", p79

② Fraser and Amthill. "Convention between Great Britain and Tibet, Signed September 7, 1904", p80–83

③ Fraser and Amthill. "Convention between the UK and China Respecting Tibet, Signed April 27, 1906", p78–80

④ Bir; Good Gill, "India's Trade with Tibet", p79

⑤ Goldstein, "The Snow Lion and The Dragon", p479

⑥ Goldstein, "The Snow Lion and The Dragon", p100

⑦ Ibid.

⑧ Goldstein, "The Snow Lion and The Dragon", p145

⑨ Ibid.

⑩ Knaus, "Orphans of the Cold War", p139

## On CIA Motivations

To discuss whether or not Tibet could operate as a buffer state during the Cold War, one must first discuss whether or not the United States ever sought Tibetan independence during that time. From 1957 to 1969, the CIA carried out covert operations in Tibet which cost over \$1.7 million and resulted in the training of a paramilitary force with approximately 2000 men.<sup>①</sup> Tibet arose as a place of strategic significance for US policy because “...US diplomatic and intelligence personnel believed that an active Tibetan resistance would simultaneously harass, divert, and embarrass Mao’s regime...”<sup>②</sup> But this motivation speaks of resistance, not an explicit establishment of an independent state. In fact, the United States’ relationship with Tibet has long been characterized by ambiguity.

US interest in Tibet first began in 1942 following a Japanese thrust which shut down the Burma Road, the only route through which the US, and other allies, could access China and provide aid to the Nationalists.<sup>③</sup> To carry out its first contact with Tibet, Franklin D. Roosevelt, the US President at the time, approved an Office of Strategic Services (OSS) mission coded as FE-2 to look into the potential value of Tibet and gain an understanding of the region in general as it was largely unknown to the United States at the time.<sup>④</sup>

Tibet was largely unwilling to provide its services during World War Two. There was a push for less Chinese presence and the British were also wary due to the previously mentioned treaties in ‘04 and ‘06; involving Tibet could remove its role as a buffer between China and British India.<sup>⑤</sup> Captain Ilya Tolstoy, led the mission which was largely uneventful besides the collection of intelligence regarding geography and the people, information which proved valuable years later.<sup>⑥</sup>

This interaction set the stage for a loose and ill-defined relationship with perhaps the most powerful country in the world at the time, tying into one key issue preventing the possibility of Tibet operating as a buffer state: the lack of international recognition of independence. These early interactions between the US and Tibet seemed at first to be “government-to-government,” but the careful wording used dissuades this. For example, Tolstoy did not arrive in Tibet empty handed. He had a letter from President Roosevelt himself which was directed to the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibet. The Secretary of State at the time Cordell Hull pushed for Roosevelt to refer to the Dalai Lama in his religious capacity “rather than in his capacity of secular leader of Tibet, so as to not offend the Chinese Government which includes Tibet in the territory of the Republic of China.”<sup>⑦</sup> However, officials in Tibet were not clear on this distinction, with the letter being interpreted as a potential offer of US support for those in Tibet who sought separation from China.

Interest in Tibet dramatically sharpened in 1950, one year after Mao Zedong established the People’s Republic of China under the Communist Party. Two major events occurred in October of that year; first the PRC entered Tibet and began the process of annexation and secondly the decision of the PRC to intervene in the Korean conflict following the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950.

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<sup>①</sup> US Department of State, “Memorandum for the Special Group”.

<sup>②</sup> McMahon, “US Policy toward South Asia and Tibet during the Early Cold War”, p135

<sup>③</sup> Knaus, “Orphans of the Cold War”, p4

<sup>④</sup> Knaus, “Orphans of the Cold War”, p5

<sup>⑤</sup> Knaus, “Orphans of the Cold War”, p4

<sup>⑥</sup> Ibid.

<sup>⑦</sup> Goldstein, “The Snow Lion and The Dragon”, p651

The idea of Tibetan independence was not entertained when it was believed the Nationalists had a chance of winning against the Communists in China; Chiang Kaishek still maintained Chinese claims over the region, though explicit administration was put off by the Japanese invasion in 1937.<sup>①</sup> However, this shifted towards the end of the civil war and the eventual establishment of the PRC. The Korean War, and China's involvement, was viewed by many within the United States as "the opening phase in a coordinated campaign of militant communist expansion."<sup>②</sup> As a result, China was perceived as more opportunistic than previously expected, with its annexation of Tibet viewed as a potential step in the further spread of communism. Tibet's proximity to India, a country in which the United States was taking greater interest as a potential ally against communism, raised the hackles of American leadership.<sup>③</sup>

However, the isolation of Tibet prevented intervention for a few years. Gyalo Thondup, second eldest brother to the 14th Dalai Lama, had attempted previously to get American support of the scattered Tibetan resistance in its early years from 1952-1955. But in 1956, he traveled to the US consulate in Calcutta where he was for once welcomed by CIA operatives.<sup>④</sup> This 1956 meeting concluded with the CIA promising Gyalo to make Tibet independent from China in exchange for his support in organizing guerrilla units to fight against the People's Liberation Army (PLA). However, whether or not this was the explicit promise is disputed as there were challenges in translating. For one, the Tibetan language also did not have the terminology to distinguish concepts of resistance and independence which posed challenges for interpreters and maintained further ambiguity.<sup>⑤</sup> Secondly, the people present at these negotiations were operations officers, not legal experts. More than likely, they made promises without a full understanding of the ramifications.<sup>⑥</sup>

So, if there was never an explicit statement by the US to create an independent Tibet, how does one claim that this was an intention of the CIA operations? The answer lies in the ambiguity and ideology surrounding the plan. Tibet's legal status was a point of contention for the US State Department. There was a brief window during which more explicit support of independence could have been obtained prior to the signing of the Seventeen Point Agreement in 1951. At this point, the US government tried to persuade the Dalai Lama in India to go against the agreement which called for the return of the Tibetan government-in-exile.<sup>⑦</sup> Then, two weeks after the agreement was signed, Secretary of State Dean Acheson sent a cable to then US Ambassador to India Loy Henderson that Tibet should not accept the agreement, going so far as to offer weaponry and political support as long as India backed the US.<sup>⑧</sup> Henderson advised the Dalai Lama (then just fifteen years old) without consulting the State Department, telling him to seek asylum abroad and not to return home "while the danger exists that by force or trickery the Chinese Communists [will] seize Lhasa."<sup>⑨</sup> When this fell through, the Dalai Lama did end up returning to Tibet before fleeing again in 1959, the US State Department wrestled with how best to label Tibet, settling eventually on recognizing independence in a "factual" rather than legal sense.<sup>⑩</sup>

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① Goldstein, "The Snow Lion and The Dragon", p616

② McMahon, "US Policy toward South Asia and Tibet during the Early Cold War", p3

③ McMahon, "US Policy toward South Asia and Tibet during the Early Cold War", p3

④ Knaus, "Orphans of the Cold War"

⑤ Knaus, "Orphans of the Cold War", p319

⑥ Knaus, "Orphans of the Cold War", p319

⑦ Knaus, "Orphans of the Cold War"

⑧ Xu, "The United States and the Tibet Issue", p2

⑨ Knaus, "Official Policies and Covert Programs", p54

⑩ Knaus, "Orphans of the Cold War", p319

But Henderson's decision is important as it highlights the ideological sentiment that backs the idea of the US pushing for an independent, and buffer state, Tibet. Just three years prior to Tibet's annexation, The Truman Doctrine dramatically shifted US foreign policy. Also known as the policy of containment, President Harry Truman shifted away from the US' prior isolationist stance to instead say that the US would provide aid to democratic countries under the threat of communist influences in order to prevent the expansion of communism.<sup>①</sup> Henderson is just one of many officials in the US who took this ideology to heart, at one point stating that if the "Communists succeed in controlling all of China, or some equivalent far-reaching development takes place, we should be prepared to treat Tibet as independent to all intents and purposes."<sup>②</sup>

Thus, it can be argued that the US sought to use Tibet as a buffer state between "democracy" and China in a similar manner to East and West Germany's role for NATO and Warsaw. However, ultimately, the United States' attempt at establishing an independent Tibet failed. During the '50s, the United States lacked the capability to directly get involved in Tibet; it would not be until after the Korean War that the CIA would develop the ability to carry out long distance operations across the terrain present in that region.<sup>③</sup> If the United States wanted to use Tibet as a method of containment, this would require the United States to seek out an ally in space, leading to Tibet's neighbors India and Pakistan being suddenly catapulted to the top of America's priority list.<sup>④</sup> But India declined to serve as Washington's strategy point and while Pakistan originally stepped up in the Pakistan-America alliance of 1954, the conclusion of the East-Pakistan war and American attempts to establish ties with the People's Republic of China in the 1970s brought both the alliance and the operations in Tibet to a close.

### On Nepal as a Buffer

Having understood the intention of the United States to establish Tibet as a buffer state, the next question is whether or not such a decision was even feasible in the long term. To understand this, one can look at Tibet's neighbor Nepal, which has a long history of operating as a buffer state between China and India. When looking at Nepal and its history as a buffer state there are two important qualities at play that ensure its ability to operate as such. First, prior to the establishment as a buffer state Nepal already had an explicit recognition of independence. Second of all, there is a lack of long-term territorial disputes between Nepal, India, and China. Upon the annexation of Tibet by the PRC in 1950, Nepal's borders had long been determined.

First, consider the history of Nepal's role as a buffer state. At the time of Nepal's recognition of the People's Republic of China in 1955, Nepal was immensely reliant on its resource rich neighbor India.<sup>⑤</sup> Nepal and India had a relationship built on unequal footing due to India's vastly wealthier access to resources. This dynamic was exasperated with the signing of The Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1950.<sup>⑥</sup> This treaty made it clear the reality of Nepal's future as a small nation trapped between two conflicting powers. Article 2 of the Treaty reads, "the two governments hereby undertake to inform each other of any serious friction or misunderstanding with any neighboring state likely to cause any breach in the friendly relations subsisting between the two governments," with neighboring state referring largely to China.<sup>⑦</sup>

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<sup>①</sup> Students of History, "Containment and the Truman Doctrine"

<sup>②</sup> Knaus, "Official Policies and Covert Programs", p55

<sup>③</sup> Knaus, "Orphans of the Cold War", p223

<sup>④</sup> McMahon, "US Policy toward South Asia and Tibet during the Early Cold War", p133

<sup>⑤</sup> Adhikari, "Between the Dragon and the Elephant", p85

<sup>⑥</sup> Adhikari, "Between the Dragon and the Elephant", p85

<sup>⑦</sup> India Treaty Series, "Treaty Between the Government of India and the Government of Nepal", Article 2

Nepal had been stuck in such a position before; it served as a buffer between the British raj-controlled India and Qing dynasty China, but this position came with Nepal's explicit independence. The international recognition of Nepal as a sovereign state took place following the signing of the Nepal–Britain Treaty of 1923,<sup>①</sup> which was recorded within the League of Nations, the first worldwide intergovernmental organization. Nepal's close relationship with India, and in turn the British during Britain's occupation of India, provided Nepal with more opportunities for diplomatic influence. That's not to say the topic of Nepal's independence hadn't been uncertain before.

Prior to 1923, and following the conclusion of the Anglo-Nepalese War, which lasted from 1814-1816, the degree of Nepal's independence was decided through the Sugauli Treaty. The treaty ceded parts of Nepal to British India, and the sixth point of the treaty stated that:

“The king of Nepal engages never to molest or disturb the king of Sikkim in the possession of his territories. If any difference shall arise between Nepal and Sikkim, it shall be referred to the arbitration of the East India Company.”<sup>②</sup>

This point clearly labels Nepal as more of a vassal state to the British than a fully autonomous power. However, even in this dynamic Nepal had consistent interactions such as participating in World War I that in turn set Nepal up for a more successful call for recognition of independence. After all, at the time the British Empire was at its territorial peak, especially in South Asia, such a negotiation would not have been easy.

The British incentive for the granting of independence can be found in the empire which lay on the other side of Nepal. By maintaining friendly relations with Nepal, the British could ensure the safety of India's northern border. While China had no incentive to encroach upon Nepal - the Qing dynasty was too strained during the British colonization of India and needed to concentrate efforts on maintaining Tibet - the unique relationship China had with Nepal would in turn encourage the British to seek out a barrier.

China's relationship with Nepal as a vassal state dates back to the Sino-Nepalese War which lasted from 1788–1792.<sup>③</sup> Fought largely over currency issues, Tibet had been using Nepali silver coins for centuries but had frustrations over decreasing quality, so it requested the assistance of the Qing dynasty. Sino-Tibetan forces eventually defeated Nepal leading to both Nepal and Tibet accepting the suzerainty of the Qing emperor. But while Tibet came further under the control of the Qing dynasty, Nepal maintained its autonomy despite needing to adhere to Qing dynasty terms and pay tribute to the state. This independence was further emphasized by China's absence during the Anglo-Nepalese war (1814-1816)<sup>④</sup> despite the treaty following the Sino-Nepalese War assuring Qing assistance should Nepal be faced with conflict. Furthermore, the Treaty of Thapathali, which was signed following the Nepal-Tibet War (1855–1856),<sup>⑤</sup> put in place an extradition policy between China and Nepal through Tibet, with murderers fleeing from Nepal into Tibet expected to be returned to Nepal and vice versa.

These treaties put in place an explicit recognition of independence, as seen with the conclusion of the Sino-Nepalese war and the later signed Treaty of Thapathali, both of which

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① Bhandari, “Nepal-Britain Treaty 1923: Nepal's Achievements and Legacies”

② Kumari and Kushwaha, “Sugauli Treaty 1816”, p42

③ Killigrew, “Some aspects of the Sino-Nepalese war of 1792”

④ Cartwright, “Anglo-Nepalese War”

⑤ Bhusal, “Historical Treaties and Agreements of Nepal and China- Tibet Relationship”



established Nepal as independent prior to the British colonization of India. The Nepal–Britain Treaty of 1923 did the same at an international level.

As stated earlier, Nepal, India, and China did not have long standing territorial disputes following the recognition of Nepal as independent. The lack of territorial disputes allowed for effective diplomacy and a longstanding coherent understanding of borders. For example, Nepal respected China’s claims following the annexation of Tibet in 1950, with diplomatic relations and the Five Principles, or Panchsheel, coming about with the expectation of Nepal respecting not only China’s claims to Taiwan, but also Tibet.<sup>①</sup> As such, Nepal became of strategic importance to China and was able to successfully operate independently as a buffer.

Tibet, however, does not possess the clarity of international recognition of independence that Nepal possesses, it is clearly a part of China and has long been recognized as such. However, if this were not the case, Tibetan “independence” would still carry with it the question of India’s territorial claims. If India were to obtain these claimed territories, would this leave China comfortable or would it breed nervousness as China’s move on Tibet did for India in 1955? This what-if scenario serves as the foundation for seeing whether or not Tibet could operate successfully as a buffer state.

### Tibetan Independence

Understanding that Tibet is today recognized as a part of China, questioning whether or not Tibet could operate as a buffer state requires looking at whether or not there was even potential for the idea of Tibetan independence to be recognized internationally during the Cold War. As previously discussed, Nepal had long possessed recognition of independence as seen in a variety of treaties brought to all parties and accepted by the international community. For Tibet however, even when the United States backed Tibetan guerilla fighters, whether or not the US was fully invested at a policy level in the mission of those fighting was shrouded in ambiguity.

China asserted its sovereignty over the Tibetan region on January 1, 1950 following the establishment of the PRC. Meetings between PRC and Tibetan representatives took place in Kalimpong, India in March, however attempts to persuade the Dalai Lama to discuss the status of Tibet fell through as Tibetan officials failed to negotiate further.<sup>②</sup> On October 7 of 1950, PLA troops entered the easternmost part of the region. This prompted Tibet to request military assistance from India followed by the Dalai Lama writing an appeal to the United Nations (UN) on November 11, 1950. The UN General Assembly condemned the Chinese invasion of the Tibetan region on November 18, 1950.<sup>③</sup> The Dalai Lama also turned to the United States and Western Europe, but no help was directly given, with a delegation eventually being sent to Beijing to negotiate Tibet’s return to China. This resulted in the two sides signing what became known as the “Seventeen-Point Agreement” (Agreement of the Central People’s Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet) in May of 1951.<sup>④</sup>

The lack of clear assistance provided shows an international understanding of the relationship between China and Tibet and the unwillingness to get directly involved in such a contentious issue of history, identity, and territory. However, it is necessary to get even more specific in just how much the international community outwardly agreed with China’s claim over Tibet. There are two internationally recognized documents that were made outside of Tibet prior

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<sup>①</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs Nepal MOFA, “Nepal-China Relations”

<sup>②</sup> University of Central Arkansas: UCA, “China/Tibet: 1950-present”

<sup>③</sup> Ibid.

<sup>④</sup> Goldstein, “The United States, Tibet, and the Cold War”

to 1957 and the official start of CIA operations in the region that efficiently set a standard for interaction with China. First, the 1912 Provisional Constitution of the Republic of China (ROC) and then the 1954 Sino-Indian Agreement.

While the Constitution of the ROC and its territorial claims would not be applicable following the recognition of the PRC, how countries interacted with its claims is important to show how Tibet being a territory of China had already been an established global understanding; This despite attempts by some in Tibet to obtain explicit support of separating from China. Within Chapter 1 of the constitution, Article 3 states that “The territory of the Republic of China consists of the 22 provinces, Inner and Outer Mongolia, Tibet and Qinghai.”<sup>①</sup> However, with the Nationalists dealing with a civil war and the Japanese invasion, ROC authority over Tibet was weak. Furthermore, looking at the involvement of Tibet in WWII and efforts to have Tibet serve as a route for allies to provide military supplies to the Nationalists, Chiang Kaishek entertained the idea of independence stating that “if the Tibetans should at this time express the wish for self-government, China would, in conformity with our sincere traditions, accord it a very high degree of autonomy.”<sup>②</sup>

Viewing this time as an opportunity to gain recognition, Tibet attempted to send a delegation to Chiang, but was held up by British officials in India following their travel to New Delhi.<sup>③</sup> Then in 1946, Tibetan representatives were invited by future Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the Indian Council of Foreign Affairs to attend the New Delhi conference. Viewed as another opportunity to bring the concept of Tibetan independence to the international stage, this hope was put down following Chinese protests of a conference map showing Tibet as a separate country. India repainted the map overnight. Even with Tibet being able to exist at the conference under its own flag, there was a prioritization of the ROC’s claims. That same year, the British General Staff expressed, “From a short-term point of view there is no practicable means of aiding Tibet against a major enemy, and there is no real threat to India from that direction and the Government of India [which was still under British control] do not propose further to consider at present the possibility of offering military assistance to Tibet.”<sup>④</sup>

While delegations seeking an audience to entertain the idea of Tibetan independence were listened to at times, even against the cries of the ROC, in the long run the region was not viewed as useful beyond ideological standoffs. For example, in April of 1947 the US War Department rejected an idea of using Tibet as a rocket base stating, “On the facetious side, two possible uses for Tibet were envisaged: as a country offering great waste areas in which rockets could be tested, or as a final retreat (Shangri-la) to which peace-loving people could flee when atomic war breaks, for Tibet is too remote to be of significance in any war.”<sup>⑤</sup> If there was any opportunity for Tibet to gain international support, it was in the waning years of the Chinese Civil War. Once the PLA officially moved in under the PRC and solidified administrative control, any hope of genuine backing (again, beyond ideological motivations of individual actors) was moot. Especially because prior to the CIA intervention in Tibet, significant countries were already recognizing the PRC’s territorial claim in the region.

India upon its independence from the British had begun warming up to the idea of a Chinese-run Tibet, going so far as to dissuade the UN from debating the Tibet sovereignty question

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<sup>①</sup> China Copyright and Media, “Provisional Constitution of the Republic of China”

<sup>②</sup> Knaus, “Orphans of the Cold War”, p21

<sup>③</sup> Knaus, “Orphans of the Cold War”, p22

<sup>④</sup> Knaus, “Orphans of the Cold War”, p25

<sup>⑤</sup> Knaus, “Orphans of the Cold War”, p26

in 1950.<sup>①</sup> India sought a foreign policy of nonalignment, with Prime Minister Nehru distancing his country from great power politics and seeking positive relations with the US, China and the Soviet Union.<sup>②</sup> While there had been times where India seemingly supported Tibetan resistance, this changed in part following the signing of the 1954 Sino-Indian Agreement. The agreement referred to Tibet specifically as a region of China and set new standards for trade between India and the region with this understanding of Tibet being under China. While attempts were made by the US to get India to work with them in the Tibetan region, this was eventually realized to be a roadblock. By October of 1950, it was understood by the US that India was unwilling to alienate China and that seeking military aid for Tibet through India was pointless. Nehru seemed unwilling to take steps that could jeopardize “India’s chosen role of best friend of Peking among the non-communist powers.”<sup>③</sup>

It was recognized across the board by this point that China had a strong claim in Tibet. An explicit separation at this time period would mean the breaking of treaties and general relations. If Tibet were to obtain “independence” during this time, the position likely would be on shaky grounds making its existence a point of conflict rather than accepted. Take for example conflict surrounding the Kashmir region between China and India and the extended Tibetan population in the provinces of Sichuan and Qinghai.

### **Territorial Claims**

A large part of Nepal’s success as a buffer state lies in its confidence in its borders. Unlike Nepal, Tibet has significant border disputes that exist both between India and China and between Tibet and China. Operating as a buffer state would require the resolution of these territorial conflicts, a goal that is easier said than done. There are three major territory dilemmas that prevent Tibet from being able to operate as a buffer: the Aksai Chin region to the east, the Arunachal Pradesh region to the west, and the concept of Greater Tibet which extends into Qinghai and Sichuan province.

The Arunachal Pradesh region is largely controlled by India and it shares a disputed 1,129 km border with Tibet. Claimed by both the ROC and PRC as South Tibet, the McMahon line was set up as the defining boundary between Tibet and India in 1914 through the Simla Accord.<sup>④</sup> This accord intended to separate Tibet into an “Outer” and “Inner” region, similar to the situation in Mongolia. However, this decision was made between British and Tibetan representatives, with the ROC pulling its support out. As China does not recognize this deal, the area of Arunachal Pradesh is labeled a part of China despite the British bringing it into India.<sup>⑤</sup> Because Tibetan representatives were involved in the establishment of this deal, it is possible that this is one territorial dispute that could be resolved. However, it would depend on whether or not Tibetans would accept British standards for borders.

The Aksai Chin region on the other hand proves more contentious. It is mostly controlled by China and lies within Xinjiang and Tibet. India claims it to be a part of its Leh District, referring to the Johnson Line boundary established in 1865 by the British, which put Aksai Chin within the Kashmir region.<sup>⑥</sup> China however refers to the Macartney-MacDonald Line which was established

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<sup>①</sup> Xu, “The United States and the Tibet Issue”, p2

<sup>②</sup> McMahon, “US Policy toward South Asia and Tibet during the Early Cold War”, p133

<sup>③</sup> McMahon, “US Policy toward South Asia and Tibet during the Early Cold War”, p133

<sup>④</sup> Bhardwaj, “The 1914 Simla Convention”

<sup>⑤</sup> Bhardwaj, “The 1914 Simla Convention”

<sup>⑥</sup> Synergia Foundation, “China’s Options for Aksai Chin”

in 1899, also by the British.<sup>①</sup> These border disputes have contributed to a variety of clashes between China and India, most notable being the Sino-Indian War in 1962. The war was triggered largely over China's construction of what is now known as G219, a highway which now connects the entirety of China's western and southern border but in the 1950s served as a connection between Xinjiang and Tibet.

A southwestern extension of the Tibetan plateau, this territory is a strong point of contention for both China and India. Should Tibet operate separately, the question becomes how this territory would be moved. Would the parts within the Tibetan region fall under "Tibet" or would a negotiation occur to shift the lands to India? Would China accept such an agreement, or would the territory continue to be disputed? Both India and China viewed each other as a potential threat of some kind during the Cold War which made China's annexation of Tibet controversial. While Nehru in large sought peaceful relations, he as an individual expressed irritation with and public criticism of the Chinese invasion of Tibet and, in 1950, the Indian foreign office sent a note to the Chinese foreign office which stated, "In the context of world events, invasion by Chinese troops of Tibet cannot but be regarded as deplorable and in the considered judgment of the Government of India, not in the interest of China or peace."<sup>②</sup>

If the Aksai Chin region serves as a point of conflict for India and Tibet, China would likely find concern in the concept of Greater Tibet. "Political" Tibet refers to the region now known as the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, which was annexed into the PRC in 1950. However, the Tibetan leadership in exile has long held the goal of the reunification of all Tibetan areas in China into a "Greater Tibet," referring to the provinces of Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu, and Yunnan.<sup>③</sup> These provinces also contain significant Tibetan populations, which the exiled leadership claims were removed from Tibetan control in 1949, extending the annexation of Tibet back by one year.<sup>④</sup> Should Tibet have been established as a buffer state, how would the question of "Greater Tibet" be addressed? Sichuan for example would be vulnerable to Tibet, which itself acts as a barrier for China due to its difficult to traverse terrain. More than likely China would feel more on edge rather than assured with Tibet in between China and India, as Tibet's long-standing relationship with India would in turn increase the likelihood of cooperation to achieve the goal of a "Greater Tibet."

## Conclusion

Territorial conflict and a lack of international recognition are the two factors which distinguish Tibet from Nepal and severely inhibit the possibility of the region successfully acting as a buffer between China and India. Should the CIA intervention in Tibet have been successful, more than likely a myriad of new conflicts would have arisen rather than the "solving" of the Tibetan question. Furthermore, the prioritization of ideology over an in-depth understanding of the Tibetan region likely hindered the CIA operations in Tibet themselves as the goals of pushing against communism led to miscommunications between CIA officers and Tibetan rebels. Previously mentioned examples of this include the Gyalo talks in '56 which concluded with US officers seemingly promising Tibetan independence in exchange for support. However, those involved in the talks did not possess the authority to make such a promise and instead prioritized an ideological fight over the expectations of those seeking Tibetan independence.

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<sup>①</sup> War on the Rocks "How British Imperial History Does (and Doesn't) Shape the Sino-Indian Border Dispute"

<sup>②</sup> Mehrotra, "India's Tibet Policy"

<sup>③</sup> Goldstein, "The Snow Lion and The Dragon", p65

<sup>④</sup> Goldstein, "The Snow Lion and The Dragon", p65

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## **“Guided Democracy” and Genocide in Indonesia: The Limits of the “United Front” in A Postbellum Era**

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### **Abstract**

This work reviews the mass killings in Indonesia in 1965 and 1966, the actors that took part in them, the political and social conditions that preceded these events, and other relevant details for their study. An arguably niche subject in mainstream academia, these atrocities can be considered as a major linchpin during the Cold War, that would shape both counter-insurgency policies directed against socialists and anti-revisionism campaigns meant to protect socialism. In this study, and opposite to the prevailing academic canon, ideology is considered as a primary factor in understanding the motivations and decisions of each actor in their respective position before and during these events: a materialist analysis, conducted through a literature review of primary, secondary, and tertiary sources, is employed for this purpose; as well, elements of game theory are didactically used in order to illustrate the nature of each actor’s position during periods of alliance and conflict regarding each other. Finally, the possibility that the development and ramifications of the Indonesian genocide influenced harsher policies in socialist states, such as the “Brezhnev doctrine” or the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, is also explored.



## Introduction

The Indonesian mass killings of 1965-66 constitute a perhaps overlooked aspect of the Cold War theater in Asia, being often seen as a background event to similar conflicts occurring throughout said region and the world – for example, decades before in Korea and decades after in the American continent. However, a particular aspect of interest in this subject is the specific form of social order that existed during the period of time that preceded these atrocities: a tripartite, atypical ideology known as “*nasakom*” – standing for the bahasa terms for nationalism, religion, and communism. In turn, this heterogeneous doctrine was an attempt to bring order to the instability generated during the period of Indonesian independence, the era known as “*Bersiap*”.

In other regions of the world, similar syncretic ideologies – consisting of apparently opposed and perhaps even antithetic elements – have also been adopted: for example, the “theology of liberation” in Latin America, that also sought to use the widespread religious affinity in the population as a fertile ground for communism and anti-imperialism, or in the thought of revolutionaries such as Sultan-Galiev, who sought to unify revolutionary Bolshevism and Islam. In this regard, while “*nasakom*” is not an atypical phenomenon in itself, it does consist of an interesting subject to study when taking into account the catastrophic collapse of its balance.

Furthermore, and as it will later be touched upon, there is a strong argument to be made that the Indonesian massacres served as a policy template that would be then propagated into similar situations across the world. This means that relations between these events in Indonesia and the subsequent ones in Chile, Nicaragua, and elsewhere might be related more tightly than what is traditionally accepted in western academia. Due to the nature of studying decisions, conflicts, and their resolution, a loose approach will be kept using elements of game theory to engage with certain arguments.

To begin with, we must introduce the concepts of game theory that shall be used in this work. It is to be noted, rather than follow a strict, analytical arrangement using the relevant mathematical terms, what shall be carried out is a pedagogic simplification of the scenarios to be studied. In other words, rather than use formulas to denote the game balance, it will be attempted to rephrase these abstract concepts into easily understandable words as often as possible, dispensing entirely from employing traditional mathematical visualizations. Therefore, there exist some key concepts for which a definition and a paraphrases will be given:

*First*, “game”, and consequently, “game theory”, which the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP) defines as “*the study of the ways in which interacting choices of economic agents produce outcomes with respect to the preferences (or utilities) of those agents, where the outcomes in question might have been intended by none of the agents.*”<sup>①</sup> Overall, this means any situation that implies a strategic confrontation between players – not necessarily a violent one nor an attack, as cooperation is also a form of strategy sometimes – can be considered as a “game.”

*Second*, “player”, which the SEP recursively defines as “*agents involved in games*”; or, in other words, anyone who is active inside a “game.”

*Third*, “cooperative” and “non-cooperative” games, meaning those that involve coalitions of players and those that do not. Coalition, of course, meaning players cooperating with one another in order to win the game or assert their interests.

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<sup>①</sup> Ross, D. (2023). Game Theory. In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved January 10, 2024, from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/game-theory/>

*Fourth*, and derived from the former, “zero-sum game”, in which “every gain in expected utility by one player represents a precisely symmetrical loss by the other”; or in other words – opposite to a cooperative game – in order for one player to win the other must lose.

*And fifth*, “equilibrium”, being “a *stable state, one in which all the causal forces internal to the system balance each other out and so leave it ‘at rest’ until and unless it is perturbed by the intervention of some exogenous (that is, ‘external’) force*”. Therefore, if one is familiar with the colloquial usage of this word, an equal meaning will suffice in this paper.

Again, it must be stressed that the usage of game theory in this work is only for illustrative purposes: no actual “trees” or mathematical formulas are employed, both as to make its reading more accessible and due to the fact this analysis is not strictly a “game theory” one. Then, it would be better to understand the few elements of said discipline in these pages as an accessory to the main body of work: the actual narrative and arguments, written in prose.

### Section 1 – Bersiap and Guided Democracy

*“People are surprised, they become indignant. They say: “How strange! But never mind-it’s Nazism, it will pass!” And they wait, and they hope; and they hide the truth from themselves, that it is barbarism, the supreme barbarism, the crowning barbarism that sums up all the daily barbarisms; that it is Nazism, yes, but that before they were its victims, they were its accomplices; that they tolerated that Nazism before it was inflicted on them, that they absolved it, shut their eyes to it, legitimized it, because, until then, it had been applied only to non-European peoples; that they have cultivated that Nazism, that they are responsible for it, and that before engulfing the whole edifice of Western, Christian civilization in its reddened waters, it oozes, seeps, and trickles from every crack.”*

– Césaire, A., (1950), *Discourse on colonialism*, Monthly Review Press.

Indonesia, like many other countries in East Asia, shared a relatively common past: first, it was invaded and colonized by European powers, then occupied during the height of Japanese imperialism; and following the defeat of the Empire of Japan, experienced a sudden power vacuum.<sup>①</sup> The imperialist exploitation of these territories created expected resentment in the people, which then originated different nationalist and anti-imperialist movements, including communist ones. However, even if there were previous insurrections and attempts at breaking free from the imperialist hold – for example, the *Nghê-Tĩnh Soviets* in Indochina – it was only until the Japanese imperialists had first crippled the colonial apparatus, and then were defeated themselves, when the conditions became sufficient for the near-simultaneous emergence of several revolutions. Thus, a specter came to haunt the anachronistic colonies: nationalist and communist insurrections broke out closely following one another, with the Indochina Wars, the Malayan Emergency, the Korean War – and the uprisings in Seju and Gwanju – as well as the militarization of the communist party in the now-occupied Japan, to name a few.

In Indonesia, after the Japanese empire surrendered, Soekarno and Mohammad Hatta soon declared independence from the Netherlands, and the newly birthed pro-independent forces quickly expanded into the rest of the country, prospering in the absence of Dutch or western occupiers and in the face of inert Japanese invaders awaiting repatriation – who, in certain cases,

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<sup>①</sup> See Opper, M. (2019). *People’s Wars in China, Malaya, and Vietnam*. University of Michigan Press; Ricklefs, M. C. (1981). *The Destruction of the Colonial State, 1942-50*. In *A history of modern Indonesia*. Macmillan; and Vickers, A. (2013). *The Revolution*. In *A history of modern Indonesia* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

even collaborated with them.<sup>①</sup> Much like in Indochina with the Việt Minh, when the first western forces landed in Indonesian territory, much of the country had already been radicalized by revolutionary sentiment or was already occupied and administered by *ad hoc* pro-independence governments and militias.<sup>②</sup> This initial period of time, where the revolutionaries expanded into the country and smashed – figuratively and literally – the remnants of Dutch and Japanese imperialism, was called by the former as the “*Bersiap*” – from the bahasa word for “prepare yourself.” Undoubtedly, for Dutch interests of regaining colonial sovereignty over Indonesia, it was a time of chaos.

However, from the perspective of Indonesians themselves, the “*Bersiap*” can be considered to have started at the onset of a war of independence, first revealed in skirmishes with the pro-colonial western occupiers and then with a punitive expedition sent by the Dutch.<sup>③</sup> The western forces that arrived in the wake of the Japanese surrender rushed to occupy territories that were to be handed to the previous colonizers; then, on the proper arrival of the former masters, *politionele acties* – or “police actions” – were undertaken.<sup>④</sup> As it had happened in Malaya during their own anti-imperialist struggle against the British, the revolutionaries – regardless of ideology or efficiency – were “bandits” and “criminals,” while the invading Dutch were righteous policemen who would bring order to the savagery.<sup>⑤</sup> Yet, to their white surprise, the Indonesian republicans were far more organized and motivated than what could be expected from common highwaymen, and much like how the French invaders found themselves trapped in figurative quicksand when fighting the Việt Minh, despite the firepower and brutality of the “police actions” and the “pacification” they implied, the Dutch failed to destroy the newborn independent state. Ultimately, in the face of rising costs – unsustainable for an “empire” that until recently had been a hinterland territory of the German Reich – coupled with international pressure and receding support from imperialist-sympathizing nations, Indonesia gained its independence in 1949, reestablishing itself as a unitary republic in 1950.<sup>⑥</sup>

A stark contrast to the Việt Minh was the relative instability of the Indonesian revolutionary forces. The former consisted of a “united front” that grouped heterogeneous anti-imperialist factions in a coalition led by the Indochinese Communist Party, therefore subduing factional interests into the larger strategy sought by the communists. The latter, however, emerged as a majority-grassroots movement, with many Indonesians taking up arms against the Dutch and their western allies for the simple desire of obtaining freedom and autonomy; yet, the question of *what* was to happen after successfully defeating Dutch imperialism was left unsaid. This led to the republican government facing insurrections in the years leading up to the cession of independence, mostly represented by four factions as described below:

1. The *comprador* bourgeoisie and their military allies, who opposed substantial change from the *status quo ante* and desired the preservation of their class interests in the face of radical reforms. Factions in this group were responsible for the 1950 *coup* attempt, by a pro-Dutch federalist militia, and by the secessionist movement in Maluku, also in the same year.

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<sup>①</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>②</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>③</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>④</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>⑤</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>⑥</sup> See Ricklefs, M.C., *Independent Indonesia*, in *Op. Cit.*; and Vickers, A., *Living in the atomic age*, in *Op. Cit.*

2. The Islamists, who sought to consecrate their religious principles into the political and social structure of the new state. Radical factions in this group were responsible for the Darul Islam rebellion, that sought to establish an Islamic state in 1949.<sup>①</sup>

3. The communists and socialists, represented mostly by the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) and the Socialist Party of Indonesia – though the latter waned in importance and relevance in comparison to the former. The communists sought to establish a dictatorship of the proletariat in Indonesia, while the socialists aimed to create a socialist government. Members of this factions were responsible for the Madiun rebellion in 1948 and the insurrection in Sumatra in 1958, respectively.<sup>②</sup>

4. The Indonesian government itself consisted of a final faction, one that can be called the “republicans”. As can be intuitively stated, the chief interest of the “republicans” was the perpetuation of the Indonesian state in the face of rebellions and other political threats. This group can be said to have been better represented by Soekarno and Hatta themselves, alongside their supporters in the government.<sup>③</sup>

While the Indonesian state – the republicans – held the most nominal power, as literal rulers of the country, the other three factions held considerable sway over them, both as possible supporters of the cabinet and as catalysts of insurrections against it. After a period of ineffective governance fashioned in imitation of the western “democracies”, Soekarno decided to adopt a more linear rule than involved concentration of authority into his person – in 1957, this political period known as “Guided Democracy” began.<sup>④</sup> In order to quell disputes for power, and as a form of political mortar to unify the different and mutually mistrusting factions, the ideology of “*nasakom*” was adopted as guiding principle for the state.<sup>⑤</sup>

In this way, the main interests of these four factions can be seen more succinctly in the following chart:

	<i>Establish a Dictatorship of the Proletariat</i>	<i>Establish an Islamic state</i>	<i>Preserve status quo ante</i>	<i>Establish factional unity</i>	<i>Return to Dutch administration</i>	<i>Avoid returning to Dutch administration</i>
<b>Bourgeoisie</b>	Opposed	Neutral	Priority	Neutral	Important	Neutral
<b>Islamists</b>	Opposed	Priority	Opposed	Neutral	Opposed	Important
<b>Communists</b>	Priority	Opposed	Opposed	Neutral	Opposed	Important
<b>Republicans</b>	Neutral	Opposed	Opposed	Important	Opposed	Priority

<sup>①</sup> *Ibid.* Also see Ricklefs, M. C. The Destruction of the Colonial State, 1942-50., in *Op. Cit.*

<sup>②</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>③</sup> After all, as it will be seen later, a primary aim of Soekarno was the concentration of power into his person and immediate circle, effectively representing then the Indonesian government in the sense explained above.

<sup>④</sup> *Ibid.* See also Ricklefs, M.C., Guided Democracy 1957-65, in *Op. Cit.*; and Vickers, A., From the old order to the new, in *Op. Cit.*

<sup>⑤</sup> *Ibid.*

Therefore, as we can see, each player has a very limited basis to integrate an alliance. For most players, save for the *comprador*, the desire of remaining independent from the colonial order is a powerful motivator. However, regarding the kind of order that would ideally follow said independence, it is easily observable that all of these players share completely opposed, non-cooperative views regarding each other's aims.

Yet another question is the form of resolving said dilemma. First, we must consult another chart:

	<i>Uses parliamentarianism</i>	<i>Uses violent struggle</i>	<i>Uses diplomacy with the Netherlands</i>	<i>Has a professional army</i>
<b>Bourgeoisie</b>	Yes	Yes	Neutral	Has supporters
<b>Islamists</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Has supporters
<b>Communists</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Has supporters
<b>Republicans</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

Then, we can see that although all sides are willing to resort to violence, only the Republicans can be considered to have a standing army, while the rest of these parties have – more or less – the same footing in the scenario. However, we can also see that all parties use parliamentarianism, while most players reject appeasement to the Dutch and other imperialist forces.

Now let's analyze a final chart, regarding the early "Guided Democracy" period:

	<i>Supports "nasakom"</i>	<i>Supports Soekarno</i>	<i>Actively opposes Soekarno</i>	<i>Has a large base of popular support</i>
<b>Bourgeoisie</b>	No	Neutral, leaning to no	Neutral, leaning to yes	No
<b>Islamists</b>	Neutral, leaning to yes	Yes	Neutral	Yes
<b>Communists</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Republicans</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

Here, we can also see that even if certain players do not uniformly conform to cooperation, as their actions are limited – basically being opposing or supporting the cabinet's actions – none of them are able to feasibly threaten the state's power yet; and equally, each party thus benefits more from cooperation – or at very least, *inaction* – in order to assert their interests. Therefore this can be called a cooperative game, or alternatively – considering the permanent opposition of the *comprador* faction – a situation of *equilibrium*.

## Section 2 – New Order

“Hegel remarks somewhere that all great world-historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce.”

– Marx, K., (1852)

Whether or not the tenuous balance of the “Guided Democracy” could have maintained stability long-term, and whether or not the unorthodox “*nasakom*” would have worked as a mortar in uniting radically opposite factions, by 1960 Soekarno had effectively consolidated a unitary state with most powers concentrated on his personal retinue.<sup>①</sup> Closely following that, the PKI had amassed a large number of militants, holding considerable influence over the government;<sup>②</sup> in fact, the increasingly close ties of Soekarno with the People’s Republic of China and the careful analysis of their victory in the war against Japanese imperialism and national liberation, had led him to conceive a plan of creating a parallel armed force – imitating the success of the originally irregular People’s Liberation Army – which was to be called the “Fifth Force.”<sup>③</sup> Needless to say, in order to militarize the peasantry and proletariat into a paramilitary significant enough to challenge the *comprador* bourgeoisie and their reactionary allies the support of the PKI was all but critical.

However, if one understands that the 1960 balance was stable – not a certainty in the future, but at least in the present – it must be strange to question what possible reason was there to carry out such a blatant destabilization against the interests of the *comprador* and the rest of the factions. In other words, once having built a proverbial house of cards, it could be seen as unreasonable attempting to add another floor to the already precarious structure – the “Fifth Force” – or enlarging one particular floor – the PKI. If this game consisted of a “closed” scenario, meaning no additional players or motives were to be introduced, then balance-threatening actions could certainly be considered as self-sabotage by a faction most interested in stability and national unity. Yet, that wasn’t the case in this era.

In 1965, the Indonesian state obtained a secret memorandum, afterwards known as the “Gilchrist document”, after the surname of the British ambassador who penned it. In it, plans for a collusion between British and American conspirators to overthrow Soekarno were detailed.<sup>④</sup> While the Americans decried said document as a forgery, their intelligence agencies were in fact working against the republicans: from funding and arming separatist movements in Sumatra and other regions to planning the assassination of key cabinet members including Soekarno,<sup>⑤</sup> it was clear that the chief goal of the imperialist bloc was to destroy the existing alliance between the PKI and the republicans, at any and all costs necessary. The U.S. had lobbied for Indonesian independence just a few years ago: now, with the Cold War fully entrenched in, returning to the Dutch or neo-colonial order was preferable to a communist-aligned Indonesia.

<sup>①</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>②</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>③</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>④</sup> *Ibid.* To be noted that although the purported text of the document is available in several sources, I cannot corroborate it since not only do I not speak bahasa, but there doesn’t seem to be an original available. However, see also Central Intelligence Agency. (1964). FIRST ADD JANARTA SUBANDRIO X X X AGENT. In *CIA Reading Room* (CIA-RDP75-00149R000700410017-5). Retrieved January 10, 2024, from <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP75-00149R000700410017-5.pdf>

<sup>⑤</sup> United States President’s Commission on CIA Activities within the United States. (1975). Summary of Facts: Investigation of CIA Involvement in Plans to Assassinate Foreign Leaders. In *National Security Archive*. Retrieved January 10, 2024, from <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/document/21512-document-19>

A certain method had been perfected in Korea: while the north of the country was unwaveringly aligned with the then Sino-Soviet camp, communist insurrections in the south were crushed with the utmost brutality at the behest of a *comprador* government – that of dictator Syngman Rhee, serving as a viceroy for American imperialism.<sup>①</sup> Before, the heartlands of the Japanese Empire had been occupied and a military dictatorship put into place: under the MacArthur regime, anti-communism took preference over anti-fascism, manufacturing a local *comprador* “nationalist” party that was to act out the American interests, and thoroughly destroying any possibility for a legitimate electoral victory of the communists.<sup>②</sup>

Years after the tragic events in Indonesia, Chile would be suddenly shocked by the assassination of general René Schneider, a legalist who opposed the politicization of the army. After his death, future dictator Augusto Pinochet – anti-communist general who had opposed Schneider’s dogmatism – started a *coup* against the social-democrat government of Salvador Allende, immediately reversing all reforms in order to surrender the Chilean market to the economic interests of the imperialist bloc, and ordering a wave of violent anti-communist purges.<sup>③</sup> Many decades after, in 1991, some elements in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union would attempt to wrestle power away from Gorbachev, seeing in the improvised military *coup* the only way to prevent the complete annihilation of the Soviet order. After their failure, the Soviet Union dissolved a few months later.

In Indonesia, the “Gestapu” movement – or the 30 September Movement – was a small conspiracy that aimed to wrestle power away from the army, carrying out the assassination of a few officers and attempting to occupy key cities such as Jakarta.<sup>④</sup> Ostensibly a communist-leaning, anti-reactionary movement, the *coup* was marred by logistics and strategic issues: a few days after it began, most mutinied battalions had surrendered or been defeated, and the leaders were arrested or in exile.<sup>⑤</sup> Appraisals of the reasons behind it are varied: one position is that the KPI colluded with their supporters in the army to launch a preemptive strike against the *comprador* faction;<sup>⑥</sup> a different one, with scholarly nuances, are that either the PKI was wholly uninvolved and the conspiracy consisted of an internal conflict in the army,<sup>⑦</sup> or that it was in fact a false flag operation

<sup>①</sup> See Gowans, S. (2018). One Country—Two States. In *Patriots, Traitors and Empires*. Baraka Books; also see Research Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. (1981). Chapter 1. In *History of the Just Fatherland Liberation War of the Korean People*. Foreign Languages Publishing House Pyongyang.

<sup>②</sup> See Kapur, N. (2018). The Waning of the Opposition Parties. In *Japan at the Crossroads*. Harvard University Press. Of course, to be noted that the “Reverse Course” (逆コース) – mentioned only in passing by the author – had a much more vital role in militarizing the JCP than Stalin’s imaginary decrees did; and also, that the Japanese tradition of anti-imperialist resistance extends beyond that: despite its own imperialist past and present as an American military outpost, movements such as the Sanrizuka resistance organizations, or the close ties between Japanese activists and the DPRK, are significant events concealed by the much more publicized acts of the pro-American government.

<sup>③</sup> See Verdugo, P. (2017). Chapter IV and IX. In *Allende*. Catalonia

<sup>④</sup> See Ricklefs, M. C., Independent Indonesia, in *Op. Cit.*; also see Vickers, A., From the old order to the new, in *Op. Cit.*

<sup>⑤</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>⑥</sup> See Supardjo, M. (1966). *Some Factors That Influenced the Defeat of “the September 30th Movement” as Viewed from a Military Perspective* (J. Roosa, Trans.). University of Wisconsin Press.

<sup>⑦</sup> See Anderson, B., & McVey, R. (1969). A preliminary analysis of the October 1, 1965 coup in Indonesia. In *Cornell Modern Indonesia Project*. Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications.

masterminded by the agents of the imperialist intelligence agencies in Indonesia.<sup>①</sup> The justification for the costs and risks such an action implied, in the latter scenario, can only be understood in light of the brutality that followed.

Future dictator Soeharto, general at the time, found himself warned of the *coup* in advance.<sup>②</sup> Conveniently commanding the KOSTRAD strategic reserves of the army, he moved to deploy them against the conspirators, quickly defeating them and grasping power over the now-neutered Soekarno cabinet. Within days, hordes of soldiers and militias loyal to Soeharto's anti-communist delusions ravaged the country, killing hundreds of thousands – if not millions – of suspected communists as retaliation.<sup>③</sup> The massacres were carried out with the logistics that only a professional army can provide, while the imperialist bloc – most notably the United States – sent as much aid and intelligence as needed.<sup>④</sup>

On the other hand, the act of killing itself was often left for fanatics and criminals to handle. As Vincent Brevins writes, “Up to a million Indonesians, maybe more, were killed as part of Washington's global anticommunist crusade. The US government expended significant resources over years engineering the conditions for a violent clash, and then, when the violence broke out, assisted and guided its longtime partners to carry out the mass murder of civilians as a means of achieving US geopolitical goals.”<sup>⑤</sup> Imperialist state media such as *The New York Times* wrote about the killings as “A Gleam of Light in Asia.”<sup>⑥</sup> Within a year, the PKI had been effectively exterminated off the face of Indonesia. Within years, western-trained technocrats under Soeharto had completely surrender the Indonesian market to the whims of the imperialist bloc.<sup>⑦</sup>

Thus the “Guided Democracy” had come to an end, and the arrangement of “*nasakom*” erased in a literal sea of blood. Soeharto defined his dictatorship as a “New Order,” and reassumed the principles of “*pancasila*” as a state ideology: monotheism, humanism, nationalism, democracy, and social justice.<sup>⑧</sup> Then, again, what any of those concepts truly meant was always up to state-interpretation.

The collapse of the “Guided Democracy,” when seen as a game, can be easily explained by the inclusion of another player into the balance. We have seen before that the four main factions were held by a tenuous commitment, which didn't consist of a priority for any of them.

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<sup>①</sup> See Scott, P. D. (1985). The United States and the Overthrow of Sukarno, 1965-1967. *Pacific Affairs*, 58(2).

<sup>②</sup> Friend, T. (2003). Mass murder. In *Indonesian destinies*. Harvard University Press.

<sup>③</sup> *Ibid.* See also Ricklefs, M. C., Creating the New Order, 1965–75, in *Op. Cit.*; and Vickers, A., From the old order to the new, in *Op. Cit.*

<sup>④</sup> *Ibid.* See also Brevins, V. (2020). Extermination. In *The Jakarta Method*. Public Affairs; Foreign Service of the United States of America. (1965). US Embassy in Jakarta, Telegram 971 to Secretary of State, Secret. In *National Security Archive*. Retrieved January 10, 2024, from <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/document/15700-document-04-us-embassy-jakarta-telegram-971>; and Simpson, B. (2015). The United States and the 1965–1966 Mass Murders in Indonesia. *Monthly Review*. <https://monthlyreview.org/2015/12/01/the-united-states-and-the-1965-1966-mass-murders-in-indonesia/>

<sup>⑤</sup> *Op. Cit.*

<sup>⑥</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>⑦</sup> Brevins, V., Around the world, in *Op. Cit.*

<sup>⑧</sup> See Ricklefs, M. C., The Destruction of the Colonial State, 1942–50, in *Op. Cit.*; and Vickers, A., Living in the Atomic Age, in *Op. Cit.* “*Pancasila*” was first formulated by Soekarno as a part of his syncretism efforts to create a nationalist ideology, but it was Soeharto who embraced the less radical principles as a counterweight to the “*nasakom*” later favored by the former.



Then, taking into account another player – or rather, outcome – the precarious equilibrium is easily destroyed, as seen below:

	<i>Support Soekarno</i>	<i>Support the PKI</i>	<i>Actively seek to end the “Guided Democracy”</i>	<i>Have the support of the military</i>
<b>Bourgeoisie</b>	No	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Islamists</b>	Neutral, leaning to no	No	Neutral, leaning to yes	Neutral, leaning to no
<b>Communists</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Neutral, leaning to yes
<b>Republicans</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Neutral, leaning to no
<b>Imperialists (mainly U.S.)</b>	No	No	Yes	Yes

Therefore, we can see the possible results of taking military action as follows:

	<i>Open to form anti-“Guided Democracy” alliance</i>	<i>Open to form pro-Soekarno alliance</i>	<i>Military superiority</i>	<i>Militia (civilian armed forces) superiority</i>	<i>Imperialist support and funding</i>
<b>Bourgeoisie</b>	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Islamists</b>	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Communists</b>	No	Yes	Neutral, leaning to no	Neutral, leaning to yes (unarmed)	No
<b>Republicans</b>	No	Yes	Neutral, leaning to no	No	No
<b>Imperialists</b>	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

Now it is necessary to remember the charts seen in the previous section. Considering all players – including the newest addition, the imperialists – accept the use of violence as a viable tactic, the question then turns rather simple, being, whether or not to initiate a conflict. See:

	<i>Level of confidence of winning a military engagement</i>	<i>Desire to initiate a military engagement</i>	<i>Desire to maintain the status quo</i>
<b>Bourgeoisie</b>	High	High	Low
<b>Islamists</b>	Neutral, leaning to high	Neutral	Low
<b>Communists</b>	Low (demilitarized party)	Neutral	Neutral, leaning to high
<b>Republicans</b>	Neutral, leaning to low	Low	High
<b>Imperialists</b>	High	High	Low

Then, having read the previous charts, the decision to initiate the 30 September Movement – by whoever party was responsible – can be seen as entirely expected, as is the brutal *coup* and response that followed. The allied anti-Soekarno players had all the incentives necessary to break the equilibrium, perhaps turning this scenario into a debatable “cooperative game” – of cooperation against Soekarno and the KPI, that is – of sorts.

### Section 3 – Holy Alliance

*“We have no compassion and we ask no compassion from you. When our turn comes, we shall not make excuses for the terror. But the royal terrorists, the terrorists by the grace of God and the law, are in practice brutal, disdainful, and mean, in theory cowardly, secretive, and deceitful, and in both respects disreputable.”*

– Marx, K., (1849).

As Vincent Brevins writes, the transcendence of the mass killings in Indonesia are, first and foremost, that they were made a template for subsequent anti-communist genocides, ethnicides, and politicides.<sup>①</sup> Still, Brevins does not perform a completely historical countdown of anti-communism in Asia: from the anti-Comintern pact to the United Nations Command in Korea, and from the invasion of Arkhangelsk to the Indochina Wars, anti-communism was a priority in policy for most of the imperialist bloc – whose leadership was later monopolized by the United States.<sup>②</sup> The argument that only genuine, *realpolitik* concerns over “great power” held by the Soviet Union or the People’s Republic of China was behind the Cold War is severely weakened when one takes into account the decades, and perhaps centuries, before. The fledgling USSR was immediately attacked by the forces of reaction: the Whites, representing the old feudal order, with support from Czechoslovak mercenaries and Allied invaders in the north. Then, in Korea, the UNC unleashed a mob of capitalist states, collared by the U.S., against the until-then internal conflict in the peninsula – of course, as “internal” to the Americans as the Haitian Revolution was to France. A century before, during the revolutions of 1848, the “holy alliance” to which Marx referred to, sought to extinguish in blood the flame of revolt throughout Europe. Then, of course, the Paris Commune and the *Semaine sanglante*, the European revolutions of 1917, the Indochina Wars, the Malayan Emergency, and a myriad conflicts throughout the world, all influenced by or directly supporting communism.

That “*war is a continuation of policy by other means*” can certainly be applied to these events, with the clarification that war is the continuation of a failed domestic counter-insurgency (COIN) response. In the Malayan Emergency, for example, the British brutality in shattering the Communist Party of Malaya’s efforts to achieve independence, alongside many other factors, translated into the effective defeat of the CPM as a meaningful rival for the control of the Malayan territory, even if asymmetrical resistance would continue for decades after.<sup>③</sup> In Indochina, the heroic victory of the Việt Minh in their defense against French imperialism meant that, years after, the imperialist bloc would necessarily be forced to engage in conventional warfare – as well as asymmetrical warfare – in order to reap their desire of crushing communism in Vietnam, and the

<sup>①</sup> Brevins, V., Around the world, in *Op. Cit.*

<sup>②</sup> See Johnson, C. A. (2000). Blowback. In *Blowback*. Henry Holt & Co. From a different perspective, other terms have been proposed to describe this structure: Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy studied the “monopoly capital”, while recently Michael Hudson studied the “superimperialism” existing in the current era.

<sup>③</sup> Oppen, M., The Malayan Emergency, 1948–1960, in *Op. Cit.*

adjacent states.<sup>①</sup> As for Korea, midway between these two conflicts, it was one of the last engagements that represented the full force of the “holy alliance”, involving more participants than the single opponents in Malaya or the comparatively small coalition in Vietnam.<sup>②</sup> The failure of an effective COIN response in Indochina, and the tragic victory of the British COIN in Malaya, were directly responsible for the form and intensity of the conflicts that followed – conventional and asymmetrical war, respectively. The arguable victory of the barbaric COIN campaign of dictator Syngman Rhee in the southern territory of Korea, led to the eradication of resistance and communist insurgents in those areas, yet also was a direct cause of the military intervention by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea;<sup>③</sup> in other words, it failed to prevent conventional warfare, even if it was relatively effective at crushing a domestic conflict.

So far, COIN policy and anti-communist directives had followed the previous examples. What made the Indonesian mass killings stand out wasn’t the act of killing in itself; at least, it didn’t make them radically different from events such as the Bodo League massacre, carried out by the forces of dictator Syngman Rhee with similar American support. In Indonesia, however, not only was the number of deaths greater and far more widespread throughout the territory, but two additional factors made these atrocities stand out: first, it was effected on one of the largest, *demilitarized* communist parties in the world;<sup>④</sup> and second, said party constituted one of three sociopolitical pillars in the state structure.<sup>⑤</sup> That is to say, while the previous COINs consisted of suppressing insurrections, in Indonesia the KPI had *already* become institutionalized, lacking an armed wing as the CPM, the Workers’ Party of Korea, or the Indochinese Communist Party, but *already* holding influence inside the armed forces and the Indonesian society at large.<sup>⑥</sup> Rather than comparing the mass killings with the massacres carried out in other anti-communist purges, this is more aptly seen as a method to implode a country from within – to *coup* governments in a veritable *blitzkrieg*. Metaphorically speaking, the Indonesian situation was as if a western country such as Canada or the United States found any of the major political parties – democrats and republicans, liberals and conservatives – suddenly and swiftly exterminated by the rest of political contenders, not only purging ministers, generals, and other political personalities, but also a large part of their militants – and general population – as well. Very few events in Asia, and in contemporary world history for that matter, can be considered as comparable or even similar.

In that regard, the politicide of the KPI and the Soeharto *coup* changed the balance of the geopolitical game between communists and other factions completely: unless one player strikes first and strikes hard, complete annihilation is risked. In other words, for ruling communist parties, the Indonesian mass killings were seen as a cautionary tale to harden their stance on capitalist and reactionary elements within their countries;<sup>⑦</sup> as for the imperialist bloc and the *comprador* states under their suzerainty, it was seen as an example of successful anti-communist policy, to be emulated in South America, Asia, and elsewhere, as Brevins already noted.<sup>⑧</sup>

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① Waite, J. (2012). Global implications. In *The end of the first Indochina War*. Routledge.

② The United Nations Command consisted of 16 countries at the time of the Korean War, while the American coalition in Vietnam is usually accepted to have consisted of 10 countries at most.

③ Gowans, S., *Op. Cit*; Research Institute of History, *Op. Cit*.

④ Ricklefs, M. C., Independent Indonesia, in *Op. Cit*; Vickers, A., Living in the Atomic Age, in *Op. Cit*.

⑤ *Ibid*.

⑥ *Ibid*.

⑦ Brevins, V., Around the world, in *Op. Cit*.

⑧ *Ibid*.

While it can't be seen as the single factor behind the hardening of anti-revisionism in many communist countries, Brevins sees in the horror story of the KPI one of the principal reasons that motivated Chairman Mao Zedong and the CPC to initiate the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution;<sup>①</sup> after all, if one of the biggest communist parties in the world – and a vital pillar of the Indonesian state – could be so brutally and absolutely obliterated, revisionist elements within the CPC could very well attempt to do the same. The close ties between Indonesia and the PRC can be seen as an argument in favor of this reasoning; still, a few years after the mass killings died down, the Warsaw Pact intervened in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, seeing in the market reforms attempted by Alexander Dubček a tangible threat to the stability of the member countries.<sup>②</sup> Therefore, in this aspect, the “Brezhnev Doctrine” and the GPCR – as well as the aforementioned hardened stance against revisionism, in general – can be seen as influenced by, and responding to, what Brevins calls “*the Jakarta method*”.

Seen in a more abstract form, one can visualize the mechanics of this game as follows, having now only two players – or rather, two players with two possible categories:

1. Communist Party (in power, not in power)
2. Pro-imperialist party (in power, not in power)

Of course, factors such as the strength of either party, whether or not they are armed or have the military support of other states, and such, are left out of this simple game. This is because the primary motivation in this specific scenario is whether or not to *attack*, considering it is a “zero-sum” game: a game with a clearly defined victor and loser, who are causally interrelated – for one to win, the other must lose. Therefore, see the below chart:

	<i>Open to cooperation with opposition</i>	<i>Open to tolerate opposition</i>	<i>Open to use of force to quell opposition</i>	<i>Actively seeks to suppress opposition</i>
<b>Reds, in power</b>	Neutral, leaning to no	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Reds, not in power</b>	Neutral, leaning to yes	Neutral, leaning to yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Blues, in power</b>	No	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Blues, not in power</b>	Neutral, leaning to no	No	Yes	Yes

Evidently, this chart is not entirely illustrative: the particularities of a form of government determines many of these factors, meaning these stances might vary considerably between a social-democrat administration to a one-party state. However, it does serve to illustrate a basic point overall: the desire to actively neutralize the opposition and the acceptance of using force to achieve that, render internal – inside a country – dynamics between *reds* and *blues* extremely antagonistic

<sup>①</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>②</sup> See *Polish-Soviet Talks in Moscow*. (1967). Wilson Center. Retrieved January 10, 2024, from <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/polish-soviet-talks-moscow>; also very enlightening regarding the role of the GPCR in preventing “Prague Spring” scenarios – at least from the Chinese perspective.

and prone to conflict. It would be prudent to revisit some earlier charts integrating these new players:

	<i>Desire to maintain status quo</i>	<i>Desire to avoid armed conflict</i>	<i>Desire to consolidate power peacefully</i>	<i>Desire to purge the opposition</i>	<i>Desire to institutionalize ideology in the government</i>
<b>Reds, in power</b>	High	High	Neutral	High	High
<b>Reds, not in power</b>	Low	Low	Neutral	Neutral	High
<b>Blues, in power</b>	High	Low	Neutral	High	High
<b>Blues, not in power</b>	Low	Low	Neutral	High	High

Of course, it must be clarified that the ideology to be institutionalized by the *blues* is capitalism: protection over private property, weakening the interests of the proletariat in favor of the bourgeoisie, etc. Therefore, we can understand that given the acceptance of armed conflict and suppression of dissent on both sides, conflict – even if power is consolidated peacefully – is all but unavoidable. However, an addenda would consist in clarifying that, even when the *reds* aren't too red, such tension still is present: center-”left” administrations such as the López Obrador cabinet in Mexico, or the social-democrat government of Lula in Brazil, still gather considerable opposition from the *blues* and their allied factions in state institutions; that neither have yet collapsed into open violence, however, can be seen due to the fact they're not *red* enough to justify such a response.

## Conclusions

*“The seizure of power by armed force, the settlement of the issue by war, is the central task and the highest form of revolution. This Marxist-Leninist principle of revolution holds good universally, for China and for all other countries. (...) Every Communist must grasp the truth, “Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.” ”*

– Mao, Z., (1938).

To say that the Indonesian case revealed vital lessons for socialist and communist movements worldwide would be an understatement. Still, as it was said before, just a few years after the mass killings ended – for the most part – the “*Jakarta method*” would then be applied to Chile. The “United Front” of “Unidad Popular,” conformed of various social-democratic and communist parties, was first besieged by the legislative representatives of the *comprador* bourgeoisie, pelted with filibustering and *lawfare*; then, discreetly, the reactionary faction of the military prodded the cabinet, with failed *putschs* such as the infamous “Tanquetazo” – after the Spanish word for tank, “tanque”. Finally, once it was gauged that the bloodletting had weakened the government enough, the “holy alliance” and its mercenaries finally moved in for the kill, with the ignominious *coup* in 1973 that led to the Pinochet dictatorship.

As Brevins noted, this was far from being an individual anomaly in Latin America. The Bolivian “United Front”, “Alianza de la Izquierda Nacional”, saw the elected president Juan José Torres *couped* by dictator Hugo Banzer, also a general and a graduate of the infamous “School of

the Americas”.<sup>①</sup> Fleeing to Argentina, where a military junta led by dictator Jorge Videla had ousted the remnants of the Peronist government, he was soon kidnapped and assassinated.<sup>②</sup> In Brazil, a violent takeover was avoided: elected president João Goulart found himself surrounded by a uniformly disloyal military, and upon the beginning of the 1964 *coup* he instead fled to Uruguay, where he would later die of a heart attack – it would be later alleged that he was also assassinated.<sup>③</sup> By then, the Uruguayan military – granted extraordinary powers by the centrist liberal government in order to combat communist insurrections – had already dissolved the other powers, installing another military junta. The coordinated cooperation between the dictatorships, in order to carry out political assassinations and purges, would become known as “Operación Condor”. Suffice to say, this consisted of a sanctioned and planned policy by the imperialist bloc, directly mapped out by the United States of America.<sup>④</sup>

A diplomatic memorandum sent to the Secretary of State – then Henry Kissinger – read: “*It is encouraging to note that the Argentine military are aware of the problem (referring to carrying out political executions) and are already focusing on ways to avoid letting human rights issues become an irritant in US-Argentine relationships.*”<sup>⑤</sup> Another one said, “*When he had seen the (secretary of state) Kissinger in Santiago, the latter had said he hoped the Argentine (government) could get the terrorist problem under control as quickly as possible. Guzzetti said that he had reported this to president Videla and to the cabinet, and that their impression had been that USG’s overriding concern was not human rights but rather that Goa ‘get over it quickly’.*”<sup>⑥</sup>

Therefore, there must be two initial assessments in order to understand the intricacies of these scenarios. First, and rather controversially – for some – it must be stated that this is strictly a zero-sum game; that is, that there is no *real* possibility of cooperation between the players – anti-imperialism-communism (*red*) and imperialism-capitalism (*blue*).

At once, this assertion brings an evident objection: the PRC did, in fact, cooperate with American imperialism, and the very same Secretary of State that brought the “*Jakarta method*” to Latin America was one of the strongest proponents for such an alliance. Yet, two responses can be said to this: first and foremost, the nature of the game between the USSR, the PRC, and the US, is considerably different from the one discussed earlier – an internal, *tête-à-tête* affair that nonetheless did involve external players and choices. In different, more concrete words, the diplomacy between states *in equilibrium* is not equal to the scenarios that we have touched upon so far, as they are characterized by the *absence of equilibrium*, and therefore involve a question of whether or not to strike first, so to speak. A second response, perhaps a more relevant one, would be to question the permanence of said alliance. As it is well known, at the peak of the Sino-American cooperation, US intelligence agencies operated surveillance stations in Chinese soil,

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<sup>①</sup> Baptista Gumucio, M. (1994). VIII. Restauración y Populismo, and IX. Bánzer: Siete años en palacio. In *Breve historia contemporánea de Bolivia*. Fondo de Cultura Económica.

<sup>②</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>③</sup> Dirección de Comunicación Institucional. (2014). Operación Cóndor: incluyen en la investigación la muerte del ex presidente brasileño Joao Goulart. *Ministerio Público Fiscal*. Retrieved January 10, 2024, from <https://web.archive.org/web/20230922040058/https://www.fiscales.gob.ar/lesa-humanidad/operacion-condor-incluyen-en-la-investigacion-la-muerte-del-ex-presidente-brasileno-joao-goulart/>

<sup>④</sup> See Brevins, V., Jakarta is coming, in *Op. Cit.*

<sup>⑤</sup> U.S. Embassy in Argentina. (1976). Military Take Cognizance of Human Rights Issue. National Security Archives. <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB185/index.htm>

<sup>⑥</sup> U.S. Embassy in Argentina. (1976). *Other aspects of September 17 conversation with Foreign Minister*. National Security Archives. <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB73/index3.htm>

allegedly in order to watch over the Soviet Union.<sup>①</sup> Decades later, the threat of “communist China” is one of the most repeated talking points in western state media. In my opinion, imperialism *necessarily* and tautologically opposes communism, and regardless of the actual characteristics of the Chinese economic system – that nonetheless remains communist *enough* to elicit fear in the capitalist bloc – the only possible destiny of the PRC after the collapse of the USSR was to either unconditionally submit to the unipolar, imperialist order, or to eventually replace the Soviet Union as their designated “evil empire” – the adversary in turn in a perpetual, low-intensity war.

For the purposes of this analysis, we can establish that *red* and *blue* were engaged in a non-cooperative, zero-sum game in the countries so far referred to – a sensible argument that can be easily backed with the historical outcome of said conflicts. Then, we can continue to the second assessment: the only available actions amount to either “doing nothing” or to “striking first”. By this, actions such as seeking conciliation with the opponents, ceding to their demands, or vying to maintain the *status quo*, are considered as “doing nothing”; opposite to this, actions that involve initiating confrontation – in a political, legal, or armed conflict – are regarded as “striking first”.

Of course, this can be seen as a ludicrous truism: clearly, if the *reds* had thrown the first punch, so to speak, the *blues* wouldn’t have taken them by surprise. But there is a final, third assessment to make regarding that dilemma, as it begets a question: *could* the *reds* have struck first? In Malaya and Indochina, their communist parties were already militarized – that is, mobilized and armed into a fighting force. In Chile and Indonesia, and other countries, the parties – not always communist ones – were not militarized, but held nominally important positions in the government.

Therein we can intuit the validity of the epigraph by Chairman Mao Zedong, as he recognized the principle that western “civilization” consecrated into their mode of production: *vae victis*, and “might makes right”. In untold disputes and conflicts, whether they consisted of civil wars or peasant revolts – of an *18 Brumaire* or a burkinabé coup, in Rome or in Gwanju – victory ultimately lies with the most militarily capable party. It must be acknowledged that, despite what is argued in capitalist propaganda, the *blues* do in fact have militarized parties: the entirety of a capitalist state serves, almost exclusively, to protect capital and its interests. Ferdinand Lassalle, somewhat ideologically opposed to Marx, famously described the fiction of legality under capitalism: “*We now know the essence of both constitutions of the land, its real constitution – the actual relations of force existing in the country – and its written constitution which in contradistinction to the first may be called a scrap of paper.*”<sup>②</sup> Therefore, if the *reds* contest a claim to power without an equally militarized party, they are simply left at the behest of the machinery of the state: Chile, Brazil, Indonesia, and many other cases, prove beyond a doubt the very tangible limits of both social-democracy and parliamentarianism.

However, there is still something unsaid left to acknowledge. That is, by the very nature of communist and socialist movements – that they rely on the powerless to resist against the powerful – such militarization has clearly defined limitations, in terms of both strategy and personnel or materiel. It is rather difficult – although not impossible – for the *reds* to match, at the beginning of these scenarios, the same equipment and force projection capabilities that the *blues* have. On one

<sup>①</sup> The creation of surveillance stations in Xinjiang by the CIA was named “Project Chestnut”: it is to be noted many of the details regarding their activities there remain classified even today. See *CIA SIGINT and Secrecy*. (2015). National Security Archive. <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/cyber-vault-intelligence/2015-03-20/cia-and-signals-intelligence>

<sup>②</sup> Lassalle, F. (1862). *On the Essence of Constitutions*. <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/fi/vol03/no01/lassalle.htm>

hand, revolutionary history has lionized the heroic struggles of the people of Cuba, Korea, the PRC, Nicaragua, the USSR, Indochina and its successor states, as well as many other regions that have stood against all odds facing imperialism and capitalism. The Cuban and Chinese revolutionaries, to name but a few, succeeded in liberating their countries against vastly superior adversaries, transforming a relatively under-powered asymmetrical warfare militia into a veritable army. As it is common knowledge, the People's Liberation Army, whose origins lie almost 100 years ago as a small-weapons force founded during the Nanchang Uprising, today is one of the most powerful armies in the entire world.

Yet, on the other hand, revolutionary history has an ever higher number of martyrs. In Malaya, for example, the CPM fought arduously against British imperialism, yet was ultimately defeated. Similar tactics to those employed in the Cuban Revolution failed to bring victory in Congo and Bolivia – the latter of which would result in the execution of Ernesto “Che” Guevara. Whether or not a militarized party would have ensured a *red* victory in the aforementioned conflicts, or simply led to a Korean scenario – the *ultima ratio* of the “holy alliance” via invasion and occupation – are unknowable and unanswerable questions. Considering that the imperialist hordes didn't spare any expenses in pacifying “their backyard” in Latin America, a wave of meaningful *red* victories would have been questionable, to say the least.

Regardless, something important to keep in mind is that beyond *realpolitik*, communist movements fight for very concrete aims, which necessarily imply using certain methods – “taking the hardest path,” so to speak. Therefore, although defeat is all too common, and even political or military victory doesn't ensure the permanence of a path towards communism – as tragically exemplified by the Soviet bloc and other former socialist countries – no reason exists that can justify abandoning said pursuit – for someone who espouses said ideology, that is. As an illustrative epilogue, it is prudent to recall the remembrance Vladimir Lenin made of the Paris Commune, considered by many as the first modern communist revolution:

*“(...) In spite of these unfavourable conditions, in spite of its brief existence, the Commune managed to promulgate a few measures which sufficiently characterise its real significance and aims (...) as a truly democratic, proletarian government (...)*

*All these measures showed clearly enough that the Commune was a deadly menace to the old world founded on the enslavement and exploitation of the people. That was why bourgeois society could not feel at ease so long as the Red Flag of the proletariat waved over the Hôtel de Ville in Paris. And when the organised forces of the government finally succeeded in gaining the upper hand over the poorly organised forces of the revolution, the Bonapartist generals, who had been beaten by the Germans and who showed courage only in fighting their defeated countrymen (...) organised such a slaughter as Paris had never known. (...) In all, Paris lost about 100,000 of its best people (...)*

*The bourgeoisie were satisfied. “Now we have finished with socialism for a long time,” said their leader, the blood thirsty dwarf, Thiers, after he and his generals had drowned the proletariat of Paris in blood. But these bourgeois crows croaked in vain. Less than six years after the suppression of the Commune, when many of its champions were still pining in prison or in exile, a new working-class movement arose in France. A new socialist generation (...) picked up the flag which had fallen from the hands of the fighters in the cause of the Commune and bore it boldly and confidently forward. (...)*

*The memory of the fighters of the Commune is honoured not only by the workers of France but by the proletariat of the whole world. For the Commune fought, not for some local or narrow*



*national aim, but for the emancipation of all toiling humanity, of all the downtrodden and oppressed. (...) The epic of its life and death, the sight of a workers' government which seized the capital of the world and held it for over two months, the spectacle of the heroic struggle of the proletariat and the torments it underwent after its defeat—all this raised the spirit of millions of workers, aroused their hopes and enlisted their sympathy for the cause of socialism. (...) That is why the cause of the Commune is not dead. It lives to the present day in every one of us.*

*The cause of the Commune is the cause of the social revolution, the cause of the complete political and economic emancipation of the toilers. It is the cause of the proletariat of the whole world. And in this sense it is immortal.”*

– Lenin, V., (1911)

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## **Benevolent or Detrimental? Text Analysis of China-Related Reports by Francophone Senegalese Mainstream Media**

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### **Abstract**

As China and African countries deepen their economic and political ties, critiques arise from the Western side, suspecting China's intention of involvement in African affairs. Nevertheless, if China and the West are both seemingly biased while proclaiming their standpoint, Africa as a first-hand witness would be most neutral in its point of view. In this paper, I deliberately choose Senegal as an example to conduct text analysis on China-related reports of Francophone mainstream media. Word frequency, topic modeling and sentiment analysis are the three technical approaches adopted. According to the results, Senegalese media reports are neutral regarding China and inclined to welcome China's presence in Africa. From a deeper level, the reports tend to emphasize the voice of Africa, showing the rationality of the African media and Africa's strong willingness to seek a diversified range of partnerships and its own path of development.

## 1. The Growing Impact of China in Africa and Senegal

Nowadays, with growing economic impact in Africa, China considerably contributes to the development of African countries. According to statistics provided by John Hopkins University SAIS China-Africa Research Initiative, Chinese exports to Africa increased from 1.25 billion dollars in 1993 to 164.2 billion dollars in 2022. Meanwhile, China's imports from Africa also grew rapidly, from 0.49 billion dollars in 1992 to 96.7 billion dollars in 2022.<sup>①</sup> The primary exports from Africa to China consist of natural resources, notably crude oil, and other fossil fuels as well as raw unprocessed minerals and other intermediate goods. On the other hand, Africa mainly imports from China primarily manufactured goods and machinery, as well as items that are generally further along in the global value chain.<sup>②</sup> Among all African countries, Senegal is not an exception.

## 2. Western Criticism of China's Presence in Africa

However, notwithstanding the deepening of China-Africa economic relations, China is facing increasingly severe critiques, especially among Western countries.<sup>③</sup> Although there are many media organizations in Western countries that hold supportive points of view towards China's presence in Africa, the overall perspective is rather binary. Many outlets publish articles that offer a negative perspective on China's involvement in Africa. Due to the existence of these perspectives, Western outlets that wish to be objective must publish positive news stories with caveats that discuss the existing criticism of China's involvement in Africa. This means that there is a relative lack of news stories that portray a viewpoint that is entirely positive. The most prominent unfavorable perspectives can be summarized by the four following statements.

First, Western scholars have alleged that China is pursuing neo-colonialism on the African continent.<sup>④</sup> It is claimed that China enters Africa only to exploit natural resources. Some western economists, such as Esposito and Tse, have written articles depicting China as expansionist, wanting to buy up Africa's land.<sup>⑤</sup> Concerning the market operation mechanism, Chinese entrepreneurs have also previously been criticized for their preference toward using Chinese rather than local labor employment.<sup>⑥</sup>

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<sup>①</sup> Anonym, "Data: China-Africa Trade," *China-Africa Research Initiative*, <https://www.sais-cari.org/data-china-africa-trade>.

<sup>②</sup> Wenjie Chen et al., "Navigating the Evolving Landscape of China and Africa's Economic Engagements," *International Monetary Fund*, February 23, 2024, file:///Users/yingehu/Downloads/wpica2024037-print-pdf.pdf.

<sup>③</sup> Maria Barbal Campayo, Changfeng Zhao, "The portrayal of Sino-African relations in the Western Media: Who is actually neo-colonializing Africa?," *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, Vol 5, No. 5 (2016): 66-73.

<sup>④</sup> Ben Willis, "China, Africa, and Neo-Colonialism," *E-International Relations*, January 22, 2014, <https://www.e-ir.info/2014/01/22/china-africa-and-neo-colonialism/>; Barry Sautman, Yan Hairong, "African Perspectives on China-Africa Links," *The China Quarterly*, No. 199 (2009): 728-759; Ehizuelen Michael Mitchell Omoruyi et al., "Understanding China-Africa Cooperation: Development Partnership or Neo-Colonialism," *Journal of Cultural and Social Anthropology*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (2019): 13-24.

<sup>⑤</sup> Mark Esposito and Terence Tse, "China Is Expanding Its Economic Influence in Africa. What Is Africa Getting Out of It?," November, 2015, <https://slate.com/business/2015/11/china-s-role-in-africa-is-exciting-for-china-but-is-it-as-great-for-africa.html>.

<sup>⑥</sup> Mark Esposito, Terence Tse, "China Is Expanding Its Economic Influence in Africa. What Is Africa Getting Out of It?," *Slate*, November 24, 2015, <https://slate.com/business/2015/11/china-s-role-in-africa-is-exciting-for-china-but-is-it-as-great-for-africa.html>.

Second, China's presence in Africa purportedly negatively affects the organic functioning of the market and weakens local competitors.<sup>①</sup> For instance, the Carnegie Endowment Centre states that "China's low-cost manufacturing exports have undercut local manufacturing firms, especially those engaged in the labor-intensive production of clothing and footwear".<sup>②</sup> Western media and scholars believe that substandard services and products made in China flooded African markets, leading to vicious market competition.

Third, China-Africa relations lack transparency.<sup>③</sup> It has been claimed that fraudulent African officials allow the Chinese to operate in Africa. Some Western media agencies even went so far as to accuse China of contributing to bureaucratic corruption in Africa.<sup>④</sup> For instance, a 2021 article by Bloomberg stressed the Chinese link to a fraud case concerning former Congo President Joseph Kabila.<sup>⑤</sup> News articles like these depict China as a country that solely cares about profits and neglects market regulations.<sup>⑥</sup>

Lastly, China's involvement in African affairs is argued to have hindered the development of human rights.<sup>⑦</sup> China has been criticized for regularly offending the local laws and customs. African scholars, like Adaora Osondu-Oti, have pointed to the fact that "Western officials and human rights organizations are expressing alarm at China's willingness to invest in countries with questionable human rights records."<sup>⑧</sup> Such accusations against China have even been exaggerated, and rhetoric blaming China for human rights violations against the African people is widespread.

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<sup>①</sup> George Ofosu, David Sarpong, "China in Africa: On the Competing Perspectives of the Value of Sino-Africa Business Relationships," *Journal of Economic Issues*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (2022): 137-157;; Adi Kraut-Adler, "Sino-Africa relations through the lenses of Western, African and Chinese media," *Ifriqiya*, Vol. 4, No. 6 (2018): 1-5.

<sup>②</sup> Nida Jafrani, "China's Growing Role in Africa: Myths and Facts," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 9, 2012, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2012/02/09/china-s-growing-role-in-africa-myths-and-facts-pub-47140>.

<sup>③</sup> Timothy S. Rich, Sterling Recker, "Understanding Sino-African Relations: Neocolonialism or a New Era?," *Journal of International and Area Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (2013): 61-76; Madison Condon, "China in Africa: What the Policy of Nonintervention Adds to the Western Development Dilemma," *The Fletcher Journal of Human Security*, Vol. 27 (2012): 5-25; Richard Hudson, "Chinese Investments in Africa: The Ethics of Transparency," *Seven Pillars Institute*, April 7, 2014, <https://sevenpillarsinstitute.org/chinese-investments-africa-ethics-transparency/>; Jana De Kluiver, "Navigating the complex terrain of China-Africa debt relations," *Institute for Security Studies*, November 2, 2023, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/navigating-the-complex-terrain-of-china-africa-debt-relations>.

<sup>④</sup> Edward Wong, "Competing Against Chinese Loans, U.S. Companies Face Long Odds in Africa," January 13, 2019, *The New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/13/world/africa/china-loans-africa-usa.html>; Michael J Kavanagh, William Clowes, "China Cash Flowed Through Congo Bank to Former President's Cronies," November 29, 2021, *Bloomberg*, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-11-28/africa-s-biggest-data-leak-reveals-china-money-role-in-kabila-s-congo-looting>; Yves Montenay, «Présence chinoise en Afrique : vers une Chinafrique ?», *Contrepoints*, October 29, 2018, <https://www.contrepoints.org/2018/10/29/328983-presence-chinoise-en-afrique-vers-une-chinafrique>.

<sup>⑤</sup> Michael J Kavanagh, William Clowes, "China Cash Flowed Through Congo Bank to Former President's Cronies," November 29, 2021, *Bloomberg*, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-11-28/africa-s-biggest-data-leak-reveals-china-money-role-in-kabila-s-congo-looting>

<sup>⑥</sup> Philippe Hugon, « La Chine en Afrique, néocolonialisme ou opportunités pour le développement ? », *Revue internationale et stratégique*, Vol. 4, No. 72 (2008): 219-230.

<sup>⑦</sup> Ian Taylor, "Sino-African Relations and the Problem of Human Rights, African Affairs," Vol. 107, No. 426 (2008): 63-87; Mersch, Celine Zaza, "China in Africa: bracketing human rights?," *Global Campus Europe: EMA*, 2008, <https://repository.gchumanrights.org/items/2d826067-8f10-4ae9-96e6-7c0300e064c3>.

<sup>⑧</sup> Adaora Osondu-Oti, "China and Africa: Human Rights Perspective," *Africa Development*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (2016): 49-80

### 3. China's Image: An African Perspective

How does African public opinion evaluate China's presence despite the prevalence of Western media's negative comments? If the Western views of China's involvement in Africa are biased, perhaps the people of Africa, who experienced China's involvement firsthand can provide the most accurate perspective.<sup>①</sup> In the 2021 AFR analysis of African polls, perceptions of China in Africa were promising. On average, 63% of African populations agreed that China is a "somewhat" or "very" positive influence in their country. Moreover, China ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> as a development model after the United States.<sup>②</sup>

In this paper, to further analyze how Africans perceive the involvement of China in the continent, I endeavor to narrow the scope of discussion to a specific case study of Senegal media report. The reason why I chose Senegal as an example of media report text analysis is threefold. First, Senegal has strong political and economic ties with China. Since 2016, the two sides have expanded bilateral relations into a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership. Senegal was also the first West African country to sign the cooperation agreement for the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with China.<sup>③</sup> Second, Senegal is a country of significance in West Africa, playing an important role in regional cooperation, with exceptional historical and cultural heritage. Third, Senegal maintains a tight relationship with Western countries, specifically France and the United States. As a former French colony, Senegal aims to seek a balance between the established colonial framework, the Washington consensus and the Beijing consensus, which endows it with a special international and political identity.

This paper mainly focuses on text analysis of two mainstream media agencies in Senegal: Le Soleil (The Sun) and Sud Quotidien (Southern Daily). Both are French media agencies. Le Soleil is a state-owned newspaper with 30,000 copies published daily and is the most widely printed and cited newspaper in the country. Sud Quotidien, on the other hand, is an independent newspaper, with 20,000 copies of publication per day.<sup>④</sup> I browsed the official websites of the two newspapers and obtained a total of 35 samples from 1 January 2023 to 1 January 2024 with a text filter condition that "Chine" (China) must be included in the content of the news report.

It is important to note that due to resourcing issues, it is common for national media outlets to republish articles originally written by major international media publications. In the case of Le Soleil and Sud Quotidien, these papers frequently draw from French-language and Chinese international media, with editors selecting the articles that best fit with the sentiments and guidelines of their own outlets, occasionally making edits to the original content. Of the 35 news reports analyzed by this paper, 12 are cited from Le Soleil and the other 23 from Sud Quotidien. To be precise, among the reports of Le Soleil, one is copied from CGTN (Chinese media), and one is copied from AFP (French media). Among the reports of Sud Quotidien, one is copied from CGTN and 6 from AFP and RFI (another French media agency). However, though 9 of the total 35 reports are copied from either Western or Chinese media agencies, the author finds that the republished reports also represent Senegalese attitudes since they are cautiously filtered and selected from the Senegalese side.

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<sup>①</sup> Especially in the U.S. and France, which are China's major market competitors in Africa.

<sup>②</sup> Josephine Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny, Edem E. Selormey, "AD489: Africans welcome China's influence but maintain democratic aspirations", *Afrobarometer*, November 15, 2021, <https://www.afrobarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AD489-PAP3-Africans-welcome-Chinas-influence^J-maintain-democratic-aspirations-Afrobarometer-dispatch-16nov21.pdf>.

<sup>③</sup> 宋斌：《中国与塞内加尔合作成果不断涌现》，载《中国网》，2021年11月，[http://ydyl.china.com.cn/2021-11/29/content\\_77899039.htm](http://ydyl.china.com.cn/2021-11/29/content_77899039.htm)。

<sup>④</sup> The daily newspaper publication data is obtained from Factiva database.

#### 4. Text Analysis

##### 4.1 Word Frequency (Word Cloud)

Using Antconc as a text analysis tool and excluding irrelevant words, this paper derives the keyword frequency of the above-mentioned news report text.

Table 1: Top 15 words in China-related reports of Francophone mainstream media in Senegal (2023)

Ranking	Key Word	Word Frequency (occurrences)
1	Chine (China)	207
2	Pour (For/In Favour Of)	134
3	Pays (Country)	75
4	Afrique (African)	49
5	Sénégal (Senegal)	42
6	Président (President)	35
7	Xi Jinping	34
8	Monde (World)	33
9	Populaire (Popular)	33
10	Coopération (Cooperation)	29
11	Economique (Economic)	29
12	Assemblée (Assembly)	29
13	Covid-19	28
14	Contre (Against)	27
15	Politique (Political)	26



Figure 1: Word cloud regarding China-related reports of Francophone mainstream media in Senegal (2023)



Through the analysis of high-frequency words, it can be concluded that Senegalese mainstream media's coverage of China has the following characteristics. Firstly, it focuses highly on China's relations with Senegal, with Africa and with the world in general. Secondly, it is concerned about the influential role of key political figures, especially Chinese State Leader Xi Jinping on China's internal affairs as well as China-Senegal and China-Africa relations. Thirdly, attention is paid to the positive effects of win-win cooperation with China. Finally, there is a strong thematic emphasis on politically and economically relevant issues.

#### 4.2 Topic Modeling

The 35 news reports can be broadly categorized by theme as described below.<sup>①</sup>

Table 2: 6 major topics of China-related reports of Francophone mainstream media in Senegal (2023)

Main Topic	Report Number (Le Soleil)	Report Number (Sud Quotidien)	Total Report Number
China's internal affairs	3	6	9
Sino-African relations	3	4	7
Sino-Senegalese relations	3	4	7
Sino-US relations	1	3	4
Pandemic in China	1	3	4
Chinese aid/loan projects in Senegal	0	2	2
Other	1	1	2

In general, Senegalese state-owned and private media reports on China cover similar topics, mainly concerning the following six aspects: China's internal affairs, Sino-African relations, Sino-US relations, Sino-Senegalese relations, the Pandemic in China, and Chinese aid/loan projects in Senegal.

Among them, Senegalese media paid particular attention to China's internal affairs, China-Africa relations and Sino-Senegalese relations. It is worth noting that the Senegalese media's China-related reports are generally objective, but some reports also show a positive inclination towards China. For example, Chinese aid to Senegal is reported favorably.<sup>②</sup> Another example is that when reporting admission of the African Union (AU) to the G20, Senegalese media suspected

<sup>①</sup> Among them, 7 reports are reprints of Western media and 2 of Chinese media. However, the fact that above mentioned reports are copied by official Senegalese media agencies demonstrate that the reprinted version of reports also represent Senegalese media perspective, as previously argued.

<sup>②</sup> Anonym, « Préparation des JOJ Dakar 2026 : la Chine offre son «savoir-faire» au Cnoss », *Sud Quotidien*, July 21, 2023, <https://www.sudquotidien.sn/preparation-des-joj-dakar-2026-la-chine-offre-son-savoir-faire-au-cnoss/>.

the effectiveness of such involvement. The media criticized that the West aims to strengthen an organization that distances itself from China and Russia.<sup>①</sup>

### 4.3 Sentiment Analysis

I then utilize Cortext, a platform for French text sentiment analysis realized by Python computing language to conduct further analysis on China-related reports of the two mainstream medias in Senegal. The computer categorizes the target sentiment into three categories: positive, neutral, and negative. The algorithm measures the sentiment of articles on a scale of -10 (very negative) to 10 (very positive).

My processing of 35 texts using the Cortext platform resulted in 4 reports with a positive level of 1, 31 neutral reports (0), and no negative reports. Such result coincides with the public opinion polls provided by Afrobarometer, proving that China's image in Senegal is rather positive, at least neutral.

## 5. Insights

This article draws the following three insights based on a summary and analysis of Senegalese media coverage regarding China.

First and foremost, Senegal, as a weaker state, navigates U.S.-China rivalry in a delicate way. Senegal maintains a balance between Washington Consensus and Beijing Consensus. The Washington Consensus refers to a set of neoliberal economic policies advocated by Washington-based institutions such as the IMF and World Bank, emphasizing free-market principles, deregulation, privatization, and fiscal discipline. Meanwhile, the term "Beijing Consensus" refers to China's development model that favors robust government involvement that is capable of deploying significant resources to overcome any obstacles to growth or institutional transformation.<sup>②</sup> As such, by striving to strike a balance, Senegal seeks to promote some Washington-style fiscal reforms while maintaining strong government control and centralized decision-making over resource allocation. In a similar fashion, when reporting on China related issues, Senegalese media seeks to maintain neutrality between the two sides by reprinting the most objective and fair articles that are available. For instance, following the US' denouncement of a major cyberattack sponsored by China, Senegal media endeavored to maintain neutrality by publishing a report by RFI. On the one hand, the report emphasized US perspective, quoting official governmental statements and comments from Microsoft and cybersecurity experts. On the other hand, the report specifically cited the proclamation of the Chinese government and announcements of diplomatic officials.<sup>③</sup> Taking both US and Chinese perspectives into consideration, the selected report depicts the arguments of both sides at relatively equal lengths, especially when compared to similar articles on the same topic by other French media outlets like Le Figaro and Le Point.<sup>④</sup> With regard to Taiwan-related issues, the Senegalese media reprinted a

<sup>①</sup> Anonym, « Admission de l'UA au G20 : Abdoul Mbaye soupçonne l'occident de renforcer un groupe dont la Chine et la Russie s'éloignent », *Sud Quotidien*, September 9, 2023, <https://www.sudquotidien.sn/admission-de-lua-au-g20-abdoul-mbaye-soupconne-l-occident-de-renforcer-un-groupe-dont-la-chine-et-la-russie-seloignent/>.

<sup>②</sup> For more details, see Yang Yao, "Beijing Consensus or Washington Consensus", *World Bank Economic Review*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2011): 26-31.

<sup>③</sup> Anonym, « Les États-Unis dénoncent une cyberattaque d'ampleur parrainée par la Chine », May 25, 2023, *Sud Quotidien*, <https://www.sudquotidien.sn/les-etats-unis-denoncent-une-cyberattaque-dampleur-parrainee-par-la-chine/>.

<sup>④</sup> The report of Le Figaro put into more efforts in concluding the Western criticism towards China. Le Point, on the other hand, absolutely neglected Chinese response to Western criticism. See Anonym, « Les États-Unis dénoncent

French media report that concentrated on objective portrayals of Chinese military deployments, while avoiding all non-objective value judgments<sup>①</sup> In both cases, the Senegalese media deliberately chose to republish the media reports which best represented the Senegalese attitude without bias or overly favoring either side.

Second, China-Senegal cooperation is in line with Senegal's national interests and development requirements. As illustrated by the Senegalese president of the National Assembly, “China has become Senegal's leading economic partner, a fruitful partnership underpinned by strong political and diplomatic impetus.”<sup>②</sup> Thus, it can be concluded that Senegal’s perspective on China is based on both pragmatism and rationalism. Namely, the country puts national interest and regional benefit first.

China has provided Senegal with substantial aid, loans and investments. In 2019, the inauguration of the Chinese-built Diamniadio Industrial Park drew a positive response from the Senegalese authorities.<sup>③</sup> Infrastructure collaboration has progressed steadily, highlighted by several significant projects following the inauguration of the Museum of Black Civilizations. These include the development of the Thiès-Touba, Dakar-Mbour, and Dakar-Thiès freeways, as well as the Grand Théâtre de Dakar and the Diamniadio Children's Hospital.<sup>④</sup> Additionally, Chinese expertise contributed to the establishment of the first Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, which now serves the Senegalese capital and its surrounding suburbs.<sup>⑤</sup> Future cooperation opportunities are a realistic basis for Senegal's positive assessment of China.

Last, Senegal takes China as a positive model of global governance, political regime as well as pandemic prevention and control. Reports indicate that the Senegalese media have demonstrated confidence in China's international role and position in the post-pandemic era. Meanwhile, the reports also demonstrate Senegal's vision to increase its international influence. Senegalese report emphasized on the fact that “we're living in an era of heightened global competition for geopolitical influence, with fierce rivalries that ignore no region of the world, least of all Africa, which is becoming ever bigger and better in the sights of their respective diplomatic trajectories.”<sup>⑥</sup> With African perspective turning increasingly important in geopolitical landscape, “Africa has developed its own multipolar influence in the world, which Russia and China may find useful in

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une cyberattaque d'ampleur parrainée par la Chine », May 25, 2023, *Le Figaro*, <https://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-eco/les-etats-unis-denoncent-une-cyberattaque-d-ampleur-parrainee-par-la-chine-20230525>; Anonym, « Les États-Unis dénoncent une cyberattaque d’ampleur parrainée par la Chine », May 25, 2023, *Le Point*, [https://www.lepoint.fr/monde/les-etats-unis-denoncent-une-cyberattaque-d-ampleur-parrainee-par-la-chine-25-05-2023-2521560\\_24.php#11](https://www.lepoint.fr/monde/les-etats-unis-denoncent-une-cyberattaque-d-ampleur-parrainee-par-la-chine-25-05-2023-2521560_24.php#11).

<sup>①</sup> Anonym, « La Chine simule un « bouclage » de Taïwan avec ses essais militaires », April 10, 2023, *Sud Quotidien*, <https://www.sudquotidien.sn/la-chine-simule-un-bouclage-de-taiwan-avec-ses-essais-militaires/>.

<sup>②</sup> Anonym, « Coopération bilatérale : la Chine, premier partenaire économique du Sénégal », May 16, 2023, *Sud Quotidien*, <https://www.sudquotidien.sn/cooperation-bilaterale-la-chine-premier-partenaire-economique-du-senegal/>.

<sup>③</sup> Anonym, “The Opening Ceremony of Diamniadio Industrial Park Phase II Project in Senegal and the Matchmaking Symposium on Sichuan-Senegal Capacity Cooperation Were Successfully Held,” *SRBG*, June 25, 2019, [https://www.srbg.com/out\\_news\\_en/show-31.html](https://www.srbg.com/out_news_en/show-31.html).

<sup>④</sup> Samir Bhattacharya, “China’s growing bonhomie with Senegal: Why the world should take notice,” *Fisrtpost*, June 16, 2023, <https://www.fisrtpost.com/opinion/chinas-growing-bonhomie-with-senegal-why-the-world-should-take-notice-12729252.html>.

<sup>⑤</sup> Anonym, « Sénégal, pari gagnant pour la Chine et la BRI », Observatoire Français Nouvelle Routes de la Soie », December 29, 2019, *Observatoire Français*, <https://observatoirefrs.com/2019/12/29/senegal-pari-gagnant-pour-la-chine-et-la-bri/>.

<sup>⑥</sup> Anonym, « L’Afrique pourrait-elle aider la Russie et la Chine à contrer l’influence occidentale ? », March 22, 2023, *Sud Quotidien*, <https://www.sudquotidien.sn/lafrique-pourrait-elle-aider-la-russie-et-la-chine-a-contrer-linfluence-occidentale/>.

their quest for a new sustainable counter-culture to the long-standing hegemony of the West, which couldn't be more threatened by the Asian giants.”<sup>①</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Senegal report texts seldom disseminate or reproduce the stigmatization of China by the West, but rather show a perspective that is based on Africa's regional interests and its respective countries' national interests. In reprinting the French reports, the Senegalese media were also cautious in choosing the most neutral and China-friendly rhetoric. When forecasting Africa's development prospects in world politics and the future of China-Africa relations, the reports tend to emphasize the voice of Africa, showing the rationality of the African media and Africa's strong willingness to seek a diversified range of partnerships and its own path of development.

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<sup>①</sup> Anonym, « L’Afrique pourrait-elle aider la Russie et la Chine à contrer l’influence occidentale ? », March 22, 2023, Sud Quotidien, <https://www.sudquotidien.sn/lafrique-pourrait-elle-aider-la-russie-et-la-chine-a-contrer-linfluence-occidentale/>.

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## **China's Flexible and Sustainable Approach to Engagement in the Lithium Triangle**

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### **Abstract**

China's foray into the Lithium Triangle showcases an adaptive approach to securing essential lithium resources for its lithium battery and electric vehicle (EV) markets. Despite holding a significant share of global lithium battery production, China's reliance on lithium imports highlights its vulnerability. It propels China to adopt an adaptive and robust strategy in the Lithium Triangle, home to nearly 60% of the world's lithium reserves. China's investment strategies are tailored to the distinct policy environments and economic contexts of each country within the triangle. In Argentina, China engages through acquisitions and equity stakes. In Chile, China forms technological partnerships aligned with national interests. In Bolivia, Chinese companies introduce capital and technology and tap into its emerging lithium sector. This approach not only ensures China's lithium supply but also promotes regional development, reflecting China's adaptive strategy in the global energy transition.



## Introduction

Energy security constitutes a key component of national security. Lithium, a critical mineral, is increasingly becoming a cornerstone in the ongoing global transition towards sustainable energy. The strategic importance of lithium is underscored by its role in the production of lithium-ion batteries. Compared with traditional battery technologies, lithium-ion batteries offer higher energy density and longer lifespan. Therefore, lithium-ion batteries serve as the essential components of mobile devices, electric vehicles, and energy storage solutions. The functionality of lithium-ion batteries plays an indispensable role in facilitating the global transition to green energy that is highly valued by nations worldwide. Thereupon, the surging demand for lithium-ion batteries has placed lithium at the forefront of national energy policy for nations.

Lithium resources play a significant role in the EV industry and allocation of global value chains. China is the largest global producer of lithium batteries and a leading player of the EV market. China houses six of the world's top ten largest battery makers. As of 2022, China boasted a battery production capacity exceeding that of the entire world combined. China's battery production capacity accounted for approximately 77% of the global in total, which is nearly 900 gigawatt-hours.<sup>①</sup> Furthermore, China contributed 64% to the global volume of electric vehicle production and 59% of global EV sales.<sup>②</sup> The dominance in the lithium-ion battery and EV industry positions China as a critical player in the global renewable energy transition. The control China exercises over a significant portion of the lithium battery market not only drives its domestic economic growth and secures its energy security but also produces a ripple effect on the global supply chain.

Despite its robust standing in both battery production and the EV industry, China still faces challenges in securing lithium resources. China heavily relies on imports, for example, in 2022 these accounted for about two-thirds of its lithium resources.<sup>③</sup> The overreliance hints at the potential vulnerability of China in its industrial supply chain and underscores the urgent necessity for Beijing to develop a comprehensive strategy to secure lithium sourcing. Therefore, China has expanded and maintained its strong footprint in the resource-abundant regions, particularly in the "Lithium Triangle" of South America; composed of Argentina, Chile, and Bolivia, the Triangle is well-known for holding nearly 60% of the world's lithium resources.<sup>④</sup> With advantageous mining conditions and resources, the Lithium Triangle has become a significant component of China's global lithium strategy. Given the divergent lithium policies in Argentina, Chile, and Bolivia, China has carried out an adaptive approach to strengthen its position in the global energy transition and to secure a solid foothold in the critical raw materials market. Consequently, China's active investments in the Lithium Triangle go beyond resource predation, dedicated to promote regional development through substantial investments in infrastructure that align with economic interest and social progression in the region.

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<sup>①</sup> Govind Bhutada, "Visualizing China's Dominance in Battery Manufacturing (2022-2027P)," *Visual Capitalist*, January 19, 2023, <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/chinas-dominance-in-battery-manufacturing/>.

<sup>②</sup> "Demand for Electric Cars Is Booming, with Sales Expected to Leap 35% This Year After a Record-Breaking 2022," *IEA*, April 26, 2023, <https://www.iea.org/news/demand-for-electric-cars-is-booming-with-sales-expected-to-leap-35-this-year-after-a-record-breaking-2022>.

<sup>③</sup> "China Expected to Increase Control Over Global Lithium and Cobalt Supply," *Institute for Energy Research*, March 22, 2023, <https://www.instituteforenergyresearch.org/international-issues/china-expected-to-increase-control-over-global-lithium-and-cobalt-supply/>.

<sup>④</sup> Scott B. MacDonald, "A New Age for South America's Lithium Triangle?" *Global Americans*, December 22, 2022, <https://theglobalamericans.org/2022/12/a-new-age-for-south-americas-lithium-triangle/>.

## Comparative Analysis of Policies in the Lithium Triangle and China's Strategies

Lithium extraction has traditionally been concentrated in Chile and Argentina, while Bolivia is also joining the development of the lithium industry in recent years. The trade volume in lithium carbonate exports from the Lithium Triangle, especially for Chile and Argentina, to China shows a significant increase as evidenced in Figure 1 and Figure 2. For instance, Chile's lithium exports to China surged from 95 million in 2019 to 6,022 million in 2022. To put it in perspective, in 2022 Chile's lithium resource exports to China constituted nearly 70% of its total exports worldwide. Argentina also saw a significant increase, with exports to China reaching 289 million in 2022, constituting roughly 42% of its global lithium exports.<sup>①</sup> Furthermore, Bolivia is actively seeking foreign investment to advance its lithium industry despite political challenges.<sup>②</sup> Bolivia has been engaging in partnerships, especially with China, to improve its production capacity and technology for lithium extraction, aiming to become a key supplier of lithium and surpass the production levels of its counterparts in Lithium Triangle. In sum, this trend demonstrates the deepening of trade relations and the growing influence of China as a primary market for lithium resources from the Lithium Triangle region.



Figure 1 (Source: Chile Customs Data)

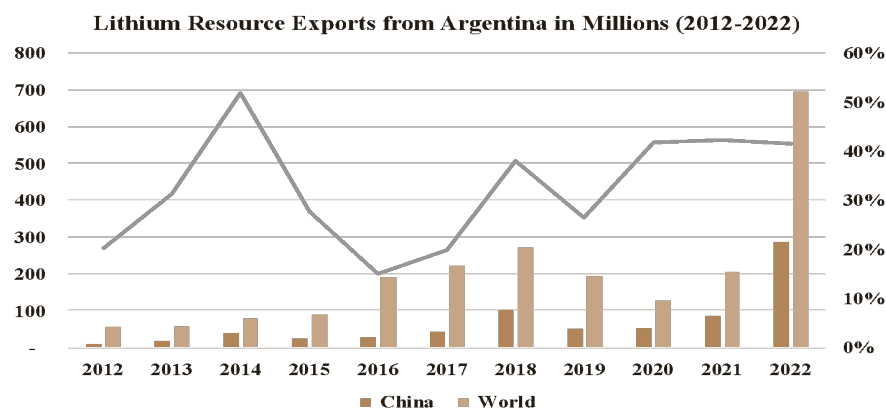


Figure 2 (Source: Argentina Customs Data)

<sup>①</sup> Delgado, Juan. "Chinese Investors Vie for Lithium Mines in Argentina." *Diálogo Americas*. November 9, 2021. <https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/chinese-investors-vie-for-lithium-mines-in-argentina/>.

<sup>②</sup> Fernando Molina, "Bolivia Signs Agreements with a Chinese and a Russian Company to Extract Lithium from Its Salt Flats," *El País*, July 1, 2023, <https://english.elpais.com/international/2023-07-01/bolivia-signs-agreements-with-a-chinese-and-a-russian-company-to-extract-lithium-from-its-salt-flats.html>.

While the Lithium Triangle is known for having abundant lithium resources, mining policies are quite different among Argentina, Chile, and Bolivia. Accordingly, China has adopted an adaptive and sustainable approach that tailors to the varying policies and economic environments of each country.

In Argentina, the government has adopted a decentralized approach to manage the mining sector. The mining jurisdiction and policy setting are being decentralized to the provinces in Argentina, which have the power to grant exploration permits and concessions to private enterprises and collect mining royalties.<sup>①</sup> Therefore, this decentralized approach enables each province to make and revise mining policies tailored to its own circumstances. Province-level government typically collects royalties that are capped at 3% of the market value of the extracted minerals, as per the Mining Investment Law No. 24,196. Under this circumstance, Chinese companies entered the Argentinean lithium market primarily through acquisitions and equity participation. For instance, Ganfeng Lithium Co., the largest Chinese lithium compounds producer, plans to acquire Argentinean private firm Lithea Inc., which owns the rights to lithium salt lakes in Argentina's mineral-rich Salta province and is expected to have an annual capacity of 30,000 tons of lithium carbonate.<sup>②</sup> Additionally, Ganfeng has a stake in the Cauchari-Olaroz project and aims to produce 40,000 tons of lithium carbonate annually. In a similar vein, one of the largest Chinese copper and gold producers, Zijing Mining company acquired in full Neo Lithium Corp., which exploits lithium in Tres Quebradas in the Argentine province of Catamarca.<sup>③</sup> In sum, the growing presence of Chinese enterprises in Argentina's lithium industry aligns with the country's strategy to boost its lithium production. As Argentina decentralized power to the province level in the mining sector, Chinese enterprises tend to enter the market through acquisitions and equity participation.

Unlike the decentralized approach carried out by Argentina, lithium concessions will not be granted to foreign firms in Chile. The Chilean government views lithium as an integral part of national construction and economic development, further emphasizing the "public-private partnership" model in the development of lithium resources.<sup>④</sup> This approach allows private enterprises to hold control over non-strategic projects while the government retains majority ownership of projects that are being considered as strategically significant. Moreover, State-owned enterprises in Chile play a major role in the entire extraction of lithium resources, whereas private or foreign enterprises, through the model of "public-private partnership", take the responsibility of contributing knowledge, expertise, and capital. Therefore, this model allows for private enterprise participation while maintaining the government's significant influence or ownership in lithium projects. Chinese enterprises adopt an adaptive approach to align with Chile's grand strategy in the lithium industry. For instance, Chinese company Tianqi Lithium, already holding a 22.16% stake in Chilean chemical company SQM, seeks to increase its participation in Chilean lithium

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<sup>①</sup> Javier Lewkowicz, "Argentina Wants to Triple Its Mining Exports, Amid Social Conflicts," *Diálogo Chino*, January 6, 2022, <https://dialogochino.net/en/extractive-industries/50042-argentina-triple-mining-exports-social-conflicts/>.

<sup>②</sup> Julieta Pelcastre, "Chinese Lithium Giant Expands Operations in Argentina," *Diálogo Americas*, August 19, 2022, <https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/chinese-lithium-giant-expands-operations-in-argentina/>.

<sup>③</sup> Juan Delgado, "Chinese Investors Vie for Lithium Mines in Argentina," *Diálogo Americas*, November 9, 2021, <https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/chinese-investors-vie-for-lithium-mines-in-argentina/>.

<sup>④</sup> Government of Chile, "National Lithium Strategy for Chile and its People," accessed January 7<sup>th</sup> 2024, <https://www.gob.cl/litioporchile/en/>.

extraction by introducing technological innovations in the lithium value chain in Chile.<sup>①</sup> Additionally, Chinese electric car maker BYD is developing a \$290 million lithium cathode battery production factory in northern Chile.<sup>②</sup> BYD's initiative is a direct response to Chile's requirements, showcasing how Chinese companies are adapting their strategies to meet the needs of countries accordingly. These investments reflect Chile's intention to align lithium development with national construction and economic development such as providing jobs and adding value to the local community.

Bolivia goes to great lengths to catch up with Argentina and Chile in the development of the lithium industry. The Bolivian government has shown a commitment to developing its lithium resources after years of political turmoil, announcing the start of a bidding process for lithium resource exploitation in 2021.<sup>③</sup> The process witnessed a significant development when CBC formally signed an agreement with Bolivia's state lithium firm YLB in 2023.<sup>④</sup> The CBC is a consortium with 66% shares held by Chinese company CATL and with 34% shares owned by another Chinese company, Luoyang Molybdenum. This deal involves an investment of \$1.4 billion for the construction of two lithium salt processing plants. The construction of these plants in the Uyuni and Oruro salt flats in southwest Bolivia was planned to begin in July 2023. In sum, given Bolivia just started attracting foreign investments in lithium resources in recent years, Chinese companies have been actively engaging in market entry and contributing capital, technology, and expertise to the country.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, China's strategic engagement in the Lithium Triangle demonstrates its adaptive approach tailored to the diverse policies and economic environments of the Lithium Triangle. In Argentina, Chinese companies are tapping into the market through acquisitions and equity purchasing in the lithium industry. Conversely, China is establishing factories and transferring technologies in order to comply with regulations in Chile, where the government tries to balance national security with lithium resource extraction. In Bolivia, the current government still positions itself in the early stage of developing lithium resources. Under these circumstances, Chinese companies take advantage of the favorable policy and environment and actively enter the new market. In sum, this underscores China's responsive and adaptive approach to foreign direct investment.

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<sup>①</sup> Fundación Andrés Bello, "China Tianqi Seeks to Increase Its Participation in Chilean Lithium Exploitation," September 26, 2023, <https://fundacionandresbello.org/en/news/chile-%F0%9F%87%A8%F0%9F%87%B1-news/china-tianqi-seeks-to-increase-its-participation-in-chilean-lithium-exploitation/>.

<sup>②</sup> Ali Rahman and Leland Lazarus, "The China-West Lithium Tango in South America," *The Diplomat*, October 23, 2023, <https://thediplomat.com/2023/10/the-china-west-lithium-tango-in-south-america/>.

<sup>③</sup> Daniel Ramos, "Bolivia Taps China, Russia's Rosatom in Bid to Unlock Huge Lithium Riches," *Reuters*, June 30, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/bolivia-seals-14-bln-lithium-deals-with-russias-rosatom-chinas-guoan-2023-06-29/>.

<sup>④</sup> Fernando Molina, "Bolivia Signs Agreements with a Chinese and a Russian Company to Extract Lithium from Its Salt Flats," *El País*, July 1, 2023, <https://english.elpais.com/international/2023-07-01/bolivia-signs-agreements-with-a-chinese-and-a-russian-company-to-extract-lithium-from-its-salt-flats.html>.

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## **Navigating the European Project: A Comparative Analysis of Greece and Portugal's Journey within the EU**

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### **Abstract**

This comparative analysis explores and compares Portugal and Greece's relationship with the European Union (EU), tracking this through history to today's contemporary context. The essay compares each nation's path to EU accession, their responses to the Eurozone crisis (Euro crisis), and current relations with Brussels. It is demonstrated that, despite their shared position as southern European nations with comparable economies and policy interests, core differences in EU relations have existed throughout each nation's history. This piece demonstrates that, at the core of these differences, is the divergent economic experiences between Greece and Portugal following accession, with Portugal enjoying steadier growth and geographical advantages compared to Greece. Moreover, in the Euro crisis context, this analysis considers the implications of seeking non-EU partnerships on greater relations with the EU, an issue particularly pertinent for both Greece and Portugal, given their shared economic relationship with China. In closing, the piece puts forth a comparison of each nation's relationship and influence within EU institutions today, in which it demonstrates that Portugal continues to 'punch above its weight' compared to Greece. Overall, in an analysis of these complicated relations dynamics, this essay provides key insights into both the opportunities and challenges facing these often-overlooked Southern European economies.

## Introduction

The historical and contemporary engagement of southern European Union (EU) member states within the European project provides a rich narrative marked by post-dictatorial consolidations of democracy, and responses to economic crises. This essay specifically seeks to present and compare the experiences of Portugal and Greece within the EU, including both their historical paths to joining and their current-day relationship with Brussels. This comparison between the two states, despite being rarely made within contemporary academia, produces a useful and relevant conclusion. Indeed, Portugal and Greece are small EU member states, both in terms of population, at around 10 million, and their economic fluctuation, each suffering greatly from the 2008 Eurozone crisis (Euro crisis). Furthermore, both their accessions to the EU represented powerful escapes from dictatorship.

This essay sets out to compare both the historical and the current relationship of Greece and Portugal with the EU's institutions, differentiating their individual experiences as southern member states, a group historically clustered together. To do so, the essay is separated into three core sections. In Section 1, we compare the historical experiences of Greece and Portugal both prior to and in the period following accession to the EU. This includes both an analysis of the immediate results on political stability and democracy, and also on each state's economy. Following this, Section 2 covers both a historical and highly current factor explicitly relevant to Greece and Portugal, the financial and Euro crisis of 2008 and beyond. In the wake of this crisis, this essay compares the approaches taken by Greece and Portugal as highly affected member states in their search for non-EU partnerships to consolidate their economies, and the ramifications this had on EU relations. In the final section, this essay compares the current dynamics between the EU and the states of interest, from a wide array of indicators including their engagement with trade and movement of persons, their influence in directing EU policy, and finally the EU's reputation within each country.

## Section 1 - Background to EU Accession

For Portugal, international cooperation began following World War II (WWII), with memberships in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). However, a period of dictatorship spanning from 1926 until the 'Revolução dos Cravos' Revolution in 1974, which kickstarted the Portuguese transition toward democracy, largely prevented any significant political arrangements with the European Economic Community (EEC). In the wake of its revolution, Portugal applied for EEC membership in March 1977, aiming to consolidate and legitimize its newfound democratic regime.<sup>①</sup> Nine years later in January 1986, Portugal officially became a member of the EEC.<sup>②</sup> This nine-year gap between applying and joining has since been blamed on the grouping together of Portugal with their Iberian neighbor Spain.<sup>③</sup> For Spain, the process of economic integration and consensus with the EEC brought much more complicated questions than Portugal's relatively straightforward blending in with the EU, including concerns from France and Italy around Spain's potential impact on the communities' existing agricultural and fishing arrangements.<sup>④</sup>

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<sup>①</sup> European Union, "Portugal – EU Member Country Profile"

<sup>②</sup> Ibid.

<sup>③</sup> Cunha, "Portugal, Spain, and Europe: From Parallelism to Capitalisation", p25–41

<sup>④</sup> Ibid.



Greece's accession to the EU spanned significantly further back than Portugal's, being that Greece initially applied to join the EEC in June 1959, but this was 'frozen' following the country's takeover by a military junta in 1967.<sup>①</sup> The fall of this military leadership, and thus re-consolidation of democracy, occurred in 1974, the same year as the Portuguese revolution. Following this, Greece reopened its EEC application in June 1975, and, in January 1981, the country formally became a member state.<sup>②</sup>

Just as with Portugal, democratic consolidation was a key focus of this alliance. Outside of democratic consolidation, for both countries, the assimilation into the EEC represented key opportunities for economic development. This occurred not only through new access to trade through the single market but also with crucial access to the cohesion fund. It is commonly believed that the EU at this time was a more "benevolent" project with its few, yet mostly rich, member states, and thus that the cohesion fund was a more plentiful and charitable source of investment for new and poorer members like Greece and Portugal.<sup>③</sup> Thus, for the EU, this period of expansion represented both a key push to maintain democratization across Europe, and also a moment which expanded it beyond a "west European club of democracies" and towards younger political and economic systems.<sup>④</sup>

### **Immediate Relations following Accession**

Following EEC accession in 1981, Greece was in a very unique position. For one, their geographical position in the southeastern part of Europe was a first for the EU, and Greece didn't share any common border with other member states. Similarly, their economy was uniquely small compared to the rest of the community, at 50% below the average.<sup>⑤</sup> Thus, while the symbolism of their membership was undeniable, both in terms of democratic consolidation and EU regional expansion, it has nonetheless been argued since that Greece "failed systematically to adjust" to the EU.<sup>⑥</sup> In terms of Greece's economic growth, the compound GDP growth rate in the period following accession from 1979-1990 was under 0.3%, and by 1987 Greece's GDP was almost identical to that of eight years prior in 1979.<sup>⑦</sup> In the same period, other EU member states – and even other southern European states like Portugal and Spain – saw compound growth well above 2%.<sup>⑧</sup>

Portugal's location in south-western Europe and border with Spain rendered it comparatively less isolated from the rest of the union. Moreover, while Portugal's economy, like Greece's, was substantially lower than the EU average when it joined the EEC, the country's economic experience in the years following this accession was comparatively less troublesome. It has been argued that the Portuguese economy became "steadier" following accession.<sup>⑨</sup> Indeed, average compound GDP growth continued firmly from the year of accession in 1986 up until 2000 at a similar level of above 2%. From this economic perspective, it would appear that the Portuguese experience in the years following their EU accession was steadier than that of their Greek counterparts. In both cases, the economic experiences of Greece and Portugal following accession

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① European Union, "Greece – EU Member Country Profile"

② Ibid.

③ Magone, "Portugal Is Not Greece", pp.346–360

④ Ibid.

⑤ Vamvakidis, "The Convergence Experience of the Greek Economy in the EU"

⑥ Tsoukalis, "Greece and the EU: a Turbulent Love affair, Now More mature?" pp.155–162

⑦ World Bank Open Data, "GDP (Current US\$) – Greece"

⑧ World Bank Open Data, "GDP (Current US\$) - Portugal"

⑨ Bação, Cerdeira, and Duarte, "Portugal in the Eurozone: Evolution and Expectations", pp.1–20

cannot be fully attributed to their new membership of the EU, but are still an important indicator, particularly in understanding the background to their EU relations.

## Section 2 - The Euro Crisis

The 2008 global financial crisis and the ensuing so-called ‘Eurozone Crisis’ continue to be remembered for their significant effects on southern European member states. It is thus a highly relevant point of comparison between Portugal and Greece, for whom the Eurozone crisis can be seen as central to their ‘historical’ relationship with the EU, yet also as a defining event of their contemporary one. Labelled the ‘PIGS,’ Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain, shared mounting debt-to-GDP ratios, banking systems in catastrophe, and required significant financial assistance from the EU to protect their economies. Indeed, this PIGS label, intended to signify states which live beyond their means and rely on EU assistance to survive, has remained a damning label for both Portugal and Greece even 15 years on from the beginning of the crisis.

From 2008 to 2015, Greece’s GDP fell from US\$355 billion to US\$195 billion.<sup>①</sup> In comparison, Portugal’s GDP fell from US\$263 billion to approximately US\$199 billion, a significant drop of 24%, but much less so when put side-by-side with the Greek’s 45% drop.<sup>②</sup> Nonetheless, both Greece and Portugal alike were forced to turn to the EU to seek a bailout. In Portugal’s case, for example, the years of ‘Troika’ from 2011-2014, in which the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the EU joined together to offer it a 78-billion-euro bailout, had an immense effect on its economy.<sup>③</sup> In the years that followed their respective bailouts, both countries implemented an “unprecedented wave of cuts, tax rises and labour market reforms,” to try to steady their economies.<sup>④</sup>

## International Trade Partners

This crisis and the resulting bailout recoveries undeniably affected the relationship these countries had with the EU, and a great illustration of this can be seen in the ensuing desire for Greece and Portugal to look beyond their EU partners to find trading alliances. Within recent scholarly work detailing the de-Europeanization process, it has been argued that, due to the limited interest of Western investors, Greece and Portugal followed similar patterns as one another, both looking to form agreements with investors from developing countries.<sup>⑤</sup> In Greece’s case, this was predominantly Chinese investors, while in Portugal’s case, this was both their Lusophone partners in Angola and Brazil in addition to Chinese investors. In either case, the pursuit of these foreign investors was seen as an important method in alleviating the economic suffering brought about by the crisis. Notably, in the Portuguese example, the pursuit of improved trade relations with South America and Africa was not in and of itself a threat to the EU. On the contrary, during previous council presidencies such as that in 2007, Portugal has worked to upgrade Brussels’ economic relations with Africa and Brazil as a whole.<sup>⑥</sup>

The same may not however be said for China, and a strong bond with China has been argued to risk incentivizing “Athens and Lisbon to contest common EU positions.”<sup>⑦</sup> For Portugal, a unique bond to China was formed through a centuries-long ownership of Macao and a

<sup>①</sup> World Bank Open Data, “GDP (Current US\$) – Greece”

<sup>②</sup> World Bank Open Data, “GDP (Current US\$) - Portugal”

<sup>③</sup> Goncalves, Sergio, and Khalip, “Portugal faces tough road under 78 billion Euro bailout”

<sup>④</sup> Zartaloudis, “The financial crisis has badly damaged the Greek and Portuguese welfare states”

<sup>⑤</sup> Raimundo, Stavridis, and Tsardanidis, “The Eurozone crisis’ impact”, pp.535–550

<sup>⑥</sup> Robinson, “Painting the CFSP in national colours”, pp.235–255

<sup>⑦</sup> Raimundo, Stavridis, and Tsardanidis, “The Eurozone crisis’ impact”, pp.535–550

comparatively straightforward handover back to China. One of the most staggering examples of this relationship in action occurred during the height of the economic crisis, when, in 2012, Portugal sold a 21% stake in its dominant electricity supplier to Chinese state-owned enterprise (SOE), Three Gorges, for US\$3.4 billion.<sup>①</sup> Greece also proved to be very reliant on Chinese investment during this period, making a number of different major investments in Greece across real estate and energy. A significant instance of this was the 2016 selling of Greece's most major port, Piraeus, to Chinese SOE Cosco at a 66% stake.<sup>②</sup>

Crucially, despite both countries taking advantage of major non-EU investment opportunities during a time of economic crisis, it can further be argued that Greece's relationship with China may have brought about more issues to their EU relations when compared with the Portuguese. For example, in 2017, Greece blocked an EU statement at the United Nations (UN) which criticised China's human rights record.<sup>③</sup> Furthermore, it has been argued since that Greece has continued to use the 'China Connection' as a bargaining tool during bailout negotiations with the EU, pitting one side against the other.<sup>④</sup> Indeed, as of 2023, Portugal has carefully followed the EU position regarding China, and has threatened to pull out of the Belt and Road Initiative should China support the Russian effort against Ukraine, while Greece has yet to follow suit.

### Section 3 – Contemporary EU Relations

#### Trade and Persons

We now move to compare the current relationship which Greece and Portugal as member states have with the institutions in Brussels including in trade, influence, and public plus political relations. According to the EU's own figures, Portugal's intra-EU trade accounts for 71% of exports and 75% of imports, with their strongest EU trade partner by a huge margin being Spain.<sup>⑤</sup> Greece's trade structure differs from this quite heavily, being that only 57% of exports and 57% of imports are intra-EU, and they have no standout trade partner within the EU in the same way as Portugal.<sup>⑥</sup> Portugal is thus arguably a more significant trade partner to the EU, likely helped by its location, while Greece, in comparison, possesses more significant trade partnerships with non-EU nations like China and Turkey.

As for the movement of persons, Portugal and Greece both have high levels of EU emigration. According to the UN Emigration Stock, as of 2020, 2 million Portuguese nationals live outside of Portugal, who have the highest rate of emigration in the EU (20% of the population) while for Greece this number is around 1 million.<sup>⑦</sup> In both cases, the overwhelming majority of these emigrants reside in the EU. Similar to the country's influence with trade, Portugal's foothold in the EU appears stronger in terms of the raw number of its citizens who reside across it.

#### Influence across the EU

Due to their relatively small economies and populations in comparison to EU heavyweights like Germany or France, the potential sphere of influence for Portugal and Greece is limited in the EU. Both nations have previously been heavily involved in discussions surrounding issues of

<sup>①</sup> Bugge, "China Three Gorges buys EDP stake for 2.7 billion euros"

<sup>②</sup> Bali, "In Greece's Largest Port of Piraeus, China Is the Boss"

<sup>③</sup> Smith, "Greece Blocks EU's Criticism at UN of China's Human Rights Record"

<sup>④</sup> Raimundo, Stavridis, and Tsardanidis, "The Eurozone crisis' impact", pp.535–550

<sup>⑤</sup> European Union, "Portugal – EU Member Country Profile"

<sup>⑥</sup> European Union, "Greece – EU Member Country Profile"

<sup>⑦</sup> Perista and Carrilho, "Portugal: High and Rising Emigration"

migration and climate change, and for which both have called for a united EU approach. In terms of migration, Portugal and Greece are situated on the “soft underbelly” of the EU, which places them at the crossroads of heavily used Mediterranean migration pathways from the global south and east.<sup>①</sup> Indeed, issues of migration have been particularly problematic for Greece, whose islands have, in the past, become home to many thousands of temporarily placed migrants and refugee camps. Greece and Brussels have collaborated in seeking to quell the issues brought about by this, including a 700-million-euro package pledged by the EU in 2020 to assist in Greece’s border management and infrastructure.<sup>②</sup> Moreover, with respect to climate change, both Greece and Portugal have been historically affected by wildfires, having damaging effects on their wildlife and tourism-centered economies. The EU has frequently been at the forefront of assisting such instances, with both relief funds and also equipment such as firefighting aircraft.<sup>③</sup>

Nonetheless, while their key EU policy interests have often aligned, it can be argued that out of the two, Portugal has more so been the one to “punch above its weight” in influencing direction.<sup>④</sup> The largest example of such is likely to be the Lisbon Treaty, which was argued to have been “rescued” under the Portuguese EU presidency in 2007, and which served to heavily strengthen the EU’s institutional framework and legal powers.<sup>⑤</sup> Moreover, crucial names in the EU apparatus have come from Portugal, including head of the Commission from 2004–2014, Jose Manuel Barroso. In comparison, Greece has very few notable examples of pioneering policy or contributing significant leaders, though this dynamic may well change as Greece, like Portugal, continues to recover and grow economically.

### Overall EU Relationship

We lastly shift to compare the stability of current relations between Greece and Portugal with the EU, including both their political and citizen-led perceptions of EU institutions. As has been widely documented, the 2008 recession and subsequent Eurozone crisis resulted in large swathes of political realignment and upswings in Euroscepticism and/or populism.<sup>⑥</sup> In Greece, while Euroscepticism can be said to “remain soft in character,” it has nonetheless been a prominent aspect of Greek politics in recent years.<sup>⑦</sup> The Syriza-ANEL coalition, a cooperative political party between radical left and populist right wing members, was elected in 2015 and ran on a platform of continued Euroscepticism, which frequently hit out at Brussels for the terms of their bailout agreement. In contrast however, the current Greek leader, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, has maintained a positive relationship with the EU, going as far as to earn him the title ‘Brussels’ darling.’<sup>⑧</sup> In the Portuguese context, despite public discontent with the EU during the height of the euro crisis, relations have remained largely stable and positive. Portugal today seems to have been the ‘exception to the rule’ of southern Europe, with no populist Eurosceptic party emerging and finding success in the years following their bailout.

It is also evident that the Portuguese citizenry share the current government’s approval of the EU. Indeed, when contrasted with Greece and even the EU average, public perception today of Brussels remains remarkably high in Portugal. According to a Spring 2023 Eurobarometer

① Triandafyllidou, “Migration Policy in Southern Europe”

② European Commission, “Commission Presents Action Plan for Immediate Measures to Support Greece”

③ European Commission, “EU Mobilises Its Firefighting Fleet to Help Portugal”

④ Möller, “Portugal: A good European in search of friends”

⑤ Ibid.

⑥ Saoulidou and Sarantidis, “Populist Euroscepticism in time of economic crisis”

⑦ Katsanidou and Lefkofridi, “A Decade of Crisis in the European Union: Lessons from Greece”

⑧ The Economist, “Greece Is a European Success Story”

report, 67% of Portuguese Citizens are “satisfied with the way democracy works in the EU,” which can be compared to a lower EU average of 54%.<sup>①</sup> Moreover, when quizzed on specific policies, in all but one policy program (economic and social recovery), Portuguese citizens have expressed well above the EU-average approval rate. As for Greek citizens, answers showed high disapproval compared to the Portuguese position, with only 34% of citizens expressing satisfaction with democracy in the EU.<sup>②</sup> Furthermore, they expressed average to well below-average satisfaction with every policy area mentioned.<sup>③</sup> Of course, it should be noted that these statistics do not necessarily reflect these member states political relationships with Brussels, though they may influence them. Nonetheless, in comparing the two, satisfaction with the EU is evidently higher amongst the Portuguese citizenry than the Greek one.

## Conclusion

In exploring the historical and contemporary narratives of Portugal and Greece, this comparative essay has revealed the similarities and discrepancies that have defined and continue to define their respective relationships with the EU. We firstly have demonstrated how both states came to join the EU in very similar contexts of democratic consolidation. However, almost immediately following accession, Greece’s stagnant economic situation more so than created significant questions for the EU more so than for Portugal. Furthermore, while Portugal experienced heavy blows in the Euro crisis and had to look abroad for investment, it nonetheless maintained an overall deference to the EU’s foreign policy. In contrast, Greece, having faced more formidable challenges from the crisis, both sought out and potentially leveraged their China relationship, creating potential problems in their relationship with Brussels to this day. Continuing this direction, while both member states have a powerful trade and social interest in the EU, we showed this relationship to be stronger between Portugal and the EU, as is the influence of Portugal on the EU as a whole. Finally, we conveyed that while Euroscepticism on a governmental level is at bay in both countries, the Portuguese citizenry today show a much higher approval of the EU compared to Greece, of whom the citizenry currently express significant disapproval.

To note, while these findings cannot necessarily be wholly generalized to all other states, they nonetheless can serve as indicators for the experiences of the EU’s southern, peripheral and/or smaller economies. Some areas of discussion within this essay invite further research. These could include a larger comparative study on the effects of the Euro crisis on member states’ relationships with the EU today, and equally issues such as the ramifications of EU member states continuing to have strong relations with China.

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<sup>①</sup> Europa.eu, “2023 Spring Eurobarometer”

<sup>②</sup> Ibid.

<sup>③</sup> Ibid.

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## **Examining Support for Pro-Integrationist Parties in the EU: Country and Socio-Demographic Dynamics Leading up to the 2024 Election**

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### **Abstract**

With the 2024 EU parliament elections looming, speculation abounds regarding potential outcomes, especially concerning the rise of right-wing and traditionally Eurosceptic parties. POLITICO's recent polling analysis suggests a possible shift in favor of anti-integrationist parties, posing questions about the future trajectory of EU politics. To address these concerns, this essay aims to delve into the underlying dynamics shaping voter preferences and party support. The essay primarily focuses on understanding the support base for integrationist parties such as Renew Europe, Greens/European Free Alliance, and The Left. Through an analysis of historical electoral data and socio-demographic trends, it seeks to uncover the key factors driving voter allegiance. Furthermore, by examining case studies from Estonia and France, the essay aims to test the hypothesis that socio-demographic groups with high human capital or aligned issue preferences are most likely to support integrationist parties. In challenging media speculation, this essay seeks to provide a more nuanced understanding of how recent geopolitical events, such as the Ukraine conflict, may impact voter sentiment. By exploring the complex interplay between socio-demographic factors, issue preferences, and political party support, this research offers insights into the potential outcomes of the 2024 EU parliament elections and the broader trajectory of European politics. However, it should be noted that any future projections are based on inference and are limited by the fact that the study only examines the circumstances in two EU countries.

## Introduction

With the 2024 EU parliament elections coming up next summer, political analysts have already begun speculating about potential election outcomes. The latest polling analysis by POLITICO's Research and Analysis Division argues that right-wing and traditionally Eurosceptic political parties look set to do well in the 2024 elections.<sup>①</sup> POLITICO poll data from November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, indicates that centrist and integrationist parties could lose seats across the board, while gains are made by the more anti-integrationist parties, such as the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) and Identity and Democracy (ID) that were predicted to gain 19 and 6 seats respectively.<sup>②</sup>

As journalists Julian Wettengel and Alice Hancock point out, changing issue preferences might be a determining factor, eroding voter support among the key countries and socio-demographic groups who backed the pro-integrationist parties in the 2019 EU election.<sup>③</sup> Key issues include the war in Ukraine, rising living costs, immigration, and energy concerns.<sup>④</sup> But in order to determine if there is any truth to this media speculation, it is important to first understand 1.) Which countries usually support the traditionally more integrationist political parties, 2.) Which key socio-demographic groups in these countries vote for these parties, and 3.) Would changing issue preferences significantly affect the way that they vote?

With the exception of the two largest parties in the EU parliament – the European People's Party (EPP) and the Socialist and Democrats (S&D), both of whom are associated with a more centrist yet integrationist stance – there are three other parties that have traditionally pushed for deeper political, economic, and social integration within the European Union. These are: Renew Europe (formerly the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, ALDE), the Greens/European Free Alliance, and The Left (also known as GUE/NGL). Although the positions of political parties can evolve, and individual members within a party may have varying opinions on EU integration, these three parties continue to speak from a platform of pro-EU integration in the lead-up to the 2024 elections. The Left is advocating for a “socially equitable and sustainable Europe” with the EU becoming “a project of people” rather than “a project of the elites”.<sup>⑤</sup> The Greens/EFA are calling for “a comprehensive transformation of Europe” to make the union “more socially, economically and environmentally resilient”.<sup>⑥</sup> And, Renew Europe is hoping to reunite Europe through “a genuine and deep process of integration of all European countries, from East to West and from North to South”.<sup>⑦</sup>

In this essay, I will first determine which EU countries the three more integrationist parties, Renew Europe, the Greens/EFL, and The Left (henceforth referred to as the “pro-integrationist parties”), have traditionally been able to rely on for support. Using EU Parliament election data from 1994 onwards, the essay compares electoral results across the 27 member states to establish which countries voted for the most MEPs from the pro-integrationist parties, as well as the percentage of the electorate that voted for them. I have chosen to exclude elections prior to 1994 because Renew Europe (initially known as the European Liberals and Reformists, then renamed to ALDE) had not yet been established. The first section concludes that during the period 1994-

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<sup>①</sup> Camut, “Right-wing gains”

<sup>②</sup> Politico, “EU Parliament elections projection”; and European Parliament, “2019 European election results”

<sup>③</sup> Wettengel, “Lookahead to 2024”; and Hancock, “Europe’s largest political party”

<sup>④</sup> Hancock, “Europe’s largest political party”

<sup>⑤</sup> The Left, “About the Group”

<sup>⑥</sup> The Greens/EFA “What we stand for”; and The Greens/EFA, “What world do we want”

<sup>⑦</sup> Renew Europe, “Europe is our future”

2019, North and Western European member states were the ones most likely to support the pro-integrationist parties.

The second part of the essay attempts to analyse which socio-demographic groups within these countries are most receptive towards Renew Europe, the Greens/EFL, and The Left. After reviewing the existing literature on the various factors that cause some groups to favour integration more than others, I find that the most popular argument – that higher human capital increases integrationist sentiment – is best supported by the reality of the voter landscape. This argument centres on the theory that individuals from better socio-economic backgrounds or those who have enjoyed higher levels of education have greater access to economic opportunities within the EU single market, are more able to move within the Schengen Area, and have more opportunities to participate in the cultural exchange, thus increasing integrationist sentiment. However, levels of human capital are not always enough to explain which socio-demographic groups vote for the pro-integrationist parties. I therefore propose the following hypothesis: Socio-demographic groups with high human capital (e.g. wealth, educational background etc.) OR strongly aligned issue preferences are the most likely to support the three pro-integrationist parties.

I will test this hypothesis using Estonia and France as case studies, drawing on a combination of secondary literature, election data, and government data to evaluate the significance of these variables. The results indicate that the recent media speculation about changing issue preferences eroding support for the pro-integrationist parties may be unfounded as recent developments, such as the conflict in Ukraine, might actually prove to be catalysts for greater alignment, increasing support for these parties in the 2024 election.

### **Which countries support traditionally more integrationist political parties?**

To establish which countries are the most supportive of the pro-internationalist parties, let us first look at the results of the 2019 EU parliament elections. During these elections the Greens-EFA ran an agenda focused on climate change and social justice, saying “no to a Europe of Nationalisms” and celebrating EU unification.<sup>①</sup> Renew Europe (ALDE) also pushed back against “nationalism and growing authoritarianism”, claiming all Europeans are “children of European history” and need to cooperate to achieve freedom, opportunity, and prosperity.<sup>②</sup> Meanwhile, the Left stressed the need to overcome the shortcomings of a capitalist system to “build a Europe of peoples”, while protecting the environment and encouraging peace.<sup>③</sup> In this regard, positive messaging about further integration of the EU was present in all three of the party manifestos, albeit framed in different ways.

The 2019 election results were a scoop for Renew Europe, the Greens/EFA, and The Left, who collectively won a total of 223 seats, over 20% more seats than their previous record of 175 seats in 2009.<sup>④</sup> Although The Left lost ground, winning only 41 seats in 2019 compared to 52 in 2014, some political analysts attribute this to a failure to differentiate the party’s strategy from that of the more moderate integrationist parties.<sup>⑤</sup> These losses were more than compensated for by the significant gains made by the Greens/EFA (74 seats, representing an increase of 24 from the 2014 election) and Renew Europe (108 seats, representing an increase of 41 from the 2014 election).<sup>⑥</sup>

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<sup>①</sup> The Greens/EFA, “*Adopted EGP Manifesto 2019*”, p1

<sup>②</sup> The Left, “Reset Europe, go left!”, p4

<sup>③</sup> ALDE, “*Freedom, opportunity, prosperity*”, p1

<sup>④</sup> For the 2019 election results for the 3 the pro-internationalist parties, please see Appendix 1.

<sup>⑤</sup> Jacobin, “Four reasons the European Left lost”

<sup>⑥</sup> Please see Appendix 1 and 2

The most impressive increases were seen in France (+22), the UK (+21), Germany (+13), Romania (+7), Czechia (+3) and Denmark (+3).<sup>①</sup> To illustrate which countries were most supportive of the pro-internationalist parties, the collective election results have been organised into two graphs.

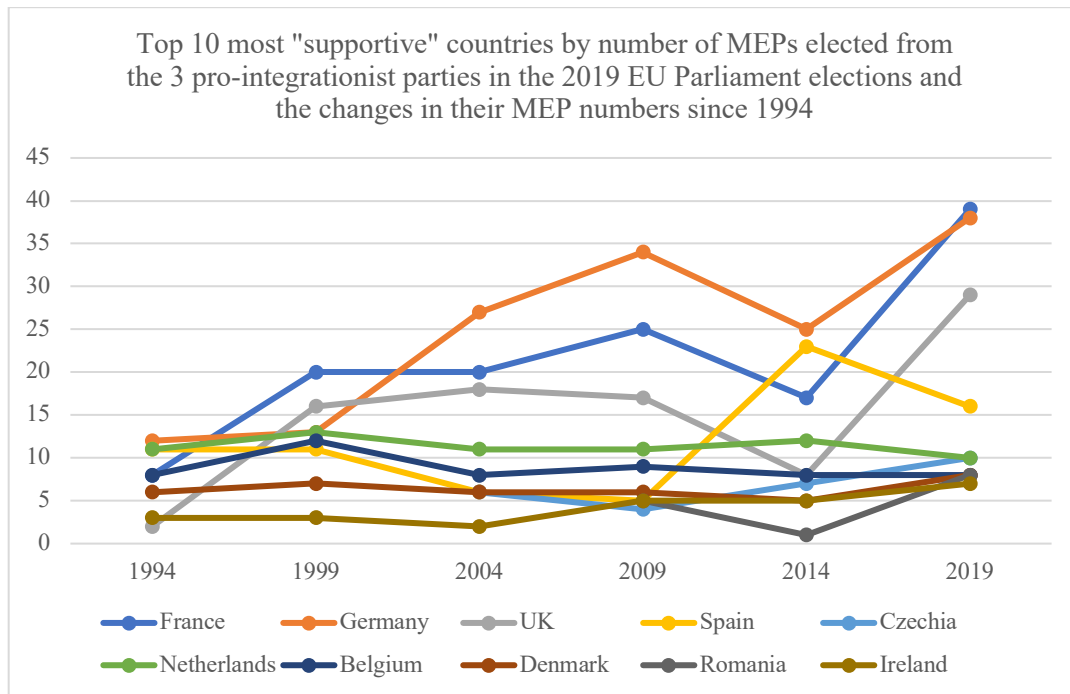


Figure 1

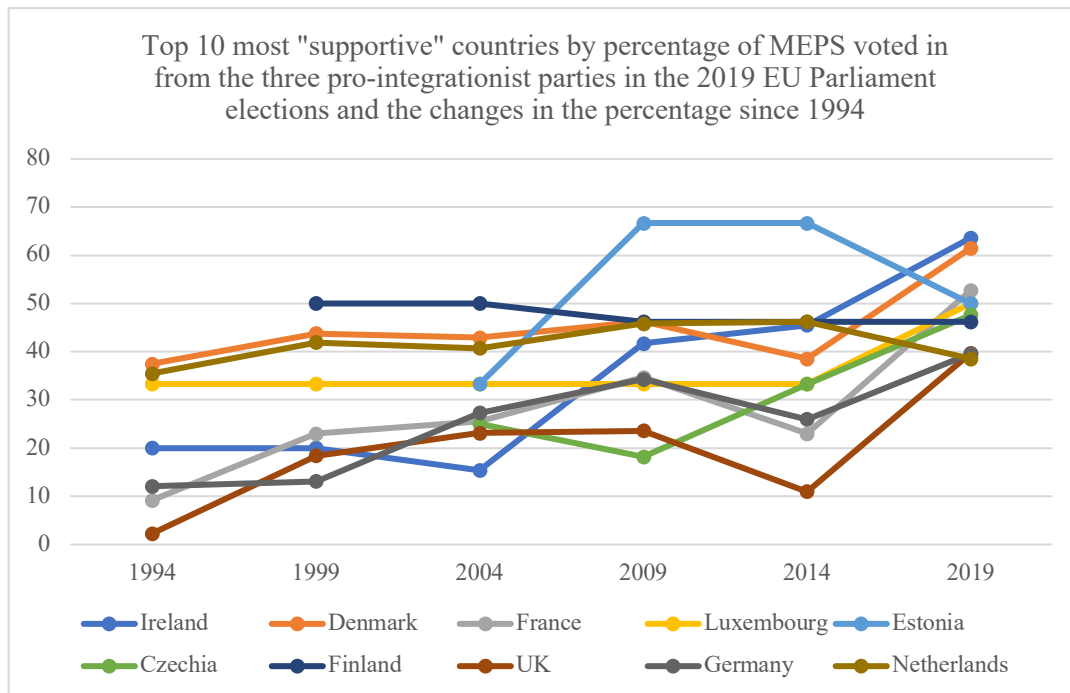


Figure 2

<sup>①</sup> See Appendix 1 and 2

Figure 1 shows the top ten most supportive countries per the number of MEPs elected in the 2019 elections. As EU member states with larger populations naturally have more MEPs due to regressive proportionality, this essay also notes the top ten most supportive countries per the percentage of MEPs voted in from the pro-integrationist parties, as shown in Figure 2. The election results for prior elections from 1994 onwards are shown to illustrate the changes in support over time.

With the exception of Italy where voters did not have the option to elect representatives from any of the three integrationist parties during the period in question due to Italian electoral law, all of the original European Coal and Steel Community members are represented in either Figure 1 or Figure 2, or both.<sup>①</sup> The three states that joined the EU during its first expansion in 1973 are also present, namely Denmark, Ireland, and the UK.<sup>②</sup> It is thus arguable that the electorate of the oldest, or “core”, EU member states are more supportive of the traditionally integrationist political parties than more recent joiners. However, a closer look at Figure 2 shows that the most consistently supportive states – here defined as countries whose percentage of MEPS elected from the pro-integrationist parties did not drop below 30% during the time period – are Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, and Estonia. As Estonia and Finland did not join the EU until 1999 and 2004 respectively, they are peripheral rather than “core” EU states and so do not fit within an explanation that is based on having a “core” EU identity. If we look at a map of the most supportive countries by percentage of electoral votes, as shown in Figure 3, it appears to be better to define them geographically as North and Western EU states, as indeed the Economist has done when discussing support for green parties within the EU.<sup>③</sup> Such a grouping ignores outliers such as Cyprus, but does include the majority of the countries that are most supportive of the pro-integrationist parties.

Percentage of MEPS elected from the three pro-integrationist parties in the 1994, 1999, 2009, and 2019 EU Parliament Elections

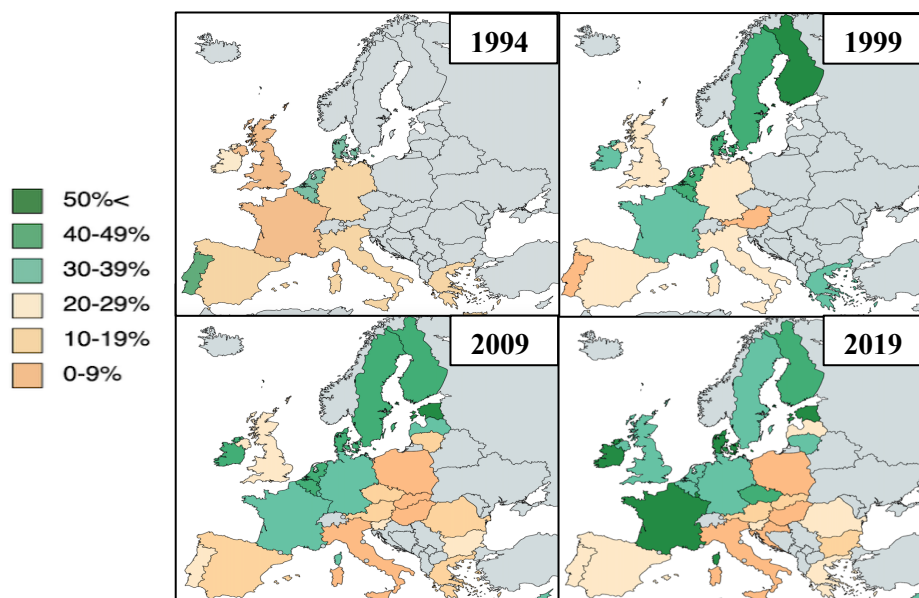


Figure 3

<sup>①</sup> Green European Journal, “How Greens Plan to Survive”

<sup>②</sup> European Parliament, “40 Years of Enlargements”

<sup>③</sup> Economist Intelligence, “Green politics in Europe”

### Which key socio-demographic groups support the integrationist parties?

Assessing voter support among different socio-demographic groups is highly complex as interconnected factors can profoundly influence voter behaviour, including demographics, geography, culture, historical voting habits, electoral systems, media influence, and issue preferences. When assessing integrationist sentiment in the EU, scholars have often focused on determining whether individuals who favour further integration do so because they have a stronger sense of European identity as opposed to national identity or because they stand to benefit more economically from integration.

Over the years, the identity argument has proven challenging to ratify empirically as many Europeans now claim multiple national identities and, in some cases, European and National identities can be mutually reinforcing with a strong national identity leading to a stronger European identity and vice versa.<sup>①</sup> In contrast, the argument that economic factors influence pro-integrationist sentiment among individuals has been much easier to back with data. In 1998, Gabel argued that support for integration depends on the economic welfare that individuals expect to derive from the EU, with those best placed to benefit economically, socially or politically favouring integration the most.<sup>②</sup> This argument builds upon Gabel's 1995 work that used OECD data on EC trade from 1973–1989 to test the effects of international trade interests, security concerns, and demographic characteristics on support for EU integration. This study found that citizens were most likely to support further integration if their country's trade and security interests were protected by EU membership, and they themselves stood to benefit from the freer movement of goods, labour, and money.<sup>③</sup> Hooghe and Marks have elaborated on this idea, arguing that in wealthier member states, the citizens with the most human capital (i.e. high-level of education, capital, and network connections) would be most likely to benefit and so would be pro-integrationist, while in poorer member states the reverse would be true, with workers favouring integration and elites being Eurosceptic.<sup>④</sup> Later scholars, like Praprotnik and Perlot, have also tried to plug some of the gaps in this economic-focused explanation of pro-integration sentiment.<sup>⑤</sup> They point out that European Social Capital – defined as trust in other Europeans, norms, and networks – should be considered in addition to human capital when analysing favourable opinions towards EU integration.<sup>⑥</sup>

According to Eurostat data, the North and Western EU countries identified as most supportive of the pro-integrationist parties are, on average, the wealthiest states in the European Union.<sup>⑦</sup> Citizens of these countries have high levels of human capital, so this might well be a driving factor behind the pro-integrationist sentiment at an individual level. However, as Praprotnik and Perlot point out, wealth and human capital alone cannot explain the desire for further integration.<sup>⑧</sup> A 2019 poll by the Pew Research Centre found that the countries that hold the most favourable opinions of the EU and would like more integration were Poland and Lithuania, neither of which are wealthy EU states or strong supporters of the pro-integrationist

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① Citrin, "Can Europe Exist without Europeans"; Klandermans, "Inclusiveness of Identification"; and Cram, "Identity and European Integration"

② Gabel, "Interests and Integration", p4

③ Gabel, "Understanding Variation", p12

④ Hooghe, "Identity or Economic Rationality", p415

⑤ Praprotnik and Perlot, "More or less integration?", p152

⑥ Praprotnik and Perlot, "More or less integration?", p152

⑦ Eurostat, "GDP per capita"

⑧ Praprotnik and Perlot, "More or less integration?", p151

parties.<sup>①</sup> Lithuania is a moderate supporter, with 4 out of its 11 seats going to pro-integrationist MEPs in 2019, while Poland did not elect any pro-integrationist MEPs.<sup>②</sup> Electoral differences partially explain this discrepancy – Renew Europe, the Greens/EFL, and The Left don't maintain a presence in every member state, meaning that some EU members, including Poland, cannot vote for MEPs from these parties at all. However, as these examples show, there is more to pro-integrationist sentiment than the desire for individuals to benefit economically from greater integration. This essay, therefore, will examine the hypothesis that *Socio-demographic groups with a) high human capital (e.g. wealth, educational background, etc) OR b) strongly aligned issue preferences are the most likely to support the three pro-integrationist parties*. Estonia – the country that achieved the highest percentage of MEPS from the pro-integrationist parties during the time period (see Figure 2) – and France – the country that elected the largest number of pro-integrationist MEPs in one election cycle (see Figure 1) have been selected to test this hypothesis as they represent the most extreme case studies of pro-integrationist support.

### Estonia

In the 2009 and 2014 elections, two-thirds of Estonia's six seats in the EU Parliament went to pro-integrationist parties, with voters consistently backing MEPS from Renew Europe (ALDE) in all elections while also voting in representatives from the Greens/EFL in 2009 and 2014.<sup>③</sup> This represents the highest percentage of MEPs voted in from the pro-integrationist parties in all EU countries. If we dive deeper to identify specific socio-demographic groups, Estonian pro-integrationist voters are highly concentrated in the counties with the highest income per employee, supporting part a) of the hypothesis that individuals with high human capital more likely to support the three pro-integrationist parties. This is evident from a comparison of the 2019 election results across the 15 counties of Estonia (Figure 4) against a map of gross income by employee (Figure 5), which shows that pro-integrationist support is concentrated in counties with the wealthiest, most developed urban areas. Such findings are not unique as similar trends are found throughout Europe, as shown by the work of prior scholars like Gabel (1998).

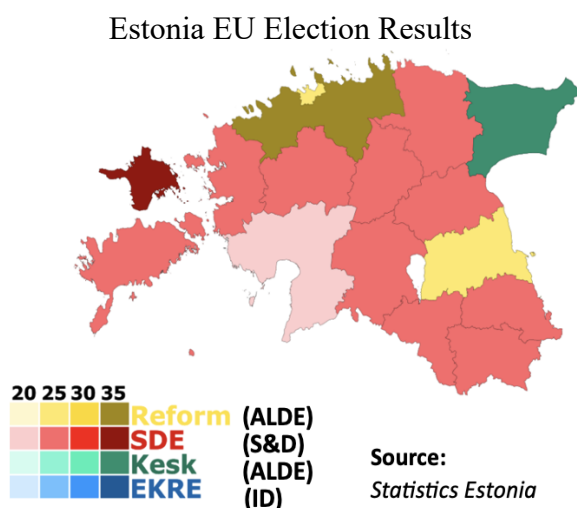


Figure 4

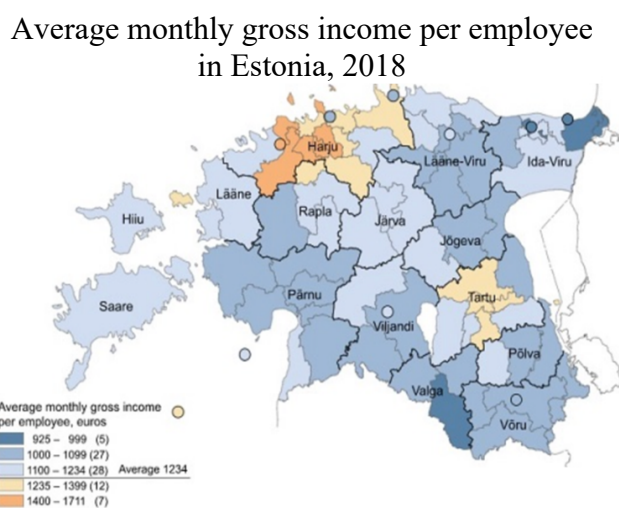


Figure 5

<sup>①</sup> Pew Research Centre, “European public opinion poll”

<sup>②</sup> European Parliament. “2019 European election results”

<sup>③</sup> Figure 2; Appendix 2 and 3

However, Estonia's poorest county, Ida-Viru, also voted for an ALDE (Renew Europe) MEP, showing that wealth is not the only factor at play here, bringing us to part b) of the hypothesis: strongly aligned issue preferences. Ida-Viru's population are predominantly Russian speakers (88%), which, given the county's shared border with Russia, brings with it certain security concerns.<sup>①</sup> Membership of the EU provides Estonia with a security umbrella and a sense of stability, particularly given the EU's commitment to common defence policies, which may be particularly appealing to Ida-Viru residents. Additionally, Ida-Viru is also home to Estonia's shale-gas industry, accounting for 50% of Estonia's greenhouse gas emissions, meaning that Ida-Viru is a key interest group when it comes to furthering the clean energy transition.<sup>②</sup> Due to this unique mix of environmental and security concerns, the EU Commission has taken a particular interest in Ida-Viru and has supported the county with financial aid. For example, in 2018 the EU Commission paid for five large-scale infrastructure projects, including the building and restoring roads along the Estonia-Russia border in Ida-Viru.<sup>③</sup> It is possible that the desire for further EU support on the issues of security and climate change may be why Ida-Viru voted for an MEP from a pro-integrationist party. If that is the case, the residents of Ida-Viru have been well-rewarded because the EU Commission has radically increased support for the country since Russia began military activities in Ukraine. In October 2022, Ursula von der Leyen visited Narva in Ida-Viru, where it was announced that Estonia will receive €354 million in EU grants to diversify the economy of Ida-Viru County away from oil and shale-gas, with plans to upskill 11,000 local workers and create new high value-added jobs in the renewable energy sector.<sup>④</sup>

The trend towards greater pro-integrationist support can also be seen throughout Estonia as a whole. In the March 2023 elections, record numbers of voters re-elected ALDE (Renew Europe) party member Prime Minister Kaja Kallas with 31.2% of the vote, 15% more than the second-largest party.<sup>⑤</sup> Kallas received more personal votes than any other Estonian politician in history.<sup>⑥</sup> Meanwhile, ALDE member Eesti Keskerakond now heads up the third-largest party in the Estonian parliament. Although it is impossible to determine the extent to which this trend is motivated by the war in Ukraine as opposed to a "Kallas effect", it is more than likely a combination of both factors. Therefore, if these national results are any predictor of how Estonians will vote in the EU parliament elections, Estonia might be set to return to a two-thirds majority of EU parliament MEPs being voted in from the pro-integrationist parties.

## France

In the 2019 elections, France voted in 39 MEPs from the pro-integrationist parties, comprising of 21 MEPS for Renew Europe, 12 for the Greens/EFA, and 6 for GUE/NGL.<sup>⑦</sup> Although these results are no doubt bolstered by the political success of Emmanuel Macron in 2017, France has always ranked in the top three most supportive EU countries since the 1999 elections, as shown in Figure 1. France was also the third most supportive country, after Ireland and Denmark, in terms of the percentage of MEPS voted in from the three pro-integrationist parties in the 2019 EU Parliament elections, as seen in Figure 2. France has been historically considered one of the more pro-integrationist countries in the EU since it was France that sought to unite with

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<sup>①</sup> Estonian World, "EU to support Estonia"

<sup>②</sup> European Commission, "€354 million for Estonia"

<sup>③</sup> ERR News, "Estonia-Russia cross-border projects"

<sup>④</sup> European Commission, "€354 million for Estonia"

<sup>⑤</sup> ALDE, "Liberals win in Estonia"

<sup>⑥</sup> ALDE, "Liberals win in Estonia"

<sup>⑦</sup> European Parliament. "2019 European election results"



Germany as part of the European Coal and Steel community to bring about lasting peace in Europe following the devastating effects of World War II.<sup>①</sup> However, as with Estonia, pro-integrationist support is concentrated around the wealthier, more developed urban areas like Paris, Lyon, and Bordeaux, as seen in Figure 6.

2019 EU Parliament Election Results in France

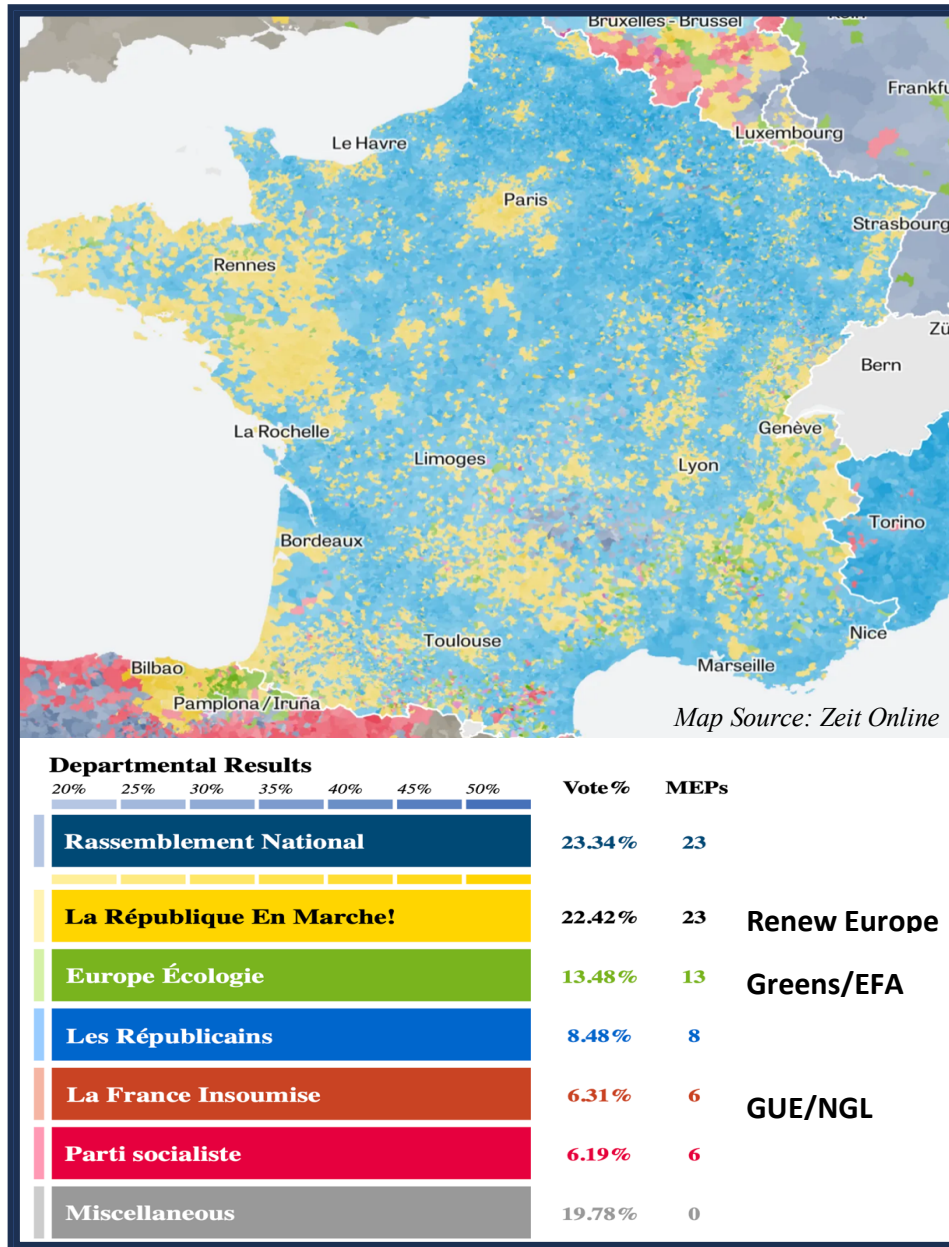


Figure 6

To test the relevance of issue preferences in France, let us look at support for the Green party. In the 2019 elections, 13.48% of the vote went to the Greens, resulting in them finishing

<sup>①</sup> European Union, “Schuman declaration”

ahead of the Les Républicains party. Although a surprise to pollsters that expected the party to garner around 7% of the vote, the success of the Greens reflects a peak in interest in environmental issues ahead of the elections, with EU barometer data indicating that French citizens listing the environment or climate change as one of the top two issues facing the EU was at a combined all-time high of 40% in spring 2019.<sup>①</sup> Greens voters, mostly concentrated in or near wealthier urban areas, therefore displayed both attributes a) *high human capital* and b) *strongly aligned issue preferences*, making them more likely to support the pro-integrationist party than media pollsters predicted. Given that the European Investment Bank's latest climate survey from 2022 indicated that French citizens rank climate change (47%) as the second greatest challenge they are facing after inflation (52%), this confluence of the two variables may lead to continued support for the Greens in the 2024 elections.

### Conclusion

This essay finds that the three traditionally more integrationist political parties – Renew Europe, the Greens/EFA, and The Left – are most likely to find supportive voter bases in the North and Western EU states. Within these states, the socio-demographic groups that are most likely to support the pro-integrationist parties are those that have the most human capital, hence the parties did very well among the wealthier, urban residents in Estonia and France. However, issue preferences that are strongly aligned with the pro-integrationist parties' core policies are also drivers of support. Although the media pollsters indicate that pro-integrationist parties might lose seats in 2024 due to the changing issue preferences of voters, this is not necessarily the case. In Estonia, changing issue preferences due to the war in Ukraine and energy concerns might cement, rather than weaken, the country's already strong support for the pro-integrationist parties. Meanwhile in France, the issue of climate change that drove support for the Greens in 2019 remains a strong issue preference among the voting population. Such findings show that it is premature of the media to call the European 2024 elections in favour of the anti-integrationist parties, especially when centrist and pro-integrationist parties are still front of mind for many EU voters.

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<sup>①</sup> Eurobarometer, “Spring 2019 - Factsheets France”

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## Appendix:

## 1. 2019 EU Parliament Election Results for the three Pro-internationalist Parties

	GUE/NGL 41	Greens/EFA 74	Renew Europe 108	Total 223		Country total MEPS	% Intergrationalist
Austria	0	2	1	3		18	16.7%
Belgium	1	3	4	8		21	38.1%
Bulgaria	0	0	3	3		17	17.6%
Croatia	0	0	1	1		11	9.1%
Cyprus	2	0	0	2		6	33.3%
Czechia	1	3	6	10		21	47.6%
Denmark	1	2	5	8		13	61.5%
Estonia	0	0	3	3		6	50.0%
Finland	1	2	3	6		13	46.2%
France	6	12	21	39		74	52.7%
Germany	6	25	7	38		96	39.6%
Greece	6	0	0	6		21	28.6%
Hungary	0	0	2	2		21	9.5%
Ireland	4	2	1	7		11	63.6%
Italy	0	0	0	0		73	0.0%
Latvia	0	1	1	2		8	25.0%
Lithuania	0	2	2	4		11	36.4%
Luxembourg	0	1	2	3		6	50.0%
Malta	0	0	0	0		6	0.0%
Netherlands	1	3	6	10		26	38.5%
Poland	0	0	0	0		51	0.0%
Portugal	4	1	0	5		21	23.8%
Romania	0	0	8	8		32	25.0%
Slovakia	0	0	2	2		13	15.4%
Slovenia	0	0	2	2		8	25.0%
Spain	6	2	8	16		54	29.6%
Sweden	1	2	3	6		20	30.0%
UK	1	11	17	29		73	39.7%

## 2. 2014 EU Parliament Election Results for the three Pro-internationalist Parties

	GUE/NGL 52	Greens/EFA 50	ALDE (Renew Europe) 67	Total 169		Country total MEPS	% Intergrationalist
Austria	0	3	1	4		18	22.2%
Belgium	0	2	6	8		21	38.1%
Bulgaria	0	0	4	4		17	23.5%
Croatia	0	1	2	3		11	27.3%
Cyprus	2	0	0	2		6	33.3%
Czechia	3	0	4	7		21	33.3%
Denmark	1	1	3	5		13	38.5%
Estonia	0	1	3	4		6	66.7%
Finland	1	1	4	6		13	46.2%
France	4	6	7	17		74	23.0%
Germany	8	13	4	25		96	26.0%
Greece	6	0	0	6		21	28.6%
Hungary	0	2	0	2		21	9.5%
Ireland	4	0	1	5		11	45.5%
Italy	3	0	0	3		73	4.1%
Latvia	0	1	0	1		8	12.5%
Lithuania	0	1	3	4		11	36.4%
Luxembourg	0	1	1	2		6	33.3%
Malta	0	0	0	0		6	0.0%
Netherlands	3	2	7	12		26	46.2%
Poland	0	0	0	0		51	0.0%
Portugal	4	0	2	6		21	28.6%
Romania	0	0	1	1		32	3.1%
Slovakia	0	0	1	1		13	7.7%
Slovenia	0	1	1	2		8	25.0%
Spain	11	4	8	23		54	42.6%
Sweden	1	4	3	8		20	40.0%
UK	1	6	1	8		73	11.0%

### 3. 2009 EU Parliament Election Results for the three Pro-internationalist Parties

	GUE/NGL 35	Greens/EFA 57	ALDE (Renew Europe) 83	Total 175		Country total MEPS	% Intergrationalist
Austria	0	2	0	2		17	11.8%
Belgium	0	4	5	9		22	40.9%
Bulgaria	0	0	5	5		17	29.4%
Cyprus	2	0	0	2		6	33.3%
Czechia	4	0	0	4		22	18.2%
Denmark	1	2	3	6		13	46.2%
Estonia	0	1	3	4		6	66.7%
Finland	0	2	4	6		13	46.2%
France	5	14	6	25		72	34.7%
Germany	8	14	12	34		99	34.3%
Greece	3	1	0	4		22	18.2%
Hungary	0	0	0	0		22	0.0%
Ireland	1	0	4	5		12	41.7%
Italy	0	0	7	7		72	9.7%
Latvia	1	1	1	3		8	37.5%
Lithuania	0	0	2	2		12	16.7%
Luxembourg	0	1	1	2		6	33.3%
Malta	0	0	0	0		5	0.0%
Netherlands	2	3	6	11		24	45.8%
Poland	0	0	0	0		50	0.0%
Portugal	5	0	0	5		22	22.7%
Romania	0	0	5	5		33	15.2%
Slovakia	0	0	1	1		13	7.7%
Slovenia	0	0	2	2		7	28.6%
Spain	1	2	2	5		50	10.0%
Sweden	1	3	4	8		18	44.4%
UK	1	5	11	17		72	23.6%

### 4. 2004 EU Parliament Election Results for the three Pro-internationalist Parties

	GUE/NGL 41	Verts/ALE (Greens/EFA) 42	ALDE (Renew Europe) 88	Total 171		Country total MEPS	% Intergrationalist
Austria	0	2	0	2		18	11.1%
Belgium	0	2	6	8		24	33.3%
Cyprus	2	0	1	3		6	50.0%
Czechia	6	0	0	6		24	25.0%
Denmark	1	1	4	6		14	42.9%
Estonia	0	0	2	2		6	33.3%
Finland	1	1	5	7		14	50.0%
France	3	6	11	20		78	25.6%
Germany	7	13	7	27		99	27.3%
Greece	4	0	0	4		24	16.7%
Hungary	0	0	2	2		24	8.3%
Ireland	1	0	1	2		13	15.4%
Italy	7	2	12	21		78	26.9%
Latvia	0	1	1	2		9	22.2%
Lithuania	0	0	7	7		13	53.8%
Luxembourg	0	1	1	2		6	33.3%
Malta	0	0	0	0		5	0.0%
Netherlands	2	4	5	11		27	40.7%
Poland	0	0	4	4		54	7.4%
Portugal	3	0	0	3		24	12.5%
Slovakia	0	0	0	0		14	0.0%
Slovenia	0	0	2	2		7	28.6%
Spain	1	3	2	6		54	11.1%
Sweden	2	1	3	6		19	31.6%
UK	1	5	12	18		78	23.1%

## 5. 1999 EU Parliament Election Results for the three Pro-internationalist Parties

	GUE/INGL 42	Verts/ALE (Greens/EFA) 48	ELDR (ALDE (Renew Europe)) 50	Total 140		Country total MEPS	% Intergrationalist
Austria	0	2	0	2		21	9.5%
Belgium	0	7	5	12		25	48.0%
Denmark	1	0	6	7		16	43.8%
Finland	1	2	5	8		16	50.0%
France	11	9	0	20		87	23.0%
Germany	6	7	0	13		99	13.1%
Greece	7	0	0	7		25	28.0%
Ireland	0	2	1	3		15	20.0%
Italy	6	2	7	15		87	17.2%
Luxembourg	0	1	1	2		6	33.3%
Netherlands	1	4	8	13		31	41.9%
Portugal	2	0	0	2		25	8.0%
Spain	4	4	3	11		64	17.2%
Sweden	3	2	4	9		22	40.9%
UK	0	6	10	16		87	18.4%

## 6. 1994 EU Parliament Election Results for the three Pro-internationalist Parties

	GUE (GUE/INGL) 28	V (Verts/ALE (Greens/EFA)) 23	ELDR (ALDE (Renew Europe)) 44	Total 95		Country total MEPS	% Intergrationalist
Belgium	0	2	6	8		25	32.0%
Denmark	0	1	5	6		16	37.5%
France	7	0	1	8		87	9.2%
Germany	0	12	0	12		99	12.1%
Greece	4	0	0	4		25	16.0%
Ireland	0	2	1	3		15	20.0%
Italy	5	4	7	16		87	18.4%
Luxembourg	0	1	1	2		6	33.3%
Netherlands	0	1	10	11		31	35.5%
Portugal	3	0	9	12		25	48.0%
Spain	9	0	2	11		64	17.2%
UK	0	0	2	2		87	2.3%

## 7. Percentage of MEPS elected from the three pro-integrationist parties from the 1999 to 2019 elections

	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014	2019
Austria		9.5	11.1	11.8	22.2	16.7
Belgium	32	48	33.3	40.9	38.1	38.1
Bulgaria				29.4	23.5	17.6
Croatia					27.3	9.1
Cyprus			50	33.3	33.3	33.3
Czechia			25	18.2	33.3	47.6
Denmark	37.5	43.8	42.9	46.2	38.5	61.5
Estonia			33.3	66.7	66.7	50
Finland		50	50	46.2	46.2	46.2
France	9.2	23	25.6	34.7	23	52.7
Germany	12.1	13.1	27.3	34.3	26	39.6
Greece	16	28	16.7	18.2	28.6	28.6
Hungary			8.3	0	9.5	9.5
Ireland	20	20	15.4	41.7	45.5	63.6
Italy	18.4	17.2	26.9	9.7	4.1	0
Latvia			22.2	37.5	12.5	25
Lithuania			53.8	16.7	36.4	36.4
Luxembourg	33.3	33.3	33.3	33.3	33.3	50
Malta			0	0	0	0
Netherlands	35.5	41.9	40.7	45.8	46.2	38.5
Poland			7.4	0	0	0
Portugal	48	8	12.5	22.7	28.6	23.8
Romania				15.2	3.1	25
Slovakia			0	7.7	7.7	15.4
Slovenia			28.6	28.6	25	25
Spain	17.2	17.2	11.1	10	42.6	29.6
Sweden		40.9	31.6	44.4	40	30
UK	2.3	18.4	23.1	23.6	11	39.7





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## **Defending the EU: Towards Europeanisation or Intergovernmentalism within the CFSP Framework?**

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### **Abstract**

Following the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine on the 24th of February, 2022, the workings and nature of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) has received increased attention, within and outside the union. While the security provided for EU member states through the CFSP framework is often considered as complementary, or inferior, in relation to the NATO-treaty, the ongoing war on Europe's eastern border seems to have made security cooperation within the EU an increasingly attractive option for its members. This essay takes a deeper look into the nature of the security and foreign policy integration within the EU, using the theoretical concepts of Europeanisation and intergovernmentalism, and focusing specifically on the CFSP domains of diplomacy, sanctions, and military cooperation, with an emphasis on the final domain. Drawing upon a constructivist analytical framework, the essay investigates the extent to which these three domains exhibit Europeanisation or remain predominantly intergovernmental. The analysis shows that in all domains instances of Europeanisation are present, particularly in the implementation of ideas of supranationality and institutionalization. Still, based on the analysis, I claim that the CFSP remains largely intergovernmental across the three domains, mainly because of the predominance of the national sovereignty norm in decision-making processes. In terms of its contribution to the discipline of international relations, this essay suggests that, by analyzing the CFSP of the EU from a constructivist perspective, we can gain a better understanding of the contemporary complexities of EU integration in the union's foreign and security policy areas.

## Introduction

The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is covered in article 21-46 in the Treaty on European Union.<sup>①</sup> It guides the EU's foreign policy and actions towards third states and actors outside the union and enables it to respond to security challenges and crises within, and outside, its borders. Two key institutions involved in the CFSP are the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP), which is appointed by the European Council to coordinate and implement the CFSP, and the European External Action Service (EEAS), which is the EU's diplomatic service and it is headed by the (HR/VP). Importantly, the Council of the European Union is a central part of the decision-making process for the CFSP.<sup>②</sup> The general guiding principles of the CFSP is clearly stated in the Treaty on European Union:

“The Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement, and which it seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.”<sup>③</sup>

The EEAS has several instruments at its disposal including sanctions, crisis management operations, and statements.<sup>④</sup> Nonetheless, the Treaty on European Union stipulates that implementation of the CFSP and the use of the instruments mentioned above, requires unanimity among member states.<sup>⑤</sup> The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is a significant part of the CFSP as it governs the common defence policy of the Union.

The question that I will attempt to answer in this essay is: which domains of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) can be considered more “Europeanized” and which ones are still run on an intergovernmental basis? Recent related research includes studies on Europeanisation, de-Europeanisation, and intergovernmentalism in EU foreign policy-making.<sup>⑥</sup> A few articles have also discussed the effects on the EU's foreign and security policy following the watershed moment of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2022.<sup>⑦</sup>

My hypothesis is that the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy remains largely intergovernmental across the domains of the CFSP. Using a constructivist analytical framework, I will attempt to identify elements of Europeanisation and/or intergovernmentalism in the central domains of the CFSP to prove or disprove my hypothesis. The paper will proceed as follows. I'm going to start by outlining my constructivist analytical framework and my methodology of descriptive typologies, which are informed by a constructivist perspective on European integration. Thereafter, I will apply my analytical tools to three central CFSP domains and argue whether the

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① EUR-Lex, “Treaty on European Union 2012”, p326

② Federal Foreign Office of Germany, “The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)”

③ EUR-Lex, “Treaty on European Union 2012”

④ Onestini, “A Hybrid Service: Organizing Efficient EU Foreign Policy”, p79

⑤ EUR-Lex, “Treaty on European Union 2012”

⑥ Müller, Pomorska, and Tonra, “The Domestic Challenge to EU Foreign Policy-Making”; Thomas, “The return of intergovernmentalism?”; Borsetti, “Quantifying Foreign Policy Europeanization: A Comprehensive Approach”

⑦ Costa, and Barbé, “A moving target. EU actorness and the Russian invasion of Ukraine”; Fiott, “In every crisis an opportunity?”; Bunde, “Lessons (to be) learned? Germany's Zeitenwende and European security after the Russian invasion of Ukraine”

domains are more or less intergovernmental or Europeanized. Finally, I'll present my conclusions, discuss the limitations of the scope of this paper, and suggest related topics for further research.

### Analytical framework

I decided that an approach based on constructivist theory was particularly suitable for the topic of this paper as the CFSP is legally connected to a number of values outlined in Article 21 of the Treaty on the European Union. These values consequently inform the foreign policy and external actions of the EU. They are “democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law”.<sup>①</sup> Wessel argues the values presented in the CFSP hold a particularly important position, as the EU's foreign and security policy, as opposed to many other policy areas, is not regulated by the TFEU, which is considered to be the EU's operational treaty.<sup>②</sup> Consequently, these values have a functional role as guiding principles for the action of the EEAS and other institutions.<sup>③</sup> Importantly, while constructivist theory puts more emphasis on how ideas, values, norms and identities affect integration, it does not ignore the importance of material and organizational structures.<sup>④</sup>

Taking a constructivist approach to EU integration implies that my analysis will be heavily focused on ideas and identities. Ideas shape the integration preferences of individual member states, therefore ideas shared across multiple member states partly determine to what degree integration happens on an international level in the EU. When analyzing ideas in relation to integration it can be useful to distinguish between two different types of ideas. First, instrumental ideas are ideas regarding how a policy goal should be achieved. For the relevance of these could be ideas inspired by Europeanisation or intergovernmentalism. Secondly, principled ideas shape both the policy goals and the constitution of the EU. Such ideas are based on principles and values.<sup>⑤</sup>

In addition to the two types of ideas introduced in the section above, identities also matter when approaching EU integration from a constructivist standpoint. Constructivists see identities as relational, and, consequently, new identities can be formed by actors through a socialization process.<sup>⑥</sup> According to Leffen et al. there are two types of identities, ethnic and civic. While the ethnic conception of identity focuses on the construction of identity through imagined communities based on a perception of common culture and history, the civic identity conception is based on values and norms.<sup>⑦</sup> For the purposes of this paper, I will exclusively use the latter conception in my analysis, as I believe it has greater explanatory potential in relation to the topic.<sup>⑧</sup>

The theoretical background outlined above informs the analytical framework I have chosen for this paper, which relies heavily on the understanding of the two central concepts in relation to EU integration, namely Europeanisation and intergovernmentalism. According to intergovernmentalism the states are the central actors in European integration. Furthermore, it is through multilateral negotiations between states that the centralization and territoriality of the EU are created. Therefore, from an inter-governmentalist perspective, any demand for deeper

<sup>①</sup> EUR-Lex, “Treaty on European Union 2012”

<sup>②</sup> Wessel, “Integration and constitutionalisation in EU foreign and security policy”

<sup>③</sup> Ibid

<sup>④</sup> Leuffen, Rittberger, and Schimmelfennig, “Integration and differentiation in the European Union”, p120

<sup>⑤</sup> Leuffen, Rittberger, and Schimmelfennig, “Integration and differentiation in the European Union”, p125-126

<sup>⑥</sup> Borsetti, “Quantifying Foreign Policy Europeanization: A Comprehensive Approach”, p78

<sup>⑦</sup> Leuffen, Rittberger and Schimmelfennig, “Integration and differentiation in the European Union”, p126

<sup>⑧</sup> Leuffen, Rittberger and Schimmelfennig, “Integration and differentiation in the European Union”, p125-126

integration within the EU is fundamentally driven by the patterns of interdependence between member states.<sup>①</sup> The second central concept, Europeanisation, is a somewhat contested concept that lacks an established definition. For the purposes of this paper, and in line with the constructivist theoretical framework, I have decided to adhere to the definition by Borsetti, who understands Europeanisation as “the process through which the policy outcomes, institutions, and norms at the European Union level impact the domestic policies, politics, and polities of (European) states”.<sup>②</sup> He understands Europeanization as a top-down process (downloading) in which the norms at the European level affect the member states on the domestic level.<sup>③</sup>

My analysis will be conducted using a method of explanatory typologies through which I operationalize the intergovernmentalism and Europeanisation concepts. Based on the constructivist approach to international integration I will extract constituent attributes from the two concepts.<sup>④</sup> Starting with Europeanisation, it will be understood as based on the principle idea of supranationality, the instrumental idea of institutionalization, and on the identity of a value-based community.<sup>⑤</sup> Intergovernmentalism will be understood as based on the principal ideas of state sovereignty and autonomy, the instrumental ideas of the prominence of national interests and interstate bargaining, and on the identity of the nation state.<sup>⑥</sup> With the help of these typologies and their attributes, I proceed to analyze different domains of the CFSP and suggest whether they are more Europeanized or more intergovernmental.

## Analysis

While the CFSP covers a multitude of policy areas, my analysis will be limited to three particular domains of the CFSP: Diplomatic, Sanctions and Military (CDSP). This delimitation is based on the perception that these domains could be considered particularly important to the EU in the context of the Russo-Ukrainian war that is currently taking place near its eastern borders. For the same reason the part of the analysis focusing on the military domain will be the most extensive of the three.

### *Diplomatic*

A core aspect of the CDSP is that it allows the EU to be an actor with diplomatic instruments and institutions.<sup>⑦</sup> The EEAS has a network of EU delegations around the world. These are divided into regional divisions covering Asia and Pacific, Africa, Europe and Central Asia, North Africa and Middle East, the Americas, and also a unit for Global and Multilateral issues.<sup>⑧</sup> Through these delegations the EU promotes central values of the CFSP such as democracy, rule of law, and human rights outside the union. Another concrete way EEAS projects these values is through conducting Electoral Observation Missions worldwide in order to support democratic development.<sup>⑨</sup> It is through the diplomatic work of the EEAS that EU values are institutionalized. Therefore, the value-driven diplomatic action conducted through the EEAS supports the idea of

<sup>①</sup> Leuffen, Rittberger and Schimmelfennig, “Integration and differentiation in the European Union”, p75

<sup>②</sup> Borsetti, “Quantifying Foreign Policy Europeanization: A Comprehensive Approach”, p74

<sup>③</sup> Borsetti, “Quantifying Foreign Policy Europeanization: A Comprehensive Approach”, p74-75

<sup>④</sup> Elman, “Explanatory typologies in qualitative studies of international politics”, p296

<sup>⑤</sup> Leuffen, Rittberger, and Schimmelfennig, “Integration and differentiation in the European Union”, p119-120

<sup>⑥</sup> Ibid, p63-63 and p70-76

<sup>⑦</sup> Spence and Bátorá, “Introduction: The EEAS as a Catalyst of Diplomatic Innovation”, p1

<sup>⑧</sup> Tannous, “The EEAS, EU External Assistance and Development Aid”, p127

<sup>⑨</sup> European Union External Action, “European External Action Service: Annual Report 2022”

an EU identity as a value-based community, where the member states trust the EU to represent them in the foreign policy realm.

### *Sanctions*

One of the foreign policy instruments available to the EU is autonomous sanctions, which can be used to influence or pressure third states. The EU historically promotes treaty-based values such as democracy and human rights using sanctions. Cardwell and Moret argue that “sanctions have become a hallmark of EU foreign policy” and point to the fact that they have tripled in the past 30 years.<sup>①</sup> While the EEAS and the HR/VP both participate in the sanction-related work, the power to impose sanctions still lies with the Council. This means that decisions are ultimately made on an intergovernmental basis. Nonetheless, the EU has a good track-record on reaching unanimous intergovernmental decisions on implementing sanctions. This could be seen as a sign of broad support for the legitimacy of the values promoted by the foreign policy of the EU, further suggesting a strong common identity shared by the member states. However, repeatedly reaching a consensus on sanctions does not serve as sufficient proof for a Europeanisation of the sanctions domain. Rather, the EU could be seen as a successful intergovernmental forum for coordination on sanctions that simply serves the national interests of all the member states.<sup>②</sup>

### *Military (CSDP)*

The Russian invasion of Ukraine led to new calls for deeper integration in the EU's military and defense domain, and two months after the invasion the EU Strategic Compass was launched.<sup>③</sup> As the document was largely completed before the invasion, some argued that it was already obsolete upon release,<sup>④</sup> while others claimed that the central themes maintained their relevance.<sup>⑤</sup> The Strategic Compass contains descriptions of common goals on partnerships, investments, and action and commits to the idea of ‘strategic autonomy’ for the EU.<sup>⑥</sup> Therefore, from a constructivist standpoint, the Strategic Compass can be understood as an attempt at Europeanisation through a shared strategic identity. Also, Russia and China are mentioned specifically as threats or rivals and therefore serve as contrasting out-groups that can be used as a contrast to strengthen the notion of a shared in-group identity for the EU member states.<sup>⑦</sup> The attempt at common identity construction in the military domain might suggest a deeper Europeanisation, but as the goals and suggestions outlined in the Strategic Compass are not binding for the EU member states there are no infringements on the principle of sovereignty.<sup>⑧</sup> Therefore, the interests of the nation-states will continue to trump the common goals of the Strategic Compass and, consequently, an intergovernmental approach prevails.

In contrast to the Strategic Compass, the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) is an instrument or a platform to deepen EU defense cooperation that actually allows for participating member states to undertake binding commitments. It also works as a platform for cooperating with third states as well as with NATO. PESCO could therefore be considered an attempt at voluntary

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<sup>①</sup>Cardwell and Moret, “The EU, sanctions and regional leadership”, p4-5

<sup>②</sup> Cardwell and Moret, “The EU, sanctions and regional leadership”, p1 and p6

<sup>③</sup> Borsetti, “Quantifying Foreign Policy Europeanization: A Comprehensive Approach”, p73

<sup>④</sup> Costa and Barbe, “A moving target”, p431

<sup>⑤</sup> Fiott, “In every crisis an opportunity?”, p450

<sup>⑥</sup> Fiott, “In every crisis an opportunity?”, p450; Council of the EU, “*A Strategic Compass For Security And Defence March 2022*”, p23

<sup>⑦</sup> Leuffen, Rittberger, and Schimmelfennig, “Integration and differentiation in the European Union”, p119

<sup>⑧</sup> Fiott, “In every crisis an opportunity?”, p450

Europeanisation in the military domain of the CSFP through a limited supranational institutionalization of defense cooperation.<sup>①</sup>

NATO works closely with the EU and is very much considered an essential partner on defense and security.<sup>②</sup> Nonetheless, the continuous intergovernmental attitude to the military domain of the CFSP by EU member states can be partly explained by the superior transatlantic alternative that NATO provides. When states join NATO they give up some degree of sovereignty in terms of national defense and security policy to gain the security guarantees of Article 5 in the NATO treaty. The vaguely formulated mutual defense clause in article 42.7 in the Treaty on European Union leaves a lot of room for interpretation and cannot compete with what NATO offers in terms of security guarantees through Article 5.<sup>③</sup> Therefore, there is less incentive for the EU member states to pool their sovereignty into EU's CDSP and move from an intergovernmental approach to the military domain of the CFSP to a more Europeanized supranational approach.

A direct response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine within the military domain was the EU's decision to send military equipment to Ukraine through the European Peace Facility (EPF). Notably, the financing of the EPF is not taken from the EU budget. Instead, it is provided by the EU member states directly, which suggests that the EPF is an intergovernmental tool where the national interests among EU member states in supporting Ukraine converge. The original expectation was actually that EPF resources would be directed towards missions in Africa rather than towards the Eastern Partnership, but the purposeful recalibration of the orientation of the EPF into providing military support for Ukraine signals a geopolitical commitment by the EU to protect democratic values through military means. Therefore, a value-oriented action such as this also hints at deeper Europeanisation.<sup>④</sup>

Finally, the decision to establish the European Defence Fund (EDF) in 2021 can be considered another rare step towards supranationality and Europeanisation in the military and defense domain. The initiative was launched by the Commission (a more Europeanized institution than for example the Council), which allowed for circumventing the legal requirement for unanimity in the CFSP and instead, it passed using qualified majority voting. While formally the EDF is an industrial policy, it is no doubt a collective step towards increased military capability for EU member states and a supranational initiative that suggests a Europeanisation in defense industrial cooperation.<sup>⑤</sup>

## Conclusion

In this paper I have attempted to answer the question of which domains of the EU's CFSP can be considered more Europeanized and which ones are still run on an intergovernmental basis? I choose three domains for my analysis: diplomacy, sanctions and military (CDSP), with an emphasis on the last domain. In my analysis of three of the domains of the CFSP I found a few common themes. Firstly, the national sovereignty norm was often safeguarded through unanimous decision-making in all of the domains. Secondly, all the domains showed instances of being Europeanized, but this was mostly visible in the latter stages of implementation, when the instruments, used by for example the EEAS, integrated values of the CFSP into the execution of the EU foreign policy. Thirdly, in the military domain the equipment sent to Ukraine through the

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<sup>①</sup> EEAS Press Team, "Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) - factsheet, 2023"

<sup>②</sup> Council of the EU, "A Strategic Compass For Security And Defence March 2022"

<sup>③</sup> Clapp, "A comparative analysis of Article 5 Washington Treaty (NATO) and Article 42(7) TEU (EU)"

<sup>④</sup> Fiott, "In every crisis an opportunity?", p451

<sup>⑤</sup> Haroche, "EU defence policy is becoming increasingly supranational"

EPF and the establishment of the EDF followed the same pattern of circumventing the unanimity voting on CFSP-related policies to achieve deeper integration and Europeanisation of the military domain. Finally, in regard to the research question of this essay, I would argue that the CFSP remains largely intergovernmental across the three domains. The principle of national sovereignty is often safeguarded, but there are nonetheless instances of Europeanisation that can be seen in the implementation of ideas of supranationality and institutionalization of the different domains.

### **Scope and limitations**

With regards to the scope of the analysis, I concede that there were more domains I could have enquired about, such as humanitarian aid and development, civilian CDSP etc., but because of the lack of time and the word limit, I had to prioritize. Also, understanding Europeanisation simply as a top-down (downloading) process and ignoring the down-up (uploading) dimension was a decision made based on the complexity that such a definition of the concept, i.e. as a mutually constitutive process, would bring to the operationalization of the concept.<sup>①</sup> Finally, my decision to approach the question of integration from a constructivist perspective allowed me to see past the simple structures of decision-making on CFSP (unanimity) and identify elements of Europeanisation.

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<sup>①</sup> Borsetti, “Quantifying Foreign Policy Europeanization: A Comprehensive Approach”, p75

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