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By Dr Terry Tucker



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Mapping Mexican Politics

By **Ramón I. Centeno**

IN MEXICO, politics unfold through cycles of six years, which is the time that every President has in office. As there is no re-election, the end of a cycle raises several questions about the future: will there prevail change or continuity?

JULY 2012 marked the end of two presidential terms led by the conservative National Action Party (PAN), which in 2000 was welcomed as a democratic achievement that had put an end to seventy years under the authoritarian Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI). Nevertheless, the latter has won the last presidential election and is again in power. What does this mean? Is it the downfall of democracy? Or is it a democratic adaptation of the old party? Overall, why this happened and how does it influence the foreseeable future of Mexico?

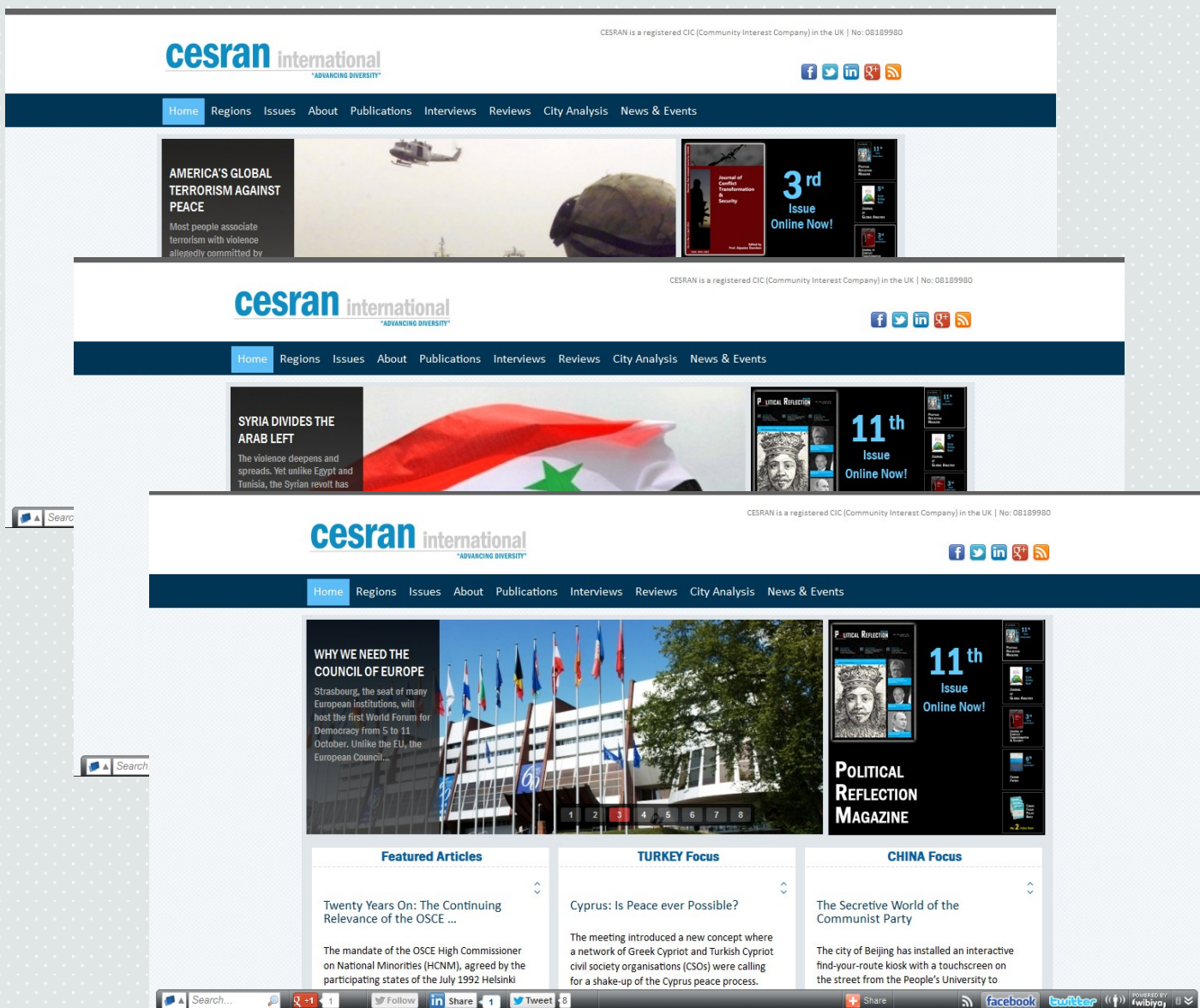
To be sure, this involves other major political players and issues. On the one hand there is civil society, on the other there are the political institutions supposed to represent its interests. Also, there is the bloody War on Drugs, which have changed the nature of Mexican political debate, which nonetheless co-exists with an unaltered neoliberal economic model. Last but not least, there is the Left struggling hard to find a political language to cope with the challenges ahead.

This collection of short essays is an attempt to deal with these contemporary questions, through

the lenses of academics specialised on Mexican politics.

Luis Daniel Vázquez for his part offers a powerful synthesis of the main signs of institutional continuity that originated in PRI's hegemonic era, were reproduced by PAN's administrations, and will be reloaded now that PRI is again in power. Is it as he suggests that there is "nothing new under the Sun"? At this level of the discussion it is worth analysing the *state-of-the-art* of gender policies in Mexico, since as María Fernanda Vidal notices, it is doubtful whether democratic achievements are so when "women's participation in politics is still questioned or limited." Finally, Ramón I. Centeno discusses why the War on Drugs became the main political issue in Mexico for the foreseeable future, and how this facilitated the PRI's comeback. However, he wonders whether the "new PRI government would only be its last empirical test before its definitive death."

The reader will find both deep analytical insight and a short road to grasp contemporary Mexican politics.



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Mexico 2012

The six-year Presidential term that awaits us

By Dr Daniel Vázquez

LAST JULY 1 THERE took place presidential and parliamentary elections in Mexico. Enrique Peña Nieto was elected, the candidate of the formerly hegemonic Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) that after eighty years in power (1920-2000) and two alternation governments in charge of the right wing National Action Party (PAN) (2000-2006 and 2006-2012) is back on the presidency.

There are many topics related to the events before and after the presidential election. One was the performance of PRI's governors regarding the lack of transparency at the local level and the arbitrary use of the public resources, which caused the accusation of thousands of bought votes around the country (there is no official data on this, but estimates go from 5 thousand to 250 thousand votes obtained in exchange for money). Another was the virtual inexistence of the electoral bodies –especially the Specialized Office for the Attention of Electoral Offenses (FEPADE)– either before and after the election. Also, there were the actions taken by Andrés Manuel López Obrador, candidate of the centre-of-left Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD) who finished second in the election and did not accept the results. And last but not least, the performance of the polling companies that overestimated the votes for Enrique Peña Nieto by 5-15%.

To sum up, there are many relevant aspects to be analysed in this election. However, beyond the topics around this juncture, it is worth asking ourselves: which patterns are going to shape Mexican politics in this PRI's comeback to power? What kind of six-year term we have got ahead?

What kind of six-year term is waiting for us?

I think there are some patterns that were born during PRI's governments, which were kept by PAN's governments, and which will shape the PRI's return in the next six-year term: a “tropicalized”-neoliberal-capitalism, an institutional design based in the logic *corruption-complicity-impunity*; and a political functioning based on *corporatism-co-optation-selective repression*. Let us see each of them.

1. INSTITUTIONAL LOGIC

THE INITIAL READING OF THE PARTISAN left on what was going on around the elections was that everything was part of a plot: an implicit agreement between the polling houses, the PAN's led federal government, the PRI's presidential candidate, the owners of the two main media's corporations in Mexico that possess 100% of open TV signal, the councillors of the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), and the magistrates of the Electoral Court of the Judicial Power of the Federation



Banco de México



(TRIFE), in order to guarantee the victory of Enrique Peña Nieto through fraud orchestrated before the elections through a massive vote buying. On the one hand, it is certainly true that the PRI governs the majority of the states of the federation (over 70%) and that there is little transparency in these governments where it is common the arbitrary use of public resources. (In this sense, it is not surprising that there was a wide mobilisation of the local state's structures favouring Enrique Peña Nieto's candidacy.) On the other, it is mistake reading the actions of autonomous organs such as the IFE or the TEPJF in terms of a plot. On the contrary, the performance of these two organs must be observed through the series of institutional incentives that, in

general, permeate all the logic of government in Mexico. Worse than a conspiracy, there exists an institutional design guided by the logic of *corruption-complicity-impunity*.

The different institutional players of Mexican politics work under logics of systematic violation of rights whether to "find criminals" or to "win elections" (the current president Felipe Calderón characterized the disputed election he won in 2006 as "haiga sido como haiga sido", which roughly translates as "[I won] no matter how"). What could be observed in the Mexican political performance is an organisational structure that informs the common sense of political action through a pattern of *corruption-complicity-*



impunity. Under this logic, it is easier to follow the illegal path than the legal one to carry out state action; execute “fake” arrests in popular neighbourhoods to increase the number of detentions; “sow” evidence both to enlarge data regarding recovered weapons and to support legal accounts; keep low standards of transparency and accountability in the states of the federation to make discretionary use of public spending via clientelistic and corporatist policies that enable the conditioning of votes; show artificial police action in TV (portrayed as real) to create the perception of an efficient security policy; etc.

It is worth asking ourselves: does this logic applies to all government institutions, including autonomous organs that seem very professional such as the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation (SCJN), the Federal Institute of Access to Information (IFAI), the IFE, and others? Fortunately corruption does not prevail in this newly formed institutions, where a different logic operates: that of complicity-impunity that needs the organisational performance to focus on making believe that “everything’s all right.” It seems that the “feeling of normality” has become a relevant pillar in the Mexican institutional logic when it comes to seek political legitimacy. Instead of conducting deep investigations that render visible –though scandalous- the structural problem of corruption in governmental functioning, the internal watchdogs are more focused on making us believe that everything is OK. This logic explains why even the Electoral Councillors linked to “leftist thought” quickly declared that this year’s elections were “exemplary”, that everything was very well. Worse, even after judicial proceedings the TEPJF simply concluded that there were not any proofs of vote buying, not a single one, although the reality exceeded it completely. Another example: facing the massive outflow of capitals during the first half of 2012 –which in this occasion four folded Foreign Direct Investment, the Central Bank (Banco de México) –another autonomous organ- declared that this outflow was “normal”, for we live in a free market.

The consequences of “everything’s all right” are serious. Far from controlling, the new

accountability’s organs focus on the management of public perception as a way of portraying themselves reliable (if everything is OK is because I do a good job) and so, legitimate. What vanishes then are the forms of institutional control inherent to any democratic government; instead, “the controllers” turn into accomplices and add themselves up to the prevailing impunity. Overall speaking, the parts of the institutional design complement each other through a criteria of *corruption-complicity-impunity* that structures the whole chain of institutional action including directive, executive, and watchdog organs of government. The good thing about living in Mexico is that nothing happens, that everything works fine.

2. ECONOMIC LOGIC

THIS INSTITUTIONAL LOGIC based on *corruption-complicity-impunity* is a dynamic that manages to reproduce itself “lubricating” governmental action, which has also supported an economic functioning characterised by a “tropicalized”-*neoliberal-capitalism* (the reference to neoliberalism is to underscore a strong tendency to favour financial capital over productive one). What interests the most to the current ruling political-economic coalition is keeping the regime of free currency and market in order to preserve high profit rates and generate processes of accumulation in the international banking system. (However, there prevail high profit rates and low reinvestment rates.) This agreement around the economic model is “tropicalized” through corporatist capitalism (or crony capitalism) with strong oligopolistic tendencies. For this financial agreement to work, tropicalized, it needs the institutional inertia based on *corruption-complicity-impunity* that allows governmental organs being colonised by big business interests. Both logics function as informal institutions (processes and procedures) that give meaning to the inertial operation of formal institutions.

3. EXCLUSION AS AN OUTCOME

The two processes mentioned above –the institutional and the economic- has various consequences. A major one is the lack of an independent prosecutor’s system with research capacity (which has rendered all special prosecutors ineffective). But also there is the



absence of a Comptroller with coercive capacity on public servants; the lack of accountability and transparency in general from the federal Government and local governments; the total absence of controls on capital and the failure of regulators in the market (which have been colonized by big business interests); the maintenance of oligopolistic markets, to mention a few. Nonetheless, there is a significant point which I want to highlight that it is also a consequence of these two forms of (political and economic) interaction: the open exclusion from citizenship of the deliberation and decision about the public thing. As a consequence, the exclusion is flagrant: economic, social and also political.

From the standpoint of representative government, the party system is becoming increasingly closed and responds less and less to the interests of the public: we have lost control of the public agenda. Therefore, it can be explained that issues such as a regressive tax reform, a reform of labour flexibility or the privatization of PEMEX (the state oil company) have remained more than 20 years on the agenda.

Moreover, there is a total absence of effective citizen's intervention mechanisms in any process of accountability and transparency. Worse still, the objective of leaving out people from binding political decisions has been enhanced to the extent that governments have learned to manage the protest. Today, the repertoires of collective action (marches, rallies, strikes, sit-ins, etc) virtually have no effect on binding political decisions. Thus, what we see is an open civic exclusion both in government policy as in the ability to influence that same policy through the streets. This structure of generalised exclusion will be chronic with the political action based on *corporatism-co-optation-selective repression* typical of the PRI governments.

4. REVIVAL OF CLASSIC PRI

During their 80 years of Government, the PRI sustained its political action through a fierce corporate organization initially aimed at the urban and rural working class, brought together in the Confederation of Workers of Mexico (CTM) and in the National Peasant Confederation (CNC), a

couple which years later was complemented by the National Confederation of Popular organizations (CNOP). Through this corporate logic the PRI ran the distribution of resources and the control of social demonstrations. To the extent that a new opposition to *priísmo* ("PRI-ism") grew up, the PRI also perfected mechanisms of co-optation accompanied by selective repression that could be higher or lower depending on specific historical junctures - as in 1956 with the rail workers movement, in 1968 and 1971 with the student movement, or 1987-1991 against the nascent *perredismo* ("PRD-ism"). Certainly, the two governments from *panismo* ("PAN-ism") who were in charge of the presidency between 2000 and 2012 did not keep these patterns of political performance, but there is a clear continuity in the case of local governments led by the PRI, including the government of the current elected President Enrique Peña Nieto in the State of Mexico, where there were penalties of up to 120 years in prison to activists of a peasant's movement in Atenco. No doubt that under a new PRI rule this form of political action will come back, *reloaded* (it actually never went away, staying in local). With this logic working, the possibilities of a strong citizen mobilisation with influencing capabilities on binding political decisions seems even more distant.

Thus, these three dynamics allow us to explain much of the six-year period that awaits us: an institutional design based on *corruption-complicity-impunity*, an economic model based on a "*tropicalised*"-neoliberal-capitalism, and a governmental operation that will join and exclude actors and demands through strategies of *corporatism-co-optation-selective repression*. The future seems not pleasing at all, although, as I mentioned from the beginning of this text, these three forms of articulation of the political and economic that already exist today were formed with *priísmo* and did not go away during *panismo*, so nothing new under the Sun.

NOTE:

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THE RENEWED FEDERALISM AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN MEXICO

By Dr Fernanda Vidal

REPRESENTATION, both in presence and in ideas is still a matter of utmost need in countries where sometimes women's participation in politics is still questioned or limited. In the case of Mexico, both women's presence and women's interest are being limited, among other issues, by the institutional design. Two key situations are directly affecting women's political participation in Mexico: the inequalities that have emerged in a rejuvenated federalism and the continual use of legal loopholes for the political benefit of the ruling elites. Each state has the legal right to select its own rules, including electoral ones. In this sense, different requirements, obligations and rights are placed for the citizens and the political parties to benefit from and comply with. This has resulted in different playing fields in which women's representation is encouraged or detracted. The variety of laws and the constant changes to these has resulted in a number of legal loopholes, which both actors and parties have used to evade the application of tougher laws that boost the representation of women.

Representation is an essential part of a democratic regime and if representation is to be

considered an intrinsic element of democracy, no system can claim to be democratic if it does not recognise the need for popular control and political equality. In Mexico, it would seem that in the representation of women has advanced in the past decade. In the last federal election process (July 2012), women advanced in the conquest of political spaces. The number of women elected to the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate exceeded what was achieved in previous processes. In the Chamber of Deputies 36.8% of the seats are occupied by women while in the Senate women have 34.67% of the seats. Previously women held 26.2% of the available seats (2009: 26.2%) while in 2006 there were only 112 women (22.4%). Nonetheless, the same optimistic scenario is yet to be observed homogeneously at the state level. In some states, women have lower percentages of representation in Congress. In Aguascalientes (7%), Queretaro (4%) and Estado de Mexico (15%) women are still a minority group among elected deputies (Camara de Diputados, 2012). On the opposite site, women in Veracruz hold 28% of the local legislature seats and in Distrito Federal 27.3%. Additionally, women have been denied the





opportunity to work in traditional “masculine” areas, such as Treasury, Defence or Constitutional Reforms across the states and in the federal government. In fact, the higher the position is within the government’s organisation pyramid at the state level, the less number of women are elected. There are 32.63% of women councillors but 11.34% of women deputies and within the 31 states and the Federal District, only one female governor (data available at INMUJERES).

Largely the observed results at the federal level may have been a consequence of the legal amendment approved in November 2011 by the Federal Judicial Electoral Court (TEPJF). In the ruling SUP-JDC-12624/2011 additional criteria for the registration of candidates for various elected positions were established at the federal level (TEPJF, 2011). These actions along with the observed differences between the levels of government are clear examples of the key situations affecting women's political participation mentioned before.

The purpose of this article is to initiate a series of debates about the political consequences that the

federal arrangement has generated in Mexico and the relationship this has to the existing legal framework that is affecting women. First, the article argues that electoral reforms have been used as the primary sources for democratic transformation, altering the institutional design in which women’s representation operates. This is followed by the discussion of the renewed federalism and its consequences over the opportunities or obstacles women have for accessing elected mandates. Examples of the existing differences and legal loopholes are highlighted. Finally, the article establishes which are the areas future debates should consider for advancing the representation of women in Mexico.

USING THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM FOR DEMOCRATISING THE COUNTRY

IN THE MEXICAN CASE, there has been a long process of political reform. First, political liberalisation was observed and, second, the beginning of democratic transformations. Electoral reforms undoubtedly played a vital role as it was – and remains - the primary mechanism for constructing and controlling new political





opportunities for widening democratic participation. The amendments made to the electoral system were used to shape the democratic structural scaffolding of the country. These electoral reforms initially affected the circumstances in which the elections were held. Free, fair and contested elections were the main aims underpinning the opposition's demands. The 1977, 1986, 1988 and 1994 reforms designed a number of institutions, including the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) and the TEPJF, whose main role was to provide certainty, legality, and impartiality in the elections. The objectives of the electoral reforms changed progressively. The newer electoral reforms, introduced between

1997 and 2011 sought to improve political representation and participation as well as mechanisms for financial accountability and parties' prerogatives. Between the 2000 and the 2012 elections, five electoral reforms were approved. The first and the last reforms concerned women's participation and representation in politics.

In 2002 with the modification to the Federal Electoral Procedures and Institutions Code (COFPE), Mexico joined 73 other countries that at the time had gender quotas. Initially the law established a 30% quota. In 2008, the percentage was modified again and by 2012, at the Federal



level, the COFIPE in its article 219 establishes that, of the total number of nominations, including both deputies and senators, at least 40% have to be of a different gender. Additionally, the law specifies that the proportional representation lists have to be integrated in segments of five nominations from which at least two have to be of a different gender and zipping is required.

A wave of change that started at the national level seemed to have reached state-level partisan politics. With the gradual deterioration of the PRI's internal discipline and the on-going acquisition of power by the opposition, the practices within the system started to change. As soon as the elections began to seem more competitive, the political pressure to adapt the rules according to the local and state contexts amplified. Increased electoral competition coupled with the implementation of a federal government system where state and local politics were becoming more relevant pushed political parties to adopt a more women-friendly electoral platform in certain states.

FEDERALISM: A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

IN MEXICO, the relationship between democracy and federalism can be traced to the transition process, which resulted in the decentralisation of decision-making power to the states. Democratisation resulted in the dissolution of power centralised in the almost authoritarian presidential figure. In other words, federalism shaped Mexico's transition to democracy, including the institutions for political representation. In doing so, it has also transformed the opportunities for women in becoming politically engaged. Federalism in Mexico pluralised competition in sub-national legislatures and gave space for opposition parties to raise and gain political opportunity against the hegemonic party. At the same time, federalism has allowed the existence of different rules, creating states with leading-edge and progressive legislation in terms of women's presence and ideas and states with more conservative or no schemes at all.

The design features of the federal arrangement inform the process of state gender crafting. Federalism, as 'a set of institutions – the division

of public authority between two or more constitutionally defines order of government – and a set of ideas which underpin such institutions' (Simeon & Swinton, 1995: 3) is capable of transforming the design and implementation of policies. In Mexico specifically, it has created different spaces that women can use in their advantage but that could also undermine women's issues. Local political actors pushed for the advancement of institutional reforms that granted them more power to influence policies and government. The speed of the changes varied among the states resulting in variations in the legal institutions controlling the process.

For example, differences can be observed in the design of the gender quotas, including the quota percentage, the existence of zipping or even the enforcement of any mechanism that aims to advance the representation of women in state congresses. Furthermore, in some of the states and in the federal government there are two types of candidates called *propietario* and *suplente*. The latter takes the seat if the former is unable to or if the deputy has to take a leave of absence once in office. In some states, the quota has to apply to both, while in some others the quota only applies to the *propietario* nominations. In some other states there is no specific ruling.

The differences observed are resulting in diverse advantages and obstacles across states. For example, states with clear enforcing rules include Aguascalientes, Yucatan and Zacatecas while Queretaro and Estado de Mexico are states with relaxed regulations. The existence of different legal frameworks is causing loopholes that have been used by certain groups within political parties in order to avoid the implementation of measures that seek to advance the representation of women, such as gender quotas. Among these loopholes two can be highlighted: the "*Juanitas*" case or the nomination of *propietario* and *suplente* and the possibility of dual nominations.

As mentioned before, on November 2011 the TEPJF took action to prevent the possibility of the so-called "*Juanitas*". The "*Juanitas*" were 10 federal deputies, eight of them women, who, just after two days of taking office, requested leave of



absence, making way for the *suplentes* candidates, who were men. Women were pressured, through loyalty and career expectancy arguments, to resign and leave their seats to their joint ticket partners. According to Milenio newspaper, husbands, brothers, relatives and political patrons displaced 13 women from their seats (Tellez, 2010). The TEPJF established the criteria to ensure the presence of 40% women nominees. To close the door to the so-called “*Juanitas*”, the TEPJF established that the nomination of women as *suplentes* would have to be of the same sex in order to prevent substitutions by male representatives. The effects of this change were visible in the difficult and intricate candidate selection process of the federal 2012 election. However, this ruling has had no consequences for the state nominations process yet.

The required application of gender quotas in the candidate and the alternate due to this recent ruling seem to have generated the need to find other loopholes through which the application of the quota can avoid. This is the case of the Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI. This political institute announced in March 2012 its lists of candidates by majority and proportional representation for the federal elections of July 2012. They nominated the same group of women on both tiers. The party was said to be affecting the participation of women. With this, the focus is now been placed in the legal concept and use of dual nominations.



The importance of the dual candidacies for the implementation of the gender quota was questioned because of the nominations during the 2012 federal election. However, the application of the dual nominations is something that has been happening at the state level in recent years. Of the thirty-two states, 17 of them allow its application. The enforcement of this type of features varies significantly between states. In some the number of dual candidacies is minimal in relation to the total nominations each party presents, as in the case of the Estado de Mexico. In orders, the state electoral code does not place any restrictions, as in Zacatecas.

On the other hand, federalism has allowed for more advanced legislation to be implemented. States do not have the legal obligation to standardise the existing laws to the federal ones (the Supreme Court ruled this in early 2002). States can have less advanced legislation but can also exceed the parameters set by the federal law and not only in terms of electoral law, but in many other areas of governance. For instance, in Mexico abortion is criminalized throughout the country except in Mexico City since the change to law in 2007.

Federalism has created the basis for the gender representation differences in terms of design and implementation, since the institutions have allowed states to regulate upon such matters. The heterogenic institutional design has come along with differences in the experiencing of citizenship. Low marginalised groups in some states have been struggling for full citizenship. The rejuvenated federalism has changed the power relations between the centre and the periphery providing congresses a real capacity for legislating. The impact of the new structures in the multilevel governance opened up a set of new opportunities for political engagement. The differences across institutional design and the enforcement of policies have resulted in women experiencing different circumstances in their search for political representation.

THE FUTURE: FROM FEDERAL ARRANGEMENTS TO LEGAL LOOPHOLES

THE DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION has come along with differences in the experiencing of citizenship.



Women have experienced different circumstances created by different institutional design within the country. Federalism has opened up the possibility of having multiple institutions that in turn are affecting the representation of women. The use of electoral reforms for producing democratic change remains constant. At the same time, in the renewed federalism, local political groups have advanced the decentralisation of power. In doing so, women have gained new opportunities but have also been blocked by local elite groups.

Future debates surrounding electoral transformations will surely involve the emanating consequences of the rejuvenated federalism and the redistribution of power between the centre and the periphery. Within these future discussions, the debate should include the predicament between the decentralisation of power and the inequality in the opportunities that women have for accessing office because of the different institutional designs. At the same time, the debate should be aware of the importance of decentralising power in a country with a previously centralised and almost authoritarian regime. According to the former President of the Gender Commission of the Senate, Senator Judith Diaz, the new challenge is the standardisation of laws setting higher parameters but protecting local faculty to regulate.

In essence, federalism should be considered important for studying the representation of women in Mexico because it is creating different dynamics, providing multiple sites and points for accessing government (situations that could act as a enhancer or inhibitor of women's representation), and is resulting in widely different levels of gender equality. But not only the institutional design matters. There are plenty of other issues that are intertwined and help undermining the possibility of advancing women's representation. The existing cultural beliefs that organise social interactions are based on a male oriented and controlled system. The existence of *machismo* and biased practices has remained constant. In fact, the resulted entrenched local political actors strengthened the male oriented model. As in many other countries, in Mexico wage differentials, access to education and health clinics, preconceptions and stereotypes that feed

the division of gender and socially constructed roles and women's exclusion (either explicit or implicit) are still barriers that undermine women's access to politics. Any future advance is subject to the reduction or annihilation of these obstacles.

NOTE:

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Kalashnikovs

under the poncho

By Ramón I. Centeno

WHEN SOMETHING as rock-solid as a national stereotype changes, something profound is surely going on. The traditional (and stupid) Mexican stereotype had been that of the guy wearing a funny and large hat comfortably sleeping next to a cactus. Nowadays, apart from or instead of that we now hold a *Kalashnikov* under our poncho, eager to sell drugs. You can see this cultural change in movies from/about Mexico. Sixty or seventy years ago most stories were about the Mexican Revolution or its legacies. Nowadays everything moves around the War on Drugs. From the insider perspective, just see the contrast between the epic utopianism in *“Vámonos con Pancho Villa”* of Fernando de Fuentes and the dystopian tragedy in Gerardo Naranjo’s *“Miss Bala”*. From an outsider point of view, just compare our national image in Sergei Eisenstein’s *“¡Que viva México!”* with that of the Tarantino-style *“Machete”* of Robert Rodriguez: virginal authenticity vs. organic corruption.

A DISCREET POLITICAL EARTHQUAKE

WHEN DID THIS CHANGING PERCEPTION of the world on Mexico - from the naive good-fellows to the ruthless bad guys - start? In December 2006 the then new President Felipe Calderón declared the “War on Drugs”. The ministry of the interior at the

time, Francisco Ramírez Acuña, explained the launch of the “Joint Operation Michoacán” as an effort to “finish the impunity of the criminals that are risking the tranquillity of all the Mexicans and, especially, our families.”¹ Since then, the word “security” turned into one of the most important political discourse in Mexico. Again, why? In that election, the two leading candidates finished with a slight difference of less than 1%, with the defeated candidate denouncing electoral fraud, hence, leaving the winner severely weakened. His lack of an unquestioned legitimacy led him to search for means to gain political stature rapidly. His choice: launch a selective and strenuous attack on drug cartels (epitome of the “criminals”) in order to successfully present himself as the incarnation of the national interests of all Mexicans. Even worse, Calderón’s decision also meant an alignment to U.S. foreign policy. Not surprisingly, Washington immediately backed the Mexican government and hastily institutionalised this public support through the “Mérida Initiative”, a military partnership signed in 2008 to jointly undertake the “war on drugs.”

Six years later, over seventy thousand people (mostly civilians it seems) have been killed as part of this military adventure against the powerful



Enrique Peña Nieto



(and also militarised) cartels. To sum-up, what started as a short-term tactic morphed into a long-term strategy aimed at political stability. If in 2006 Mexico was on the brink of joining the club of centre-of-left Latin American governments, after that it rapidly became the decisive player of Washington and his friends to counter-weight Chávez's coalition. Along with Colombia, Mexico moved the whole Central America to the War on Drugs. This sub-region, with a political dynamic opposed to the rest, has pushed rightist but well-informed analysts to ask whether there are now two Latin Americas: "one on the Pacific, another on the Atlantic."² This counter-tendency to the *Left turn* so much cheered at the beginning of the century covers more than 1/3 of the regional

population as it reaches other right governments, Peru and Chile. These two along with Colombia and Mexico have recently launched (June 2012) an economic bloc to oppose Chávez's ALBA and Brasil-led Mercosur: the Pacific Alliance, with Costa Rica and Panama as observers. The rest of Central America had anyway previously signed a favourable trade agreement with Mexico in November 2011.³ In short, the countries where neoliberalism still runs unbridled are making love to each other's elites.

So not to anyone's surprise, the new President, Enrique Peña Nieto will act along the lines of his immediate predecessor. Rosario Green, an ex ministry of foreign affairs and long-time regime's





*former President
Vicente Fox*

*López
Obrador*

*former México State
governor Arturo Montiel*

adviser on international relations, recently put it this way: “If you ask me which are probably going to be his first, second, and third priority, I would say that the United States, Central America, and the Pacific.”⁴ Or in Peña’s words, “We have to assume, as a country, a greater role of responsibility in the different regional and multilateral organisations, and in the Pacific Alliance in particular.”⁵

Thus the changing perception of Mexico abroad must be read as an index of the discreet political earthquake that the country has undergone. In a trip to Cuba in 2010, I was so astonished by the precarious living conditions in popular neighbourhoods that I wondered whether I would be able to live as an ordinary Cuban. But when a Cuban asked me where I was from, he exclaimed “I couldn’t live in Mexico, too much violence!” But however bloody the last six years have been, no

major political actors dared to challenge the bloodshed. Moreover, that was one of the fields in which the presidential candidates agreed: they only battled each other on how to pursue a more effective War on Drugs. In this sense, although Peña has said that his priority is “reducing the levels of violence”, he is quick to add that there “are tasks that have been followed that should be maintained and increased.”⁶ Talking about legalisation of drugs largely remains taboo.

MIDDLE-CLASS MINDS

WHEN IN 2006 *The New York Times* covered the allegations of electoral fraud made by the opposition candidate, two main forecasts were reflected. One the one hand, “political analysts like Robert Pastor of American University said the history of the Democratic Revolutionary Party of Mr. López Obrador and his own scrappy political instincts could easily lead him to take this fight to



the streets.” On the other, Pamela Starr, at the time a Latin American expert for the Eurasia Group, got it right: “she expected Mr. López Obrador to “make a lot of noise” but to concede defeat quickly.” Why? In her view, that politician “had learned from the election that his confrontational political style frightened away supporters in a country where people are overwhelmingly poor, but hold conservative, middle-class sensibilities.”⁷ Here lies the secret of how she guessed correctly: Mexicans have one social class in their pockets while other in their minds.

This truth is so deep that it even biases Mexican social sciences. Just look at Roger Bartra, a leading sociologist for whom Mexico “is a middle-class society already”. How come? His answer: if it is well true that 40% of the population is poor, “the remaining 60% is part of the middle-class.”⁸ Let us put aside the astonishing fact that he ignores the tremendous gap between the poor and the rich.⁹ There is more. As if refuting Bartra, a study in 2011 revealed that 81% of the Mexican population believes to be middle-class although only 32% earns more than one thousand dollars a month.¹⁰ Thus one can conclude that the Mexican working classes are middle-class *in aspiration*. It is not “the middle-class” the subject of contemporary Mexican political discourse: the *families-to-be-saved-from-drugs*? So when Bartra argues that in Mexico “the middle-class is already hegemonic”¹¹ he is providing a correct insight that nevertheless cannot be substantiated with statistics as he thinks, but can only be explained as an ideological phenomenon Bartra himself is a victim of.

When in 1975 a Communist student at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) confronted President Luis Echeverría, he was happy to clap enthusiastically and shout: “I’m the first one to applaud that”, when the activist explained the auditorium the need to “incorporate the proletariat into the revolutionary process.”¹² Later in the 1980s the “revolutionary nationalism” was still dominant in the ruling Institutional Revolutionary party (PRI). In his speech before the election he won for governor of the Nayarit State in 1981, Emilio M. González was confident enough to declare this as part of his

“doctrine”: “I believe in the Mexican Revolution, I support the revolutionary nationalism... I am anti-imperialist.”¹³

Here the parallel with Stalinism is revealing. The PRI, just as the Soviets since Stalin, needed a repressive political apparatus that allowed it to guarantee a monopoly of power, while building its legitimacy on acting on behalf a people’s Revolution. Octavio Paz, Mexican poet, Nobel laureate on literature, maybe put it more clearly when defined the *classic* PRI’s regime as a “philanthropic ogre.”

This PRI was sensible to popular demands, due to the fresh memories of the Mexican Revolution (yes, with capital letters), from which after a long process emerged a regime that legitimated itself as the personification, product, representative, and guardian of that heroic deed. The PRI managed its relation with the popular classes (and with the bourgeoisie at some extent) through corporate structures: that is, organisational vehicles whose leaders are promoted from above, with no chance for any insider opposition. These resemblance of all this with Stalinism is no coincidence. For example, the main worker’s-aimed apparatus -the Confederation of Workers of Mexico (CTM)- was designed with most of its anti-democratic features in the 1930s by the Mexican Communist Party, which soon handed over its leadership to the PRI, by Moscow’s orders to support the Mexican regime at that time “at all costs”. In other words, the corporatism of the PRI is a tradition originated in a welcomed Soviet embedding in the post-revolutionary institutionalisation of Mexico: the down-to-earth form of “revolutionary nationalism” rhetoric of the *classic* PRI.

Nevertheless, with the ascendance of the neoliberal technocrats within the PRI, best represented by Carlos Salinas, who ruled Mexico from 1988 to 1994, the definitive dismantling of *classic* PRI started. Never again did the party talk about “revolutionary nationalism”, “anti-imperialism” or its commitment to “the Mexican Revolution”. When in 2000 the PRI finally lost the presidency, it was at the hands of the conservative National Action Party (PAN), giving another blow to the ogre’s philanthropy. What



are the current implications of all this? By diminishing and setting aside the once explicit vehicles through which to monitor and channel the popular “feelings” and demands, Mexican political elites severed the link of the regime with most of the people. Therefore selective violence is more widely used to face societal malaise. The War on Drugs’ madness is also partially explained by this: the cartels do not clearly have whom to negotiate impunity with (as in the past).¹⁴ With no communication vehicles to/from power, the outcome of clashes between Mexican social actors is more unpredictable and so violence a bigger possibility at every situation.

In short, the neoliberal vision treated (‘rationally’ from its point of view, of course) corporate structures as annoying obstacles to the optimal functioning of the market. In reality, the elites, by sweeping away organisations that were not replaced with something ‘better’, only left a vacuum between the regime and the classes. The so-called middle-class hegemony is rather the defeat of working-class structures. They were in the hands of PRI, of course, but now most of them just do not simply exist. Only few of them were democratised from below, for example, the teacher’s union in Oaxaca. But that is the sad exception, not the rule. The new rule is working-class atomisation, which fuels the illusions of being better off via individual social mobility. Why? Without these middle-class illusions there is *nothing*, no place for hope.

THE DINOSAUR WAS STILL THERE

NOT SO MUCH TIME AGO, any future PRI’s comeback seemed inconceivable. Its 2000 defeat seemed irreversible and its death, just a matter of time. The next PAN-led twelve-years *interregnum* marked a political earthquake that even affected cultural outputs, as said above. So how to read this change when the PRI is again on the driver’s seat after being declared terminally ill? Its return possibly signals an interrupted political continuity, which was resumed after a while... with *something* happening in between. No doubt a

new political equilibrium was reached, although some old actors are again on stage... performing a different script.

One is intuitively tempted to see such PRI revival through old good Marx’s lenses: “first as tragedy, then as farce.” In this sense, a new (farcical) PRI government would only be its last empirical test before its definitive death. However intellectually appealing this image might be, it seems more appropriate resorting to Latin American magical realism: “When [s]he awoke, the dinosaur was still there.”¹⁵ The uncomfortable truth is that the *PRI-nosaur* never left though we loved to think so: and no remainder philanthropy is left in its genes. The neoliberal version of the old ogre is here to stay.



After all, even in his years out of the Presidency, the PRI never ruled less than half of the Mexican states, and in 2012 is governing 20 out of the 32. We have finally woken up from the illusion and when the truth was becoming apparent, the student movement *#YoSoy132*¹⁶ emerged in the middle of the 2012 electoral campaign. Peña Nieto had been the

unacknowledged official candidate of Televisa, the main TV broadcaster in the country. Opposing this, a new generation of activists rebelled against the capitalist monarchy in the Mexican media. (Certainly, what are the merits of Televisa’s CEO Emilio Azcárraga to lead that company? Is it he the most suitable professional to deliver information to the Mexicans? No. He is simply “the heir”, as in any kingdom that deserves decapitation.) But here, as in a sad reminder of the prevalent middle-class sensibilities -let us compare to phenomena such as *Occupy Wall Street*- *#YoSoy132* was also a deep critique to capitalism... without noticing it: was not it a condemnation of the private property over all that, which for being part of the common interest, should not have to be owned by a single individual?

The dramatic question is: Why did PRI come back to power? Certainly not only due to two failed



PAN administrations. At a large extent, because they kept their presence among the popular classes, their *larger-than-life* expertise. Their corporatist tradition (their “popular contact”) although weaker is still effective: and they have no serious opponent at this level. Reluctantly both the PAN and PRD-led coalition have tried to copy PRI’s master model. Overall, the PRI has proved the most experienced and trustable guardian of Mexican crony capitalism. This party had enough machinery to spread its promise of *order* as opposed to Calderón’s mess. And Televisa’s complimentary support was not insignificant at all.

If this was not enough, the day of the election there were many reports of vote buying by PRI operatives. And although it is true that the electoral system showed ineptitude to deal with these allegations, it is *true* that having a flawless electoral body is a waste of time if it is only destined to count corrupted ballots. Maybe the lesson is that PRI can only be defeated in its terrain: with “the people.” Otherwise any novel and well-intentioned democratic institutions, such as the Mexican ones, will eventually be under siege by the regime, still anchored in PRI’s legacies.

However, if one goes to “the people”... is to say what? Any answer to this question reveals how sterile is supporting the ex PRI’s cadre and two-times PRD presidential candidate López Obrador whose political program can be fairly described as a utopian neoliberalism “with a human face.” And this is the other explanatory variable in regards to PRI’s *reinassance*: the so-called leftist PRD has consistently showed a remarkable inability to present an alternative to both neoliberalism and the war on drugs. This party has largely been reduced to parasitic politics: an attitude of “wait and see” the actions of both PRI and PAN in order to criticise them without offering anything instead. The need of an alternative unveils a political void that can only be filled by a new left. Will this happen?

NOTE:

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Cowboys vs. Indians in Nicaragua's 'WILD EAST'

By Nathaniel Morris

THE ROAD FROM MANAGUA TO BONANZA, a mining town in the autonomous north-eastern part of Nicaragua, is long and for the most part unpaved. Every summer, clouds of dust accompany the brightly painted buses that run to and from the capital, choking the passengers and turning hands, faces and clothes a startling white, while during the rainy season the same dirt road becomes a sea of mud, slowing traffic to a crawl and making the fifteen-hour journey yet more uncomfortable.

But it is the region's isolation that has allowed the ten thousand or so Mayangna Indians, second largest of Nicaragua's indigenous populations, to survive here with their language and culture largely intact, despite the pressures exerted on them by the conquistadores and slave-raiders of the colonial period, the North American mining companies who succeeded them in the early twentieth century, and the constant efforts of the Nicaraguan state to absorb the nation's Indian groups into a homogenous, 'national' mestizo culture.

However, while Bonanza and the neighbouring municipalities of Siuna and Rosita remain remote, pressure on the region's lands has been building since the 1950s, when thousands of mestizo

peasants, displaced by the Somoza dictatorship's land reforms aimed at 'modernising' agriculture, first began to migrate towards the supposedly 'virgin lands' of the Atlantic Coast. The problem is that the region's rainforests, far from being 'wasteland' ripe for conversion into 'productive' cattle pastures by entrepreneurial mestizo farmers, are essential to traditional Mayangna life, which continues to revolve around hunting, gathering and small-scale slash-and-burn agriculture. While the violence that wracked the Atlantic Coast during the Nicaraguan Civil War in the 1980s largely halted the eastward expansion of what is locally known as the 'agricultural frontier', since the early 1990s the economic policies of successive Liberal and 'neo-Sandinista' governments, with their emphasis on growth in the agro-exports sector, has accelerated mestizo migration to the area, making new land conflicts inevitable.

On the road from Rosita to Wasakín, a large Mayangna village of wooden houses on stilts surrounded by tropical fruit trees, the devastation caused by mestizo 'colonists' is obvious. The virgin jungles that once surrounded Wasakín have been illegally logged, the wood sold for profit and the land transformed into cattle pasture. But as the dry soil becomes exhausted, the colonists,



having laid claim to the land by ‘improving’ it in this way, sell up at profit and move on. Through this process Nicaragua is losing an estimated 75,000 hectares of forest cover a year,¹ and despite Wasakín’s legal title to a large, inalienable and communally-held territory, the ranchers have begun to carve out plots for themselves within this area, claiming that the traditional Mayangna use of forest resources is ‘unproductive.’ And as in other areas contested between the Mayangna and mestizo colonists, the result has been a permanent state of confrontation between the two groups and a series of bloody murders.

In March 2011, for example, two Mayangna youths were killed on the Bambana river near Wasakín, apparently in revenge for the earlier death of a mestizo rancher during a fight with a group of Mayangna farmers. According to Cornelio Fenly Pins, Wasakín’s Protestant religious leaders – one legacy of the colonial-era British domination of the region – have explicitly forbade any further violence, and have tried to arrange a dialogue with the Catholic priests of the mestizo settlements.² But he warned that the young men of the village are angry and increasingly impatient, as so far the central government’s only response to these killings has been to blame them on “armed criminal gangs”, refusing to deal with the root cause of the violence – that of the invasion of communal lands and the illegal destruction of the forests.

It is not only the central government’s inaction that angers the Mayangna. They also feel neglected by the region’s autonomous government, dominated by the YATAMA party, which represents their Miskitu Indian neighbours – the largest and most important indigenous group in Nicaragua. Traditional enmity between the Mayangna and the Miskitu dates back to the Colonial era, when the latter, allied with the British, became the main power on the coast and displaced, enslaved and massacred the former. Despite this, however, during the Nicaraguan Civil War in the 1980s many Mayangna joined Miskitu guerrillas in the fight against the Sandinista government. Although peace negotiations between the Sandinistas and the Indian rebels eventually resulted in the central government granting autonomy to the Atlantic Coast in 1986,

the current autonomous political system is far from ideal in the eyes of the Mayangna, who feel that despite their own sacrifices during the war, the Miskitu leaders now ignore their distinct problems as a people and yet continue to portray themselves as representatives of all of the ‘Indians’ of the Coast, depriving the Mayangna of the chance to make themselves heard. Nicaragua’s Liberal party and its allies, despite granting official land-titles to several Mayangna communities in the 1990s, have also largely alienated the Mayangna, ignoring issues of indigenous rights, regional autonomy and environmental conservation throughout their time in power, instead prioritising accelerated economic development (prompted in part by IMF and World Bank ‘structural adjustment’ programmes).

Since the mid-1990s, the Mayangna have therefore regarded Daniel Ortega’s Sandinistas as their only political ally, which has made the lack of the Sandinista-run central government’s intervention in the territorial conflicts on the Atlantic Coast doubly frustrating. In Wasakín, as in many other Mayangna communities threatened by the advance of the ‘agricultural frontier’, the inaction of the central government is blamed on one thing; the November 2011 general election, in which the Sandinistas were re-elected for a second term. As Cornelio explained at the time: “The ranchers are all government supporters. And the government doesn’t want to lose their votes.





And let me put it this way, it's not just the votes of the ranchers they're worried about – there are a lot more mestizos than Indians in this country”.

The small size of the Mayangna population means that, despite the promises of Sandinistas politicians, there is little political will on the part of either central or regional governments to put an end to the problem of the land invasions, even though the majority of Mayangna communities now have legal title to their lands. Meanwhile, despite the differing economic policies of the Somozas, Sandinistas and (neoliberal) Liberals, the continued importance of agricultural exports to the Nicaraguan economy, and the same broad international trends that have long put indigenous communities across Latin America on a collision course with ‘national development’ by favouring the transformation of ‘unproductive’ forest into ‘productive’ pasturelands open to exploitation by domestic capitalists, make finding a definitive political solution to Mayangna’s problems yet more difficult.

Thus the Mayangna find themselves trapped between a ‘Revolutionary’ central government that depends on mestizo farmers for votes and

economic growth, an ‘Indianist’ regional administration that largely ignores them in favour of another Indian group, and an international economic system that actively promotes the destruction of their forests and thus their traditional way of life. However, in Musawás, the largest Mayangna community in Nicaragua and the unofficial Mayangna ‘capital’, the leadership believe that another international trend may hold the key to saving their territories from the advance of the ‘agricultural frontier’. They hope that UNESCO’s declaration of much of the forested region in which they live as the ‘Bosawás Biosphere Reserve’ in 1997, together with the growing political clout of the international environmentalist movement, will force the State to act to halt the invasion, colonisation and deforestation of their territory within it.

In line with their new alliance with the international Green movement, the Mayangna have begun to rearticulate their traditional demands for territorial, political and cultural autonomy as the struggle of “the last pure Indians in Nicaragua”³ to preserve their forests. Borrowing from the rhetoric of environmentalist NGOs, the Mayangna now describe their





homeland as “the lungs of the Americas”, and themselves as “the guardians of the forests”.⁴ Furthermore, by taking advantage of the expansion of the Nicaraguan education system – one of the main achievements of the Revolution – and entering their children into secondary schools (a level of education that before the Revolution only two Mayangna had ever completed), community leaders plan for the new generation to go on to train as forest engineers, BOSAWAS Reserve administrators, or as the ‘Forest Guards’ tasked by the central government with protecting the Reserve’s forests – thus allowing for a kind of *de facto* Mayangna autonomy as control over the defence of their lands within the Reserve passes into their own hands. For Econayo Taylor, a Mayangna leader who has played a key role in these efforts, “it is only as masters of their own forests, rivers and mountains that the Mayangna can be masters of their own destiny.”⁵

The Mayangna believe that, with help from international environmentalists – and perhaps even the World Bank, which has at last begun to emphasise the benefits of ‘sustainable development’⁶ – they will be able to persuade the Nicaraguan government that the defence of indigenous territories is in the national interest. Whether they can achieve this before land invasions and deforestation deal a death-blow to

their traditional culture, however, remains uncertain, and largely depends on Daniel Ortega, now in his second term as President (and with a strengthened mandate following Sandinista successes in last November’s general elections), finally making good his promises to the nation’s indigenous communities. The founding this February of the Nicaraguan Army’s ‘Green Battalion’ – the first military unit in the world charged exclusively with fighting illegal logging – is certainly a positive sign, indicating that the government recognises the threat that deforestation poses to the country’s water supplies, and its own ambitious plans to build a national hydroelectric power network. But a definitive solution to the problem will depend on Ortega having the courage and political strength to face down an alliance of mestizo peasants, big landowners, local capitalists, and crooked lawyers and politicians, who see in the destruction of Nicaragua’s forests a route to money and power.

In the meantime, the Mayangna will have to hope that the gamble they have taken – with the self-conscious adoption of environmentalist rhetoric and with the education and empowerment of their youth – pays off, providing the next generation with the tools needed to protect and preserve their traditional way of life for themselves, before it is irreversibly eroded by the increasing pressure on their lands, and the violence that comes with it.

NOTES:

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1. A. Acevedo Vogl, *Nicaragua Country Report* (Social Watch, 2012)
2. Author’s interview with Cornelio Fenley Pins, *síndico* of Wasakín and in charge of the community’s land titles (Wasakin, 18/04/11)
3. Author’s interview with Rolando ‘Chaoling’ Davis, pro-Sandinista Mayangna community leader (Bonanza, 22/04/11)
4. Cornelio Fenley Pins

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in
COMMENTARY
Section

Beyond Blind Optimism

By Pär Isaksson & Martin Karlsson

**The Kalchakra Pooja at Bodh Gaya:
Spiritualism and Nationalism**

By Assoc. Prof. Manish Sinha

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By Dr Terry Tucker



BEYOND BLIND OPTIMISM

By Pär Isaksson & Martin Karlsson

INTRODUCTION

IN *POLITICAL REFLECTION MAGAZINE*, vol. 3, issue 3, Dr. Terry Tucker writes about the role social media played in the Arab Spring and the campaigns against SOPA/PIPA (Stop Online Piracy/Protect IP Act) and NDAA (National Defense Authorization Act). His article consists primarily of a list of lessons learned from these highly disparate “events.” In the first paragraph he claims that they are only “seemingly unconnected,” and the text proceeds without mentioning the vast differences in context—the lessons learned from revolts and revolutions gets lumped in with lessons from political campaigns in democratic countries. The “lessons learned” are presented without clear references to analyses or descriptions of these cases, as if the conclusions were self-evident and independent of political context. Given the vast differences between these cases it is probable that Dr. Tucker attempts to draw generally applicable conclusions about the consequences of social media for political engagement rather than restricting his analysis to specific cases.

Dr. Tucker is very optimistic about the possibilities of social media, and his article echoes of the writings of Martin Hauben, Howard Rheingold and

other earlier preachers of the revolutionary potential of new information and communication technologies (ICTs). The lingo is the same—revolution, regime change, and end of history. Another similarity with earlier cyber-optimists is how Dr. Tucker writes about social media as if it was a living entity possessing agency. Among other things, we can read about what social media “has done in the Middle East” (emphasis added). Cyber-optimism was a common position in the early years of the debate about the political consequences of ICTs, within and outside of academia, and the debate was plagued by opposition between optimists and pessimists for many years. Within the scholarly community a clear empirical turn in the research around ICTs and politics has pushed the debate forward toward a more realistic middle ground. In the wider debate, this development is still to come.

Dr. Tucker’s piece illustrates all too well the unfortunate gap between the wider political debates around social media (in which we include Dr. Tucker’s article) and empirically grounded research. Recently, a growing interest in social media and online political engagement has arisen outside academia resulting in a widely read debate with little connection to the empirically grounded research in this field. The consequence



of this divide has been that wild claims contradicting earlier knowledge of social science are made and published, reaching a large audience without being challenged. The aim of this article is to challenge some of Dr. Tucker's wilder claims in order to illustrate how important parts of Dr. Tucker's reasoning are at odds with empirically well-grounded observations within the research field. We end the article with reflections on the potential gains of bridging this divide for the understanding of the relationship between social media and politics.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND REVOLUTION

ACCORDING TO DR. TUCKER, the birth and global spreading of social media is causally related to the recent revolutions in non-democratic regimes. Apparently, "[s]ocial media is best suited to a 'Maoist' strategy" where "the will of your opponent is quickly overcome through indirect means and psychological mass" (p. 25). Tucker also presents a historical ranking of social revolutions, claiming that, "The most profound revolutions to date were social media population-centric resistance movements" (p. 26). However, the most surprising and inaccurate statement is saved for the end of the article where he states that:

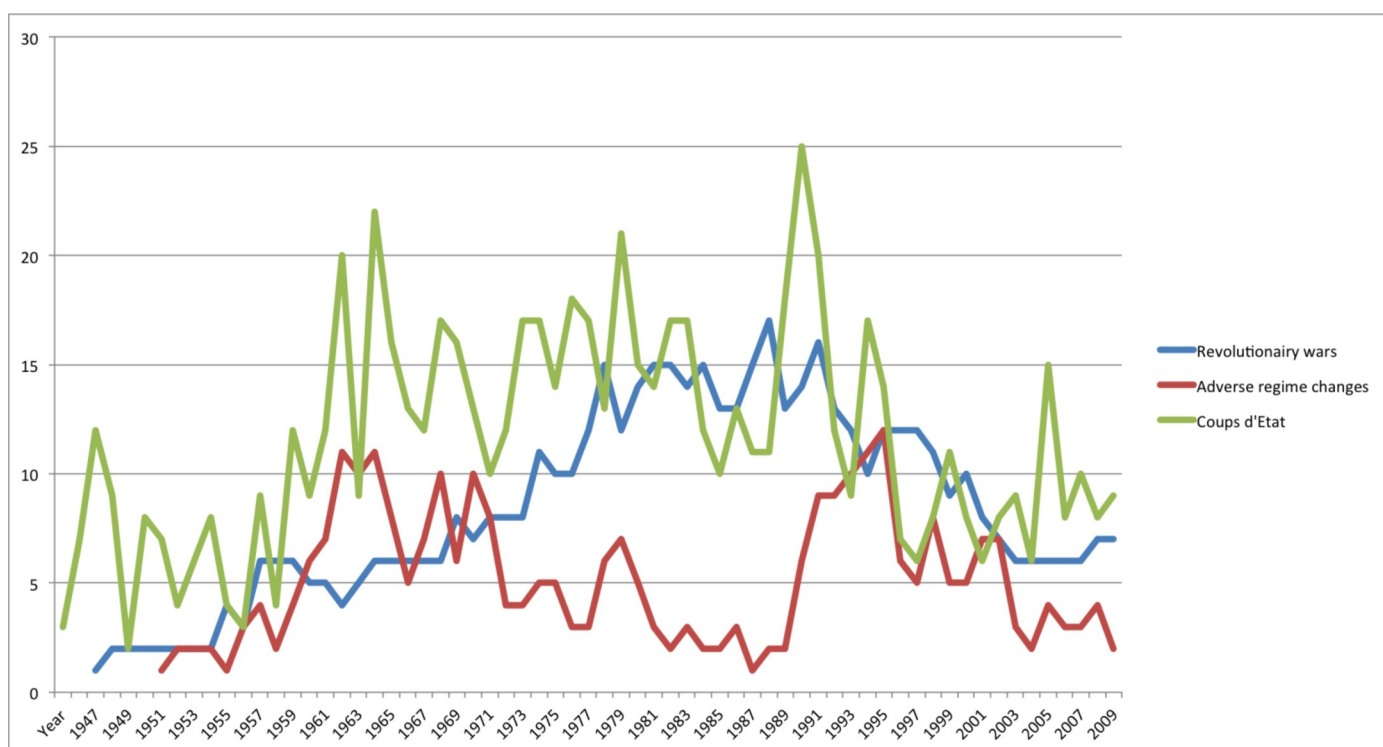
"Revolution may not be the aim, but in most cases to date it has been the outcome. Social media and the growing body of collective effort create a sense of inevitability of perceived outcome and regime change. The sense of narrative creates actions before consequences. Social media creates a sense of the 'end of history' as the nuanced version of the narrative creates millions of identifiable personal stories, statements, or chronicles feed the proverbial beast. The ethics and universalism of the moment is greater than the parts." (p. 26)

This kind of revolutionary prophecies was not uncommon among cyber-utopists in the 1990s, nor was the form of technological determinism evident in Dr. Tucker's writing. While such opinions may have been common back then, today they are nearly extinct. For good reasons, few still talk as Dr. Tucker does of the "inevitability" of regime change in relation to

social media. The accumulated knowledge of research on the Internet and politics gives us at least three reasons to question this statement.

- 1) Revolution is far from a common outcome of social mobilization with support of ICTs and social media. In fact, the thresholds for political engagement among citizens, in democracies and authoritarian regimes alike, remain largely unchanged by recent technological advancements. This is evident by the hundreds of studies of the so-called mobilization hypothesis (among the more famous examples we find Margolis and Resnick's book, "Politics as Usual"), investigating the claim that new forms of political communication and engagement offered by ICTs will help mobilize new groups of citizens to become politically active. This research shows that the cognitive and social recourses that have traditionally been important for explaining political participation are still significant for understanding online political engagement. In many ways the digital divide shown by this research mirrored the previously known inequalities that created a divide between politically active and non-active. Therefore, social media is not mono-casually linked to social mobilization, a prerequisite for revolutions to occur. The new socio-technological landscape does not in itself mobilize earlier inactive citizens to become engaged in political protests.
- 2) Social revolutions (in any form) are no more common in the age of ICTs and social media. On the contrary, the occurrence of revolutionary wars, coup d'états and adverse regime changes was highest around the fall of the Soviet Union and has since started to decline. Except for the years after the end of World War II, the past decade has been the most stable period of the post-war era.¹
- 3) Dr. Tucker does not discuss the many ways that authoritarian regimes employ ICTs and social media in order to stabilize the regime and battle oppositional forces. Social media gives non-democratic governments excellent opportunities for surveillance and propaganda. From the UN E-government surveys (conducted between 2003 and 2012) it is evident that non-democratic regimes





The occurrence of revolutions during the post war era (1945-2010)
[Source: Integrated Network for Societal Conflict Research (INSCR) database].

have caught up with, and in many cases, passed advanced democracies when it comes to advancements in the political usage of ICTs, in recent years. Among the most advanced E-government nations in the world we now find regimes such as China, Bahrain and Kazakhstan. This side of the story is not only important but also well researched and debated within the scholarly community. Among other important works in this area, Kalathil and Boas's book, *Open Networks, Closed Regimes* (from which this article's title is borrowed), have helped change the debate from a blind optimism to a realism that acknowledged that ICTs and social networking are a double-edged sword in relation to democratization.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND UNIVERSALISM

DR. TUCKER VIEWS online political activism as a universal, liberal (in the U.S. sense) and democratic movement. He said, "Within this cloud is a network of individuals and communities that identify with a single and or multiple unifying factors, such as: grievances over corruption,

religion, governance and unemployment," (p. 24), and talks of a movement characterized by universalism and common ethics.

If researchers studying political engagement and social media have learned one thing over the past decade, it is that online political engagement is highly fragmented and Balkanized. Just like (or even more than) other political practices, online politics is ideologically diverse and polarized. Several studies have shown that political social media use highly depends on ideological preferences. Some (most prominently Cass Sunstein) even claim that the structure of the Internet reinforces this polarization, and that it undermines possibilities for deliberation over ideological divisions. According to some scholars, the U.S. political blogosphere is divided into several functional blogospheres with little communication between them as democrats communicate with democrats, republicans with republicans and so on. This observation is not isolated to the U.S., but evident in studies of social media use from many different contexts.





This does not mean that online politics are one-dimensional or that debates and solidarity between different groups are impossible. American political scientist Henry Farrell notes the difference in the Egyptian blogosphere before and after the regime change; before, bloggers of different political stripes emphasized their common opposition while after Mubarak's regime fell, the solidarity between groups vanished. This is an important aspect of online politics—even though it is a political sphere in its own right, with its unique mechanisms, it is everything but disconnected from conventional politics and the political behavior associated with it. Therefore it is hard to understand how Dr. Tucker can talk about a universal and ideologically coherent movement of social activism; a fuller explanation must include both its inclusive and exclusive qualities.

CONCLUSION

OUR AIM is not to suggest that social media and ICTs are without consequences for political mobilization and social change. In fact, we are dedicated to understanding this area because of our belief in the transformative potential of ICTs. Hopefully, the debate will progress, move away from techno-determinism and polarization between techno-utopian and techno-phobic

positions, and accept that ICTs are embedded in and affected by pre-existing social and political orders. That would give us a chance to gain a fuller understanding of the consequences of ICTs and social media for politics, government and democracy. Articles such as *"Social Media: Lessons Learned for Political Engagement"* and its overtly optimistic view of social media and its capacity to change the world are a step away from a more realistic and nuanced debate.

NOTES:

Response to "Social Media: Lessons Learned for Political Engagement" by Dr. Terry Tucker, *Political Reflection Magazine*, vol. 3, issue 3.

* **MARTIN KARLSSON** is a Doctoral candidate in political science at Örebro University in Sweden, specializing on the relationship between ICTs and politics.

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1. The currently available data lacks the years of the recent protests and revolutions in the Middle East (2011-2012). However, it is evident that these events do not change the overall picture.

The Kalchakra Pooja at Bodh Gaya

Spiritualism and Nationalism

By Assoc. Prof. Manish Sinha

THE KALCHAKRA POOJA is supposed to be the most advanced form of Vajrayana practice and is one of the most complex systems in Tantric Buddhism. The present Dalai Lama, the fourteenth is the most prominent Kalchakra lineage holder alive today and has given over thirty Kalchakra initiations all over the world. 'Presented as 'Kalchakra for World Peace', they attract hundreds of thousands of devotees from all over the world. Kalchakra means Time Wheel derived from Kala in Sanskrit meaning time and Chakra meaning cycle. The Pooja revolves around the concept of time and cycles, from the cycles of the planets, to the cycles of our breath, and the practice of controlling the most subtle energies within the body on the path to enlightenment. It is said that the Kalchakra Pooja was taught by the Buddha himself and was later brought to Tibet by King Suchandra. The Kalchakra Pooja conducted by the present Dalai Lama at Bodh Gaya between 31 December 2011 and 10 January 2012 was the thirty third initiation given by him. It was a mega international event attracting more than 3 lakh devotees from all over the world. The Tibetan Diaspora living in exile in India and elsewhere, and

thousands of Tibetans from mainland Tibet and China (who crossed into India giving the Chinese authorities a slip) converged at Bodh Gaya. Apart from spirituality it provided them with a unique opportunity for cultural and social mobilization and most importantly to gather support and create awareness for the movement for Tibetan independence or autonomy.

The Tibetans are a Nation in exile, theirs being a colossus human tragedy. Everywhere there were posters of political prisoners and independence activists inside Tibet who had self immolated themselves protesting against the Chinese occupation and photo exhibitions which are creating awareness about the 'Free Tibet Movement.' Press conferences were organized by the independence activists as also Rock Concerts which were used to gather support for the movement. The Tibetans were very optimistic and hopeful that there would be a political solution which would end their tragedy in the near future. Their optimism flows from their redoubtable faith in Dalai Lama and their strong religious and moral orientation.





At the Kalchakra, the Tibetan youth were at the forefront doing social service making valuable contributions to its management apart from mobilizing support for the 'Free Tibet Movement.' Various Tibetan organizations spearheading the movement had put up stalls from which they distributed pamphlets, posters, and literature associated with their movement. In the course of my interaction with the Tibetan Diaspora I met several firebrand youth leaders who were espousing the Tibetan cause. Tenzin Tsundue is a famous young prolific Tibetan writer and activist who is closely associated with the Tibetan Youth Congress (very important youth organization advocating total independence) and is also the General Secretary of 'Friends on Tibet (India). His most famous book is *Kora*, which is a collection of poems and stories, which beautifully capture the pain and anguish of the Tibetans. Tsundue was imprisoned at Lhasa prison for 3 months by the Chinese authorities when he crossed into Tibet from India and was severely tortured. He gained global recognition in 2002 when he scaled 14 floors of a Mumbai hotel to greet Zhu Rongji (then the Chinese Premier) with a 'Free Tibet' banner

and the Tibetan National Flag. He said that the present Free Tibet movement is more assertive and proactive as compared to the earlier movement which was more passive. The movement for democracy in China as well the unrest amongst the various ethnic minorities gives hope for Tibetan solution as it might lead to a change in the Chinese polity which might adopt a positive attitude for the solution of the Tibetan Question. According to Konchok Yangphal (Executive Committee member of Tibetan Youth Congress), their movement is more radical as it stands for total independence as compared to the softer line of other groups which advocate the middle path of autonomy. Konchok is of the view that the difference of opinion regarding independence or autonomy doesn't in fact weaken the movement but in fact strengthens the democratic ethos of the movement in which there should be scope for mutual adjustment and accommodation over the differences of view points.

The 'Tibetan Women's Association' TWA, was founded in March 1959 when Tibetan women





from the three provinces stood united and challenged the brutal clampdown by the Chinese authorities. Today, TWA has 56 regional chapters all across the world. Dhardon is the Research and Media Officer of TWA. She said that the TWA stands for autonomy and was working for attracting the attention and concern of the world community towards the violation of human rights and plight of the Tibetan women inside Tibet as well as working for the empowerment of the Tibetan women living in exile all over the world as also the danger to the fragile environment of Tibet from Chinese imperialism. According to her the Tibetan women have come a long way and present a beautiful synthesis of the traditional as well as the modern which gives them strength



and optimism about a just solution to the Tibetan Cause in the near future.

Dorje Tseten is the National Director of 'Students for a Free Tibet' which advocates complete independence and has branches in 35 countries. He said that their movement is essentially political and they are actively campaigning for harnessing the support of the international community for their movement. They organize a lot of events and panel discussions for creating awareness about the Tibetan Cause and also very importantly the release of all political prisoners inside Tibet, the most notable being the young Panchen Lama who today is the second most important Tibetan religious leader. Their stall is adorned with the posters of the Panchen Lama and other political prisoners inside Tibet seeking the support of the world community for their immediate release.

'Gu-Chu- Sum' is the 'Former Political Prisoners Association' and its stall attracted huge numbers of visitors who flocked to see the photographs of the victims of Chinese atrocities. I met a number of former political prisoners who had escaped into India after being released from Chinese prisons where they were imprisoned for protesting against the Chinese occupation of their homeland. Tserang, Sundu and Lobsangyatso said that they were imprisoned at Lhasa prison for 5yrs for nonviolently protesting against Chinese occupation and were severely tortured during 1994-2000. Lobsangpalgen was imprisoned for 12 yrs at Tamu prison under unbearable conditions where he almost died of torture. They all fled to India after their release trekking through snow and treacherous terrain. The torture and the severe ordeal they had to face have not succeeded in breaking their indomitable will and resolve to struggle for the independence of their motherland. A most remarkable feature was that inspite of their adversities almost all the Tibetans, I met were highly optimistic that their country will definitely achieve independence.

NOTE:

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A Comparative Business Case for Bridging Strategies

By Dr Terry Tucker

SUMMARY

DAILY TURMOIL ON A GLOBAL SCALE is giving business leaders and investors plenty of reasons to keep investments close-hold and their head down as they confront major challenges. New markets, new locations, cross-functional teams, plus uncertainty add risk, delay, and complexity to the business modeling. Strategy must be linked with design and implementation. Today's success demands integrated and expanded social networks linked through centers of commerce.

ANALYSIS

THE CURRENT US FOREIGN POLICY seeks to maintain a balance of power among Nation States. The US expects to confront all manner of persistent conflict through a global engagement strategy.

Although there are different political, military, economic, and social elements that compose the National Security Strategy, the strategy generally relies on cooperation, strength, and power to develop desired security end-states. Trade partnerships, and as well as military security-force-assistance engagements and programs remain the primary means of achieving the desired ends. These activities seek to build partner capacity while stabilizing and improving existing governmental structures. The expected results

include an increased sharing of techniques and knowledge to improve skills and education in formal and informal settings, improving quality of life, and in some countries, to arrest the dichotomy between power and morality in governance. This opens the door for what ultimately could become a shared understanding of democratic concepts to improve meaning, purpose, and positive impact on people at a personal level.

Globalization connects every geopolitical region in real-time with mutual impact through the process of exchange. The US Financial crisis of 2008 and immediate bleed-over to the Eurozone provides a glaring example of our global interconnectedness and vulnerability.



The following three examples illustrate the various traditional methods in which globalization connects.

- Recent news reports attribute the 40% plunge in the Iranian Rial to International Sanctions. The follow-on of recent large demonstrations in Tehran, has subsequently caused Israel to re-consider its strategy on Iran.
- The Keystone XL Project, a proposal for a pipeline to carry oil extracted from tar sands in Canada to refineries on the Gulf Coast of the U.S. is likely to remain a focus of heated political debate on environmental issues vs. employment, national strategy, and energy dependence issues. A project originating in Canada has implications on the US economy as well as global energy markets.
- The weekly Drought Monitor, as of 2 Oct 2012, indicated the current epic drought in the US had spread to more than 65% of the US Continent. Crop production, according to the report, had dropped by \$12 Billion and had shaved 0.2% off the US GDP for the Quarter. The US Department of Agriculture reports that Corn and Soybeans will be down

15 to 20%. The USDA reports that it will take a full 12 months to realize the full impact of the drought and in the meantime, international commodity and crop prices have risen carrying a direct economic impact on local markets around the world.

The five examples below show how barriers have been eliminated and yet remain connected in both a virtual and traditional way. These examples also demonstrate integrated and expanded social networks linked through centers of commerce.

- Cloud Computing. Although viewed as a North American invention, cloud computing has clear and present business applications in the Energy sector (Google's seawater-cooled facility in Finland, and Facebook's hydropowered plant in Sweden.) Dublin is once again emerging as a tech data center with the European home-base for Amazon Web Services' and Microsoft's cloud businesses.
- Basic commodities. Under pressure not only from higher demand within traditional



sectors, basic commodities are also under the pressure of increasing alternate uses. For example, corn will be needed for food and ethanol. Water will be required for consumption, agricultural production and energy production. The epic drought conditions in the US have global impact on energy and commodities.

- DataSift. Headquartered in Reading, England, DataSift is one of three companies (along with Gnip and Topsy) certified to resell all the billions of data points streaming from Twitter every day. Social media, and Twitter especially, are a huge focus of corporate analytics efforts. This is big data that impacts several domains at once.
- The Occupy Movement. As of October 5th, 2012, 1483 Occupations for financial reform had been plotted globally by the Occupy Movement. There is a monthly calendar of planned events. The organization has consolidated its efforts and is extensively represented globally through a number of allies and supporting organizations. <http://occupywallst.org/infotent/> and <http://directory.occupy.net/>
- The Arab Spring, and The Occupy Movement. Both of these movements represent more than social upheaval. They have used digital influence across boundaries' to change policy and influence change in global politics, economics, and social conditions.

Cloud Computing, Energy, Occupy and the Arab Spring represent local-local and the global to local connection and bifurcation around the globe.

Other examples can be found with the EU and California which provide a snapshot into the inter-connectedness of local-local and global markets. These also represent a bifurcated economy on different scales simultaneously. For instance, the EU is in economic chaos, each of its States too differing degrees, with unemployment in Greece and Spain at 24% and 25% respectively and Germany and Netherlands at the lowest end with both countries just over 5%. Conversely, the US unemployment average is at just about 8%, with some financial sites reporting as much as 14%.

The California unemployment rate is an average 10.6%. Unemployment rates for various areas in California are also different with Castro Valley, CA, an agricultural community, at just over 1%, and the Los Angeles zip code of 90013, an urban environment, linked to entertainment, defense, import, export, and financial sectors, at just over 50%.

Global interconnected commerce is challenging traditional forms of exchange, the organization of business, and even forms governance. Geopolitics are not detached from the local environment and the need for enhanced understanding at the local level is increasingly connected to the success of corporate strategy. The EU and California examples above illustrate more than bifurcation and complexity. They also demonstrate why one size strategy does not fit all, and why it is important to understand and include the micro-urban and micro-rural landscape in functional implementation. The concerns of Greek and Spanish communities will not be the same as those of the German or the Dutch. In the California example, Castro Valley, CA, a highly rural and agrarian community, is in the proverbial *high cotton* when compared with a segment within Los Angeles, an urban community.

How much change in the global business environment has really occurred in the last 20 years? Or has technology just dominated the flow and speed of information to a point in which we presuppose that this is all new?

Companies that are considering doing business in a another country gather the economic and demographic data, income levels, GDP, and consumer expenditures in different segments. They then investigate infrastructure challenges, hiring practices, labor issues, and political and regulatory policy. This information helps determine the attractiveness of market, but since all companies look at the same data, it is really just an initial screening rather than a deep analysis.

Success is contingent on capability assessments. There is no undifferentiated and single concept of what success and capability will result as different organizations apply assessment results differently. Businesses such as HP, Dell, Apple, Amazon,



Google, Yahoo, Facebook, Virgin Air, American Airlines, and Linked-in, however, offer clear examples of varied application and success.

Strategy and plans for business and government follow similar paths, but have diverging ends. Arguably, they are interrelated and interdependent, but the expectation, results, and outcomes are focused into a single domain; either economic, or military-political. Business leaders expect an ROI on the capital invested and governments expect to strengthen political ties. It sometimes appears that little thought is given to how these domains converge, diverge, or how one might impact the other. Are these connected domains so new that leaders might be rooted in older structures and can not adapt quickly enough?

Strategy results from a concept or idea. The process of identifying and analyzing all the touch-points and data result in the usual decision making process, followed by the development of a course of action, and a functional plan once due diligence and planning is complete. There is consistently a disconnect between concepts, the strategy, and functional implementation. In essence, the bridge to integrate all three is this missing bridge. It is not enough to compensate with superior numbers, or superior technology.

For instance, consider water used in fracking. This might seem simplistic, but when drought conditions exist, and water resources scarce and rationed, the use of 1 million or 5 million gallons of water for drilling can suddenly become a political, social and environmental issue. Conversely, even if that water comes from non-potable sources, and drilling engineers replace and replenish that water to a potable condition, this can also become a friction point unless an engagement strategy is crafted and implemented early.

In another energy example, consider the following case of Apache and Cheniere.

"Apache is a gas producer. It wants to export gas from North America—where a glut keeps prices low—to Asia, where prices are linked to oil and much higher. Apache and its partners also must invest a lot upfront just to pipe their gas to the

coast before it even gets liquefied, providing even more incentive to demand oil-linked pricing.

Cheniere, on the other hand, isn't a producer and largely insensitive to what price gas producers get for their product: It is essentially a middleman. For Cheniere, the cheaper the gas, the more volume is likely to pass through its proposed plant. And that plant is situated in a region crisscrossed with pipelines."

"LNG is usually sold at a price linked to oil. But Cheniere, planning an LNG export plant in Louisiana, has made deals priced off U.S. gas, which is much cheaper. Asian customers are holding off on new contracts awaiting the political fall-out on how much export the US will allow. Additionally, Cheniere has yet to build its plant."

Increasingly, global business needs regional and local engagement and influence strategies. Competitive intelligence now comes from multiple interdependent sources, yet must be focused for specific relevance to multiple simultaneous uses across the human domain for the corporate, regional and local level. This is how effective bridging engagements provide the necessary "course corrections" at the local level before the required course correction becomes a risk, and an economic and political issue at the C-Level - too late to for effective action to be addressed,

Reducing an organizations vulnerabilities is a continuous process and a broad range of capabilities, elements, and components must be assessed. Strategy is only part of the equation for success. Implementation and execution on the ground must have a bridge to the strategic vision and intent.

NOTE:

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PR

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in
EURASIA REVIEW
Section

The Hindrance of Development in Pakistan
How Pakistan is Holding Itself Back

By Ashley Sanders



The Hindrance of Development in Pakistan

How Pakistan is Holding Itself Back

By Ashley Sanders

A **BSTRACT:** THIS PAPER seeks to explain the predominant reasons behind Pakistan's lack of development. While there is not one, simple definition of what a developing country is, there are a number of attributes a country may have that can explain why it has not become a developed country. Countries that engage in democratic processes typically fall under the classification of very highly, or highly developed. It is interesting, therefore, to see that democratic practices have not been able to bring Pakistan out of its state of low human development. Pakistan's society is comprised of a number of factors that can be linked to its lack of developmental success. The five of the most predominant of these factors are: Pakistan's historical political factors, civil-military relations, the role of Islam, the role of women, and regionalism. This paper explores these five factors and suggests steps that Pakistan should begin to take to remedy these issues.

A FULL, LIBERAL DEMOCRACY is a system that has fair, competitive elections along with conditions such as: nearly universal suffrage, a loyal opposition, and respected civil liberties. Democratic practices give countries an advantage towards economic growth and prosperity. In a study that analyzed economic growth from each year between 1960 and 2001, Halperin, Siegle, and Weinstein concluded that "citizens of democracies live longer, healthier lives on average, than those in autocracies. (Handleman, 2011 p 49)" Being a liberal democracy, it is generally believed, will naturally put a country in a better position to become developed. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) uses the Human Development Index to measure levels of development around the world. This index is a "way of measuring development by combining indicators of life expectancy, educational attainment and income into a composite human development index. (UNDP, 2011)" In 2011, Pakistan was ranked at number 145 on this list, as a country with low human development and an HDI of 0.504. Due to its inability to fulfill all of the requirements of a liberal democracy, Pakistan is not considered a full democracy, and therefore has not been able to reap all of the benefits that other democracies have. In 2011, the United Nations



Development Programme (UNDP) reported Pakistan's gross national income per capita as merely \$2,550. To put that into perspective, the gross national income per capita in the United States, which is a full, liberal democracy, is \$43,017, almost seventeen times higher.

Certain aspects of Pakistan's society reveal why it has not been able to transition to a developing country, despite its efforts towards democratization. First, it is useful to look at Pakistan's historical development to understand how it became the country that it is today and to show why it is only a semi-democracy. Pakistan was drawn up as a Muslim nation by Muslims, who were not politically organized. It is a country that was founded on the "belief that political power was essential to the higher ends of establishing God's law. (Mukherjee, 2010 p 69)" In 1947 Pakistan gained its independence from India at the end of British colonial rule. As a typical result of decolonization, "none of

Pakistan's regimes has been able to fully consolidate power. (Hoffman, 2010 p 79)" After gaining independence from Britain, India, especially with the help of Jawaharlal Nehru, was open to democracy. In Pakistan, on the other hand, "those who came to rule were not particularly open to democracy; they believed in personal cults and group interests, not in political institutions or systems. (Haqqani, 2006 p 222)"

In a full democracy, it is necessary to have elections that are "largely free of fraud and outside manipulation. (Handleman, 2011 p 31)" In Pakistan's 1954 elections, however, that was not the case. "The sanctity of the ballot box was sacrificed for the sake of political interests and coming to power by any means. (Haqqani, 2006 p 223)" The Jagtu United Front won the elections but had not been trained in democratic traditions and was not successful. In 1958, Pakistan faced martial law for the first time. The military ruler Ayub Khan came to power, but was forced to

abdicate his position in 1968. After his departure, however, democratic practices still did not ensue. He was succeeded by another military leader, General Yahya Khan, who presided over the separation of East Pakistan. In 1971, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was elected Prime Minister, but then declared himself the "Civilian Chief Martial Law Administrator. (Haqqani, 2006 p 225)" He drew up a new constitution for Pakistan in 1973, but he did not always follow what his own constitution said. He "not only persecuted his political opponents but refused to tolerate dissent, even from within party ranks. (Haqqani, 2006 p 225)" Therefore, at this point, liberal, democratic practices were still not in place in Pakistan.

In 1985, elections were held, although General Zia-ul-Haq had no political opponents. Under his rule, during the tenure of Prime Minister Junejo from 1985-88, "martial law came to an end...



political parties were revived, and there were greater freedoms of speech and dissent. (Haqqani, 2006 p 226)" Between 1988 and 1999, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif each held power two different times. According to Irshad Ahmad Haqqani, "neither showed any interest in promoting democracy in the country and instead indulged in personal aggrandizement and cronyism. (Haqqani, 2006 p 226)" Consequently, the military was able to rule from behind the scenes during this time.

From its beginning, Pakistan has been conceived of as a national security state. It is a country that is "constantly threatened by outside enemies, in particular by India but at times also by Afghanistan, Iran, or America. (Rashid, 2010 p 367)" As a result, it maintains a large standing army and spends between 30 and 40 percent of government expenditures on the military. This national security paradigm serves the interests of the military in asserting its role over the state. Defining Pakistan as a national security state has "allowed the army to define itself as the guarantor of Pakistan's borders. (Rashid, 2010 p 268)" In turn, this has strengthened the military's power and presence in civilian life. "In the sixty years since independence, none of the elected civilian governments have ever served a full term, because the military, the only institution that worked well in the country, has repeatedly intervened in politics. (El-Khawas, 2009 p 94)"

In 2002, General Pervez Musharraf was elected president of Pakistan, with 98% of the people's votes. There were reports of physical abuse and intimidation of public sector employees (Talbot, 2002 p 312)" to pressure voters. Musharraf made efforts to portray his regime as being different from those that ruled before him. He spoke of the "need for 'good governance' and for governments to 'serve' rather than to 'rule' the people. (Talbot, 2002 p 313)" However, the military has still appeared in the lives of civilians as a pressure group, willing to take over to further its own interests. Poor civil-military relations have put a serious strain on the possibility for democratic development. Even prior to Musharraf's reign, Amnesty International had charged Pakistan with "torture, imprisonment, and other human rights abuses. (Talbot, 2002 p

316)" By the time that Musharraf took power, the concept of martial law had become engrained in the Pakistani way of life. Musharraf faced opposition when he attempted to change the Constitution to sanction military rule. He has frequently been criticized for trying to formalize the involvement of the military in politics. The military's presence in politics has restricted Pakistan from developing a democratic political culture. Along with attempts to integrate the military into politics, Musharraf also sought to integrate a moderate Islam, referred to as "Jinnah's Islam" into Pakistan.

It can be argued that the role Islam plays in Pakistan's politics has prevented it from flourishing as a democracy and into a more developed state. Islam is Pakistan's official religion and Pakistan has the world's second largest Muslim population, after Indonesia. Islamism is not present all throughout Pakistan but it has emerged in its politics on several occasions. On the international spectrum, "the military has been the chief sponsor of jihadi activism (Nasr, 1992 p 207)" in Pakistan. Islamism is also present in the domestic arena, although it has not been as powerful since 1999, when the military began to liberate Islamism from the Pakistan Muslim League (PML). Just as there are tensions in Pakistan between the military and civilians, there are tensions between the military and Islamists. Pakistan's laws are heavily guided by Islam as well as by its constitution.

Muslim education begins at a young age in Pakistan, although education of democracy does not. In a study conducted by Muhammad Nazir, an educator and writer for *Educational Review*, schoolteachers in private and public schools in Pakistan were examined on the role of democracy in their classrooms. Only one of the teachers reported that "her school had a relatively open discussion culture, as long as it did not challenge the head teacher. (Nazir, 2010 p 335)" All of the teachers reported that the head teacher had the authority to assign any tasks to the other teachers, which they were obligated to do. Without the head teacher's authority, they had no official organizational structure or written responsibilities. This reflects a culture with a large power distance, as demonstrated by the





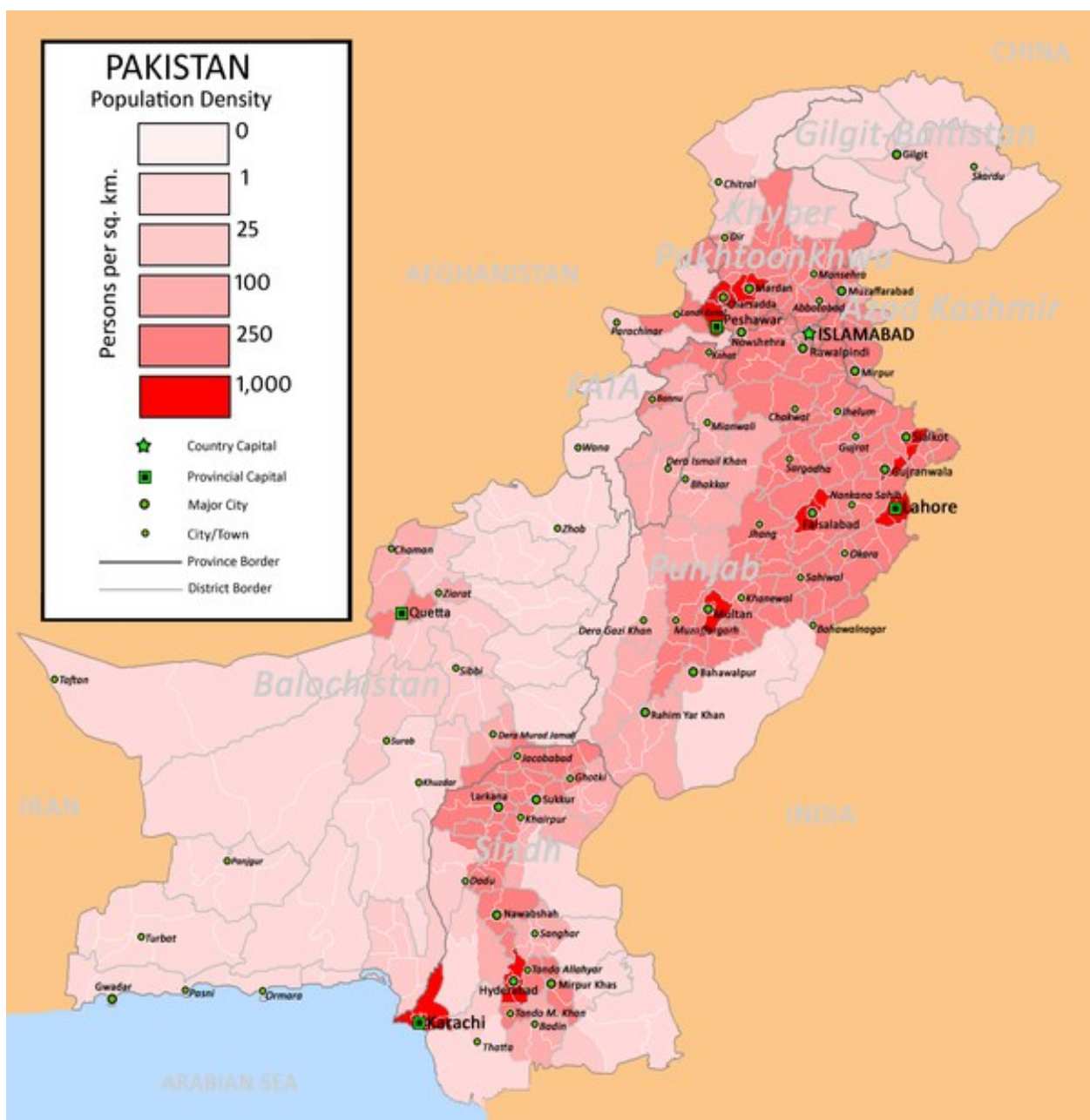
Hofstede Model. This reflects “a psychological mindset that prevents subordinates from challenging authoritarian attitudes. (Nazir, 2010 p 335)” This mindset is present in the teachers and begins to form innately in the children, who are being taught in this environment.

The societal role of women in Pakistan also indicates difficulties towards democratization. While women are granted civil liberties, their ability to exercise them is frequently hindered. This hindrance happens as a result of traditions, customs, and religion. Marriages in Pakistan are frequently arranged, sometimes to settle disputes between men, and sometimes even without the woman’s consent. Fathers are considered the legal guardians of children and mothers have no legal authority over their children. In this male-dominated society, there is a prevalence of violence against women. Legally, women do have the right to press charges against an abuser, but

in most cases they do not report the abuse. This is because there are requirements for reporting a crime and if they are not met, the situation could be manipulated to appear to be the woman’s fault. For example, if a woman is raped, it is necessary for her to provide four Muslim adult witnesses, otherwise she could end up prosecuted for illicit consensual sex.

For the most part, women in Pakistan are unlikely to inherit, own, or manage large stretches of land. Women typically have no personal income and therefore cannot buy any land of their own. Although they are entitled to bank loans and other forms of credit, women are usually limited by their inability to provide collateral, as well as by their low literacy levels. In 2007, according to the UNDP, “women’s labour participation rate was less than 35 per cent in Pakistan. (UNDP, 2009 p 59)” The women who do work typically earn less than half of what men in the same





positions earn. Men have more power within the workforce as well as in politics in Pakistan. Men set and enforce the political standards and women are obligated to abide by them. Female activists in Pakistan have argued, without success, against the application of quotas for women in political parties and have demanded direct elections, instead.

Another issue which has made it difficult for Pakistan to become a developed country is the existence of regionalism within it. Pakistan has four distinct provinces: Balochistan, Pashtun, Punjab, and Sindh. Each of these provinces is

unique and looks upon itself as its own distinct state, rather than part of a country. Aside from being four, divided regions, the provinces are all engaged in ongoing conflicts. Balochistan, which consist of forty-four percent of Pakistan's land mass, wants full autonomy from Pakistan's government. It has been involved in the Balochian Conflict with the Pakistan government attempting to win this autonomy through violence. This violent struggle has resulted in the death of over 7,000 Pakistani citizens. The Pashtun region is one that is extremely poor, and shares a border with Afghanistan. Due to the lack of money in the region, the few schools that exist



are inadequate for children's learning. Therefore, Afghanistan steps in and offers these children the opportunity to study in *madrassas*, which are Islamic schools that feed and house the children, while teaching them a more militant version of Islam than what is typically taught throughout Pakistan. Afghanistan has used these children to help them fight in wars that they have been involved in, most notably in the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and today during the War on Terror. The Punjab region is partially in the province in Pakistan and partially in India, which has created an ongoing conflict between the two countries. The Indo-Pakistani War of 1947 was a violent dispute over the division of the Punjab Province as a result of the partition that created Pakistan. Both countries still feel that the entire region should belong to them, and therefore are still at odds with each other. The Sindh province has been involved in the Sindhi-Mohajir Conflict since 1947. The Sindhi people desire a national language and cultural identity and violently resist the Mohajir, Urdu-speaking refugees. The tensions that exist in all of the provinces of Pakistan have made a unified country unattainable for Pakistan.

It is crucial for Pakistan to remedy these issues in order for development to be a possibility. It is apparent that their definition of "democracy" is very different from that of the United States. That is not to imply that Pakistan should become more Western to be successful, but that it should adapt the standards and requirements of a full, liberal democracy. It is especially necessary, however, for leaders in Pakistan to always be elected to avoid the possibility for a military coup and martial law. It is also necessary for gender equality to be something that the Pakistani citizens strive for. A step towards achieving this would involve having women and men be considered equal under the law. If a law applies to men, it should apply in the same way to women. Having educated, free women in Pakistan's society would have numerous benefits including an increased workforce, innovation, increased household incomes, and improved family health. Although it would be difficult to end conflicts within the four provinces that have been ongoing for over sixty years, the Islamabad government should work to unify them, rather

than treating them as four entirely separate regions. In the years since its creation Pakistan has allowed itself to delve further and further into these problems rather than making efforts to improve its situation. Until Pakistan begins to reform these aspects of its society, it will be unable to become a developed country.

NOTE:

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in
CHINA REVIEW
Section

Interview with Prof. Liu Jian
By Pankaj Adhikari



Interview with Prof. Liu Jian**

By Pankaj Adhikari

Q: Tagore visited China in 1924. Most significant program on May 8 that year (Tagore's 63th birthday) was Liang Qichao's speech, translated into English by Hu Shi (1891-1962), conferring the Chinese name 'Zhu Zhendan/Chu Chen-dan' on Tagore. This was a great episode in the annals of Sino-Indian cultural intercourse. Xu Beihong went to Santiniketan in February 1940 and met Mahatma Gandhi. Tagore introduced him to Gandhi and the latter requested him to organize an exhibition of Xu's paintings to promote Sino-Indian cultural relations. Both countries should remove mutual distrust and work together to strengthen cultural ties. What do you think?

Liu: There is no doubt that both China and India should remove mutual distrust and work together to strengthen our cultural ties in addition to political and economic ties. Both countries have a history of cultural exchanges for about two thousand years. China is indebted to India, for her culture has enriched Chinese culture in many aspects. The two countries have had many similarities in history. Today since we are both

developing or rising rapidly, we need to know each other better and be more friendly to each other than ever. In the past 30 years, all kinds of cultural exchange programs have been carried on smoothly between the two countries. The number of Chinese tourists to India is on the quick increase. Articles and reports about India have also increased tremendously, with positive views overwhelming the negative ones. Intellectuals, including both journalists and scholars, need to do more work to promote mutual understanding between the two countries. Personally I have collaborated with co-authors and written two books entitled *Indian Civilization* (672 pages) and *India* (541 pages), trying to help Chinese readers know Indian culture and various aspects comprehensively. Both of them have been printed twice.

Q: Since 2008, global economic scenario has been bleak. Many European nations are in serious trouble. US economy is in the doldrums. India and China are relatively better off, even though both countries are feeling the heat of financial turmoil.



At this juncture, if China and India sincerely work together, we can bring about global economic stability. Your opinion...

Liu: If China and India sincerely work together, we can make greater contributions to global economic stability. However, both countries are also faced various domestic problems. China's growth rate has shown signs of decrease recently, and India suffers from huge deficit in her trade with China. If the two countries can keep a reasonable and sustainable growth rate, it is already a contribution to world economy. European nations and US can solve their problems, no matter how serious.

Q: China has recently said that South China is their property and asked all the countries to stay away from it...what is your view on that?

Liu: The South China Sea has been part of China for many centuries. Now there have appeared some bilateral disputes between China and some other Southeast Asian nations, the Philippines and Vietnam in particular. The best way to solve the dispute is through bilateral negotiations between China and other individual countries.

Q: Sincere and genuine efforts are needed to ensure peace and development in Asia Pacific region. Also, both India and China can play a significant role for global peace and progress, if we forget border disputes and think positively and work together.

Liu: Both India and China can definitely play a significant role for global peace and progress, due to their sizes, populations, and social-economic progress. If the two countries cannot solve their border disputes at present or in near future, they can still develop relations and cooperate in other areas. Both countries have genuine intentions to keep the borders in peace and tranquility, and both leaderships are more reasonable than their predecessors decades ago.

Q: Last week I read a report that China has responded positively to India's proposal for an India-China-US trilateral talks on regional issues, particularly Afghanistan and Central Asia. What's your opinion?

Liu: Afghanistan and Central Asia are China and India's close neighbors, and historically they have been closely linked with one another. US has been deeply involved with Afghanistan and Central Asia affairs. I think the trilateral talks on regional issues can benefit parties concerned.

Q: We must improve living standard of common man, provide food for them, and ensure primary education. ... Isn't it

Liu: That is absolutely right. If the gap between the rich and the poor is wide enough, if common people feel strongly they are deprived of their basic rights and cannot have sufficient food and clothing, the society is in danger. History has proved this again and again. Common people are the builders of a country. If they are not ensured primary education or further education, how can a society find qualified man power for its healthy and healthy development. Both China and India need to fight against corruption and increase welfare to common people so that they can become truly civilized and modern countries.

Q: We must cut our defense spending and focus more on sustainable development. Your opinion...

Liu: I completely agree with you. Sustainable development is of more significance for both China and India since we have very limited resources and huge populations. Both countries are powerful enough militarily and need to invest more in areas of social development and people's life.

Q: How important is BRICS summit which was held in Delhi earlier this month

Liu: I do not know much about BRICS. I only feel that the nations involved are geographically separated more or less, and they cannot be as close as countries in a regional organization. However, they share some common interests in terms of phase of economic development and size.

NOTE:

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Section

LOS ANGELES

“Either exist as you are or be as you look”

By Dr Fatih Eren



LOS ANGELES

“Either exist as you are or be as you look”

By Dr Fatih Eren



Seal of City of Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES (LA) is located in Southern California which takes place in the western part of the United States (US). With its 3,792,621 population, it is the second most crowded city in US. However, LA must be considered as a metropolitan area instead of a city. With 18 million inhabitants, the Greater Los Angeles Area, which includes Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside and Ventura counties, is the largest metropolitan area of the world. Being one of the leading centres in terms of business, international trade, entertainment, culture, media, fashion, science, sports, technology and education makes here the third wealthiest region in the world. It should be stated that some illegal activities in this region have a great role in the creation of this wealth. This region is one of the most important production/distribution centre of drug and adult movie industries, in which large sums of money circuit.





For globalisation studies, LA should be considered as an open urban laboratory because here is a place where is affected very much from varied global flows as well as strongly affecting the world in cultural terms. On one hand, the centre of Hollywood takes place in this region. Most of motion pictures, television productions, stage productions, video games and recorded albums, which dominate the world's entertainment sector more than a hundred year, are produced here. These productions play a key role in the spread of American culture to the world. On the other hand, LA is one of the most complex and diverse regions in terms of ethnicity and religion in the world. Having a great Mediterranean climate, the dramatic growth of some sectors such as oil, automobile, rubber, motion pictures and aerospace after World War I and 'the California Dream' factor attracted many people from different countries to this region. From an ethnic point of view, 62.1% of all immigrants in this region came from Latin and Central America while 28.9% of them came from Asia. From a religious point of view, the region was subject to a Buddhist migration from Taiwan, Thailand,

Srilanka, Burma, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam; to a Christian migration from Philippines, South Korea, Eritrea and Ethiopia; to a Jains and Hindus migration from India and to a Muslim migration from Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Iran, especially after 1965. Many people from every nation and from every religion live together in LA today so this region is called as 'minority-majority state'.

Interestingly, despite ranking at the top of global city indexes every year, from many point of view LA does not display a real global city character because even though it has a power to affect the world culturally, it has no global power to control the world. When examines, it is seen that very few of the headquarters of international companies are accommodated in LA. Here is also not a financial centre. International banks and financial institutions have not settled their headquarters in LA. However, this region is a very important destination for world trade. LA sets down its importance to its twin ports [Long Beach and Los Angeles] and to trade partnerships which are established between LA and several countries



[especially strong Asian countries]. The biggest trading partners of the region are China, Japan and South Korea in turn. The value of two-way trade [import and export] between LA and these countries reached \$190,4 billion, \$53,3 billion and \$24,3 billion respectively in 2010. It should be noted that transportation links in the region are very strong. Despite its advantageous geo-political position and developed infrastructure, this region entertains several natural disaster risks such as earthquakes, drought, wildfires, flood, heatwaves, hurricane, tornadoes, tsunami, volcano and winter storms (Community Emergency Response Team Los Angeles, 2012).

THE IMPACT OF GLOBAL CONCERN FOR LOS ANGELES: ANALYSIS

SOME DEVELOPMENTS which may lead us to make optimistic predictions about the future of LA have been seen recently in this region. For example, the number of small and medium size enterprises is very high; these enterprises mainly display activity in entertainment, food, tourism, furniture and apparel sectors and they act with local economic development principle in their operations in general. Again, LA is like an

incubator centre for small companies who want to show activity especially in information technology, biomedicine and multimedia sectors. Next, thanks to migrations, the region developed into a very rich place in terms of human capital. In addition, it is an attraction centre for individual and alternative sports such as breeds athleticism, surfing, roller blading, skate boarding, bicycling and swimming. Finally, people give very much importance on craftsmanship and hands-on works in LA. All these developments may be considered as elements which will make LA again a self-serving region with an authentic character in the future. However, it is possible to find some other developments which may lead us to make pessimistic comments on the future of LA.

For many decades, US governors tried to dress LA in a certain global identity in a very systematic way. LA has been marketed to the world as a very special place with a perfect weather where very rich and famous people live in. As a result of this systematic attempt, in time, an unreal, constructed common memory regarding LA was settled in the minds of the world society. Movies, pictures, policies, novels and ads on California

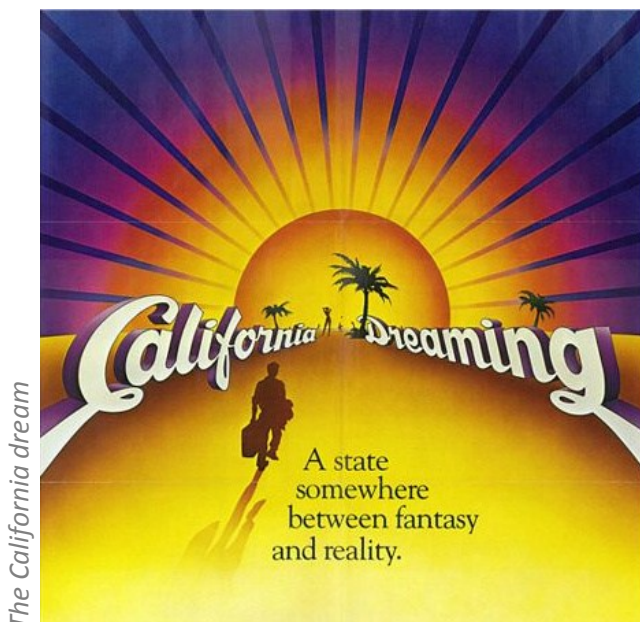
Local food production in Los Angeles



made LA an utopian city which symbolizes a lifestyle of sunshine, large family houses with garden and swimming pool and the Hollywood dream factory. This strong and wonderful image which is called as 'the California dream' attracted too many people to this region in the last 80 years. People came to LA to turn this dream into reality finding a place for themselves in this wonderful place. It is clear that LA benefited very much from this artificial image up to now but we are now in a time in which everybody notices that this image is not completely true for LA. Let's open this issue a little bit.

L.A. Confidential –a Hollywood movie- tells us a story about the 1950s of Los Angeles. One of stars in the movie describes LA as a paradise because of four reasons. These are 'affordable housing', 'cheap land', 'too many job opportunities' and 'happy American family'...

"Come to Los Angeles! The sun shines bright, the beaches are wide and inviting, and the orange groves stretch as far as the eye can see. There are jobs aplenty, and land is cheap. Every working man can have his own house, and inside every house, a happy, all-American family. You can have all this, and who knows... you could even be discovered, become a movie star... or at least see one. Life is good in Los Angeles... it's paradise on Earth."



We don't know very well whether or not these four features which are attributed to LA were valid in the 1950s in the city but this is clear that it is not possible to draw the same picture for LA in the year 2012. Today, it is very hard for an Angelenos to own a house in the region. L.A. ranks at the bottom of the list in which the top 20 largest metropolitan areas in US are compared according to the affordability of housing criteria by the National Association of Home Builders in November 2011. In parallel to the increase of land prices in years, the price of an average house passed \$300,000 in 2012 where it was only \$100,000 in 1987 (National Association of Realtors, 2012). Job opportunities decreased significantly.

Unemployment rate in the region is above 12% in 2012 [the highest figure in 70 years] and despite strong governmental efforts, this rate was not moved down in the last 5 years. Since LA attracted only well-qualified people [professionals and managers] from other counties and countries in the last 10 years, job opportunities for unskilled labour decreased significantly. It is also not easy to say that Los Angeles families are very happy. According to U.S. Census Bureau, 807,000 families are living under poverty threshold in this area. Worse still, nuclear family which is the basic unit of a healthy society is about to disappear. Parents have to work long hours to meet their living expenses so they can't find time to show enough concern for their children. Youngsters become member of gangs, which deal with illegal activities such as adult movie, drug and gun trades to earn easy money and to satisfy their sense of belonging. For example, the 18th street gang, which is one of the most popular LA gangs, has 50,000 young members.

Today, Angelenos face up to the biting realities of LA and discuss urban problems which emerge as a consequence of this fake image, which is clearly expressed in LA Confidential movie. LA can not be managed and marketed with old urban rhetoric and policies from now on. A change is required in the vision, management and planning of LA. The utopic LA vision/image must be destroyed and a real true future vision must be created for LA. However, both the governors and inhabitants of the region are unable to forecast how this change



L.A. gangs



L.A. as a city of diversity



may happen. Therefore, the need for change and the greatness of urban problems [suburban sprawl, high cost of urban life, high crime rates, gangs and disintegration of nuclear family] create a fear for the future among Angelenos. 18 million inhabitants wonder whether or not they will find a place again for themselves in LA which will be governed with a different mentality and vision in the future.

Every government which wants to create a healthy society works decisively for the limitation of spread of drug trade and pornographic broadcasts in the legal boundaries of its country. Due to this global trend, in the next decades, it can be forecasted that limitations will increase against drug and adult movie industries in California. These limitations mean that the urban economy of LA which take nourishment seriously from these two dangerous industries will be shrunk. Dependant on a shrinking urban economy, people may migrate from LA to other growing wealthy regions. Even in today's economic conditions, the region is losing population. About 500,000 people abandoned LA permanently and were accommodated in a different region between 2004 and 2008. As mentioned, the region has also a very high natural disaster risk so it is predicted that the region may experience a large amount population loss in a way in the future.

LA is named 'city of diversity' so changes in its demographic structure are crucial. Due to migrations, the number of whites decreased and the number of Hispanics and blacks increased gradually in the region. When minorities who are generally hungry, jobless and poor take population majority power in their hands, they

may struggle for influence the governance of the region because these crowded communities will want to remove injustice income distribution and want to take more share from the wealth of LA. This initiative may develop LA into an unliveable or uncomfortable place for whites whose population is low but whose economic conditions are good in general. In addition, different social communities who have a demographical advantage may struggle for power in the management of LA in the future. The main reason for the failure of establishment of a regional governance in this region is the demand of social communities for the continuation of their local autonomy and local power in their areas. All social groups fight only for their own ends and they do not support social and governmental integration initiatives in the Greater Los Angeles Area. Contentious and fragmented attitudes of social communities portend that a struggle for power may begin among some minority groups in the near future. On one hand, if some minorities increase their power in the governance of LA, the region may develop into a very different place with a very different identity. On the other hand, if current governors continue to keep their power on LA, a riot then may break out in the region.

In conclusion, Although LA is a region which has got great food, scenery, history, art and people, it is now tired. As a leading global city, it is now struggling with many urban problems which have not been seen yet in most of cities in the world. I believe that Los Angeles will show to the world the way of how plurality, difference and variety can be turned into advantage in an urban society.

NOTE:

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PR



The Greater Los Angeles Area

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in
FILM REVIEW
Section

REVOLUTION
A Power Cut and the End of State Power
By Dr Alaaddin F Paksoy



REVOLUTION

A Power Cut and the End of State Power

By Dr Alaaddin F. Paksoy



Revolution (TV Series - 2012)

Creator: Eric Kripke

Starring: Billy Burke, Tracy Spiridakos, Giancarlo Esposito,
Zak Orth, David Lyons, Graham Rogers

Trailer: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwfCRAtkYEI>





“We lived in an electric world. We relied on it for everything. And then the power went out. Everything stopped working. We weren't prepared. Fear and confusion led to panic. The lucky ones made it out of the cities. The government collapsed. Militias took over, controlling the food supply and stockpiling weapons. We still don't know why the power went out. But we're hopeful someone will come and light the way” (Revolution, 2012).

Watching a TV series is a great time investment compared to enjoying a movie. That is why, I feel quite picky before taking the risk of being a follower of several seasons. After watching NBC's new TV drama *Revolution*'s trailer and reading about its plot a bit, I decided to take the risk. I watch it weekly on a new online archive TVYO and it has been riveting three episodes so far.

I am not going to write about the visuality, cast, characters or the details in the plot in this review. You will see them in the drama anyway. My intention is to motivate you to check yourself

whether you are interested in contemplating the notions of the state and anarchy.

The electricity is a new phenomenon when we think of the overall human history. However, in the contemporary world, the lack of electricity means a total change in people's lifestyles and their behaviours. The majority of people in the world only knows what a temporary power cut is. A permanent power cut sounds like a joke or a science fiction. *Revolution* presents the audience a new world order without electricity. The power cut, which is called as the black out in the drama, does not allow any electric device to turn on. Even the electrical system of vehicles with a battery (cars, planes, etc.) turned off when the blackout occurred. Accordingly, the power cut firstly abolished the urban life. People had to go back to the pre-electricity period and started to produce their own food in their gardens. Big cities became abandoned places and the public order collapsed. In the post-black out period, within 10-15 years, the state completely dissolved in the US and probably in the other parts of the planet too.





Simple telephone conversations became impossible, transportation could only happen by walking or riding a horse. All these made it impossible to sustain peace in the society and they ended the influence of the state. People started to live in the law of the jungle. As an example for this point, in the 3rd episode, when Miles (one of the protagonists of the drama) saw a murderer, he decided to punish him by his own judgement. He says "we can't call the cops; we can't put you in jail".

Therefore, the new circumstances paved the way for the militia. As the rule of law dissolved, having a gun became so precious. However, the militia bans owning guns which means that they are the only entity who have the right to use guns as part of their force. People who do not work for the militia could only defend themselves by old style swords and arrows.

Why did the power go down? Apart from a little metal necklace, there is no clue about the reason

of the black out in the first three episodes. The necklace and some flashbacks might reveal some points in the upcoming episodes.

All in all, I cannot define myself as an anarchist and I have always been against a strong state which intervenes every point of people's life. However, after watching the first three episodes of *Revolution*, I would say that I became more rightist concerning how the public order should be sustained by the state power. Therefore, Lin Yutang's remark¹ does not sound that much eye-opener for me anymore.

NOTE:

* **DR ALAADDIN F. PAKSOY** is the Film Review Editor of Political Reflection Magazine.

1. "Where there are too many policemen, there is no liberty. Where there are too many soldiers, there is no peace. Where there are too many lawyers, there is no justice." (Lin Yutang)

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