

JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



Volume 14, Number I , 2020



A biannual journal of the Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka

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Journal of International Relations

Volume 14, Number 1, 2020



Department of International Relations
University of Dhaka



The Journal of International Relations is published biannually by the Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The views and interpretations in the articles expressed or implied in the Journal are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views and policies of the Editorial Board, the Department or the University of Dhaka, or any other agencies of Bangladesh Government.

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ISSN: 2218-7391

Journal of International Relations

Volume 14, Number I, 2020



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Editor's Note

Never did I, Niloy, Atique and Monzima know, as we sat through the oft sultry and lazy afternoons of September, October and November, 2019 planning for the two day international conference on, *Revisiting International Relations: Critical Reflections on 100 Years, 1919-2019*, organised by the Journal Committee of the Dept. of International Relations, University of Dhaka to celebrate the 100 years of IR as an academic discipline, that the world would actually change in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic, which hit the world in December 2019 has put in the table new puzzles, interrogations, politics and indeed reflections. International Relations as an academic discipline and practice is faced with new challenges as well opportunities. One may very poignantly ask, if the IR since 1919 is giving way to IR since 2019?

The key note speech and the six papers (out of a total of 36 presentations) published in this volume are part of the presentations made in the two day conference held on January 19-20, 2020. The conference sought to bring together scholars and practitioners of international relations from home and abroad to deliberate upon the evolving dynamics of international relations and politics. As the discipline celebrated its 100 years, it was felt that the Dept. of International Relations at the University of Dhaka, being the first of its kind in South Asia, set up in June 1947, before the partition of the Indian sub-continent in August 1947 was well placed to initiate the questioning and revisiting process; not to mention the fact that Bangladesh has had experienced two colonialisms, the British and then the internal colonialism of Pakistan. The country faced a genocide in 1971 in its quest for independence. Dhaka University was the epicentre of genocide because of its centrality and critical role in the

political history of the nationalist movement for independence and liberation. The Pakistan army sought to wipe out the intellectuals/teachers of the Dhaka University, in order to take the brain and soul out of the people of Bengal. It therefore calls to reason that the Dept. of International Relations at Dhaka University starts the process of what may be called- the decolonisation of knowledge- through revisiting the foundational premises of the discipline and move forward by making a confluence between the local and the global. This is all the more pertinent as with globalisation, the boundaries between local/domestic and foreign/international and global have literally blurred. The COVID-19 pandemic, amongst other things has brought home the reality of a common peril and the absurdity of territorial boundaries for 'securing' a population called 'nation' and 'citizens.'

The essays in this volume walk us through the evolving paths of the disciplinary boundaries of IR; there is constant questioning and critical reflections on the remoteness and inadequacies of the IR in 1919 to the IR in 2019, both conceptually and spatially. There is no denying of the existence of 'fathers' and 'theories' in the disciplinary realm, but then the interrogation and the requisite for reforms and change is loud and clear.

Imtiaz Ahmed in his key note speech, titled, *IR in Bangladesh: Time for an epistemological break*, emphasises upon the need for rooting IR in the soul and soil of the land. This soul he finds in the liberation war of 1971, in the cultural ethos of the land, when as a student of Class nine, Ahmed chose to cross over to Agartala to be a part of the ongoing liberation war. Through the ravages of war, fear and plight of the refugees, Ahmed did not forget to buy a gift for his mother, two volumes of Tagore's *Gitanjali*. The boatman also did not forget to return him his book, which he had left with him for safekeeping while crossing over. One indeed may argue that a genocide could not rob the soul of the soil, which as Ahmed's narration of the history of the region suggests is given to accommodation, sheltering, care and nurturing. 1971 was strategic studies and international relations for the people of Bangladesh. Ahmed consistently questions the western foundations of knowledge as taught in the discipline of IR, the linear presentation of history, the privileging of one knowledge over other, the absence and invisibility of the local in this matrix. The close relationship between international relations and capitalism, the confluence between reason and faith spearheaded by secular discourses; Western discourses of rationality that made the non-West irrational, if not non-existent; the transformation of a people into a nation by the colonising powers are the constant themes of contestations in Ahmed's deliberation. This disciplining of the discipline of IR gives birth to a

knowledge system devoid of its own civilisational roots, this only reproduces the hegemony the colonising powers had sought for. What is called for is the decolonisation of the mind through an epistemological break with the transformation of IR and capitalism.

21st Century International Relations: Deepening or Diversifying? penned by Imtiaz A. Hussain poses the question, if the 19th Century European disciplinary IR can meet the challenges of 21st Century IR. The interrogation indeed has its premises in the theoretical and structural transformations permeating the boundaries of IR. The essay maps the conceptual and structural journey of European IR, seen through the prism of empire, balance of power to the modern day state. The Cold War politics, the demise of the Soviet Union, the reunification of Germany and the multiplicity of actors and reactions evolving in the pages of IR defying the rather neat theories of power and balance of power. Hussain posits multipolarity, unipolarity, the forces of globalisation- environmental movements, the 4th Industrial Revolution, proliferation of economic cooperation through trade, political yearnings for full freedom and democracy, gender concerns and issues, as challengers to the traditional IR. New actors have emerged starting from the individual to global levels, NGOs, CSOs are critical global actors as well decision makers. The COVID-19 pandemic has opened up new arenas for IR theories and structures to contend with. Hussain's query, if the 19th Century European IR can absorb these transformations is the quest and challenge for IR to move on with its deepening and diversifications. Indeed the European IR has to give way to a global IR.

Meghna Guhathakurta opens up a critical dimension of IR through her writeup on, *Gender and IR: The Bangladesh Context*. While discoursing on the latter, Guhathakurta traces through the global discourses in IR and suggests that gender analyses entered the field of IR at about the time of 2nd wave of feminist movements which thrived in the 1960's and 70's. The movements were the pacesetters of feminist theories that challenged the notions of the 'givenness' of sex and gender and posited these as social constructs that needs to be transformed. Power, power relations are at the core of the feminist interventions premised on the ethical norms of inclusivity and reflexivity. In the Bangladesh context, at the academic level, though gender made its entry into IR through the development approaches of WID and GAD; but the history of 1971 and partition literature also provided critical ingredients to gender and IR, as notions of war, war crimes, peace and conflict came to be redefined and re *searched*. This led the country to play an important role in the UNSC resolutions on WPS. The feminist understanding of politics also sought to incorporate the unheard voices of the minorities, migrants, displaced

and people in the margins leading to the widening of IR boundaries as well the interrogation of the 'givens,' and 'naturalness' in major IR theoretical frames.

The ideas of peace and security have remained major dilemmas for international relations, more so because of the changing dynamics and nature of conflicts, from inter-state to intra-state to transnational. Md. Touhidul Islam, in his essay on, *Transformative Peacebuilding: Approaches, Agencies and Issues*, addresses the dilemma most comprehensively through an examination of the different notions of peace conceptualised to understand the multifacetedness of peace, which Islam defines as a dynamic social construct. The construct has moved through the structure agency debate to positive negative attributions to liberal and post liberal conceptualisations of the concept. Islam makes a critical review of the approaches to the understanding of peacebuilding- governance, security and safety, development and well-being, justice, acknowledgement, reparation and trauma healing. Peacebuilding also involves multiple actors, local, national and international. Islam, however makes the case for transformative peacebuilding, which moves beyond the liberal and neo-liberal approaches. It also goes beyond international relations and embraces the local context with an emphasis on inclusivity and the agentic power of the marginalised.

From the terrain of transformative peacebuilding with its emphasis on the local, Niloy Ranjan Biswas takes us to the international, the UN efforts at peace support operations. His writeup on, *United Nations and Counterterrorism: Future Trajectories of Liberal Support Operations* raises the contestations between the promotion of liberal norms and the realist security concerns and how this would shape the future UN support operations. Biswas contends that though peacekeeping is not mentioned in the UN Charter, but it is the most important function of UN. Given the changing dynamics of conflict, the UN requires doctrinal and operational reforms to accommodate the changing patterns of peace operations. Consent, impartiality and minimum use of force are the three key features of peacekeeping; but often these are not met. In the light of the changing nature of violence and conflict, counterterrorism might become a new arena for UN peacekeeping. Biswas raises doubts on the present capacity of the UN to deal with the complex nature of counterterrorism and calls for reforms in the UN, at the cognitive and manifest levels to meet this challenge.

The changing nature of conflicts and violence, climate change, globalisation, connectivity and so on has brought migrants and migration studies to the table of IR. *The Perspectives of International*

Relations on Human Migration; A Critical Review, by Syeda Rozana Rashid maps the marginalisation of migration by IR theorists. Despite being positioned as an inter-disciplinary subject, migration, Rashid contends, remains an under researched field. Migration has been viewed through the security lens, which resulted in the securitisation of migration. The migrant's canvas has been filled up with different nexuses, ranging from environment, security, policing, terrorism and conflict, with the COVID-19 as an add on to their plight. Rashid maintains that, IR has concentrated on the consequences rather than drivers of migration, which gives a fractured understanding of migration as a variable in IR. The latter also has its disciplinary biases, IR focuses on the international migrants and migration not the internal; the hegemony of the West is visible; though majority of the migrants are from the South, the literature is dominated by the migration in the developed countries. Refugee studies also get prioritised over internal displacements. Rashid concludes that there is scope for theoretical innovations in IR to look at migrants and migration without the frames of binaries. This she argues is important as there is a dynamic relationship between migration and global changes.

A latent theme that ran through these essays is the dominant gaze of the West and more overtly the Western foundations and bias of IR. This gaze is not lost even in the media representations of Bangladesh by the West. Kajalie Shehreen Islam, in her writeup on, *Discursive Constructions of Bangladesh in the International Media; A Study of News Magazines from 1991 to 2019*, quite aptly brings the gaze to the fore. Islam chose the British magazine, *The Economist* and American, *Newsweek*. Between the period of 1991-2019, *The Economist* had a total 266 news items on Bangladesh; while *Newsweek* had 137 for the same period. Out of the 266 stories on Bangladesh by *The Economist* 117 were on politics. Bangladesh is portrayed as a broken political system. Most of these stories are around the personalised nature of politics and the rivalry between the two women leaders of the country. Negative news on the RMG sector are also components of the stories. Even while reporting on Rohingyas, the stories are on what is missing? On the other hand, *Newsweek* stories are more issue based, like terrorism, religious fundamentalism, Rohingyas, politics. It also has positive stories on the NGOs in Bangladesh and the country's culture and heritage. The media gaze is indeed important in how a country is framed. This framing plays an important role not only in creating the image of the country; but also at policy levels. Bad news is good news for the media, but not for the country concerned.

Sifting through the pages of the essays in this volume, I am confident the reader would be compelled to *think* and *rethink* about the state of our borrowed knowledge, its Western foundation and bias. All the writers in this volume have called for change, reforms and a revisiting of the disciplinary premises and boundaries.

I would like to conclude this note with the hope and dream that 100 Years from now, students of IR or for that matter of Dhaka University would be the pace setters and path breakers of a non-hegemonic knowledge system rooted with the pride of ownership; and they would dare dream of pushing through the disciplinary boundaries of 'disciplining.'

Amena Mohsin

September 2020



Prolegomenon

IR in Bangladesh: Time for an epistemological break[♣]

Imtiaz Ahmed[♣]

My introduction to international relations or IR as a discipline was rather accidental. During my college years I had no idea that such a discipline existed in the University of Dhaka or for that matter in Bangladesh. But as the Master sage in the *Kung Fu Panda* would say, “There are no accidents.” Not sure how true is the statement, but my carefree walk in the corridor of the first floor of the Arts Building, where IR department was previously located, changed my formal disciplinary interest. Actually, I ended up on the first floor for seeking an admission in the department of philosophy, but then a distant cousin of mine, who was then a young faculty of IR and at that moment probably sun-bathing in the corridor,

[♣] Keynote paper presented at the International Conference on “Revisiting International Relations: Critical Reflections on 100 Years (1919-2019),” organised by the Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka, 19 January 2020.

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stopped me, somewhat puzzled as to why I was walking down from the philosophy department. In those days, there was only one television channel in the country, and that was of course, the BTV. If you ended up in the BTV for an inter-college or an inter-University debate or for some general knowledge competition, you are literally a known face in the city, even rickshaw-pullers would slow down and smile at you! On the top of that if you were a student of the formerly prestigious Dhaka College and made to the merit list then you were no less a celebrity in the making. But foolish though it now seems, you also end up getting affected by all the attention and turning yourself into a little snob! I was no exception. But then my cousin, just like my father, thought that I would remain perennially unemployed and bare-footed (I guess, just like Socrates) if I formally train myself in philosophy. Not wasting a moment, my cousin hurriedly tossed the idea, "Why don't you get enrolled in the IR department?" That was the beginning of it in the year 1976, formally that is, but certainly not the beginning of knowing and discoursing on IR.

The biggest, boldest, brightest, and the wildest education that I had in my life was in 1971. I was merely a student of class nine, but left my parents in the early hours of the day without informing them and crossed over to Agartala, India, to join the liberation struggle. I literally slept on the pavement in Agartala, while waiting for a proper place to be put in, and used to puff a cigarette or two a day, not like an ordinary smoker but just like Che Guevara puffing a cigar. Those were the days of youth and fearlessness, indeed, in the midst of gunshots, human cries, dead bodies, refugees, and genocide.

My interest in philosophy was obvious. In fact, the only book I carried with me right up to the border was Karl Marx and Friedrich Engel's *German Ideology*. I still fondly remember the boatman who hid the book coiled in a plastic bag at his modest tin shed house, with all the risk one can think about, as I headed to cross the border. On my return trip the boatman hurriedly ran to his house and got the book back. I certainly got exposed to what many would now refer to as security studies, realising instantly the merit of Mao Zedong's remark that "A guerrilla swims among the people like a fish swims in the sea. Without the support of the people the guerrilla is a fish out of water, it cannot survive." I certainly would not have survived without the courage and care of the boatman!

But then fearlessness had no limits in those days. By the time I reached Agartala, the slow paced town-like capital of the Indian State of Tripura was saturated with able-bodied Bangladeshis eager to get trained and take up arms against the Pakistan military. Given my age and surely my smallness, I could see that not much attention was paid to me. I decided to return. But then I thought I must take something for my mother. The only thing I purchased in Agartala and contributed to the local economy

was the two volumes (1 and 3) of Rabindranath's *Gitanitan*. My mother already had volume 2, *prem parba*, of the collection. No doubt, some amount of risk was involved because a serious search of my bag would have easily told the Pakistan military that I had crossed over to India and now returning from there. But then, at that age there is some charm in being foolishly brave! My joy came, however, when I finally handed over the two volumes to my mother, who was by then a very terrified mortal! Indeed, during those challenging days if there was someone who had made our lives a little bit bearable was Rabindranath.

In 1971, therefore, my mind blended with Marx-Engels and Tagore, as much as it remained receptive to the independence struggle of Bangladesh and the complex, multi-layered discourses on India, Soviet Union, USA, China, and the rest of the world. Military strategy, government-in-exile, geopolitics, millions of refugees, *mukti-bahini*, food rationing, language, religion, the plight of minority, diplomacy, smuggling of arms, access to explosives, nothing was left out in the discussion. In fact, IR in 1971 came to be discussed behind the doors in a hush-hush manner, often from dusk to dawn, not so much for the sake of knowledge as much as for remaining alive and planning the survival of the near and dear ones. In those discussions, Bangladesh certainly was at the centre, with the rest of the world circling around Bangladesh. My first glimpse of the Bangladesh flag tied to a jeep driving up and down the road from a window of the third floor of our temporary hiding place in Kakrail in the morning hours of 16 December 1971 made me euphoric beyond description. I stood near the window for quite some time, relishing the feeling of freedom and standing on the top of the world.

The disciplinary introduction to IR in 1976, however, was markedly different. The introductory course titled "IR since 1919" came as a shocker! We were being disciplined into thinking that IR started from the Treaty of Versailles, an event with which none of us were ever directly connected nor even really knew where exactly the bloody place was! Europeans certainly would know, but why should a course taught in Bangladesh make you think that you are no less a European? This is nothing less than a pathetic case of intellectual colonialism, which, as Ashis Nandy would say, is much more menacing than physical colonialism. If we were to deem the world horizontally, shouldn't the starting point of IR discourse in Bangladesh be from the time when the Europeans came to Bengal to trade, dominate, and rob? 1757 otherwise would be more relevant than 1919. Indeed, that was the year when the British colonialists under the leadership of Robert Clive and with the help of the quislings (or paid *chamchas*, as we refer to them now) occupied Bengal.

The quislings incidentally were not Bengalis. Mir Jafar was an Arab by birth, while the predominantly Hindu bankers, who conspired against Siraj ud-Daulah, the 5th Nawab of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, were either Marwaris or Punjabis, like Jagat Seth and Amin Chand respectively. Only the foot-soldiers were predominantly Bengalis, and in the absence of a national identity during those days they saw no difference between Robert Clive and Mir Jafar. All they were interested in is getting a good pay for their service. Siraj ud-Daulah was no help in this. Having a reputation similar to our romantic president Ershad and preferring to rule by whim, Siraj ud-Daulah alienated both the financiers and the foot-soldiers, which only created space for the British to make a decisive move with the conspirators to overthrow Siraj ud-Daulah and take control of the fertile, resourceful kingdom. It may be noted here that in the eighteenth century China was the largest economy in the world, while *undivided* India was the second largest, with Bengal being the richest province in the sub-continent.

There were good reasons for the Europeans to make the long arduous journey to Bengal, as the Turkish poet, Nazim Hikmet, would say, "If there is honey in my pot, bees will come from Baghdad!" Bengal in the eighteenth century did have the honey for Robert Clive and the like to flock, profit and loot, and make a substantial part of what Great Britain is today! As Shashi Tharoor went on to say that soon after the victory at Plassey in 1757, Clive "transferred the princely sum of GBP 2.5 million (GBP 250 million in today's money, the entire contents of the nawab's treasury) to the Company's coffers in England as the spoils of conquest." This is where the Mughal invasion of the sub-continent makes a qualitative difference from the British colonisation of South Asia, including Bengal.

The Mughals too were outsiders, they were predominantly Chagatai Turks, a blend of Mongols and Turks, and ruled the size of South Asia for nearly 330 years, but they never looted resources from the region and shifted them to Kabul or Bukhara. As Tagore would say, they came with their "cavalry and foot soldiers, richly caparisoned elephants, white tents and canopies, strings of patient camels bearing the loads of royalty, bands of kettle-drums and flutes, marble domes of mosques, palaces and tombs, like the bubbles of the foaming wine of extravagance; stories of treachery and loyal devotion, of changes of fortune, of dramatic surprises of fate." They never came as a 'nation,' and took the booties back to their country of origin. More importantly, they never brought their wives from Kabul or Bukhara, in fact, they married locals, and by the time of Aurangzeb they were practically Indians.

Not so different was the Sultan Dynasty, who had reigned the undivided India for 300 years. Originally Turks, they too made South Asia their

home, with their language, religion, food and poetic verses. It may not be out of place to point out that South Asia was predominantly ruled by the outsiders, if we were to go by its current geographical composition. Chandragupta Maurya of 4th century BC, aided by the foremost strategist the world has ever produced, Chanakya Kautilya, established a kingdom comparable to the size of South Asia, but then the Mauryan Dynasty lasted for only 136 years with three rulers, Chandragupta, Bindusara and Ashoka the Great. No one knows what happened after Ashoka the Great as the *Puranas* stopped recording his deeds following his conversion to Buddhism.

Compared to the Sultan Dynasty and the Mughals, the British rule was nominal, only 190 years, and that again, in predominantly undivided Bengal (that is, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa). The rest of South Asia was under the British only for 90 years. Not surprisingly, the Bengalis made the best use of it, including winning a Nobel in literature as early as 1913, and that again, not for the poetic merit of the Bangla language but for the contribution the Bengali poet made with his translated verses to “the language of the West.” The question that merits attention now, why an empire of 190 years would erase the memory of empires of over 600 years? Are we to take that Emperor Tughluq had no internal or external policies of merit, which one could share other than his rage or *Tughluqi meja*? Or, are we to take that Emperor Shah Jahan had no other business but to run after Mamtaz Begum with a lone flower in his hand, while trade, investment, military strategy, even foreign policy, during his time occurred on their own, with no intellectual input, no discourses, no theorisation?

Colonisation of the mind certainly made a difference, but this the colonial power alone would not have done without the consent of the colonised. I sometimes marvel as to how it was possible for only 168,000 Britons, which included 60,000 in the army and 4,000 in civil government, to rule a population of 300 million? *Divide et impera* or divide and rule was certainly one. The best example on this, of course, would be the cartographical massacre of the Greater Bengal, starting first with the separation of Bihar and Orissa from Bengal, then the separation of Assam from Bengal, but that too did not satisfy the British colonial power, which then went on to partition Bengal into East and West, interestingly this time on the ground of religion. Although Viceroy Curzon argued that the partition was based upon administrative principles, in private the British officials were more candid about their motives. Home Secretary to the Government of India, H. Risley, summed it up:

Bengal united is a power; Bengal divided will pull in several different ways... One of our main objects is to split up and thereby

weaken a solid body of opponents to our rule... A separate administration, a separate high court and a separate university at Dacca would give extra opportunities to the Muslim middle class to emerge from their backward state and weaken the economic base of the Hindu middle classes. The Hindu zamindari patrons to the Congress would find the Muslim peasantry ranged against them... It would divide the nationalist ranks once and for all.

Certainly the locals, both Hindus and Muslims, were impressed by this, and they fell for their respective religious identities. Indeed, not having a national identity was another factor, but more the nationalists tried to harp the mantra of nationalism the more divisive the population got, which finally resulted in the region having the most divisive doctrine in its thousands of years of history - the two-nation theory. Very few kept note of the fact that the father of the two-nation theory, as Romila Thapar pointed out several years back, was James Mill, the Scottish historian, economist, political theorist, and philosopher. James Mill never laid a foot on the Indian soil but was given the task of writing the first 'official' *History of British India* (1817). Basing his research on the epistemological foundation of the West, James Mill made a triadic division of the Indian history, and called the ancient period 'Hindu,' the medieval period 'Muslim,' and the modern period 'British.' As a result, like the 'British,' the 'Hindus' and 'Muslims' emerged as nations!

After James Mill, it was first copied and advocated by the propounder of *Hindutva*, V.D. Savarkar, President of Hindu Mahasabha, in 1923, and seventeen years later by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the 'Father' of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The 'two-nation theory,' indeed, became the ideological goal of the Indian Muslims, which eventually led to the partition of British India and the creation of Pakistan and India (officially Bharat) in 1947. The consequence of which was nothing less than a genocide. Some of the figures are staggering. 200,000 to 2 million people got killed; 83,000 Hindu, Muslim, Sikh women were abducted on both sides; and 14 million people were displaced with equal number crossing the borders. But then the triadic formulation of history not only got stuck to this day, even at this University, it is still being used, as would be the case with the current ruling party of India, indeed, to the detriment of the minorities within and beyond its borders.

Our epistemology is otherwise rooted in European or Western sources. And this is not limited to the discipline of history alone, the same is the case with political science, economics, sociology, anthropology, peace studies, literature, gender studies, and of course, IR and a host of other disciplines. Put differently, our sources of knowledge, whether perception, introspection, memory, reason, testimony, even our imagination, all have

been infected and coloured by the West. As Nirad C. Chaudhuri, while reflecting on the 'real cultural role of the Bengalis,' remarked: "It is to assimilate, by slow degrees, the ways of Europe, till at last, civilisation in India becomes the provincial edition of the civilisation of Europe, palely reflecting like the moon, its borrowed light from the great sun beyond." Since we claim that we are guided by reason, let us examine this unique source of knowledge, and see how the moon has come to palely reflect the sun, and the consequences of it.

Reason as a source of knowledge had a tumultuous journey. This is mainly because it gives credence to the idea that humans can acquire knowledge without the intervention or blessing of the divine. But much of this had to do with the power of the vested interests, whether state, church or the clergy, often formulated and championed 'reason' in the name of faith. Put differently, the relationship between reason and faith has been a contesting one, with one trying to displace the other, although there has been repeated calls for a confluence between the two, interestingly spearheaded by secular discourses.

The person who spearheaded the secular debate, of course, was none other than Rene Descartes. Following him and his mainstreaming of the human in so far as the production of knowledge is concerned, there has been no turning back from humans' quest to reason each and every phenomenon on earth and when possible in matters related to heaven as well. But Cartesianism attracted many minds craving for unrestrained freedom, some even challenging the divine and all the paraphernalia related to the latter, including the Church. In fact, Benedict de Spinoza, again basing on reason and bordering on something akin to rational pantheism, went on to claim that "Nature is self-moving, and creates itself." It did not take long for the critics, particularly the Church, to denounce Spinoza as "the prince of atheists, Christendom's chief foe, the new Mahomet." His Jewish background also unleashed a wave of anti-Semitic attack on him, particularly with the publication of *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* in 1670, which was quickly dubbed as an instrument "forged in hell by a renegade Jew and the devil." The roots of modern or post-Enlightenment anti-Semitism could otherwise be found in the very unfolding of reason during the early period of Enlightenment or what is now commonly referred to as the period of 'radical Enlightenment'.

But the radicalism brought forth by Spinoza and a host of Spinozists needed to be tamed. Faith in the divine, if not on the Church, needed to be restored for the sake of societal stability and the power of the state. The person who could applaud 'human reason' without displacing the

place of 'faith' was none other than the German philosopher and a Lutheran, Immanuel Kant. In 1784 he made the following submission:

Enlightenment is man's release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another. Self-incurred is this tutelage when its cause lies not in lack of reason but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. *Sapare aude!* 'Have courage to use your own reason!' - that is the motto of enlightenment.

It is not enough just to have 'reason,' as the Cartesian dictum upheld, but one must also have the 'courage' to use one's reason. His submission otherwise reaffirmed his earlier contention outlined in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) that 'knowledge' alone is not enough, there ought to be 'room for belief' in order to nurture and reproduce a moral dimension of freedom, immortality and religious fulfilment for man. Belief in the 'existence of God and a future life,' to which Kant remained firmly committed throughout his life, was brought back to the modernist discourse through the power of human reason itself. This was indeed a marked departure from the advocacy of 'reason' espoused by the scholars of radical Enlightenment. Modernity since the Kantian intervention therefore no longer championed the cause of 'doubting' to the point of nurturing Spinozism or something bordering on atheism but had 'reason' and 'faith' conjointly informing and shaping the quest with the former itself making room for the latter.

The conjoint or confluence between reason and faith certainly oversucceeded in history, indeed, to the point of reproducing genocide and mass killing one after another. Not surprisingly, Kant distinguished the 'autonomous, rational Christians' from the 'heteronomous Jews' (one incapable of transcending material forces), and called the Jews "a nation of cheaters" and depicted them as "a group that has followed not the path of transcendental freedom but that of enslavement to the materials world." Kant otherwise helped construct the ideological basis of Nazism. In fact, ideology being 'false consciousness,' as Engels would say, was guided as much by reason as by faith, and Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Churchill, Roosevelt and Truman, all showed how deadly it could be. In six years during World War II, 66 million people were killed, which included 6 million Jews, 22 million Russians, and in one night in Dresden 25,000 people were killed, and then of course you have the atomic bombs dropped over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Nearer home, the same confluence killed nearly 2 million in 1947 and 3 million in 1971. The plight of the Rohingyas in Myanmar, including the genocide that has now been unleashed on them, is no different. But such mass atrocities have not stopped people from supporting, even electing, leaders who thrive on

divisive politics or in the art of confluencing reason and faith, whether under the banner of ‘Salafism,’ ‘Trumpism,’ ‘Hindutva,’ or ‘Theravada Buddhism’!

Must we then be dictated by the Western discourse on rationality, knowing well that it not only created monsters but made the rest of the non-West irrational if not non-existent? Must our children be glued to the West, particularly the US, and wait for the first opportunity to migrate, indeed, on the grounds, which certainly is a myth if not a blatant lie, that the US is much safer than Bangladesh? Let me share some figures. A study conducted by the University of Texas found that roughly 7,100 children under the age of 18 were shot each year from 2012 to 2014. An average of 1,300 children died of their injuries in a typical year. This would mean that 19 children are shot every single day in the course of a year — or 3.5 children are killed by guns every single day. If we include the adults the figure is unbearable. In 2017 there were 39,773 deaths by firearms, of which 23,854 were suicides and 14,542 were homicides. If we were to limit ourselves to the latter this would mean that on an average nearly 40 people are shot and killed in the US every single day. What about in Bangladesh? According to Bangladesh Peace Observatory, housed at the Centre for Genocide Studies of the University of Dhaka, which maps violence in 26 categories throughout Bangladesh, 13.9 people die on an average in violent incidents, including gunshots, every day, indeed, far less compared to the US.

Still, if you are given an option whether to go to New York or Netrokona, you would certainly opt for New York, despite the fact that New York, with high rate of gunshots, is much more insecure than Netrokona. It is, of course, the richness of New York that would attract us all, not security. Humans certainly have an innate tendency to fancy richness, with little regard to its origins. As Sophocles long back pointed out: “there’s nothing in the world so demoralising as money!” But this is not to discount the fact that problems of serious nature do persist in Bangladesh and some of the problems are endemic, particularly in areas of governance, including corruption, law and order, drug abuse, road accidents and profiting from partisanship. In addressing these problems, often we forget that Bangladesh is the 7th largest country in the world, and certainly a late comer in dealing with the world.

Take Norway, for example. Norway’s current population is 5.3 million, but then there are more than 4.5 million Norwegian Americans residing in the US. That is, nearly 50 percent of its population reside in the US, otherwise its total population in Norway would have been nearly 10 million. If Bangladesh had the luxury of having 50 percent of its population living abroad, I guess by now we would have emerged as a developed country despite the cartographical massacre that it had suffered

historically at the hands of the British colonial power! But late comer Bangladesh may have been in dealing with the world, yet it has not remained idle. Rather, backed by the spirit of 1971 and the energy of youthfulness Bangladesh succeeded in making an enviable journey from “bottomless basket” to a developing country. If an epistemological break is required for the de-colonisation of the mind, the urgency of such a break is now greater with the transformation of capitalism and IR.

The birth of IR as a discipline 100 years back had to do more with the dynamics of capitalism than we realise. This is where the execution of ‘primitive accumulation’ under Robert Clive and the East India Company made a difference to the growth of capitalism in Britain. This is also the reason why the histories of 600 years of the Sultan Dynasty and the Mughals got displaced by the colonial or should we say, ‘primitive accumulation’ history of capitalism of 190 years. Capitalism mesmerised us all! But then capitalism went through phases, indeed, from the internationalisation of trade, capitalism spearheaded the internationalisation of finance and investment. In all these phases, IR held to the ground, and had no problem in understanding and analysing things.

The tectonic shift in capitalism, however, took place with globalisation, and it is in globalisation that much of the success story of Bangladesh is to be found. This is because with globalisation ‘production’ became international for the first time in the history of capitalism, increasing the possibility of a win-win situation in the relationship between developed and developing economies. Indeed, in addition to the internationalisation of trade, finance and investment we now have the internationalisation of production. That is, multi-national or rather transnational companies now collect resources in several countries, process them in another several countries and finally, export the finished products to the rest of the world. A fully finished product, therefore, no longer has one single birthmark; it has multiple birthmarks since several countries have gone to produce it. A Compaq computer, in that sense, is no longer entirely American, or a Toyota car fully Japanese. The final product of both these items will have components made in several countries of the world. Put differently, unlike the previous internationalisation of things, in the globalisation phase of capitalism the thing itself is the product of the international or global market.

In the case of Bangladesh, globalisation is critical in reproducing two things. One, the remittances from the diaspora; and two, the earnings from the ready-made garments (RMG) sector. As of March 2018, according to World Bank, remittances from nearly 10 million migrant workers settled in over 140 countries reached USD 13 billion, up from USD 11.49 billion in February 2018. Remittances in Bangladesh averaged USD 11.89 billion in 2012-2018 period, reaching an all-time

high of USD 14.91 billion in July 2014. The narrow slide in the flow resulted from a global downturn, including low prices of crude oil in the Middle East. What it implies is that Bangladesh can no longer remain attentive to its own economy but must be equally attentive to economies of the world, particularly of the countries where there is a sizeable Bangladeshi diaspora. In terms of expertise there is a serious deficit in Bangladesh, often making the country captive to ideas, theories, and strategies manufactured elsewhere.

The growth of RMG sector has also been phenomenal. The first apparel export started in 1978 but now the industry includes 4500 factories and over 4.2 million workers, mostly female. Bangladesh is currently the second largest producers of RMG in the world after China. In 2017, Bangladesh export earnings from the RMG sector stood at USD 28.14 billion. This Bangladesh has attained only by adding value to the RMG production chain which is otherwise global. In this sense, two-country export-import calculation has become practically irrelevant in the age of globalisation. This is because the 'export component' of a commodity can very well include a part of the 'import component' and vice versa. Put simply, the deficit that Bangladesh has with India or China when measuring the export-import figures gets relatively balanced when Bangladesh has a 'surplus' in its trade with the US, for instance, and the overall economy of Bangladesh growing with a respectable figure of over 7 percent. In the age of globalisation, therefore, the single country-country matrix ought to be replaced with the country's engagement with the global and see whether the country has attained an overall growth rate, despite having deficit with some of the countries while surplus with others.

Aided by the economic growth and an unique GOB-NGO partnership, Bangladesh has succeed in reducing poverty from 44.2 percent in 1991 to 18.5 percent in 2010, and is projected of reducing it even further to below 13 percent in the current year. The country is projected to become a middle-income country by 2021 and a developed country by 2041. This is no mean achievement if we were to look from the standpoint of 'bottomless basket'! Certainly, when compared to Pakistan, it has done extremely well. The growth forecast for Pakistan in the year 2020 stands at 2.4 percent while for Bangladesh it is 7.2 percent, even higher than India's, which stands at 6.9 percent. More significantly, if we were to take life expectancy at birth, Bangladesh figures 72 years, while India and Pakistan figure 69 and 66 years respectively, both below Bangladesh. I'm not sure whether some of the politicians in India, who keep harping on illegal migration, are aware of such figures! The time probably has come to ask, "yes, there is migration, but in which direction?"

But then with growth and prosperity, Bangladesh will certainly have more enemies and not less. And since its economy is tied up with globalisation, it is important that we invest in creative diplomacy and a knowledge receiving-and-delivering centre or intelligence, as it is referred to, having a global reach. In this quest, that is, if we were to reproduce and surpass the current developmental momentum, both in economic and non-economic or human development categories, it is important that we make IR in Bangladesh rooted in the civilisational quest of 165 million people of Bangladesh. This I'm afraid cannot be made with borrowed knowledge of the West, however, appealing they may be. This is not to discard Hans J. Morgenthau or Henry Kissinger, but to make the point that neither of them could be the beginning or end of IR in Bangladesh.

The beginning and end of IR in Bangladesh ought to be in queries rooted in the soil and soul of Bangladesh. Indeed, what prompted Faxian, Yijing, Xuanzang from China or Ibn Battuta from Morocco to travel to Bengal? What led Atish Dipankar of Bikrampur travel to Tibet and develop Tibetan Buddhism? What made Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, one of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad, travel to China via Lalmonirhat and the Brahmaputra? Why did Emperor Yongle respond to Sultan Ghiyasuddin and send ambassadors to Bengal, including members of the spectacular fleet led by Admiral Zheng He? What prompted Sultan Shihabuddin Bayazid to send gifts to the Chinese emperor in 1414, which included East African giraffe among many other things? Why did Abul Fazl refer to Bengal as *bulgagkhanna* (house of turbulence) and cautioned Emperor Akbar to stay away from it? But then, what prompted the British to conquer Bengal, and from Bengal the rest of India? Or, why did Gokhale say that "what Bengal thinks today, India thinks tomorrow"?

And nearer to our time, what prompted the Father of the Nation to declare our foreign policy as "friendship with all and malice towards none," indeed, at a time when Bangladesh had far fewer friends than we have today globally? What made Bangladesh transform its grief in the early hours of 21 February into a cause of celebration for all the languages of the world? What industrial skill did Bangladesh use to capture the global RMG market and become number 2 RMG exporter in the world after China? Why is Bangladesh diaspora so passionately glued to Bangladesh, from politics to poetry? What diplomacy would be required to stop the cropping up of the "Begum *paras*" in Canada and elsewhere and make the children of those *paras* come back and creatively reproduce Bangladesh? When will Bangladesh shed its colonial legacy and reform the Police Act of 1861, including the Evidence Act of 1872, to contain the menace of contemporary terrorism? What will make the students of this university obtain extra marks for planting a tree and help in the reforestation of the city? Why is Bangladesh so sensitive to human sufferings, providing shelter to over 1.1 million Rohingya refugees despite

its own lack of space and resources? When will Bangladesh see merit in becoming both peacekeeper and peacebuilder and make a difference to the world in ensuring peace and justice? I could go on and on with more questions, but I'll stop.

One thing is certain that any serious response to the queries would require an epistemological break, indeed, from the current sources of knowledge. This would require hard work. Let us therefore work and work persistently, so that 100 years from now another person could come and stand at this rostrum and say, Bangladesh has certainly made a difference from its yesteryears of borrowed knowledge, anti-intellectualism and frailty.

Let us keep our dreams alive!



21st Century International Relations: Deepening or Diversifying?

Imtiaz A. Hussain*

Abstract

Is the International Relations discipline today facing what E.H. Carr, one of its 'grand-fathers' found in rival disciplines, Diplomacy, Economics, Foreign Policy, History, and Politics, at the start of 20th Century: permeating boundaries? Addressing that question through a comparison between 19th balance-of-power constitution and distribution and its 21st Century counterpart, this study finds, in spite of a common lineage that goes back to ancient times, secular recent developments have widened the gap between the two instances beyond repair: cultural, geographical, political, but most crucially technological nature have weighed irreconcilably more than adjustment capacities. These do not doom the discipline, itself born of adjustments, but without deeper and more fundamental game-changing mindsets, instruments, and trajectories, the IR discipline could resemble the 19th Century: too washed up to connect. The critical test will be in how material gains can be tamed, but in which a theoretical interplay slants away from the realist paradigm (Morgenthau 1948, or Waltz 1979), towards more than a mixed turbulence dressing (Rosenau 1997), not necessarily towards any liberal outcome (Keohane,

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1984; Haas 1958), but introducing panglossian outcomes within disorderly structures.

The Puzzles

Viewed through disciplinary IR (International Relations) lenses, one significant 19th Century power-balancing inheritance may be resurrecting itself in the 21st Century.¹ We noted how incorrigible the once staid *multi-polar* power distribution was under the 1947-87 *bipolar* and brief 1990s *uni-polar* passages.² ‘Why’ so, the obvious IR question, needs a prior ‘how’ query: how a *European* system is not fitting *global* 21st Century clothing? Structures may be loosened, but compositional changes of *power*,³ our analytical subject, must also be examined to configure the discipline’s playground and drawing-boards.

Rapid technological changes exemplify why we must constantly do so, if only to prevent historical trajectories/identities from swallowing an innocuous future. Whether by coincidence or craft, the International Relations discipline was born one century ago in that spirit, with that mission. It has enriched our *power* knowledge, among other contributions; and so in testing the proposed *multi-polar-bipolar-uni-polar-multi-polar* transition, it is only fitting to ask of the discipline if it can absorb multiple emergent and diversifying 21st Century components.

City-states evolving towards nationalistic end-points, for example, prompted Barry Buzan to robustly propose four state types (nation-states, partial-nation-states, multi-nation-states, and state-nations),⁴ overloading the historically contested *nationalism* term.⁵ Nevertheless, nationalism, today remains less fiery than during those battle-scarred 16-17th centuries. Authors of the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia tamed a 130-year conflict between politics and religion:⁶ the Hundred Years War unleashed by Martin Luther’s 1517 theses, then the Thirty Years War, pitted orthodox Christians against reformers. Not just the state (instead of the church), but also territory fixation along nationalistic boundaries (rather than the porous faith-based perimeters), would henceforth anchor identities.⁷ Today’s altered playground and fulcrum invoke yet other tantrums.

Transplanting 16th-20th Century European dynamics onto a global 21st Century stage has not banished the politics-religion divide, with fundamental Muslims challenging moderates, as their Christian counterparts did.⁸ Yet, other divisions already cram the 21st Century calendar. For one, the contraption-based technologically-driven First, Second, and Third industrial revolutions that fired up Westphalian pistons even in the late-20th Century, now unleashes an AI (artificial

intelligence)-driven Fourth Industrial Revolution threatening states, as empires were before, with death. For another, non-state actors have exploded in numbers, from the grassroots to global arenas, with policy-making levels and sectors mushrooming and breeding both problems and prospects. Divisions *ad infinitum* remain, states with their legitimate armed-force monopoly also remain, but since today's ocean of states began in trickles centuries ago, there must be other stories with a point to be made that must also be heard.

Can vintage theories capture new variables? Do 'power' notions distinguish 19th Century *European* from 21st Century *global* multipolarity?

Background

Today's *nuances* would not fully fit into ancient philosophies. For example, 21st Century states differ structurally from before based on (a) nationality, (b) West European interpretational domination, and (c) non-nationality spaces, widening, as they have been, from 'Atlantic' models to include Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

When we compare new dynamics through the works of ancient philosophers with ancient works, we find *underlying instincts* remaining similar: the vocabulary and narratives resonating with each other. One hop-skip-and-jump across history shows so: in the 5th Century BCE (Before the Christian Era) Greek historian Herodotus,⁹ and his Athenian counterpart, Thucydides (the 'father' of scientific history), the 4th Century BCE Greek philosopher Aristotle, India's founding 2nd-3rd Century BCE economic and political philosopher Chanakya (Kautilya),¹⁰ and two from China's 'Warring Period', the 6th-5th Century BCE military general and famed tactician Sun Tzu,¹¹ and, from the Han state's 3rd Century BCE legal philosopher during the 'Warring States Period' (5th Century BCE to the 3rd Century BCE), Han Fei Zi (the Chinese Machiavelli), before the Modern Age. Florentine's 14th Century Niccolò Machiavelli,¹² 16th Century English Lord Chancellor, Francis Bacon,¹³ and 17th Century Thomas Hobbes, the 1651 author of *Leviathan* paved the way for the Modern Age actors and structures. Do not the vocabulary and narratives resonate?

Idiosyncratic pulls and pushes differ everywhere. Yet, will 20th Century Atlantic prisms adjust to the widening, more globalised 21st Century?

Exploring possibilities, this essay first identifies relevant concepts and phases/sections, highlighting state emergence, nationalistic contexts, and

various interpretations. Defining power, “in terms of the national interest,” as in IR literatures, helps explore uni-polar, bipolar, and multi-polar possibilities next. Multi-polar transitions from the 19th Century into the 21st Century get attention in the third section, leaving the fourth for endogenous/exogenous distinctions, transitions, and inheritances, with conclusions drawn and implications projected thereafter.

Concepts & Chronologies: Nationalities, States & Variations

When Machiavelli wrote to his prince about securing his state, Buzan’s state menu was not on the table. City-states dominated the landscape, much like those that riddled the Greek peninsula during Aristotle’s time, until Count Cavour transformed the Kingdom of Sardinia in 1861 into the Kingdom of Italy (almost from his deathbed), under Victor Emmanuel. Machiavelli’s city-state was Florence, in the central Italian highlands during the European Renaissance (early 16th Century). Expanding beyond the city-state, based on prior Asian and European examples, became ‘imperialistic’. Too many cases existed in Europe (alphabetically): the Bourbons (13th Century to the 19th Century), Hapsburgs (13th-19th centuries), Tudors (primarily 16th Century), and Valois (14th-16th centuries), among others, before the Westphalian pact; Britain’s Hanovers (18th-19th centuries), then across the English Channel, in Prussia, the Hohenzollerns (17th-19th centuries), and Romanoffs in East Europe (17th-19th centuries). Perhaps the Holy Roman Empire oddball (9th-19th centuries), depicted best how surreal pre-nationalism identities were: caesars and churches cohabitated uneasily, boundaries vacillated, and long-term top-down reconciliation with both bottom-up pressures and exogenous developments relied more on force than negotiations, and were too short-term anyway. Discovering new land and technologies changed the calculus, a change more imperative today.

Asia had its imperial systems too. China’s Zhou era for 8 centuries BCE, as well as the Ming and Qing dynasties sharing 6 centuries before the tectonic 20th Century changes, and the Indian Mughals (16th-19th centuries), not to mention the Arab/Persian caliphs (for 8 centuries after the Prophet, from both Baghdad and Cairo), grab attention. Just as Byzantine/Ottoman Turks crisscrossed Asia and Europe, as Macedonia’s Alexander the Great once did, so too did Genghis Khan threaten both Asia and Europe from Mongolia, Christianity and Islam disseminated to Asia and Europe from similar Middle East pastures, and European empires explored Africa, Asia, and Latin America variously.

We noted how imperialism provided subjugated peoples hopes of independence, eventually culminating through boundary-fixing state-

formation from the mid-20th Century. Since city-states expanded, unevenly and irregularly for survival, the principle became 'the more land controlled, the better'. Yet, as with nationalism, new 20th Century governance had to reflect local experiences, not absorb imperial leftovers. A common currency, patriotic songs (the national anthem), and eventually the national army, became state-identity trademarks.

Such a 'national' reference may have evolved from over-extended and unwanted imperialism, but also increasing human desire to live on earth less by scriptural dicta than secular, to 'eat, drink, and be merry', in Ernst Hemingway's parlance.¹⁴ Historically conflictive, the Doctrine of Two Swords pitted religion (*sacerdotium*), epitomised by the Christian papacy and its Pope, against a paradoxical caesar (or kaiser/tsar, with the Islamic caliph a close cousin), the secular, materialistic ruler (*imperium*).¹⁵ Pope Gelasius's 494 letter to Emperor Anastasias introduced that doctrine in Christianity,¹⁶ (though the ruler ultimately prevailed), while in expansive Islam, from the 7th Century, Allah's one mortal representative, the caliph, remained a subordinant.. Prophet Muhammad began the caliphate, from 632 (Rashidun, until 661), but by the time the Umayyad caliphs took over from 750, then the Abbassids until 1258, and eventually Ottomans from 1517 to 1924, even subordinated secularity stood relatively stronger.

Nationalism pecked away at both Christianity and Islam. Martin Luther's Protestantism or John Calvin's followers, the Calvinists, attempted this after 1517, unleashing the 130-year conflict alluded to within a traditional Christian setting. With Islam that same Two-sword tension must now add technologically-driven threats for any 21st Century Muslim Westphalia to make peace. As evident, governance challenges only grow.

After Westphalia discoveries by European sailors were slowly supplanted by imperial controls across Africa, Asia, and Latin America (in alphabetical order). Great Britain made the most hay while the sun shone (claiming, in fact, an empire where 'the sun would never set'). The Dutch, Portuguese, and Spanish made that same claim before Westphalia. France followed, and much later, Belgium, Germany, and Italy (again, alphabetically), did so too (19th Century). In what historians called a 'scramble for Africa', Belgium, for example, grabbed the largest and most resource-filled chunk (Congo), but only for the French Empire did the 'sun never set'. It claimed Vietnam, at one end, and portions of Latin American islands, at the other. Portugal had done so with Goa (India) and Brazil; and Spain with the Philippines and almost all of South America (except Brazil).

When Westphalia fixated territory along nationalistic lines (though not as *sine qua non*),¹⁷ France and Spain became the first and second states, followed by Great Britain (the 1708 conversion into the United Kingdom recognised the usurpation of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales), ironically creating the first *multi-nation-state* and *state-nation*, from Buzan's typology, which would be replicated next outside of West Europe: by the United States of America in 1776, a 19th Century spate across Latin America, before the 20th Century avalanche across mostly Africa (keep in mind the vertical and horizontal boundary lines; and the African unit being 'tribes' rather than 'nationalities'). Within West Europe 'Germany' was publicly created in the Hall of Mirrors, in Versailles Palace, in 1871, after the French defeat (sowing an almost century-long phase of shame and revenge); and the Union of Soviet Socialist Russia on the eastern Urals created a state-nation out of a nation-state (or empire), called Russia, in 1917, almost 210 years after the United Kingdom was created. Only after World War I was the dangling Holy Roman Empire put where it literally belonged: in history books. Other empires collapsed, but European imperialism, structures, and practices hit high-gear, violent nationalism engulfed southern and eastern Europe, and Africa, Asia, Latin America.

Many European administrative structures and practices riddle these colonies still, but no known African/Asian/Latin governance pattern has flowed back commensurately. Such a hornet's nest accompanies 21st Century African/Asian/Latin resurgence.

Power & Systems: From the 'Parts' to the 'Whole'

Empires shifted in the *state* direction between 1648 and 1919 (when the Paris Peace Conference established the League of Nations, the first global institution combating conflict). Globally the force was too strong to deny, but needed new make-ups, mechanisms, and mindsets. Though 20th Century world wars were triggered by intra-European developments, they fed nascent nationalism across Africa and Asia, while purging overzealous nationalism: Japan's 1850s-1940s westernisation, triggered by Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry's July 1853 Tokyo stopover, culminated in bitter wars. European multi-polarity culminated into a vivid half-century bipolar global system. Though anchored across Europe, "from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic," this Iron Curtain line between Soviet and U.S. spheres formalised two unbeknownst claimants climbing behind the global power steering-wheel.

If not the indirect origin, certainly the growth of the IR discipline owed much to these developments: Interpreting absolutely new dynamics

demanded scholars to probe beyond their own intellectual bailiwick. Some who did (alphabetically): Raymond Aron from politics and sociology, who challenged the Weberian notion of state power-monopoly,¹⁸ E.H. Carr, who diverted the then dominant diplomacy, economics, and history pedagogical attention to social chasms between 'haves' and 'have-nots' to explain conflict, paradoxically reaffirmed what came to be called the power-based *realist* viewpoint, against *utopian* argumentation (especially targeting 1933 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Norman Angell);¹⁹ Quincy Wright, who combined international law with international relations, based on ongoing League of Nations institutional cases;²⁰ and so forth. With Wright alone representing U.S. scholars (Woodrow Wilson's self-determination also inspired *idealist/utopian* thoughts globally), in an almost exclusive European disciplinary camp, it was in post-World War II United States that the IR fire was lit, albeit by European migrants.

Hans J. Morgenthau, the 'father' of the IR discipline', contributed enormously, as too the multidisciplinary Karl W. Deutsch, also from Germany (who returned in the 1980s)²¹ Still, Aberystwyth, Wales hosted the first IR professorship (the Woodrow Wilson Professor), from 1919 (held by Carr from 1936), followed by the first in the United States, Edmund A. Walsh School in Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., before many other universities stepped in during the 1920s: the London School of Economics with its Montague Burton School of International Affairs, the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, the Committee on International Relations at Chicago University (first to offer graduate degrees, from 1928). The Fletcher School of Diplomacy in Tufts University, Boston, followed during the 1930s.

Systems and Prisms: Concept and Reality

Europe's multi-polar system acquired importance both of its own will and for secular reasons. Building upon a centuries-old balance of power system, it was formalised for state-centric manipulation (even if by empires in charge of those states), by Klemens von Metternich, through the 1815 Treaty of Vienna. Great Britain's Foreign Secretary Viscount Castlereagh and later Arthur Wellesley, First Duke of Wellington, finessed the hands-off balancer's role, as needed against any future threat.²² Count Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord reaffirmed the old-school approach that only France could invoke, by abandoning Napoleon and supporting the European coalition against him (which helped restore France's post-defeat dignity and stature). The evolving balance of power *system* depended on these,²³ though Russia's Alexander II and Prussia's Bismarck played pivotal subsequent parts.

An alternate, sometimes complementary, *system*, elicited other so-called military powers, but without the military behind the steering-wheel. It included Russia's Romanoff Emperor Alexander I with his Roman-Catholic Eastern Orthodox off-breed called Russian Orthodox, under a Synod (in defeating Napoleon, he could claim controlling more European territory than the Soviet Union ever did subsequently); and Prussia's Emperor Frederick William III, representing the Hohenzollern Dynasty. Both strongly believed in religious pre-eminence over governance. Apparently the medieval Two-swords Doctrine still haunted 19th Century Europe.

Even Austria's Hapsburg Emperor Francis II (tenure 1804-35), whose aunt was the Queen Consort of France, Marie Antoinette (guillotined by French revolutionaries), joined this group, in spite of Metternich's tilt towards power-balancing through the Concert of Europe. As against the balance-of-power approach of the Concert of Europe, the Holy Alliance devoted itself to divine-right rule and Christian precepts (though ignored by a historically dilly-dallying Pope, some so loose as to father children: particularly in the 15th Century, by Pius II, Innocent VIII, and, in the next century, Clement VII, although many other sexual scandals prevailed).²⁴

Any post-Napoleon status quo was firmly held by these, permitting a balance of power *system* to evolve in a way it could not fully or purposefully do after Westphalia (or World War I). Collision with the Holy Alliance was routine. Even within the Holy Alliance nationalistic movements threatened empires, exposing Europe's softer underbelly: the most sprawling of the powers, Russia, sought class equalisation through Tsar Alexander II's 1861 serf abolition (so he could convert his agrarian country into a West European-type industrialised country), but ended with his assassination twenty years later. Japan's similar and simultaneous westernisation conveyed the spread-effects of European development/modernisation tools.

Prussia's huge strides to become a world power owed much to Prince Otto von Bismarck, Minister President of Prussia from 1862, now Chancellor of North German Confederation until France's 1871 defeat, then Germany's Chancellor (until 1891). Germany's 1867 Austrian defeat began undermining Europe's carefully crafted balances (as those in the late 18th Century). Britain's worry also began, as too with Germany's expanded army and navy, with such innovations as the needle-gun and submarines. Still, Bismarck also created the world's first social security system (far before British or U.S. initiatives even began). For the fastidious, this served as the pillar of the prodigious and envious European Union (EU) social blanket attracting so many outsiders today,

both legally and illegally, and perhaps the Rubicon to be crossed later in the demographically decimated and economically bypassed 21st Century, while the intervening coronavirus pandemic imposes the severest EU test yet from 2020.²⁵

Germany's industrialisation and, especially, naval expansion, fed European colony-grabbing splurge ('Germany's place in the sun', as Bismarck propagated), directly threatening the invincible 'Britannia rules the waves' mindset. Africa became the European prize.

The United States followed, but elsewhere. Historically indifferent to 'Old World' politics,²⁶ it showed great global interest after its Gilded Age (1870s-1890s), sowing seeds of today's 'international system'. One pathway was removing Spain from Cuba at the end of the 19th Century (given the 1823 Monroe Doctrine: America for the Americans doctrine).²⁷ Spain was an odd leftover of the European imperial order, being the dominant originator of Latin conquest from the late 15th Century, until its 19th Century eviction. After defeating Spain in 1898, the United States took over Spain's key Asian colony, the Philippines (Hawaii, too, in the Pacific Ocean). What was called the 19th Century U.S. 'westward movement' from the original 13 colonies was extended,²⁸ after California was absorbed into the Union in 1850, into an evolving Pacific and Asian U.S. strategy.²⁹ In the 'Atlantic' twilight, a firmer U.S. Pacific or Indo-Pacific 21st strategy is heralding the 21st Century.³⁰ New challenges will obviously emerge.³¹

Imperialism aside, Russia experienced the greatest transformation. The Bolshevik subjugation (and eventual murder) of Tsar Nicholas II and his entire family not only erased the Romanoffs off the European map, but also challenged the very essence of industrialisation and capitalism. Even Karl Marx might have winced how much farther Vladimir Ilyich Lenin and Leon Trotsky (Lev Davidovich Bernstein, who founded the Red Army in 1917, only to be assassinated by Joseph Stalin's Mexican agent, Ramón Mercader, in 1940), had taken communism by projecting proletariat power. Adolf Hitler's one crucial folly was to forge a secret Soviet pact in 1938, then let Operation Barbarossa violate it from June 1941, resulting in a firm unilateral and final Soviet control of all of East Europe. Churchill's 'Iron Curtain', and the U.S. mission to dismantle it, logically followed (successfully at that by 1987).

It was nothing more than a lesser, symbolic event then, that the United States, rallying behind a staunch defense of capitalism, actually sent up to 13,000 troops (the 'American Expeditionary Force, North Russia'), to combat the Red Army, that too, on Soviet territory (in Arkhangelsk, Far East), the one and only time soldiers of the two future global contestants

actually battled, face-to-face, on territory controlled by the other side. Nothing much transpired, but ironically, after 1945, when these two countries squeezed each other's throat for 40 years and the United States won, not a single direct shot was fired: nuclear arms-race and stationing ground-troops bled the United States, but pauperised the Soviet Union more for it to actually hoist the yellow-flag. Mikhail Gorbachev's peace train with U.S. President Ronald Reagan between 1985 and 1988 brought what came to be called the Cold War to an end (the only 'cold war' beginning in capital letter).³² It killed the Soviet Union, but leftover Russia learnt the power of nationalism: the dozen-and-a-half new countries carved out of the former Soviet Union shed lessons for artificial African/Asian multi-nation-states and state-nations to learn.

Multi-polar power died with the onset of U.S. strategies of containment.³³ The first one, George F. Kennan's 5-vital power thesis (referencing China, Great Britain, Japan, the Soviet Union, and the United States), actually kept a multi-polar foot, postulating all had to be protected against the Soviet Union. Realistically the chips remained in U.S. hands alone, as evident with the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) formation. A multi-polar power system died, leaving no successor: the United States would not allow it, potential European allies could not sustain it, and the Soviet emergence, together with the Warsaw Pact, formalised bipolarity by default. Rewriting this seismic change was itself hijacked when the 40-year bipolar era produced an unorganised multi-polarity counterpart by the 21st Century, essentially to prevent any uni-polar outcomes. More than a military yardstick would be needed to harness this.

Even with military capabilities, a key measurement threshold was crossed. With atomic weapons entering the picture from 1945, and with only two countries capable of using them by the 1950s, multi-polar thinking and realities received a mortal blow, at least through traditional military lenses. A bipolar framework had not only evolved, but the very growth of a nuclear club virtually rules out the balancing nature of the game (still a 'balance of terror' tag was added):³⁴ just as there is no place to run to at cliff's edge, so too the attainment of nuclear capabilities runs out the rationale behind competition. Social forces against further nuclear development strengthen.³⁵ Soviet and U.S. policymakers (and subsequently British, French, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Israeli, and other counterparts joining that club, roughly in that chronological order), play a largely mythical confrontational game, competing only over numbers when annihilation hangs in the IR air, both regionally and comprehensively, for the first time. Numbers matter with traditional weapons, annihilation fears for nuclear. Nukes invite negotiations, as with the first SALT (strategic arms limitation talks) in 1972, and SALT II

(signed in 1979, but not ratified), as well the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty, without guaranteeing lasting peace.

Communism tip-toed a religion-based problem: material interests prevail over ideological bents. Soviet-China collaboration was thwarted for territorial differences; but China's 1964 entry into power calculations gave multi-polar politics the vitality Britain's 1952 nuclear entry (first test) and France's in 1960 did not. Even though Henry Kissinger proposed a 'pentapolar' thesis in his 1970s strategy, he clearly gave China more attention than Britain or France, particularly as it broke the Soviet 'camp'. Balancing was the cardinal lesson he drew from Metternich's 19th Century Concert of Europe experiences. China did enter, but the bipolar system was formally ended through decisions by both the superpower leaders, Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald R. Reagan, without including Chou En-lai (Zhou Xiangyu), the Chinese Communist Party Premier.

China's role was seen not just by Kissinger, but also Kennan in his 5-vital power thesis (a variant of what Kissinger's détente). Yet China was not a party to the early 20th Century multi-polar system, but its entry by late 20th Century exposed a broader playground. India entered it in 1974, inevitably followed by Pakistan. Both World War II losers, Germany and Japan, pushed the economic alternative over a military 'power' calculation.

Both Germany and Japan see their diminished 21st Century economic salience (the former largely from the costly 1989 reunification, the latter from an unfinished recession, also from 1989), but both also face crippling demographic nightmares, as their future economic shadow lessens. No other country has advanced economic capabilities more dramatically than China. Its economic clout equally vigorously ramps up its military might, inverting the HST (hegemonic stability theory) premise of the *necessary* condition being military and the *sufficient* economic.³⁶ No country will soon match U.S. military, but given its economic exhaustion today, the scope for tussles grows outside the military ambit. Yet, no country or IR theory makes economic clout the *necessary* power-balancing condition: Immanuel Wallerstein's capitalist world economy completely ignores that angle.³⁷ Local-level skirmishes and non-state actors or mediators proliferate on the ground, but the evaporation of public/collective good effectiveness, as HST proponents posit,³⁸ virtually guarantees spiralling power claimants without even their provisions.

Multi-polar or Melting Power?

Two sub-sections follow. Empirical conclusions are recognised: three ground-level observations highlighting comparative advantage sparks (role of heavyweights, type of balance, and nationalism), then at least four secular forces (environmental, technical, economic, political, and COVID-driven possibly health/social), before winding up with a state-non-state discourse. Theoretical implications are then made from the comparative multi-polar appraisals.

Conclusions: Empirical Observations

Looking back from the 21st Century, only the bipolar 20th Century phase (1947-87) produced peace, if, and only if, conflict is between the heavyweights, or only involving traditional military hardware. As in the 19th Century multi-polar system: only the big-guns, the *Don Quixotes* mattered, others, their *Sancho Panchas*, were their foils. This is the first 21st Century observation.

One might appropriately ask which produced a more enduring peace, the 1947-87 bipolarity or 19th Century European multi-polarity? Whereas Waltz has forcefully and almost singularly pushed the bipolar cause,³⁹ Deutsch and Singer lead the larger multi-polar supporters.⁴⁰ Waltz's arguments influenced more than a generation of U.S. students about the polar U.S. mindset (going back to the '*settlers* versus *injuns*', then the 'better dead than Red' Cold War dubbing, and now in the anti-terrorism battle, '*us* versus *them*'). Yet, when the Cold War ended, Waltz's scholarly salience quickly sapped.

The Deutsch-Singer multi-polar argument is seductive, but also misleading. They expressed it through the formula: $N(N-1) \div 2 = \text{dyads}$, where N=number of great powers, with dyads referencing bilateral partnerships. If N=2, there would be one dyad, the minimum possible and the most unstable; if N=10, then 45 dyads would keep countries more busy on the negotiation table than in battle-fields. It made 19th Century sense, provided 20th Century analytical mileage, but is hardly recommended for the 21st Century when the nature of power has become more diversified and too unpredictable (for example, cyber-driven war), If Waltz's bipolar thesis may never find ground-level corroboration again, multi-polar 21st Century dynamics would chew away the Deutsch-Singer contribution too.

Whatever bipolar peace there was, just as after the 1815 Vienna Treaty, the 'rest of the world' had other interests, or take to be too pliant to

matter: the chance for freedom from great/super power rivalry to push their own bottled-up interests was foremost; but the virtual neglect, even subject to increasing imperial exploitation, hand-cuffed their choices. One net result: history written and theories postulated, without western input, indeed recognition.

Nationalism alone gripped Europeans after Napoleon's defeat, but combined with economic growth when the Cold War began. Just as when the 19th Century ended, military and economic interests rocked Europe, so too a neo-liberal working order, announced by the 1989 Washington Consensus,⁴¹ greeted the Cold War ending. Another problem was that those Atlantic countries would soon lose their competitive edge, indicating how nationalism, in addition to state creating desires, can also be fuelled by declining economic edge. Even as the Atlantic giants stand diminished at the start of the 21st Century, the 'rest of the world' is too motley to identify a fulcrum: both African and Asian countries wield more independent power today than ever before, but whereas African strength is in population, youth, growth in numbers, and other demographic indicators to harness enormous natural resources, Asian countries carry more conflicts between themselves in spite of exerting clout over natural resources (the Middle East oil producers), industrial competitiveness (China, India), skill pools (Four Tigers/Dragons/Little Dragons: Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan), and religious identity (Buddhism in Sri Lanka and Thailand), Confucianism (China), Hinduism (in India), Islam (Iran, on one hand; and Saudi Arabia, on another; and South-east Asian countries like Malaysia and Indonesia).

Behind these three comparative advantage-driven sparks lies a host of other secular forces. At least four could also be highlighted here: environmental (what with pollution, scarcities, and resource depletion, and against the 1967 Montréal Protocol and 1992 Río Declaration on Environment and Development); technologically (now with new contraptions seducing the human mind in so many ways, thus occupying more precious time from every individual than ever before, again, encapsulated under the emergent Fourth Industrial Revolution); economical (that too an age when cooperation from trade scaled new heights, promising more fun than fighting with guns, and evident in the 1990s explosion of trade agreements); political (with the entire world wanting to taste full freedom through democracy in a parallel movement unmatched in history, as well as forging new identities, either through trade, over religion, or over other emergent abstract forces like climate-change); and, amid the COVID-19 (coronavirus-19) pandemic, a motley, including health (from malnutrition to curing diseases) and other social issues (i.e., anti-military gender disparities, immigration, and so forth).

Then there are the states and non-states. Turning to the latter first, they have ripened and ebbed unevenly geographically. Regionalism went the farthest in West Europe, from the 1950 European Coal and Steel Community and 1957 Euratom, to the European Economic Cooperation from 1958 to the European Community from 1967, then the European Union from 1993, regionalism gathered moss across Europe, as 5 original members eventually expanded to 28 (before Great Britain exited in 2020, the first to go). A string of others groupings, both within Europe (the European Free Trade Agreement),⁴² and elsewhere (from the Organisation of African Unity, Organisation of American States, Association of South East Nations, among others), from the hey 1960 days, to the post-Cold War outbursts (from MERCOSUR arrangements among four South American countries, to North American Free Trade Agreement, Central American Free Trade Agreement, the Free Trade Area of the Americas, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and so forth).⁴³ Even though clipped, buried, or reinvigorated, carry more seeds of resurrection than the economically aging and military-anchored Atlantic zone.

With nearly 200 states in the United Nations, the growth of multinational, transnational, regionalism, and issue-specific boundary-breaking forces jam-packing this planet, many autonomous of state influence or dependence, states still matter. When the only creator of multilateralism, the United States, wants to withdraw, under President Donald J. Trump, costs climb. He has accused NATO members of free-riding on U.S. funding, the World Health Organisation for being too pro-China, among other grave charges, and launched indiscriminate tariff wars against trading partners to the chagrin of the World Trade Organisation. A Damoclean Sword cannot but scavenge the planet.

Theoretical Discourse

Originally seen as the only policy-making level, the state was challenged by a vague *systemic* level, championed by *realists* and *neo-realists*, respectively. When Kenneth N. Waltz and others elevated the autonomous role of the system,⁴⁴ very much, as they posited, analogising the market and corporations over pricing in a competitive world. In policy-making this boils down to whether the state/firm is at the steering-wheel or the system/market.

Neither *realists* nor *neo-realists* pay attention to non-military power sources, *realists* ignoring them almost entirely, *neo-realists* subordinating them to military capabilities. Puzzles like this encouraged *liberalism*, and spawned *neo-liberalism*, to bring in non-military dynamics, from moral

persuasion and laws to social, political, and economic developments for the former but their institutionalised treatment of procedures and practices, principles and purposes externally, for the latter. Pre-World War II utopianism (including Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points), bred the *liberal* school, but post-World War II, say, the growth of *neo-liberal* growth, has been confused with unpopular private sector business, which is just one segment of the broader *neo-liberal* theory. This lively debate, and between *realists* and *neo-realists*, have tended to hop in and out of those four identities arbitrarily. A central tendency needs more monitoring.

Within this *statist-systemic* contest, two references deserve attention. The first is how interpretations stop at the water's edge, with the Atlantic Ocean: U.S. interpretations accent the *systemic* view, European *societal* interpretations, that too, where the military balance-of-power *system* originated and glorified. Buzan distinguishes both.⁴⁵ Hedley Bull,⁴⁶ in the same 'English school', prefers the societal view, which does not reduce governance (order) only to the state, since before Westphalia and city-states, there were hunting-gathering and other communities, in fact, where post-jungle life began for the *homo sapiens* specie.

Policy-making levels have proliferated through the interaction of these systems: from the individual, at the smallest level (like Osama bin Laden, Hitler, or Bill Gates), through groups/associations/societies within the country, state next, followed by state-based groupings, such as bilateral arrangements or regional, multilateral, international, or global (both non-state actors and states), with the same groups/associations/societies, but this time trans-boundary.

As part and parcel of the evolving nature of the IR discipline, of their expansive and complicated gestations, or evolution, policy-making levels virtually prohibit pinning any country to any one theory. Modernisation challenges theories, as argued here, with new theories confusing the analytical subject (in IR methodological terms, dependent variable), even understudying it, like great/super powers in this study.

James Rosenau's turbulence theory is an explicit *post-realism*, *post-neo-realism*, *post-liberalism*, and *post-neo-liberalism* argument admitting plenty of non-military dynamics without dispensing the military solutions.⁴⁷ It makes both order and disorder the subject simultaneously, thus capturing reality better. Yet, its end-point remains vague: *realism*/*neo-realism* enhances *relative* gains, and liberal/neo-liberal and turbulence theories leading in every which way, promoting *absolute* gains. For policy-makers, this means nowhere and nothing, indicating why, democratic election results inherently conspire against *realism*,⁴⁸ and

theoretically, why democratic peace theories cannot, unfortunately, be brought into any multi-polar interpretation.

Back to the system/society we must return. Since every group claims one slice of reality for validation purposes, a multi-polar world emerges. Whether militarily or economic, or even environment-consciousness, does not matter, but this option was absent in the 19th Century multi-polar policy-making menu, and given too little attention in other subsequent theories. The result: to a free-for-all counterpart in which anything goes from more levels of analysis, some visible, others barely so, and from any corner of the world than the predictable previous ones. We can manipulate them like we could not before. But there are too many of 'us' (that is, power contenders), seeking stakes in every leadership battle. With the Fourth Industrial Revolution posing a more critical game-changing moment, like the nuclear weapon's annihilation threat seems to have done: the nature of conflict further deescalates, but witness many more conflicts.

With their explanations and predictive capacities, IR theories eased interpreting these dynamics. Fidgeting was natural, but we were left with better comprehension and more complete interpretations. One IR 'grandfather', E. H. Carr, explained those crucial dynamics in *Twenty Years Crisis*, that between 1919 and 1939 about all those dynamics and interpretations.⁴⁹ When the undisputed discipline's 'father', Hans J. Morgenthau, took over with six principles in his 1948 'bible', *Politics Among Nations: Struggle for Power and Peace*, it was as if the study got what independent countries first seek: a constitution. As an immigrant escaping Hitler's Holocaust, Morgenthau's sparse 'power' definition is explicit and implicit in each of those principles, but how "the national interest," still guides 21st Century *realism* is something that has not varied as much as the *liberal* counterparts. Imagine all the water to have constantly flown under that same *realist* bridge, while under *liberal* bridges, sunnier days have to be anticipated.

Traces of *realist* footprints can be found in the works of Kautilya/Herodotus/Thucydides/Sun Tzu/and other ancient writers, then the more recent Thomas Hobbes, Machiavelli, Metternich. Few other theories, if any, can go back to such rich a pedigree and references as *realism*. *Liberalism* can, all the way from Doyle's democratic peace to Woodrow Wilson's self-determination, slightly farther behind to Immanuel Kant's *Perpetual Peace*,⁵⁰ yet digging deeper back into the ancient world and Socrates seems forbidden. Routes get more cluttered (no central theme: could be democracy, or morals, peace, not to mention religion, a historically large literary interest), and too often, with these diverse flashes coming too far and few in between, to help. Above all, power, the subject here, in its comparative multi-polar formats, could not

be swayed this way or that with any democratic peace discourse. On the other hand, though *realism* more volubly explains post-17th Century Westphalian systems, it is not flawless: it has been like the rolling stone, yet on the other hand, it has been gathering diminishing moss by de-emphasising non-military and non-state dynamics.

It further helped us build the notion of a system. Whether it was the one to emerge in mid-17th Westphalia or in early 19th Century Vienna, multipolarity was conjoined with the balance-of-power nexus formally. Military power was the subject in its relative capacity, and the nation-anchored state was the vehicle. Prior city-states boasted parallel frameworks. Whether in Peloponnesia, Italy, or emergent, *system* can be differentiated by scope and size.

It is possible to propose a rough transition to the 21st Century. From a *multi-polar* balance-of-power system, such as the Concert of Europe, we entered a *bipolar* phase after World War II, only to find the Soviet Union collapse (as opposed to a Soviet military defeat), produced a brief *uni-polar/monopoly* moment, until we reverted the *multi-polar/oligopoly* direction. It lacks 21st Century interpretive anchors, though fully played in disparate corners of the system.

Among the *liberal* contributions has been (a) widening the exogenous menu beyond the military, even institutionalising these forces; and (b) opening an endogenous menu so fully for the first time. Regional trading organisations, led by the empirically most accomplished and enduring attempts across West Europe, though preceded by the Permanent Council of International Justice. Both functioned, and survived, but badly need more consensual acceptance.

For at least a generation of its life (seen today as being between 21-30 years, but before perhaps 20-25 years), International Relations was debated upon the *realism-idealism* dichotomous plane, then slowly overtaken in the next generation by a *neo-realism* versus *neo-realism* tussle. *Bipolar* assessments and systemic interpretations characterised this evolution. We were so gripped by them that we missed key undercurrents. Soviet socialism (the endpoint of a proletariat communist revolution) targeting capitalism, which the United States championed (as it was born in the same year as the capitalist bible, *Wealth of Nations*, was published by Adam Smith⁵¹), spun more cobwebs around us, by invoking so many non-state forces, that we may have to spend the rest of the 21st Century disentangling them.

And that may be an ever harder task, given our (a) more *realist/materialist* instincts; and (b) the absence of coherent global

leadership in the foreseeable future, leaving more self-defensive burdens upon each one of us for us to divert attention.

Notes

- ¹ On 'power', simply see Frederick W. Frey, "Comment: On issues and non-issues in the study of power," *American Political Science Review* 65, no. 4 (December 1971): 1081-1101.
- ² See various articles on the notion in Ethan B. Katz, and Michael Mastanduno, eds., *Unipolar Politics: Realism and State Strategies After the Cold War* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1999).
- ³ See, among others, Jack N. Nagel, *The Descriptive Analysis of Power* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975).
- ⁴ Barry Buzan, *People, States & Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations* (Durham, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).
- ⁵ Rupert Emerson, *From Empire to Nation: The Rise to Self-assertion of Asian and African Peoples* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), among others.
- ⁶ Stephen D. Krasner, "Compromising Westphalia," *International Security* 20, no. 3 (Winter 1995-6): 115-51.
- ⁷ John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1985); and Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (London: Penguin, 2005).
- ⁸ Noah Feldman, *After Jihad: America and the Struggle for Islamic Democracy* (London: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2003); and James T. Johnson, and John Kelsay, eds., *Just War and Jihad: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives in War and Peace in Western and Islamic Traditions* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1991).
- ⁹ See particularly the Greek Historian, Herodotus (born in Persia, Turkey, born in 484 BCE, died 425), *Histories*, 2 vols (on the Greco-Persian wars).
- ¹⁰ Chanayka (Kautilya, or Vishnugupta), *Arthashastra*, 2nd century BCE, worked for Mauryan Emperor Chandragupta.
- ¹¹ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, with unknown publication date, probably from oral commentaries rather than written, but one of half a dozen of works to survive the 2nd Century BCE book burning of Shi Huangdi.
- ¹² *Prince* (*Il Principe* in Italian; *De Principatibus* in Latin, 1513, but published 1532).
- ¹³ Of many pivotal scientific works, many discoursed with prior philosophers, like *Novum Organum*, or *New Method*, challenged Aristotle's *Organon*, in 1620. Relevant part, "On the interpretation of nature and the empire of man" (another on 'logic' and 'syllogism').
- ¹⁴ Theme came out in many of his works, but most compellingly in Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises* (New York, NY: Pan Books, 1957).
- ¹⁵ Andrew McGowan, "Liberty, dominion and the two swords: On the origins of Western political theology," *Publications in Medieval Studies* 28, ed.

Lester L. Field, Jr. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 180-398; and Matthew J. Tuininga, "Two swords, two powers, or two kingdoms," in his own *Calvin's Political Theology and the Public Engagement of the Church: Christ's Two Kingdoms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 23-60.

- ¹⁶ Andrew McGowan, "Liberty, dominion and the two swords: On the origins of Western political theology," *Publications in Medieval Studies* 28, ed. Lester L. Field, Jr. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 180-398; and Matthew J. Tuininga, "Two swords, two powers, or two kingdoms," in his own *Calvin's Political Theology and the Public Engagement of the Church: Christ's Two Kingdoms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 23-60.

- ¹⁷ See Michael Lower, "New wars, old wars, Medieval wars: European mercenaries as state actors in Europe and North Africa, ca 1100-1500," *Mediterranean Studies, Non-state Actors in Mediterranean Politics* 25, no. 1, Special Issue (2017): 33-52.

- ¹⁸ See *Introduction to the Philosophy of History: An Essay on the Limits of Historical Objectivity* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1948), *The Opium of the Intellectuals* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1957), and *Peace and War* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966), among others, all in his native French.

- ¹⁹ Among a vast number, the pivotal IR contribution is *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: an Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1939). Also his 14-volume epic, *A History of Soviet Russia* (London: Macmillan, 1950-1978), that Historian A.J. P. Taylor calls "the most fair and best series of books ever written" on the subject.

- ²⁰ His monumental piece being *A Study of War* (University of Chicago Press, 1942), but more pertinent to this work's subject, *Mandates Under the League of Nations* (University of Chicago Press, 1930), *The Study of International Relations* (Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1955), and *The Role of International Law in the Elimination of War* (Oceana, 1961).

- ²¹ Most relevant work here, with J. David Singer, another IR pioneer, "Multipolar power systems and international stability," *World Politics* 16, no. 4 (April 1964): 390-406.

- ²² See Henry Kissinger's classic, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812-1822* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954).

- ²³ Other works on Europe's landmark balance of power cultivation include: R. Albrecht-Carrié, *A Diplomatic History of Europe since the Congress of Vienna* (New York, 1958); Ernst B. Haas, 'The Balance of Power: Prescription, Concept, or Propaganda', *World Politics*, v (1953), pp. 442-477; E. V. Gulick, *Europe's Classical Balance of Power* (Ithaca, NY, 1955); L. C. B. Seaman, *From Vienna to Versailles* (pbk edn, New York, 1963); and A.J.P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848-1914* (Oxford, 1954)

- ²⁴ See Lindsay Brook, "Popes and pornocrats: Rome in the early Middle Ages," *Foundations* 1, no. 1 (2003): 5-21; Peter de Rosa, *Vicars of Christ: The Dark Side of the Papacy* (Dublin: Poolbeg Press, 1988/2000); Eamon

- Duffy, *Saints and Sinners: A History of the popes* (Yale University Press, 2006); and Angelo S. Rappaport, *The Love Affairs of the Vatican* (1912).
- ²⁵ Matina Stevis-Gridneff, "E.U. backs half trillion Euro stimulus, but balks at pooling debt," *New York Times*, 09 April 9 2020, 1.
- ²⁶ See Kathleen Burk, *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America From the Beginning* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 2008).
- ²⁷ See Ivan Musicant, *Empire by Default: The Spanish-American War and the Dawn of the American Century* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1998).
- ²⁸ Steven Woodworth, *Manifest Destiny: America's Westward Expansion and the Road to the Civil War* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010).
- ²⁹ Walter McDougall forcefully advocate this U.S. strategic flank in *Let the Sea Make a Noise: A History of the Northwest, from Magellan to MacArthur* (New York, NY: Harper, 2004); and "History and strategies: Grand, maritime, and American," *The Telegram*, 13 November 2011. Almost when the United States received the Philippines, Alfred Thayer Mahan posited a theory which has exerted much IR influence. See *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783* (Dover, DE: Dover Publications, 1890).
- ³⁰ See my own, "Asia, Latin America, and globalization: Close encounters of a different kind?," in *South Asia in Global Power Rivalry: Inside-out Appraisals From Bangladesh*, ed. Imtiaz Hussain (London: Springer, 2018).
- ³¹ Imtiaz A. Hussain, ed. *South Asia in Global Power Rivalry: Inside-out Appraisals from Bangladesh* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019); Mohammad Aminul Karim, *21st Century High Politics in the Indo-Pacific and bay of Bengal* (New York, NY: Nova, 2017); and - *Geopolitics of the South China Sea in the Coming Decades* (New York, NY: Nova, 2019).
- ³² Neal Conan's interview of John Gaddis addresses this, among other Cold War related issues, "A new history of the Cold War," *National Public Record*, February 8, 2006.
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Gender and IR: The Bangladesh Context

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Abstract

Whilst the study of International Relations in Dhaka University has had a long history, its links with gender has emerged more recently. Both the external and internal milieu in international and national academia has led to the emergence of such thought in the context of Bangladesh. In the external milieu, critical theories deconstructing concepts such as the monolithic construction of the nation-state and security and feminist analytical tools interrogating the separation of the public from the personal have contributed and foregrounded gender as an important dimension in the study of international relations. Internally, in the domestic discourses in Bangladesh, traditional notions of state, security and nation have come up against many challenges and the gendered lens informed by feminist thoughts of many hues have foregrounded many alternative approaches to these concepts. Such trends have helped to bring about holistic as well as an interdisciplinary approach to the study of international relations, the depth of which has been hitherto unanticipated and somewhat unpredictable. Even as we write today, new ways of looking at borderlands, diversity, migration and climate change have occupied core areas of international relations which has many

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repercussions for the study of international relations in and about Bangladesh. Feminist approaches to gender, which first contested and interrogated the space between the public and private have become more relevant than ever before. The paper intends to look at the origins and strands of such thinking and trace its development in subsequent years both within the discipline as well as in its application in broader fields of interdisciplinary research and relate them to the context of Bangladesh.

Global Discourses in IR

Gender analyses entered the field of International Relations at about the time of the second wave feminist movements that thrived globally in the 1960s and 1970s. These movements were the pace setters of feminist theories that analysed sex and gender as social constructions to be transformed rather than given facts of nature. Feminist theory was in itself seen as an essential form of feminist practice that could challenge the male dominance of academic knowledge.¹ Studying International Relations with a gender perspective therefore must take into account the underlying notions that such feminist theories have brought to the field in all their diverse complexities.

Feminist scholars used gender analysis to deconstruct the theoretical framework of International Relations, and reveal the masculine bias pervading key concepts such as power, security, and sovereignty. For example the differential experiences of women and men's experiences in peace and war call for the redefinition of the notion of international security. Similarly too 'national security', the central concept of realist power politics embedded in the study of International Relations has been considered to be vastly endangering to human survival and sustainable communities, failing to take into account women's experiences of insecurity.²

Feminist scholars of International Relations share a praxis-oriented normative theory, consciously building theory from practice and in turn to guide political practice, but their normative theoretical and political positions are plural. They differ over the philosophical grounds for their knowledge of gendered international reality, the theoretical location and centrality of gender as an analytic category in the study of International Relations, and, on the basis of these, their prescriptions for ethical conduct.³ Hence there are many types of theories e.g. liberal feminist, Marxist feminist, constructivist etc. They also have shifting forms as they are heterogeneous, diverse and non-consensual⁴. The difference revolves around their (a) epistemological stance, (b) feminist concepts of gender relations and (c) feminist normative approaches to world politics.

It is not so important to delve in details about each of these positions in this article. They will be brought out where relevant in the analyses of the Bangladesh context below. However in the analyses of global discourses of International Relations it will be worthwhile to mention that despite their diversities and complex relations, feminist theories are commonly distinguished by their ethical commitments to inclusivity, self-reflexivity and their focus on relationships and power.

Inclusivity in International Relations feminist scholarship and gendered perspective is derived from taking into consideration the experiences of marginalised and oppressed peoples, including women who have been normally excluded from conventional studies. Their re-inscription into mainstream discourses have often resulted in challenging and re-visiting the epistemological and ontological foundations of the field. Feminist scholarship on globalisation therefore examines the neo-liberal perspectives of international institutions, state agencies and elites in promoting capital mobility by drawing out perspectives of actors such as female migrant domestic servants, micro-entrepreneurs and women trafficked for prostitution that cross borders to facilitate global production and reproduction. On the other hand feminists analysing gendered politics in conflict zones tend to research on both sides of the conflict in order to understand its identity dynamics and the alternative possibilities for conflict resolution.⁵

The norm of self-reflexivity in feminist analyses in International Relations helps in discovering the exclusions and biases of main actors. For example a common position taken up gendered analyses is an anti-war stance especially in the analyses of weapons of mass destruction. But this kind of analyses may have a western bias denying the social and political realities of women and men living in less powerful states that are nevertheless patriarchal. A self-reflexive perspective would foreground and engender a poly-directional analyses of the problem rather than reinforce a dominant perspective of western possessor states.

Finally an attentiveness to relational power dynamics imbued by post-modernist schools of constructivist thought helps to interrogate dominant concepts from within rather than trying to assimilate differences into one's prior conceptualisation of the world. Hence it would be important to reveal the differences observed between developed and developing countries and not analyse it from the viewpoint of dominant perceptions which often leads to the presumption that 'one size fits all'. In this way a feminist analysis inclusive of gendered perspective contributes towards an empirical understanding of global politics by including new actors and processes as well as improve the strength of mainstream International Relations theories and their methodological rigor by subjecting them to ongoing critical scrutiny.⁶

The Changing Field of IR

International Relations as a discipline has changed radically over the last century. Developments in the world has opened it up to new and novel junctures of interaction. It has taken it from a focus on nation-states to transnationalism and globalisation, from technology to digitalisation and cyber reality.

Accompanying the widening of the field of international relations the feminist perspective has entered the discipline slightly later than it has in other fields or subjects. As such it has aligned itself more intimately with the post-modernist constructivist school of thought from the very time of its inception. This has resulted in a deepening analyses of existing trends such as critiquing of the male bias inherent in key concepts of power, security and sovereignty and nationalisms to embracing diversities within the nation-state. It has also led the way from a *realpolitik* view of national security towards alternative visions embedded in the expansive field of peace and conflict studies. It was feminist scholars of IR who urged that international security must be redefined.

The dynamic nature of the field persists in current day politics as well: the existence of borderland studies, migration and displacement, global terrorisms and climate change or crisis notwithstanding the current phenomena of a pandemic era. Feminist perspectives or gender analyses enriches and equips us better in the diagnosis of this kaleidoscopic reality which we face today as well as offer prescriptions in the ways to survive.

We shall now turn our attention to examine how gender perspectives and feminist concepts have impacted on the study of IR in the Bangladesh context. This will be done in two ways: reviewing trends in state policy and critical engagements of civil society or non-state actors.

The Bangladesh Context

State/Official Narratives – Development and Nation-Building (Political Economy)

When Bangladesh emerged as an independent state in 1971, it was generally categorised among the lesser developed country, its development depending on Foreign Aid. The consequence of this is that development remained a dominant discourse in statist policies for more than two decades. Besides, Bangladesh's position in the margins of the world economic order meant that it came under the influence of dominant

global discourses of development.⁷ At the state level, gender as a policy influence also entered the national development arena.

In the late 60s and 70s, a school of economists under the leadership of Ester Boserup's seminal work 'Women's Role in Economic Development' began to interrogate established developmental models from the perspectives of women⁸ where women's role as producers were largely overlooked. Hence it was felt necessary to integrate women in development processes if development were to be made effective. This mode of thinking found institutional support when the UN General Assembly declared the year 1975 as the International Year of the Women, which was then extended into the first Decade for Women. It was during this decade that a Ministry for Women (first as a department then upgraded to a Ministry and later named as Ministry for Women and Children Affairs) was formed. Bangladesh subsequently signed most of the UN treaties related to women and children unconditionally e.g. Child Rights Convention (CRC), except for the CEDAW which was signed with reservations to certain core clauses⁹. Bangladesh showed significant progress in attaining MDG goals¹⁰ and embraced SDG goals as central to its 7th five year plan.¹¹ From the original position on Women in Development policies framework, Bangladesh's policies on gender evolved with feminist critiques of the modernisation model in which WID was ensconced, towards re-orientation towards first, Women and Development and lately Gender and Development schools of thought. In November 2013, Bangladesh through a Cabinet decision recognised "*Hijras*" as a gender marker but fell short of recognising LGBTQI groups.

In 2019 The Bangladesh Government launched its first National Action Plan (2019-2022) on Women Peace and Security.¹² In doing so Bangladesh drew upon its legacy of being one of the earliest champions of the women, peace and security agenda. During its membership on the UN Security Council in 2000, under Namibia's presidency, Bangladesh played a pioneering role in the adoption of the landmark UN Security Council resolution 1325, which for the first time emphasised the central role of gender equality in the maintenance of international peace and security. Through this Plan Bangladesh demonstrated its commitment to the principles of 1325 and subsequent UN resolutions from both historical and contemporary contexts. In 1971 during its emergence, Bangladesh lost 3 million valuable lives and experienced the sexual violence against 200,000 women. These deep wounds marked the perspective of the agenda in the NAP especially with respect to the rehabilitation of female victims and also with regard to the prosecution and punishment of persons for committing genocide and crimes against humanity.¹³

In the contemporary context, Bangladesh's commitment to the women peace and security agenda stems from the significant role it plays globally in the UN Peacekeeping Agenda as well as it being the host to one of the largest refugee population in the world today; the Rohingyas fleeing from the neighbouring state of Myanmar.

Impact and Incorporation in Policy

The above achievements of Bangladesh did not occur through external linkages alone. Bangladesh has a vibrant civil society which has emerged as a continuous struggle from the time that had played a significant role in nation-building both pre and post-independence. The path of the struggle has been a tough one with the pitfalls of military coups, dictatorships and military-bureaucratic oligarchy creating obstacles on the way. The civil society in turn has been critiqued for being politicised, fragmented and often commercialised. But various social movements on different issues have persisted in Bangladesh whatever the nature of the regime, one of the principal reasons being that one could always fall back on the legacy of the Liberation War as a foundational pillar for restoring democratic ideals.

The movement to restore democratic practice in a country which has seen-sawed between authoritarian rule and populist leadership has been a long hard struggle and in terms of specific governance issues e.g. establishment of a corruption free society, or gender-based regime, the ideals are far from being achieved.

The women's movement has had a fair amount of success in having its demands imprinted on policy at various points in history. The women's struggle against *fatwas* worked to get a good verdict in the High Court against the issuance of such *fatwas*.¹⁴ Against individual but significant cases of gender-based violence, it has been the women's movement which has been able to impress upon the Government the need for a Women's policy. The course of such a policy itself went through a roller-coaster ride, but again it was pressure from progressive forces within civil society that pressurised the Government to revive it. Women's fight against fundamentalist forces has been quite exemplary. First, the women's movement has taken a civic rights approach rather than a revisionist religious one as in many Muslim majority countries. Recently however this has drawn some criticism from observers who think a dual approach would have been better to gain more credibility among conservative sections of the society especially in rural areas. Second, it has not only been a woman's concern though they were frontrunners in the issue. Progressive forces from the democratic centre and left have joined hands to mainstream the movement. Furthermore, grounded research from

academic circles has addressed women as non-state actors and victims of violence.¹⁵

Another reason for the relative success of civil society movements to make an imprint on policy in Bangladesh is the presence of a developmental regime consisting of both national and international actors (developmental partners) whose support on the issues mentioned above has been significant both in terms of financial input as well as moral support. Networking among NGOs and donors especially during times of autocratic governance, when normal democratic channels were absent, had proved to be an important feature in the power game.

Counter-narratives from Universities, Civil Society, Rights Movements

Apart from the function of civil society acting as one of the prime negotiator between people and the state, various civil society groups have contested, interrogated and challenged statist principles of governance. These may be divided into the following categories:

- (a) Critical engagement with the state
- (b) Gendered engagements with notions of state, nation, sovereignty, power security
- (c) Gendered engagements in conflict and peace-building
- (d) Exploring new horizons and dimensions with a gendered lens

Critical Engagement with the State

Since Bangladesh emerged as an independent nation as a consequence of people's struggle against military dictatorship on the one hand and economic and cultural domination of the Pakistan state on the other, much of the politics in the aftermath of the 1971 Liberation war came in the form of a nation-building project that took the form of constituting a democratic secular country promising equitable distribution of resources. But as was to be seen very soon, there were gaps in the process and soon things went awry, giving rise to increasing critical engagement of the people against the regime in power. The alternate voices arose from this disillusionment with the state in a multiple of ways which was reflected in subsequent literature in the nascent state of Bangladesh. This literature fell into the following categories:

- a. Critique of the nature of the state to institutionalise democratic practice: this includes studies on the legal-constitutional framework, judicial, and administrative apparatus of the state and critical engagement with the state using a political economy approach.¹⁶

- b. Inability of the state to take a strong stand on its secular goals and fight religious fundamentalism: studies of this genre consist of political analysis written from a civil rights perspective as well as from the progressive forces seeking democratic and social transformation.¹⁷
- c. Failure of the state to deliver economic emancipation for all, justice, and the rights of the poor: this is a genre followed mostly by those writing within a rights discourse (political, civil, social, and economic rights) as well as from a political economy viewpoint.¹⁸
- d. Failure to try war criminals of 1971 and establish a just society; studies of these were written both by those with an eye for judicial and legal reforms as well as those verging on a more political analysis. Much of this literature is polemical in nature and stems from a steady stream of studies on the liberation war, though only a few of these foreground gendered aspects of the war. However such literature did succeed in creating a discursive practice around it which helped to bring the issue of genocidal justice to the national and international arena. Only in recent years have a comprehensive account of the legal proceedings of the trials been published.¹⁹
- e. The failure to recognise indigenous people in the constitution and democratic practice of the state: studies in this area were generated from the demand within indigenous communities.²⁰
- f. Failure to incorporate gender-based justice and combat violence against women which has a vibrant literature that engages theory, policy, and praxis.²¹

We now look at how gender has been inscribed into mainstream discourses mentioned above and how women's voices have emerged.

The dominant literature on the 1971 Liberation war has been a nationalist one. Other voices and hence interpretations and perspectives surfaced subsequently as critiques and alternative visions. Among the new voices that were brought in as different perspective were women and indigenous people and studies from a gendered perspective of the state helped to foreground this aspect.

Women's voices were first heard when their autobiographies first came to light in the 80s, almost a decade after the war e.g. Jahanara Imam who lost her son in the war, Basanti Guhathakurta, Panna Kaiser, Mushtari Shafi who were war widows. Then came the voices of victims of rape in Nilima Ibrahim's *Ami Birangona Bolchhi* (I, War Heroine, am Speaking). Ain O Salish Kendra's *Narir Ekattor* (Women's 1971)²² threw another perspective on women's voice where women were simply not inscribed

into the history of the Liberation War but also interrogated and contested the national ideal. The discovery of Taramon Bibi who was a national awardee but who never got discovered before because she was a woman and came from a poor farmer's family was another landmark. It took a college teacher's quiet determination to discover her whereabouts and bring her to public notice.

The voices of indigenous people and their positive role in the war emerged subsequently, but their role has yet to be researched fully. This is especially true for the Chittagong Hill Tracts, where the movement for autonomy turned into armed conflict and as a result even after decades of cessation of armed hostilities, the hostility towards indigenous people in the region remain justified by a nationalist ideology that constructed indigenous peoples as rebels acting against the national integrity of Bangladesh.

But the autonomy movement and the debates it gave birth to also silenced many voices. Women's narratives of the conflict threw up multiple dimensions, the smaller ethnic communities in the Hills were seen to have different priorities and most of all an internal critique of the CHT discourse was not tolerated in the mainstream media. Peace-building therefore necessitated the need to construct identity politics from multiple perspectives: gender, class, ethnicity, religion and language.

Minority voices seldom get heard in the mainstream discourse, and that is true of religious minorities in Bangladesh as well. But there are minority groups who often fall in the category of minorities within minorities like the Dalits whose voices are hardly ever heard.²³ Unless effort is made to enable them to articulate their demands, conflicts which arise from structural discrimination will continue and provide the basis of future conflicts.

Gendered Engagement with Notions of State, Nation, Sovereignty, Power, Security in the Region

Alternative visions also emerged in the context of South Asian politics. Regional or rather South Asian efforts of peace-building from civil society perspectives has had limited effect so far but whatever efforts have taken place shows signs of promise. A second-track diplomacy effort coordinated by the Centre for Policy Dialogue in the early nineties, had limited amount of success in bringing together professionals, civil society members and politicians and policy-makers of five South Asian countries (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan Nepal, and Sri Lanka; Maldives and Bhutan could not be included) for visits and meetings in all the countries to discuss issues which normally are not discussed multilaterally and which are often swept under the carpet in formal discussion. These meetings

provided an informal forum of discuss sensitive issues, like water sharing between India and Bangladesh, Kashmir conflict between Pakistan and India in a free and easy manner so that they might be taken up by the politicians and policy-makers present in the meetings. Where the Governmental regime was found to be more receptive, a limited success was achieved.²⁴

Other more unofficial peace-building efforts also took place to change the nationalistic mindset of the citizens and policy-makers and make them think in more South Asian terms. In the human rights field South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR) was formed, a woman peace-building effort consisted of South Asian Women's Peace Initiative who visited both Pakistan and Bangladesh. On a smaller scale a group called Onnyo Pakistan formed in India attempted to conduct programmes which would help Indians to look at Pakistan not as their arch enemy as is projected in the Indian media but reach out to the common people residing in Pakistan who lead lives similar to common people everywhere. In Bangladesh the outcry against the proposed Tipaimukh dam over the Brahmaputra managed to bring about a semblance of cooperation and collaboration across the border with civil society organisations of Indian states like Manipur and Assam which will be equally affected by the building of this dam.

Among the more academic interventions on the issue of cross border movements that has affected South Asian narratives of international relations has been the ever growing partition literature. This was not only focused on historical trends of violence but also related to current affairs of how majoritarian states treated their minority population. The global interest was initially triggered by novels such as *Midnight's Children* (Salman Rushdie), *Tamas* (Bhisham Sahni), the gendered lens on Partition was actually foregrounded by two seminal works, Urvashi Butalia's *The Other Side of Silence*²⁵ and Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin's work *Border and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*.²⁶ The literature has developed multitudinously covering other areas and regions of the sub-continent affected by the Partition.²⁷

Linked closely with partition has been the concern for minority rights in all states of South Asia. Violence against religious minorities in Bangladesh has been a crucial issue that has been written about in connection with peace and security in the region.²⁸ Within Bangladesh, works on revealing unheard voices of minorities within minorities such as the marginalised communities of Dalits, and the nomadic Bedays has been conducted within the auspices of Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB) through using participatory action research.²⁹ These researchers has enabled the articulation of new voices that empowered them to strategise their way out of poverty through innovative methods whether in the

rights discourse or in the welfare discourse. As a result communities such as these have drawn the attention of international development partners such as UN, and EU as well as bilateral partners.

Another important trend that has come to bear on Bangladesh's relations with other countries has been the interrogating of borders through transborder movement of people whether voluntarily (women's labour migration), illicitly (trafficking of women) or forcefully (refugees).³⁰ The scholarly works promoted by Borderland Studies³¹ has greatly enhanced and enriched such cross-border research. All three movements have had serious repercussion on Bangladesh's external relations as well as had a deep social impact within.

Gendered Engagements in Conflict and Peace-Building

The more specific peace-building literature in Bangladesh emerged more recently on the one hand with concerns of conflict and security, especially non-traditional security, and on the other hand with the more evolved discourses of gender and ethnicity. The trend which drew its strength from the first discourse was a more establishment oriented literature produced in the genre of strategic studies institutes,³² while the second discourse provided the underpinnings of alternate voices of peace-building. The following is an elaboration on the gendered aspect of this second discourse which touches on the following approaches.

- a. Intersectional approach: Diversity of the population; exploring ethnicities *e.g. Women's narratives of CHT*
- b. Understanding protection from the perception of refugees *e.g. micro-narratives, Rohingya women's self-perceptions of violence, return, justice*
- c. Conflict and peace studies; non-state actors and state-violence *e.g. Chittagong Hill Tracts, conflict transformation, study of non-state actors*

The two discourses that have most evolved in Bangladesh in terms of theory as well as practice have been gender and ethnicity. The embryonic emergence of an alternative peace-building literature has therefore been centred on these two components.

Gender studies have evolved from its first focus on development to focusing on gendered nature on war and conflict. These studies have unearthed the largely androcentric structure and male-dominant culture in the practices of soldiering and militarisation. Feminist scholarship on women and security has also been among the first to foreground structures of patriarchy, capital and militarisation as a cause of conflict. In

Bangladesh, Hameeda Hossain, Nayanika Mukherjee and Bina D'Costa, Amena Mohsin, have used feminist analytical lenses in their narrative of 1971 Liberation War and its aftermath.³³

The focal point of the ethnicity debate in Bangladesh has been the conflict in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). Raja Devasish Roy, Shapan Adnan and Amena Mohsin have produced seminal works where they critically engage with the Bangladeshi state on the notion of indigenous concepts³⁴ of land ownership, self-administration and cultural hegemony. Guhathakurta³⁵ brings in the gendered dimension of the conflict and critically engages with the mainstream women's movement on perceptions of peace-building by intertwining class, ethnicity and gender in identity politics. After this, many others have started writing on ethnicity and gender.³⁶

A single conflict can be so multifaceted that they could be looked at from each or more than one of these levels. Peace-building in such conflicts therefore needs to be layered, multidimensional and multifaceted. The Chittagong Hill Tracts conflict falls mostly within an inter and intra-community/nation level, although it has strong implications at the international and global level with issues at the state versus civil society and factional level.

The major issues that confront the conflict is the settlement of land issues between Bengali settlers and the indigenous community, a root problem of the conflict along with cultural domination in the form of Bengali hegemonism. Indigenous rights of land are only partly recognised in the legal structure of the Bangladesh state and in a nation of 150 million that suffers from land scarcity the state has no clear policy on how to handle the land hunger of their political constituencies. Though a Land Commission has been instituted by the 1997 CHT Accord, it has taken its time for it to be activated, and when activated it is being critiqued by both Bengali and indigenous civil society as showing privileging the interest of Bengali settlers over indigenous people. The presence of the military in the CHT, which was originally responsible for bringing in Bengali settlers as a counter-insurgency policy and giving them protection has contributed towards aggravation of the situation. In such a situation, both civil rights organisations of the mainstream as well as indigenous society have been forced to take up this issue in national and international platforms like the UN, and other organisations such as the ILO, EU etc. Peace-building has also been aggravated by the divide and rule policies of the state via the military that has encouraged the growth of factional rivalry among the indigenous organisations which prevents them from putting up a united stand on issues.

In addition, women's movements both in the Bangladesh mainstream rights movement as well as among indigenous organisations have attracted attention on the growth of gender-based violence against indigenous women and thus argued for looking at the above issues from a gendered perspective.

The voices of indigenous people and their positive role in the war emerged subsequently, but their role has yet to be researched fully. This is especially true for the Chittagong Hill Tracts, where the movement for autonomy turned into armed conflict and as a result even after decades of cessation of armed hostilities, the hostility towards indigenous people in the region remain justified by a nationalist ideology that constructed indigenous peoples as rebels acting against the national integrity of Bangladesh.

But the autonomy movement and the debates it gave birth to also silenced many voices. Women's narratives of the conflict threw up multiple dimensions, the smaller ethnic communities in the Hills were seen to have different priorities and most of all an internal critique of the CHT discourse was not tolerated in the mainstream media. Peace-building therefore necessitated the need to construct identity politics from multiple perspectives: gender, class, ethnicity, religion and language.

Recently, NGOs and developmental agencies in both the CHT and the Cox's Bazaar district, which plays host to both documented and undocumented Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, have come under special surveillance of intelligence agencies. Among other things, the reasons could primarily be found in the growing economic and geo-political significance of the area given its strategic location adjacent to both Mizoram and Myanmar border as well it being the immediate hinterland to Chittagong port, which the current Government intends to develop as a free port. In addition, both the CHT as well as the coast off Cox's Bazaar and Chittagong port area are sites for potential gas exploration which has and is being bid by influential oil companies. Regional powers like India and China are also implicated in this power game.

Another main thrust of peace and conflict studies has been the war on terror which apart from its security dimensions, looks keenly at the role of non-state actors. A few but significant studies have been looking at the role of women as both victims and non-state actors in this context.³⁷

In recent years, several topical issues have arisen in Bangladesh which have drawn both global and national attention, the prime being the environmental degradation and climate crisis for which Bangladesh is supposed to be a frontline state. Some embryonic studies on displacement of vulnerable population, the implications for women and environment, cross border migration and trafficking have all come up in such fields but much more is needed.³⁸

On the subject of climate change and the accompanying disasters and adaptation that it brings along with it, there is relatively few expertise in this area and the big money promised by donors have usually been channelled to projects which try to pour old wine into new bottles i.e. adapting old programmes of disaster management strategies to climate change programmes. A very embryonic environmentalist movement through the organisation of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA) has come up in recent years and they have had been effective in certain policy area e.g. influencing Government's move to ban polythene and also replace three engine driven scooters with CNG powered vehicles or policies to stop illegal construction work on rivers thus ensuring their navigability. But what is needed here is a more cohesive environmentalist peace-building strategy which will have a perspective of dealing with some of the conflicts that may emerge from climate change e.g. increasing land grabbing, powerful vested interests linked to global politics that encourage social violence as in the case of saline water shrimp cultivation in south-west Bangladesh.³⁹

There is another aspect of resource politics which engages with global powers and that is the recent movement called "The National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports". The movement takes a strong position against open pit mining and resistance to lopsided share agreements with oil and gas exploration agencies like Shell, UNICOL and CONNOCO Philips that work against the people of Bangladesh, is now becoming global with its links to anti-mining movements and anti-globalisation networks in the world. The literature available on this consists mostly of articles, position papers, leaflets appearing in blogs and websites and an articulated gendered perspective is missing. Environmentalists and anti-globalisation campaigns also have the potential to become the new voices in future peace-building strategies.

Currently the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown open all doors to new areas which have not yet been traversed or given importance both at global and national level. Issues of migration, as well as food politics and the politics of care have made a comeback centre-stage after decades of glorifying neo-liberalism. The implication for feminist notions of care or

gendered interpretation of current trends is critical in this respect.

Concluding Analysis

The review of literature in the Bangladesh context reveals that almost all three components of feminist IR theory that has been characterised i.e. inclusivity, self-reflexivity and relational power dynamics have been touched on. The inclusivity and relational power dynamics occur more than self-reflexivity angle however.

The inclusivity component are embedded in those studies that bring out new voices or actors in the discipline through exploring women's narratives or the perceptions of ethnic people or regional and non-state actors. Seeing multiple sides of a conflict or negotiations such as in studies of a regional dynamics or in a conflict zone where intersectional approach is used to understand the nuances of identity politics along lines of multi-ethnicities and/or gender or using the gendered lens to understand non-state actors involved in terrorism contributes to self-reflexivity. Critical engagements with states either from a gendered, marginal or environmental standpoint contributes to the interrogation of existing power dynamics entrenched in the political and cultural boundaries of the nation or the status quo of cross-border/regional politics. From all these studies alternative visions emerge which opens up great possibilities for future research agendas. This is what we shall reflect on now.

Exploring Future Agendas of IR

There are fields of International Relations in Bangladesh that still needs to be explored. Some of these maybe mentioned below.

- a. Peace-building strategies of inclusive citizenship, e.g. the empowerment of vulnerable groups with gender as cross cutting element
- b. Counter narratives to the War against Terror
- c. Strategies of peace-building from an environmentalist perspective as an input to climate change scenarios
- d. Regional (both South and South-east Asian) perspectives on refugees and forced migration
- e. Exploring the nexus between peace and migration
- f. Borderland perspectives on building a counter-narrative to cartographic anxieties of states (e.g., NRC, fencing, push back)
- g. Strategies of national, regional and global resource-sharing
- h. Politics of the Pandemic

But from the point of feminist theories these subjects need to bring in inclusivity, self-reflection and an analysis of relational power dynamics. Two examples from the topics mentioned above can help to shed light on how this can be done. The topics are peace-building processes and the politics of the pandemic.

Peace-building in such situation needs strong capacity-building of both indigenous and mainstream civil society actors in lobbying and advocacy as well as in processes of self-enquiry and self-management to overcome their own internal dissensions. Although a few NGOs and “watch-dog” institutions like the International Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission have tried to address such effort in a miniscule way, the Bangladesh state instead of acting in a positive manner has taken negative steps like denying the term indigenous in official documents (so that they are not seen to concede with indigenous land rights or rights of self-determination), allowing for misinterpretation of affirmative action policies (that is allowed by the constitution) and hence giving moral support to the demands claimed by Bengali settlers. In many cases the state has openly denounced those organisations and advocates of indigenous rights as operating in conjunction with “foreign powers” against the national integrity of the state.

Inclusion of new actors such as women, smaller ethnic groups, or even inquiring into livelihood issues such as *‘jum* cultivation (swidden cultivation) would help one to go beyond such polarised power dynamics and seek resolution of conflicts through reflexivity. Bringing together women of both Bengali settlers and indigenous groups have had some amount of success in improving governance related to violence against women. At the global level, there is a possibility on the part of international and regional peace missions in the form of 2nd or 3rd track diplomacy to take this up in their agenda and open up dialogues with the Bangladesh Government especially in the context of the adoption of the first National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security (WPS).

The COVID-19 pandemic which hit the world in late 2019 to 2020 has caught many powerful, rich countries unprepared to handle such a phenomena. Not only has it taken the global economy into a historic recession but has raised questions about strategic priorities of policies and our living pattern and lifestyles. Analytically it serves as a perfect platform in which to bring in gendered perspectives in many ways, some of which have already emerged. For example the point how lockdown and stay at home instructions have led to flagrant rise in domestic violence against women and children has been made quite forcefully even at the global level.⁴⁰ The mass displacement of migrant populations especially industrial workers consisting of large female workforce and their specific struggles have gone unnoticed in the media. But it would be even more

interesting to see how notions of care that feminists have taken up in past decades would be relevant in addressing the gap in health sectors, public services in general and allocation of resources. Furthermore the importance of food aid which had nearly disappeared or relegated only to emergency response after the seventies, had made a comeback with implications for supply chains, environment and women as producers. Famine politics had re-entered the household as women starve in order to feed their families as is evident from observations made in the social media.

The above examples demonstrate the tremendous implications for future analyses of International Relations. Such studies will at first help to locate women within the broader parameters of the issues and problems, and to look at the world through a gendered perspective critiquing existing notions of power relations and security. But more importantly because feminist theories are derived from the experiences of marginalised and oppressed peoples, including women, it would help to reveal and bring to light, voices of marginalised groups. Furthermore due to the fact that feminist theories are praxis-oriented and normative, consciously building theory from practice and in turn guiding political practice, it will open the doors for policy oriented studies that uphold the diversity and complexity of any issue, local national or global.

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Transformative Peacebuilding: Approaches, Agents and Issues

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Abstract

Building peace after violent conflict is a complex and challenging task as there are multiple stakeholders and diverse issues involved in and associated to this strategic process. There has been an argument that post-conflict liberal peacebuilding often designed by external actors has a high potency of maintaining stability through efforts of promoting liberal democratic governance system and market-based economic growth. Nevertheless, the concept of liberal peacebuilding has been under question on many grounds including for not paying adequate attention to the realities of local contexts, which as a result leads to counter-productive results. Having such critical and paradoxical issues into consideration, this paper attempts to explore another concept, transformative peacebuilding, which could be useful to make peace after conflict durable. Within this framework, it aims to identify, and analyse, associated approaches, agents and issues that could be considered to transform negative energies of conflict(s) into a positive direction in order to prevent recurring violence, build cooperative relations and bridge the distance that armed conflict creates between parties, and communities so that they could overcome their hatred and prejudices in the long-run.

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Introduction

Peacebuilding is one of the most discussed issues in contemporary world, which is full of apprehension, mistrust, anxiety and trauma, created by different armed conflicts, and is a highly used practical term which has significance to undertake suitable strategies of maintaining and building peace once violence is over. Peacebuilding has primarily been understood through studies of different scholarly writings and policy documents produced by different international organisations including the United Nations (UN) as a process of following some indicative activities and programmes for re-building war-ravaged countries. Although this concept has widely been studied in the last nearly three decades since Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the then UN Secretary General popularised it through *An Agenda for Peace* published in 1992, Galtung in his 1969 inspiring work titled 'Violence, Peace and Peace Research' not only distinguished between 'negative' and 'positive' peace but also coined the term much ahead of the UN.¹ Nevertheless, the notion of peacebuilding in the post-Cold War era - when the patterns and dynamics of armed conflict shifted from an inter-state dimension to an intra-state dimension - has been understood as a narrow perspective largely to attain two key preconditions of liberal peace, e.g. post-conflict statebuilding and improving its democratic governance capacity, which is believed to have abilities to stabilise and restore peace. This liberal notion which the international community has pronounced and exercised after conflicts has over the period been questioned by scholars including Richmond and Mac Ginty on many grounds including its tendency of intervening to the recipient states through economic liberalisation and political reforms,² which they could not resist due to domestic weakness and fragilities of those states.³ Moreover, it has a notion of creating a universal temple of liberal peace governance that to a considerable extent pays no or less attention to local realities.⁴ The argument of post-liberal peace has developed in a way that has an attention to overcome the downsides of liberal peace as it has talked about going beyond the "imperial IR [International Relations]" and emphasised on embracing 'local context' in a manner that could denote 'a hybrid local-liberal peace'.⁵

Having these complex and contested issues in consideration, this paper aims to examine and analyse different approaches that could effectively contribute to another concept, transformative peacebuilding, in which scholars and practitioners working on building and sustaining peace after conflicts have special interests. This paper attempts to explore and to combine two ideas: (i) an argument that Roland Paris, in spite of being a forerunner of the concept of liberal peacebuilding, has carried forward in relation to 'transformatory peacebuilding'⁶ and (ii) an idea of 'conflict transformation' that John Paul Lederach has profoundly carried forward through his research and writings.⁷ In doing so, this paper, which is built

upon wider review and consultations of secondary resources related to conflict resolution, peacebuilding and conflict transformation, attempts to identify, explain and analyse key approaches, actors and issues of transformative peacebuilding that could not only contribute to preventing resumption of violence once a conflict is over but also to bringing fundamental change in conflicting relations of parties and communities that experienced armed violence. The paper begins with a fundamental understanding of 'peacebuilding' and its significance, divergence and convergence with the concept of 'transformative peacebuilding'. This theoretical paper thereafter carries forward discussion and analysis of different approaches that could be considered relevant for understanding and applying the concept of transformative peacebuilding. Having discussion on multiple interconnected approaches of transformative peacebuilding, it further examines the significance of different actors and agents relevant to this concept, both practically and theoretically.

Peacebuilding and the Concept of Transformative Peacebuilding

The concept of peacebuilding has been defined and re-defined in many ways. The publication, *An Agenda for Peace* brought new insights to the practices of rebuilding war-torn countries and societies and mainly focused on two aspects: (i) to take actions for supporting structures to strengthen and solidify peace, and (ii) to prevent relapsing of armed conflict, once violence stopped.⁸ Since then, the concept of peacebuilding has gone through extensive review, and led to numerous scholarly definitions, albeit without a consensus of having only the definition. However, peacebuilding is considered as a complex and prolonged process 'of change and an instrument of intervention in post-war societies'.⁹ The conventional understanding of peacebuilding focused only on preventing recurring violence, once an armed conflict ended either through victory-defeat outcome or negotiated political settlement. International community therefore has paid most attention on strengthening capacity of the state and its institutions through involving peacekeepers so that stability could be maintained. Peacekeepers traditionally were only allowed to keep and maintain 'negative' peace; although, over the period their mandates have been enlarged, particularly under the umbrella of 'peace operations' and 'peace support' to undertake and participate in wider activities that fit within the rubric of peacebuilding.

Based on the practical recommendations of the 2000 Brahimi Report to include more civilian police and human rights experts to improve the state of rule of law and human rights in peacekeeping missions, a robust discourse developed in relation to peacebuilding versus statebuilding.¹⁰ Over the period, the scope of peacebuilding has widened from a narrower perspective, although its predominant dimension focused on 'liberal'

peace, which talks about statebuilding, democratisation and marketisation process¹¹—since ‘democratic transition’ is considered as a yardstick of peacebuilding vis-a-vis statebuilding.¹² The contemporary IR has ‘problematised the state, sovereignty, embedded liberalism and the international system’, which often are profoundly emphasised in statebuilding process.¹³ This liberal statebuilding is rooted in Woodrow Wilson’s fourteen (14) point foreign policy objectives which have fundamentally been related to promotion of ‘liberal democracy and market-oriented economies.’¹⁴ As democratic transition process equates with that of statebuilding, attentions have been paid to the nature of state institutions and their capacity building so that states, either in their own or with the external support, could perform responsibilities to prevent further violence, and meet demands of parties to conflict(s).¹⁵ Other important issues like economy, culture and social change etc. have often been treated as secondary elements in the discourse of liberal statebuilding.¹⁶ Within this process, as Richmond argued, ‘the most marginalised, the individual, community, kinship, agency and context have been subsumed. At best they are only recognised rhetorically’.¹⁷

There are conceptual confusions between peacebuilding and statebuilding. One could argue that peacebuilding includes ‘a subset of state-building activities’, while another could consider ‘state-building to be a part of peacebuilding’.¹⁸ Others argue that peacebuilding is conflated with the objectives and tasks of statebuilding. Paris, for instance, stated:

Peacebuilding is in effect an enormous experiment in social engineering—an experiment that involves transplanting Western models of social, political and economic organisation into war-shattered states in order to control civil conflict: in other words, pacification through political and economic liberalisation.¹⁹

This notion of establishing legitimate governance process is one of the key means to accommodate conflicting parties, particularly in weak and fragile states.²⁰ Liberal peacebuilding, however, has been questioned due to its potential to establish a form of universal peace, irrespective of conflict affected states’ nature and patterns of governance. Whether or not the concerned states prefer to embrace liberal peace, which to a considerable extent is externally supported, encouraged or enforced, those states often have to accept economic liberalisation and political reforms, which at times could lead to further tensions, crisis and at worst violence.²¹ Nonetheless, if we look into the practical objectives of peacebuilding, its minimalist approach pays attention to preventing recurring violence once a peace settlement is achieved, while the liberal dimension focuses on establishing decent government to prevent parties to engage in hostile behaviours.²² The maximalist approach of peacebuilding, on the other hand, stresses to address underlying issues and causes of a conflict in post-

conflict governance process,²³ although one could raise question about identifying and understanding root causes as those are not always 'self-evident or agreed upon'.²⁴ This encompasses 'the elements of structural transformation of the conflict's root causes in the political, economic and social spheres', which are interconnected with normalisation of situation and reconciliation of parties' relations.²⁵

This maximalist approach also emphasises on healing trauma and wounds that people of all conflicting sides experience as a result of violence, atrocities and human rights violations committed by the parties to each other which cannot be underestimated for consolidating peace as there are ethical and moral consideration attached to such issues.²⁶ This leads us to a point, which liberal peace often tends to avoid due to supra complexities of peacebuilding, to address 'the past' of conflict, a pre-requisite to transform relationship of parties, and communities in a longer-term politico-strategic process of building peace.²⁷ As peacebuilding canvas is larger enough, this can be a means of building relationships between parties, and communities, which experience armed violence, through setting different priorities and following a strategic process.²⁸ This implies that peacebuilding requires 'forging structures and processes that redefine violent relationships into constructive and cooperative patterns'.²⁹ John Paul Lederach, an academic and practitioner of conflict transformation, stated:

Peacebuilding is understood as a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships. The term thus involves a wide range of activities that both precede and follow formal peace accords. Metaphorically, peace is seen not merely as a stage in time or a condition. It is a dynamic social construct.³⁰

Although the concept of 'transformative peacebuilding' is newer in critical scholarship, the maximalist approach of peacebuilding has a resemblance to 'transformative approach' as this aims to attend and meet demands of conflicting parties in post-conflict legitimate governance process and to transform attitudes and behaviours of conflicting parties.³¹ Another crucial aspect of transformative peacebuilding is that rather than maintaining status quo of hegemonic peace, often operated only through institutional mechanisms and approaches, guided by external authority, it pays attention to alternative and innovative approaches which have power to engage wider stakeholders in broader process. Burton, being critical to realist approach argued that all parties have 'needs' related to 'ontological needs of identity and recognition, and associated human development needs', which could only be addressed through accommodative approach.³² Without addressing the root causes of conflicts and 'the past',

peace may not be sustainable. Whatever be the statebuilding process, it may only accommodate immediate political needs of concerned parties. Transformative peacebuilding must be a long-term process, which urges to engaging with conflict, and seeing it proactively as 'a potential catalyst' for positive change, instead of a 'problem'.³³ This refers to a process oriented holistic concept that, in the short-term, aims to prevent renewed violence, and wants to sustain peace through 'structural change' in the longer-term.³⁴

This structural change however is not always an aim of transformative peacebuilding; this instead intends to bring changes in attitudes and behaviour of conflicting parties, and communities, towards each other. As a comprehensive concept and a practical term, it could focus on 'inherent dialectic nature' which aims to transcending parties' negative relations into a positive direction.³⁵ This change could not be attained in a short period; instead, would require inter-subjective exchange of parties' perceptions and views over many issues through a long drawn process. This process must be influenced by values and principles of peace and justice, truth and mercy.³⁶ This is also a process of constructing and reconstructing 'social organisations and realities' of conflicting groups, which helps to softening parties' socio-psychological boundaries and fostering dialogue and relationship building across the divides.³⁷ This allows parties to 'altering' their attitudes and perceptions as they could 'come together for serious and productive' discussions once armed hostility is reduced.³⁸ The core principle is to transform 'the negative energy' of a conflict, which does not naturally die down when it ends instead could connect with 'one or more conflicts', often links with the old conflict(s).³⁹ Therefore, transformative peacebuilding as a strategic process proposes not only to change conflicting parties' negative energies gradually into a positive direction through different approaches and innovative initiatives but also to utilise local capacities and strengths besides the international initiatives in such endeavours. These must be related to deep reconciliation of parties, and communities' relations, which could help to address 'deeper psychological and subjective aspects of people's experiences' of recent past as well as 'generations of pain, loss and suffering'.⁴⁰

Fetehrston argued that the 'diversity and density' of different works which take place in post-conflict complex situation have to be understood from a flexible and inter-subjective manner in practice and in theory that could aim to 'emancipatory social transformation' process.⁴¹ This goes beyond elite-oriented problem-solving approaches, but intends to attract and engage local societies, people and communities, often in partnership with the institutional processes, in order to changing conflicting relations of parties, and communities.⁴² The skills and experience that peacebuilding practitioners receive from different consultative problem solving

approaches and through application of different strategies to meet unmet needs of conflicting parties, and communities living in the context, have to be utilised and applied not only for resisting potential emergence of violence but also for changing their relations. However, the quality of peacebuilding will be determined by the ex-conflicting parties themselves. Wallensteen states:

If a (formerly) fighting party believes that peace will last, it behaves in such a way that peace actually becomes durable, and acts to reduce tension in society or between states. On the other hand, if the parties do not expect that peace will be lasting, their self-protective actions will soon undermine the process and, as a result, peace will not remain, as predicted by the classical security dilemma.⁴³

This entails the extent to which ex-conflicting parties will be ready to embrace the other, including diversity and aspects of transforming their relations. What is more, there has to be approaches of supporting peaceful means to address emerging tensions and crisis, which could reinforce their trust-building process. The more they would apply peaceful approaches in this regard, the more likely it would create a condition for managing next crisis in non-coercive ways.⁴⁴ In summary, the concept of 'transformative peacebuilding' actually does not focus on systemic change rather aims to alter conflicting parties' perceptions, attitudes and behaviour to each other by involving them in a long-term process so that they do not engage in violence again, and maintain cooperative, peaceful relations. This is a process of easing their relations and transcending their differences, which would glow and galvanise gradually, and that would sustain through multiple interconnected approaches.

Approaches of Transformative Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding actors and authorities inclusive of people on ground could consider multiple approaches for transforming and transcending relations of conflicting parties over a longer-period. These are so well connected to each other that make them highly significant for creating an environment conducive of fostering cooperation between/amongst parties and bridging their gaps and fractures that an armed conflict often creates.

Governance Approach

The governance approach of transformative peacebuilding emphasises on the process of changing old governance process, if required, that created a condition of conflict and violence into an effective and well accepted

governance system that could convince the most important, if not all, parties of a conflict. As contemporary armed conflicts are mostly related to either governance or territorial issues of the states,⁴⁵ there is an essence of addressing such issues that have created debacles at the first place. After armed violence, parties to it pay attention on the matters how the wider issues of governance, often related to political authority and control, and territorial control, are handled, and the extent to which that convince parties to participate in this process, particularly in political sphere. Although the international community often stresses on promotion of democratic governance after armed conflicts, this could lead to counter-productive results—as the beginning of democratic electoral process, for example, could ignite further tensions. As this is a process of bringing normal politics back after conflicts, it knowingly or unknowingly could create more complexities, and lead to violence, especially when politics is intensely personalised and connected with identity, race, religion etc.⁴⁶ Having said that, this is not to argue against democratisation process, instead it proposes to create a scope of allowing, and sharing of power between/amongst adversaries immediately after violence, which could motivate them to participate in post-conflict transition process, and subsequently to democratisation practices. Immediately after conflict, this is actually about building parties' confidence to stay in a process that allows them to recognise and work jointly, if not constructively, with their former adversaries.

The guarantee of sharing of power immediately after armed conflict is what parties actually want to ensure their survival, and sustain their existence.⁴⁷ This guarantee often comes through sharing of power in post-conflict decision making process. The essence of promoting power-sharing formula, which could be considered as a 'tool' of preventing and resolving conflicts in divided societies, is to offer some incentives that help parties to build their confidence to participate and engage in governance process.⁴⁸ The cornerstone of this formula is that it allows parties to share power and resources on four key areas: political, military, economic and territorial. Lijphart argued that power-sharing may help to mitigate ethnic tensions and divisions that the majoritarian democracy sometimes could not address—as power-sharing formula could include all major stake-holding parties in united or grand coalition governments, often supported by proportional representation.⁴⁹

Power-sharing institutions and formula could offer 'a code of conduct' for parties to shape appropriate group behaviour, to keep commitment of peace with their adversaries, and to improve 'prospects of reconciliation' by different means of addressing other outstanding issues.⁵⁰ However, in spite of different caveats of power-sharing arrangements, the success of such arrangements would be determined by the ways and approaches that the conflicting parties, and sometimes the external authority that assists in

setting up power-sharing government, would apply to start a transition process after armed conflicts. If it sustains, it will help to set up conditions for other procedural arrangements, for example, of holding national election and institutional capacity building of other governance institutions for democratisation process, afterwards. Such democratisation process, nonetheless, could lead to unforeseen consequences in political process, since not all conflicting parties including rebel(s) within the rebel group may not equally prefer to transform into political entity, and thus to participate in democratic process.⁵¹ The governance approach therefore focuses on changing political system of a post-conflict country gradually, instead of rapidly moving towards a democratic system, as many contemporary conflict affected countries are located in non-western countries and exercised different forms of governance in their respective locations.⁵² Therefore, this approach has to be respectful to other models of governance that these countries want to exercise to avert 'cultural imperialism' in their contexts.⁵³

Security and Safety Approach

This approach states that security in post-violence fragile situation is a prime concern for all parties and actors involved in peacebuilding process. Security is crucial not only for the state and its citizen, as well as rebel groups, but also for all other stakeholders, both international and domestic, who would engage in wider peacebuilding process. Nevertheless, an application of a realist approach – application of security forces – after armed conflict may not be suitable to transform conflicting parties strategies; it instead would require to embrace more of an integrative approach that could consider engaging peacekeepers with wider mandate and other societal actors to engage in diverse tasks.⁵⁴ However, peacekeepers often are not sent to every post-conflict context, instead are mandated to direct towards the theatres where conflicting parties have authority and strengths to retaliate each other.⁵⁵ A sense of insecurity, originating from the post-conflict reality or perceived by parties due to lack of security guarantee(s) often provided by external authority could undermine parties' relationship transformation process.

The security approach actually emphasises on creating conducive environment for all major conflicting parties to participate in transition process – which would start through a practical Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) process in the short term, and has to be supported by longer-term Security Sector Reform (SSR). The SSR is a security governance process that could allow all parties to engage in security maintenance through an acceptable, if not appropriate, manner. Disarming combatants of conflicting parties is as crucial as demobilising them with some incentives so that they could consider to return to normal

life, and to live non-combatant life without fear and apprehension as both the DDR and SSR set some terms and conditions of the use of forces, a pre-condition of post-conflict transition of security situation.⁵⁶ The DDR is a highly politico-strategic process that besides disarming and demobilising ex-combatants provides some incentives, mostly economic and legal in nature, to encourage them to participate in normal political and non-combatant activities.

This DDR is a pre-condition of stabilisation process that requires engagement of security forces—either military or police, and presence of international peacekeepers, to undertake and implement its associated activities.⁵⁷ Although the presence of international peacekeepers could be considered to provide implicit or explicit ‘security guarantee’ to the ex-combatants of conflicting parties for DDR,⁵⁸ this depends upon the context where the conflict is located and what capacities do parties have to retaliate each other. Where there is no presence of peacekeepers, there has to be some other mechanisms that could assure ex-combatants to participate in the DDR process on the condition that their security and survival will not be at question. This guarantee, of course, could come from national political authority in asymmetric conflicts, wherein political gesture and sincere commitment of powerful party could encourage the weaker party to participate in DDR process and begin the transition from violence to peace. This nevertheless must include a commitment of not using dubious coercive mechanism to suppress the opponent, which could undermine the DDR as parties after conflict not only have control of their arms but also could access other unaccounted arms which remain in circulation.⁵⁹ It could jeopardise this process: if the weaker party feels that the stronger party has breached commitments there would be less option for the former than to organise itself to attempt fighting back for its survival. The sharing of political power as discussed before as a consequence could collapse, and thus would undermine starting of a smooth transition process.

Nevertheless, this approach could not neglect protection and safety of the ordinary citizen’s living in post-conflict contexts in the name of providing security to ex-combatants to participate in DDR process.⁶⁰ Inadequate attention to security of general citizen could create complexities from two dimensions. Firstly, some of the conflicting parties could continue creating a reign of fear and apprehensions amongst local citizens and thus carry on their violent activities for undermining overall transition process. Secondly, when the international community, and the state institutions concerned with maintaining security, could not ensure security of general citizen, those people may look for alternatives to ensure their protection. This allows some armed groups to control those areas to provide people’s security, and thus sustain their unlawful activities.⁶¹ Therefore, once transition process begins, attention has to be paid on long-term security

governance process to sustain peace. This evolves through some joint planning for security governance management that the SSR process could ensure.

As a part of security governance, the main purpose of SSR is to set up 'a basic, functioning security infrastructure in conflict ravaged nations' that could create 'a strong civilian institution to allow citizen-led, transparent control over security forces and institutions', a precondition of sustaining longer-term peace by transforming parties security related perceptions and attitudes to each other.⁶² This is a process of establishing institutional mechanisms like national military, intelligence services, police, paramilitary and judicial institutions to 'protect citizens against violence or coercion' that could originate from any unforeseen sources.⁶³ Nevertheless, after demobilisation in some complex contexts ex-combatants could be cautiously included in regular security forces which may help parties to work jointly in the security sector, although it could create more complexities too in security management leading to mixed results.⁶⁴ The need of international peacekeepers therefore may not finish immediately after disarming the parties to maintain stability and peace as the SSR, as a follow up of the DDR, could be considered 'work in progress'.⁶⁵ As a part of this, international community has to look forward to a strategy that is safe and appropriate to transfer security related tasks to local security and law enforcing forces and their capacity building process based upon the 'context and culture-specific norms' instead of only focusing on priorities set by the liberal actors.⁶⁶ There has to be commitment, both at the national political and strategic aspects, and international level, in terms of undertaking such approaches of DDR and SSR, for transforming parties' relations and transcending their differences by ensuring all parties' security and safety. This requires training of professional security forces of a country to fight against insecurity, threats and violence, and building of their capacity in terms of trauma healing and non-violent conflict resolution techniques so that a resilient society, a pre-requisite of transcending parties' difference, could function in the long-term.

Development and Well-being Approach

The development and well-being approach suggests and focuses on local needs grounded in the post-conflict context(s) in terms of understanding socio-economic needs and demands of the society. No doubt, once a conflict is over it creates scopes for many actors to be involved in infrastructure and other socio-psychological development activities. This approach argues to pay attention on the matters related to improving living conditions of people, and engaging ex-combatants into non-combatant activities ideally to bring their confidence back – for not to

engaging in further violent activities and creating sufficient scopes for all sections of people to be involved in income generating activities to maintain and secure their livelihood and well-being. These could be key sources of overall social and economic transformation. The types of programmes and activities that are crucial for a post-conflict country or society have to be determined and mapped by appropriate assessment, which could be conducted by the concerned government if it is capable enough to do so, or, by the international community as they engage in post-war reconstruction and development activities.⁶⁷ Such assessment would help development partners to understand the context better and to know the priorities that conflict affected communities and parties, and people, want to meet their basic needs and demands for improving their livelihood conditions and living with dignity. This to a great extent also assists other associated actors and partners to consider alternative but context specific approaches instead of applying 'one-size-fits all' policies in terms of undertaking wider socio-economic activities and programmes.⁶⁸

Addressing and attending basic socio-economic needs and demands of conflicting parties could reduce the risks of further violence as such issues are positively correlated with lasting peace.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, having a large number of unemployed people mostly between the age of 15 and 24 who overwhelmingly could join rebellion and engage in unlawful activities – if they are not provided adequate means to meet their basic needs – is a serious matter of post-conflict development.⁷⁰ Although one could argue that this is connected with the 'greed versus grievance' thesis, the issues of wider socio-economic development have to be understood from a combined perspective as 'greed' often interacts with 'grievance' in a complex manner wherein not only the rebels but also the state and government could influence in terms of fuelling violence and war economy, particularly after armed conflict(s).⁷¹ Therefore, post-conflict development including infrastructure development and programmes of socio-economic advancement including access to education and health facilities, and resource control and regulation have to be undertaken in such a way that listens to the conflicting parties' and pays attention to localised contextual needs for avoiding further tensions, leading to armed conflict(s).

Without paying adequate attention to, and adequate understanding of, local context and needs, development activities could not contribute to transform parties' relations but may lead to counter-productive results as often happen due to expansion of privatised, market-based economy. There are claims that liberal and neo-liberal economic expansions after conflict(s) could instigate further political and socio-economic tensions, and at worst recurring violence.⁷² Hence, post-conflict development approach that international community would want to exercise should not

exclude local actors and priorities aside, instead has to examine the extent to which external assistance could benefit people living at the communities, though they could be divided in many lines including ethnic, cultural and political affiliations. Development activities after conflict that pay attention to local contexts, to meet local needs, to satisfy conflicting parties' legitimate demands and to ensure basic well-being of people living at community level could assist all parties to build their confidence to lead peaceful social life in the long-term.

The end of armed conflict creates opportunities for donors and domestic authorities to undertake and execute development activities which benefit people living on ground such as returnee refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), unemployed youths, women and children, ordinary citizen who have specific needs and priorities to be fulfilled. Besides security guarantee, ex-combatants would want guarantee of returning to normal life and to engage in lawful socio-economic activities to maintain their livelihood. They hence need capacity and skill building training to adapt in diverse socio-economic activities. Child soldiers, for instance, once return to non-combatant life they need special care—not only through capacity building training but also by providing basic education, as they may lack many issues of fundamental socialisation process. Further sections of people including refugees, IDPs, ordinary citizen and others want to see that ending of war has brought some direct benefits in their social and economic lives. Access to education and health care facilities are two prime issues all invariably of their affiliation to conflicting groups would want. Therefore, such facilities have to be ensured in a manner that does not make further distinctions based on their identity, race and religion. More importantly, there has to be adequate scope and opportunities for people to be involved in legitimate income generation activities.

The more people are engaged in lawful income generating activities to support their livelihood, the less scope would there be for them to involve in other unlawful activities. This could be considered as a process of transforming people's attitudes toward work and legitimate economic activities, and thus to reduce their potential of engaging in violence, as employment generation and livelihood activities are means of maintaining their survival. Jackson and Beswick stated:

Both livelihood and employment require considerable attention early in the process, not only to ease suffering but also to soak up demobilised combatants as they return, as well as civilian youth and other groups that may consider entering less productive employment.⁷³

Nevertheless, transforming war economies after armed conflict is a daunting task as many of the ex-warring groups may not equally like to change their ways of livelihood as informal and shadow economies could bring more profits for them than the formal economy.⁷⁴ To overcome such challenges, there has to be strong initiatives to stop illicit businesses and activities, and alternative opportunities that could benefit people through legitimate business and income generating activities. For quick recovery, and promoting more income generating activities, external actors could advance ideas of undertaking initiatives for macroeconomic stability through mega projects considering that such 'capital-intensive economic activity like the extraction of natural resource' could bring more benefits for local people.⁷⁵ Although such financial liberalisation could create employment opportunities for skilled people, this may not sustain unless there is adequate measures and capacities to 'regulate financial market' of states that experienced violence.⁷⁶ Therefore, there has to be regulating measures to control privatised economic activities that have immense scope of employing local people. Furthermore, policies and activities of macroeconomic projects have to be locally accepted as they could complicate post-conflict development activities by creating stratified societies wherein gaps between the rich and poor as well as between urban and rural people could increase.

Hence, any development initiative after violent conflict has to be sensitive to local contexts on the one hand, and has to attend well-being of ordinary people, on the other. Insensitive development programmes and activities could do more harm, either unknowingly or unintentionally, than doing well.⁷⁷ To avoid such sensitivities, what is important is to change development planning in such a manner that pays attention to localised contexts through inclusive and participatory programme designing, development of its methods and its execution process, which could significantly reduce risks of violence.⁷⁸ Moreover, economic activities that people on ground would like to be engaged with have to be of their choice, based upon their capacity and societal arrangements.⁷⁹ Therefore, operationalisation of development has to be inclusive and investment has to be for the well-being of inhabitants to see a bright and resilient society in the future.⁸⁰

Justice Approach

The justice approach is a critical one for transforming parties' and communities' relations. The issues of ensuring justice, which follow a complex process in post-conflict situation carry no less significance but constitute a high priority of transformative peacebuilding. As armed conflicts lead to atrocities, violence, wounds and produce trauma, these memories are held and owned by parties and consequentially by

community people that have to be addressed in due legal process so that victims, and their relatives, could feel a sense of satisfaction for their loss made during the conflict. Nevertheless, ensuring justice in due legal process could be one of the key challenging tasks, which depends upon the context, and when and where such atrocities have been committed by which authority.⁸¹ Johansen stated:

Investigations of mass murder and prosecutions of those responsible for it may increase instability and deepen hostility among adversarial groups in one society but contribute to a sense of political catharsis that relaxes tensions, enables social healing, and opens the door to restorative justice in another. Context matters.⁸²

When we talk about justice, this means to dealing with the ‘accountability of, and responsibility of committing’ violence during the course of conflict in an institutional process.⁸³ This retributive process could be accomplished through either national legal procedures or application of international procedure of prosecuting war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and mass killings because many of the direct victims or their relatives and family members want perpetrators to be brought under justice.⁸⁴ If such atrocities and violence go unprosecuted in procedural and legal manner, it could run the risks of further violence, even after years of settling a conflict.⁸⁵ This is mainly because the history of violence and war, as well as memories created by these, remains active for many years, even generation after generation. They could be addressed by ad hoc tribunals as done in Rwanda and former Yugoslavia or by international bodies like the International Criminal Court. The national government could also apply national laws in conjunction to the international legal procedures to prosecute such crimes of mass atrocities and genocide.

When to undertake initiatives of prosecuting issues of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocidal violence is a critical matter. One state could undertake such initiative(s) immediately after ending violence, though highly complex at this stage, while other would initiate after sometime when a propitious moment is found in national, and international, context.⁸⁶ Whenever initiatives are undertaken in terms of prosecuting persons of great responsibilities of violation of laws of war, genocide and war crimes, the central intent has to be to bring them under trial to ensure justice of the victims of armed violence and to prevent persistent culture of impunity.⁸⁷ If impunity persists, it not only could lead to further violence and atrocities but also may encourage other leaders and responsible persons to follow such atrocious paths in other contexts. Therefore, the essence of this approach is to ensure justice to victims of violence and atrocities and to make decision-makers located in

other contexts aware about consequences of unabated mass atrocities, genocide and war crimes.⁸⁸ Although there has been many limitations of legal approach, for instance, victor's justice, marginalising victims or victimising them during cross-examination, breaching judicial impartiality in post-conflict contexts,⁸⁹ the issue of justice could not be ruled over as victims often constitute a large majority of population who want to know their relatives' whereabouts and to see that accountable persons have faced punishment in due process. Once punishment is ensured in due legal process, it gives a sense of satisfaction for victims who remain alive and relatives of victims who died as a result of violence.

Acknowledgement, Reparation and Trauma Healing Approach

This approach emphasises on acknowledgement of past wrong doings by the offenders and seeking forgiveness from victims, providing compensation and reparation to them, as well as following wider restorative process. This includes jointly participating in rituals of remembers, mourning past losses and undertaking different organic community-oriented initiatives for healing trauma, for example through arts, storytelling, religious and cultural practices.⁹⁰ The very core of this approach is to touch upon the emotional and psychological aspects of loss that parties and communities have made during violence. Without addressing such psycho-social aspects and "invisible effects" of war to which community people and relatives of dead have high emotional attachments that influence their everyday life and determine their perceptions about the opponent, there would be less possibility of changing their attitudes and behaviours towards the 'other'.⁹¹ Therefore, the essence of this approach is high in terms of transforming parties, and communities, perceptions and relations in the longer-term as parties' and wrongdoers generally may not acknowledge their responsibilities unless there is conducive environment for them to do so. This approach actually, according to Lederach, is founded upon four key fundamental values—truth, mercy, justice and peace.⁹² These collectively help to re-build and repair their broken relations so that communities could feel empowered to recover fractures with an attention to moving forward and leading their life.⁹³ This is a part of broader reconciliation process that arguably would help parties to bring a positive change in their relations through different 'culturally sensitive' restorative initiatives, although many may not be able to recover from past losses and trauma.⁹⁴

Some institutional initiatives like Truth and Reconciliation Commission or Truth and Justice Commission could undertake investigation to know and understand what actually happened with the victims of conflict. Such initiatives help to make "a historic bridge" between the past and shared, united future of adversaries.⁹⁵ These also assist in public disclosure of

past atrocities and to avoid vindictiveness, although they often not push for punishing the responsible, instead could suggest what mechanisms should be undertaken in terms of providing reparations and compensations for people who lost their lives or became victims of violence. Nevertheless, parties and communities often have 'taboo values' which are difficult to overcome.⁹⁶ Such issues could only be addressed when all sides of a conflict would realise and acknowledge that others' also have similar types of values, pain, losses and victimhood.⁹⁷ Once they realise, they could collectively acknowledge historical narratives of violence and sufferings people irrespective of their affiliations experienced through 'apology, symbolic gesture and concessions'.⁹⁸

Some form of acknowledgement of responsibility by the parties is crucial; although these could be truly hard to consider and accomplish at top political level, but not impossible to explore especially when people of communities are mobilised on the ground that violence does not discriminate but inflicts pain to all sides irrespective of their identity, ideology and struggle. At community level, there are different embedded, and sometimes hidden and informal, social, religious and cultural mechanisms that assist parties and communities to heal their trauma and victimhood. In many localised contexts, especially throughout the African continent the concept of *Ubuntu*, meaning 'to be human' is in exercise as a cultural world-view to express empathy and compassion.⁹⁹ This uses the principles of 'reciprocity, inclusivity and a sense of shared destiny' in terms of 'giving and receiving forgiveness' between people.¹⁰⁰ As this values community life most and works collectively to maintain peace and social order, members of *Ubuntu* societies are linked to each other—whether they are victims or perpetrators.¹⁰¹ They help to build consensus for resolving disputes and 'healing past wrongs and maintaining social cohesion and harmony' through localised cultural reconciliation process.¹⁰²

Such localised approach is highly victim-centric that helps to restore community relationship after conflicts. As a ceremonial approach the *Mato oput*, for example, involves clan and family members to heal their traumas by acknowledging the past wrongdoing and offering companion to victims' family by the accountable persons and sharing traditional drinks.¹⁰³ Undertaking some measures of reparation for survivors and victims of war, although these may not be compensated with punishment and forgiveness, could be considered for strengthening long-term reconciliation process.¹⁰⁴ Besides offering money, it could include some infrastructural issues like setting up monuments, establishing parks, renaming an important building as compensations, which have values for transforming relations of the parties, and communities, as they all collectively acknowledge such installations.¹⁰⁵ Community based localised initiatives moreover can arrange exchange of gifts like pigs or goats as

compensation, which though dependent upon the context, has symbolic value for improving relationship between ex-conflicting parties, and communities.¹⁰⁶ These help parties to re-examine and re-evaluate their relationship in the long run. Once such community oriented and ritual based process functions, they drink, dance and eat together, which symbolically means their relationship has gradually shifted from enmity towards acceptability of the other side. Nevertheless, such localised approaches should be exercised in sensitive manner so that no new tension is generated through the confessions process but could contribute to give some answers to community people about the past violence what they always wanted to know. This has significance for them as sometimes legal approach may not realistically be able to prosecute accountable persons; therefore, community driven acknowledgement and reparation approach could heal victim's wounds at minimum level by knowing the fate of war victims, and where and how they were killed or disappeared. They at least would be satisfied to know that in the absence of legal procedures the offender has made an apology.¹⁰⁷

Different non-Western, localised approaches originating from religious and socio-cultural dimensions can be effective in terms of promoting such activities, even when a political settlement does not address issues related to impunity of past violence. Although there are critical knowledge about involving religious leaders in conflict and post-conflict situation, they could help in re-humanising ex-combats by arguing against violence and preaching for tolerance and peace.¹⁰⁸ This process values the humanity, instead of enmity and leads to gradual relationship building process in long-term through exercise of principles of unity, community strength, forgiveness, empathy, and human dignity. However, there has to be conducive environment as a part of overall strategic peacebuilding to exercise these approaches of healing trauma of past atrocities so that positive change of relationship could start and sustain; otherwise, the risks of resumption of violence would increase. Therefore, any kind of social, cultural, formal, semi-formal and informal networks that could work for promoting cooperation and reducing divisions between parties and communities have to be supported and made functional to establish localised and national peace infrastructures. This is a process of engaging and empowering communities in such trauma healing and cooperative relationship building tasks.

Actors, Agents and Issues of Transformative Peacebuilding

As transformative peacebuilding is a holistic concept that has an intent to change conflicting parties' relations overtime, the nature of it is inclusive and actors could be considered from a diverse range of sectors. While we consider transformative peacebuilding, this does not mean to exclude

actors of generally practiced peacebuilding process like the international community including the UN prefers to employ for stabilising and rebuilding a conflict ridden country. Paris once argued that 'liberalism is a broad canvas', and there is 'no realistic alternative' other than existing practices to address post-conflict critical issues.¹⁰⁹ Besides engaging with the conflict as a catalyst of change, Miall has seen utilities of engaging wide range of actors in this inclusive process:

[It] is therefore a process of engaging with and transforming the relations, interests, discourses and, if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict. . . . People within the conflict parties, within the society or region affected, and outsiders with relevant human and material resources all have complementary roles to play in the long-term process It also recognises that conflicts are transformed gradually, through series of smaller or larger changes as well as specific steps by means of which a variety of actors may play important roles.¹¹⁰

Miall basically identified four categories of actors: (i) states and inter-governmental organisations, (ii) development and humanitarian organisations, (iii) international NGOs concerned with conflict prevention and transformation, and (iv) parties to the conflict and other relevant groups within the affected societies.¹¹¹ This is a pragmatic list of actors who could contribute to transformative peacebuilding, although the parties of a conflict are key subjects of transformation as their attitudes and behaviours to each other are supposed to be changed in this long-term process. Nevertheless, only the conflicting parties in a conflict-ridden country which is weak and fragile in many respects under no circumstances could lead this in spite of having their significant role and compliances, and non-compliance, to transformation process. The importance of maintaining state of stability and peace by deploying peacekeepers, either international or regional, or state security forces, could not be ruled out for addressing fragility as well as disarming and demobilising ex-combatants. The enlarged mandates of peace operations moreover allow peacekeepers to help states in strengthening their capacity in terms of ensuring transition and inclusive political process as much as possible so that state institutions could deliver services of all kind to its citizens. Once there is a mandated peace support operation in any context, peacekeepers become key actors who have mandated agentic power to maintain negative peace, to bring stability back through undertaking different activities required for transition. However, in post-conflict contexts where there are no UN peace support operations, these tasks are supposed to be accomplished by the government of the country and its bureaucracy, both military and civil. Therefore, this primarily requires confidence building between the parties before involving in such activities.

Lederach in his seminal writing identified three layers of actors: (i) top leaders, (ii) middle-range leadership and (iii) grassroots leadership, and recognised middle-range actors including ethnic and religious leaders, academics, humanitarian leaders and NGOs as pivotal connectors between the top political, military and religious leaders and bottom level actors including local leaders, local community NGOs, community developers, health officials, refugee camp leaders etc.¹¹² This is a wide ranging list which covers all domestic actors as he emphasised more on 'human and cultural resources' coming from 'within a given setting' but to a considerable extent rejected 'the outsiders'.¹¹³ Nevertheless, there are diverse other actors including the state itself which experienced armed violence either in ethnic conflict or civil war, political elites, bureaucrats, women groups, youth groups, donor community, humanitarian industry, private sector, religious institutions etc. that have scope to engage in peacebuilding process. Only the internal or the external actors could not be effective in easing and transforming relations of parties' and communities. They all have agentic and strategic roles in peacebuilding process. This is a multi-stakeholder engagement that allows a wide variety of actors to be involved; however, once we argue for transformative peacebuilding we consider that each actor has agentic role to contribute in changing relations of main parties and other substitute parties and actors. Without their involvement, chances of succeeding in terms of changing their conflicting relations is slim as they constitute as powerful forces and could control areas after officially ceasing violence. Therefore, all activities and approaches have to be directed towards assisting and pursuing conflicting parties, and communities, to transform their relationships.

The engagement of local communities in transformative peacebuilding process is crucial. This could not only help in making a connection between the top-down and bottom-up approaches,¹¹⁴ but also to uplift grassroots peace, which empowers local agencies to let other actors to respect contextualised norms, values and practices. As a part of post-liberal, hybrid forms of peace, local politics based on localised norms, values, identities and resources in association with international norm can assist peacebuilding process.¹¹⁵ Although regional, national and international are interconnected in a globalised complex system, local agencies sometime remain invisible but have various embedded capacities of maintaining 'tolerance and coexistence' of adversaries in everyday practice, and of 'large-scale mobilisation' for social and historical struggles.¹¹⁶ Local people yet understand their needs and priorities better than the external actors, and thus could contribute to designing appropriate programmes and activities. This term of 'local' however is 'extraordinarily flexible' and 'highly contested' too which means this could be 'inherently relational' referring to a connection between the national and global interventions.¹¹⁷ The argument of involvement of local

communities could be questioned due to its political use, for instance, when elites and warlords may want to capture and control power and politics in a more 'responsive, non-exclusionary' manner that could lead to intolerance.¹¹⁸

However, involving communities in conflict transformation tasks is not to romanticise the local people but to consider their collective and individual agentic role to influence parties, ex-combatants and other concerned actors to change their perception about the other. This is actually a pragmatic way of exploring other innovative approaches that could leave space for peace missions to transform conflicting parties by either persuasion or pressure in political transition process and to empower local communities and people who have contextual knowledge that external actors often lack to be involved in post-conflict peacebuilding process. The involvement of women groups, civil society, youth groups—key agents of making changes, could play significant roles too in terms of healing trauma and building bridges with the 'other'. One of the key challenges of acknowledgement and healing approach is that top level may not feel comfortable, in particular of acknowledging their involvement in the past atrocities as this could connect with the issues of responsibility, accountability and possible prosecution and punishments.¹¹⁹ Therefore, community based programmes, initiatives and interventions could be applicable for addressing localised issues and healing traumas. For effective reconciliation of relations and altering perceptions of adversaries, the priority has to be to connect the elite and community level initiatives so that the society could move from a divided past to a shared future.

Concluding Remarks

The popular quote of Gramsci, 'the old is dying and the new cannot be born' has a relevance to contemporary critical peacebuilding scholarships. The practice of liberal peacebuilding remains on the one side, and the notion and propositions of transformative peacebuilding has been reflected, on the other. These two concepts, though are contested theoretically, have convergence on many grounds as pragmatic transformative peacebuilding has depicted. Nevertheless, long-term transformation of conflicting relations of the parties, and associated communities, has often been challenged by only application of dominant and state-centric liberal peacebuilding process to which the international community including humanitarian and peacekeeping intervention has most attention. The concept of transformative peacebuilding goes beyond this traditional understanding of peacebuilding. This paper neither claims for radical systemic change nor totally rejects contemporary peacebuilding practices but argues in favour of going beyond liberal and neo-liberal approaches for transforming conflicting relations after violence. Besides

connecting with some aspects of statebuilding, it both – in rhetoric and practice – claims for easing relationship between conflicting parties that allows them to work jointly in due political process, which could help to transcend their differences through non-violent, cooperative means and social mixing, and to reduce psycho-emotional gaps between the communities that carry on traumas and wounds of violence.

Transformative peacebuilding as a concept and as a process states to follow multi-dimensional tasks in terms of changing politics of hate and hatred towards politics of cooperation and of offering services to people who have experienced violence. Transformation of parties' and communities' relations has to undertake at different levels that may evolve through diverse inter-related approaches: for example—governance, safety and security, development and well-being, justice and associated acknowledgment of atrocity, trauma and reparations. These may not create a situation between the conflicting parties, and communities, as it was before armed violence, but could assist them to ease their affairs and build new workable and sometimes cooperative relations by changing their perceptions, attitudes and behaviours to each other. Once these approaches, which are not mutually, and exclusively, inclusive to engage all stakeholders of armed conflict, would be applied strategically – it can assist parties' and associated communities' hostile relations into a positive direction directed towards a common and shared future. Although the concept of transformative peacebuilding has not received adequate attention in mainstream IR, there are wide range of other actors located at different layers of post-conflict settings apart from the state(s) that have agentic roles to influence conflicting parties and their followers to transform overtime. The communities and its different actors should not be ignored and marginalised, instead have to be considered relevant and use their agentic powers in innovative ways, sometimes by social engineering what humans for greater benefit could pursue gradually to transcend negative energies of conflict and to promote social healing leading towards cooperation and tolerance.

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The United Nations and Counterterrorism: Future Trajectories of Liberal Peace Support Operations

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Abstract

This paper examines a major research question—how is the struggle between the promotion of liberal norms and realist security concerns shaping the future United Nations peace support operations? It analyses major trends of transformation in global peace support operations led by the United Nations (UN). Furthermore, the paper discusses patterns of transformation of UN peace support operations—from peacekeeping to peace enforcement and peacebuilding endeavours. It further examines major challenges—both doctrinal and operational—of future peace operations. This discussion highlights that future missions will be influenced by some critical features—such as robust postures, increased demand for sophisticated logistical capabilities from contributing forces, effects of counterterrorism operations, and an emphasis on protection of civilians and (re)establishing the rule of law. Finally, the paper sheds light on one crucial feature of future trends of UN peace operations—UN's position in counterterrorism operations going alongside UN missions. This feature highlights the dichotomies between liberal peace and realist features of international security. The paper underscores that the future of peace operations is complex in nature as it may need to adopt strategic

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military objectives of counterterrorism which will dilute its conventional ideals of liberal peace. The UN requires more cautious steps to accommodate changing patterns of peace operations.

Introduction

The preamble to the Charter of the United Nations signed on 26 June 1945 at San Francisco, the United States of America (USA), asserts that, “We the Peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime have brought untold sorrow to mankind.”¹ From this combined resolve emerged its primary function, the UN peace support operations. Even though peacekeeping has not been defined in the Charter and does not find mention anywhere in it, but it remains till today the most important function of the United Nations. Over the past three decades, peacekeeping operations have become one of the largest and most visible activities undertaken by the UN. A doctrine for peacekeeping has evolved over the years based on the experiences of the UN system and continues to benefit many regions of the world, which otherwise could have had worse experiences. Lakhdar Brahimi in his report in 2000 to the UN on Reforms to Peacekeeping Operations mentioned, “It is the yardstick with which the Organisation is judged by the peoples it exists to serve. Over the last decade, the United Nations has repeatedly failed to meet the challenge, and it can do no better today.”²

Moreover, in reality, this important responsibility is performed today mainly by the developing countries and that too by the nations of South Asia. As of January 2020, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka have collectively contributed approximately 27.18% of the entire troop strength to UN Peacekeeping missions.³ This is despite the fact that a large majority of such operations are located in Africa. It will be no exaggeration to assert that without the South Asian contribution, UN peace support operations may not be sustained in the world.

In 1948, the UN first deployed military observers as peacekeepers to the Middle East. Article VI (peaceful settlement of disputes) of the UN Charter offered legal frameworks for peace operations.⁴ In 45 years during the Cold War, the UN only allowed thirteen peacekeeping missions. The bipolar political and strategic rivalry between the USA and the former Soviet Union played a significant role in preventing UN's greater contribution in conflict resolution. Nevertheless, in the post-Cold War era, the world experienced more peacekeeping missions. The total number of missions in the first five years of the post-Cold War was more than the total number of missions during forty-five years of the Cold War.⁵ Article

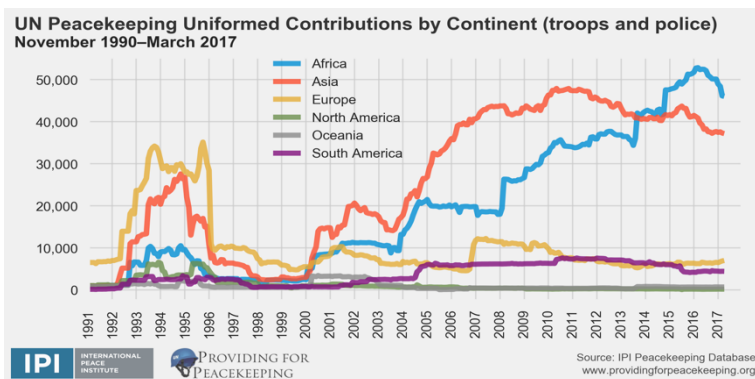
VII (peace enforcement) of the UN Charter has mostly been exhausted as the core framework of the post-1990s peace support missions. New conflicts were registered that had posed new threats to the international order.

The so-called Global War on Terror (GWOT), after September 2001, has profoundly influenced the nature of conflict in the 21st Century. This also brings enormous challenges to international community's peace and security. The GWOT has also influenced UN's engagement in peace support operations. UN peacekeepers ensure security and support for peace-building to help conflict-affected countries transition from conflict to peace, albeit difficult. Contemporary peacekeeping is multi-dimensional in nature. It not only strives to maintain security, but also facilitates the development process in host countries. UN peacekeepers assist in the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration processes of former combatants, initiate political reform, strengthen democratisation process, assist in infrastructure development, and promote human rights in countries wrecked by conflict. Nevertheless, it is a striving question whether the UN endeavour has complemented or contradicted with states' strategic cause to fight against terrorism at the global stages. This paper, therefore, examines a major research question—how is the struggle between the promotion of liberal norms (i.e., UN's role in peace support operation) and realist security concerns (such as, global counterterrorism drives) shaping the future UN peace operations? In an effort to answer the question, this paper analyses major trends of transformation in global peace support operations led by the United Nations. Furthermore, it discusses patterns of transformation of UN peace support operations—from peacekeeping to peace enforcement and peacebuilding endeavours. This discussion highlights that future missions will be influenced by some critical features—such as robust postures, increased demand for sophisticated logistical capabilities from contributing forces, effects of parallel counter-terrorism operations, and an emphasis on protection of civilians and (re)establishing the rule of law. Finally, the paper analyses UN's [dis]engagement in counterterrorism operations alongside UN missions with a particular reference to the case of Mali. This feature highlights the dichotomies between liberal peace and realist features of international security. The paper underscores that future peace support missions will not be able to avoid strategic security concerns of counterterrorism military operations; therefore, liberal objectives of UN peace support endeavours will be influenced by the real-politic or strategic objectives of selective powerful contributing states to ensure national security interests. The United Nations requires doctrinal and operational reforms to accommodate changing patterns of peace operations.

This section discusses the trends of contribution in peace support operations. Now these days, the UN deploys troops, police and resources in greater numbers to more complex operating theatres than ever before. The peacekeepers are mandated and instructed to carry out this work in contexts where there is no peace to keep or where peace is fragile.⁶ From 1948 to 2019, a total of 71 missions were conducted in four continents and 15 missions are currently active led by the UN.⁷ At present, 13 peace support operations are ongoing under the leadership of the Department of Peace Operations, United Nations. As of 31 January 2020, 81679 uniformed personnel are serving these missions—69638 (88%) troops and 8869 (12%) police, 1119 military observers, and 2053 staff officers.⁸ In addition, 14831 civilian personnel, both local and international, are also working in various capacities. A total of 121 countries are contributing through troops, police, civilians and finances. 3911 blue helmets have died in the line of duty as of 2019.⁹ The numbers suggest that the trend of peacekeeping contribution is quite high in the consecutive years. Even though missions often closed and the numbers went down for various reasons; however, it does not help to understand a correlation between strategic conflicts and peace support operations, and how and to what extent conflicts are deescalated on the global level.

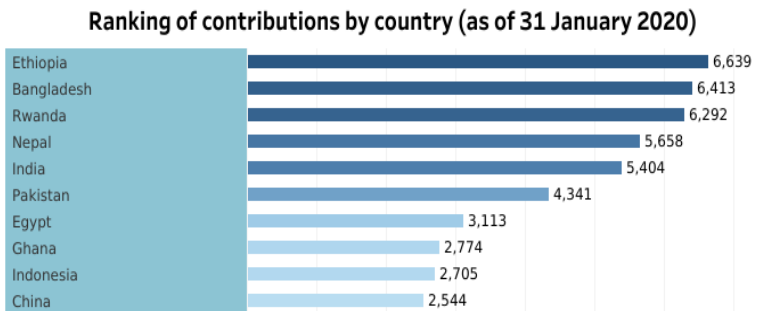
According to the data on contributions by continent, Asia's contribution is declining in comparison with Africa. This is because of the new commitments of African countries and the regional organisations-led peace support missions. The following graph [Figure 1] shows that, as of 2017, Asian contribution has decreased below 40000 as opposed to African contribution of about just below 50000. This poses a significant concern for the top contributors of Asia and the future of contribution in UN missions.

Figure I: UN Peacekeeping Uniformed Contributions by Continents



It is also important to remember that a significant number of uniformed peacekeepers (90% of the troops) are deployed in various missions in Africa. Less than 10% are deployed in Asia.¹⁰ This indicates the significance of African regional missions in their own continent. Top financial contributors to UN's peacekeeping tasks are majorly Western/North American states, therefore, they play a critical role in formulating the mandates of the missions. The United Nations General Assembly has approved USD 6.69 billion in peacekeeping expenditures for the 2018/19 budget year.¹¹ Two current developments in financing UN missions will determine the future of the endeavour. In 2017, the US administration under Donald Trump has proposed a 7.5% cut to its contribution to UN's peace operations.¹² It is expected that this proposition may impact the future of peace support activities. Moreover, China has emerged as a significant contributor in the peace support dynamics. It must be mentioned that China is the third largest donor 10th largest troop contributing state in the world (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Ranking of Contributions by Country¹³



The contemporary progress of UN missions in post-conflict environments can be qualified as the reflections of western nations with long experience in parallel engagements to both peace support operations and counter-insurgency/counterterrorism in various parts of the world. The liberal notions of UN endeavours may have been affected by strategic military interventions led by the western states in the post-Cold War era. This has furthered a troubled consensus among the permanent member states of the UN Security Council (UNSC) that UN peace support missions may need to deal with violent extremism and terrorism in order to remain relevant to the contemporary challenges.¹⁴ The data presented above shows that there has been a dramatic increase in the contribution of troops by regional and neighbouring states to peacekeeping operations with a strong self-interest in the outcome of the

conflicts. It is important to observe how the regional patterns have influenced UN peacekeeping away from its conventional principles of impartiality, consent of the main parties, and the non-use of force except in self-defence or to protect civilians.¹⁵

It remains, therefore, a profound challenge for the United Nations to adopt a balanced position and prepare its contributing member states and their troops on the ground so that they should be able to continue giving support to lasting, inclusive, and sustainable political solutions, where operations are at the cross-roads of civilian protection and kinetic military engagement may be the centre of gravity.

Liberal Peace vis-à-vis Realist Security Concerns in Transformations of Peace Support Operations

Liberalism ponders that a liberal constitution of society with democratic institutions is the prerequisite for a peaceful society.¹⁶ In democracies, various institutions create a check and balance in the ways how state regulates the society and restrains itself to wage a conflict within state or with other states. Scholars, henceforth, correlate democracy and liberal peace, and therefore, promotion of democracy becomes one of the core values of the liberal peace support missions.¹⁷ Liberal peace endeavours are often top-down and driven by external actors—which strengthen the assumption that an external solution may be a necessity for an internal crisis.¹⁸ The scope of such work, as it is suggested in the Brahimi report, can be illustrated by “activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war.”¹⁹ Therefore, it proposes a prolonged international engagement whose task will not only to keep peace after a ceasefire, but also undertake an attempt to build post-conflict institutions in the state. Finally, liberal peace aims to transform the state by installing democratic political governance, market-centric economic structures and modern institutions by strengthening local capacities with the support provided by international stakeholders.²⁰ It connects the state with a liberal international order that underpins democracy, rule of law, collective security, good governance, humanitarianism and the like.

Is the contemporary international order unproblematic to liberal peace promoted by the United Nations? One can explore answers in two ways; first, by understanding transformation of international security order that reflects the national (real-politic) security concerns of the states and its impact on the peacekeeping endeavour. Second, it is important to understand how contributors are coping with these transformation of liberal peace support ventures led by the United Nations. The liberal

international order is undergoing a major transformation. After the Cold War, instabilities and intra-state conflicts heightened across Africa, Europe, the Middle East and East and Southeast Asia. This was complemented with a significant rise in military assistance by the United States, United Kingdom, and other western states in conflict environments. Some crucial examples of such kind may include Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. The War on Terror has revealed the contrast between states' security concerns in stabilisation process and liberal peace support operations. These transformations have unsettling implications for peace support operations both at the conceptual (doctrinal) and operational levels. Furthermore, when it is about whose national security concerns—there is no longer one uncontested global power or sphere of influence in the contemporary world politics. States, such as: the USA, China and Russia, together with rising powers from Africa and Asia, are forging new alliances and developing new rivalries. What changes has it brought to UN peace support operations?

The following discussion illustrates the transformation in peace support operations. Consent, impartiality, and the minimum use of force are three core features of peacekeeping.²¹ First, locals in a conflict environment may need to offer unanimous consent in seeking UN support either to formulate a ceasefire or peace agreement among the conflicting parties. Consensus also helps to attain local ownership to peace missions, therefore, has been a basic requirement for the UN to initiate a peace support interventions. However, since the post-Cold War era, the UN has conducted several peace support missions in order to protect civilians without ceasefire or/and peace agreements between warring factions, henceforth, the UN did not always rely on the consent of the host nation.²² Impartiality is considered to be an invincible norm, i.e., the UN must treat all parties in conflict equally. However, there is a thin line of distinction between impartiality and neutrality.²³ The UN is supposed to be impartial in formulating and executing its mandates for peace support operations, however, cannot afford to be neutral and overlook its roles in resolving a crisis. Finally, in peacekeeping, blue helmets are compelled to use the minimum force necessary for self-protection, the mandate of the mission, and the mission's ability to achieve its mandate.²⁴ Scholars have been sceptical in measuring the utility of peacekeeping operations based on Chapter VI of UN Charter (Peaceful Settlement of Disputes) in contemporary complex operational environments.²⁵ A case in point here is the experience of the UN in Rwanda, Somalia and Bosnia to understand the loopholes in traditional peacekeeping operations. General Sir Michael Rose, Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in former Yugoslavia, highlighted the weakness of traditional peacekeeping missions, and observed that "rather than lose faith in the whole peace process, we need to analyse the changed operational circumstances and try to determine new doctrines for the

future”.²⁶ The UN realised the significance of the use of force which would be dedicated to accomplish the mandate of the mission.

Peace enforcement, on the other hand, indicates, “An aggressor(s) has(ve) been designated by the UN Security Council, and that the use of force has been authorised to impose the will of the Council on the aggressor(s)”.²⁷ Peace enforcement operations do not necessarily require consent from the belligerent parties or the host-nation to the conflict.²⁸ Chapter VII of the UN Charter Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of Peace, and Acts of Aggression allows the UN to take enforcement actions. In 1999, the UNSC has invoked Chapter VII in the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to authorise peacekeepers ‘all means necessary’ to protect civilians from harm. Thenceforth, civilian protection and the authorisation of ‘all means necessary’ have become inseparable parts of mission mandates.²⁹ Furthermore, the UN formed a Forced Intervention Brigade (FIB) in the UN Stabilisation Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) with a mandate to eliminate M23 and other rebel groups, thereby, executed peace enforcement upon the perpetrators.³⁰

There are peace enforcement operations that received a mandate from the UN Security Council, however, were not carried out by the blue helmets. For example, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan (2001-2014) and Operation Unified Protector in Libya in 2011 were two significant peace enforcement operations conducted by the international forces and approved by the UN. In addition, over the past two decades, it is observed that often peace enforcement operations were delegated to regional organisations, such as the African Union (AU) and others. It could be assumed that by delegating peace enforcement to regional actors, the UN has tried to maintain its impartial role on the ground.³¹ However, it is difficult to conclude that the UN has been successful in maintaining its image bypassing or franchising its responsibilities.

Peace enforcement operations were often criticised by UN’s in-house study reports. In 2015, the UN High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) report observed that the UN is not well prepared to deliver beyond peacekeeping roles, and recommended that the UN Security Council may need to outsource peace enforcement tasks to others—regional organisations.³² The HIPPO report also acknowledged that the global demand for UN blue helmets’ roles had been widened due to transformation in the nature of conflicts, and the UN was yet to develop its capacity to deliver accordingly.³³

Peacekeeping mandates are undergoing transformations to include new tasks, such as policing, counterinsurgency and promoting national

reconciliation. Moreover, the UN acknowledges that violence, asymmetric threats, and unclear political situations—real-political concerns within and beyond states—have led to robust mandates and multidimensional peacekeeping missions, which already made the non-use of force an obsolete idea.³⁴ Moreover, contemporary UN missions aim to enforce peace by using ‘all necessary means’ to protect civilians, to prevent and mitigate political violence, and to assist state governments in maintaining public order.

Counterterrorism and UN Peace Support Operations: The Case of Mali

At present, a significant number of peace support missions are undertaken in countries which also experience threats of terrorism and violent extremism. In addition to the security challenges to the states, where the missions are ongoing; the threats of terrorism offer complex challenges to UN mandates of liberal peace and the efforts of contributing countries. As it is mentioned in the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, counterterrorism rests on four pillars. These are: (a) addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism; (b) preventing and combatting terrorism; (c) building states’ capacity and strengthening the role of the UN; and (d) ensuring human rights and the rule of law.³⁵ This, therefore, blends strategic aspects of forces’ engagement in a war and peacebuilding efforts by states in a post-conflict environment. Scholars argue that although the UN has been distancing itself from deploying forces with a counterterrorism mandate, it would be plausible to argue that counterterrorism can be the beginning of a new trend of UN missions which would increasingly expect to deal with violent extremists or terrorist groups on the ground.³⁶

Terrorist groups have increased their activities rapidly. The number of fatalities caused by terrorism has risen steadily, from 3329 in 2000 to 32685 in 2014.³⁷ An 80% increase in casualties was reported in 2014 from 2013, which happened due to the rise of the Islamic State and Boko Haram. In early July 2015, six UN peacekeepers from Burkina Faso were killed during an attack on their convoy in northern Mali.³⁸ Peacekeepers also often find themselves thrust into the front line when armed groups target civilians. For example, in December 2017, fifteen UN peacekeepers have been killed in a terrorist attack in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It is alleged that the attack was carried out by a militant group Allied Democratic Forces. In addition to the UN peacekeepers, five members of the DRC’s armed forces were also killed and a further 53 people were injured in the attack.³⁹

Mali is a critical example to understand the threats of CVE to the UN. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission

in Mali (MINUSMA) is as one of the deadliest missions in the history of United Nations (UN) peace support operations. It suffered 69 fatalities due to hostile acts from its inception on 1 July 2013 to 31 August 2016.⁴⁰ In August 2017, terrorists attacked two neighbouring UN camps in Douentza in the Mopti region of central Mali, killed a Malian soldier and a UN peacekeeper, and wounded another peacekeeper.⁴¹ MINUSMA is also the first multidimensional peacekeeping operation to be deployed in parallel with on-going counterterrorism operations, the French *Opération Serval* and *Opération Sabre*, later transitioned into the current *Opération Barkhane*. This operation, along with other efforts of counterterrorism, is a critical reflection of realist security concerns.

This is imperative in Malian context to understand how UN Security Council's (UNSC) decisions are diverted due to regional and global security concerns to counter terrorism in the region. The UNSC adopted a resolution 2085, inspired by Chapter VII of the UN Charter, to authorise an African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) to fight terrorism in the northern parts of Mali. Malian Government, however, requested France to take the lead of the counterterrorism operations, which was later endorsed by the African Union. French campaign had strategic advantage in addressing the crisis, nonetheless, it decided to withdraw from the operations in 2013 which had longstanding influence over the AFISMA and the UN-led peace support operations—both, doctrinal and logistic.⁴² French intervention in Mali highlights two important propositions leaning towards realist security perspectives. First, in counterterrorism operations, states consider this as a strategic intervention, as opposed to humanitarian interventions; therefore, Mali's decision to engage France, a former colonial power, in counterterrorism represents its national security interest more effectively than UN's proposition to use African regional military brigade. Second, French intervention also exposed the weakness of multilateral peace support exercises, which was offered by the African Union (AU) or Economic Cooperation of the West African States (ECOWAS).⁴³

The UN-led mission in Mali (MINUSMA) was uniquely positioned between the kinetic approaches of Mali-French-led counterterrorism operations and an increasing demands of protection of civilians originating from the ground. The violators or abusers of civilian security and human rights are non-state faith-based groups, such as: Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Mahgreb (AQIM), Ansar Dine and al-Mourabitoun (a branch of AQIM) and other major terrorist actors in West Africa. Although MINUSMA was mandated 'to stabilise the key population centres, especially in the north of Mali and, in this context, to deter threats and take active steps to prevent the return of armed elements to those areas' and the UN is not officially mandated to counter terrorist groups, the

blue helmets have often become the target of the terrorists for their support to the Malian government in this conflict.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, MINUSMA has actively supported the Malian Government not only by protecting the civilians in the terror-affected zones but also by strengthening its position to fight against terrorism. The use of lethal violence and direct operations against credible threats, as proposed in the MINUSMA mandate, was a clear indicator of robustness in peace enforcement missions.⁴⁵ Furthermore, MINUSMA initiated a dedicated intelligence unit—All-source Information Fusion Analysis Unit—to facilitate early warning system, and anticipate and deter potential threats.⁴⁶

There are genuine concerns about UN's direct or indirect engagement in counterterrorism operations. The emergence of non-state armed groups and violent extremists has exacerbated vulnerabilities for the peacekeepers. Therefore, the safety and security of peacekeepers have become a matter of heightened concern in light of new and evolving threats.⁴⁷ It further raises two contradictory, nonetheless, very crucial questions. First, will it be possible for the UN to avoid an engagement in counterterrorism operations? Second, will UN's direct engagement in counterterrorism undermine the UN's international legitimacy and its role as an impartial conflict arbiter?

It may be necessary to observe more unfolding cases, such as Syria and Yemen, in future, which highlight changing patterns of conflicts and terrorism. It further sheds light on the debate—what roles UN peace support operations should have in countering or/and preventing violent extremism and terrorism. In 2016, a high-level debate of the UN General Assembly on peace and security observed that there was a need “to further reflect on tools and means for the Organisation and the Secretariat to respond in meaningful ways to the threat of terrorism and violent extremism in various contexts where the UN is confronted with this increasingly complex phenomenon, particularly where peace operations are deployed.”⁴⁸ The 2015 Report of the UN High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) Report identifies “lack the specific equipment, intelligence, logistics, capabilities and specialised military preparation” as reform areas that need to be addressed, if UN should be given counterterrorism tasks.⁴⁹ This is not only about preparing the UN at the policy and practical levels for more robust and multidimensional peace enforcement operations targeting the possibility of engagement in counterterrorism. This will also pose enormous challenges for contributing states to play within the dichotomies of realist security concerns (for example, national/strategic interests) and liberal peace ideals—global effort to keep, enforce and sustain peace.

Discussion on Peace Enforcement Problematic

The discussion above highlights that counterterrorism enforces some unprecedented features for future peace support operations that would require more proactive use of force for the combat purpose, intelligence gathering and sharing with allies who may not be part of the peace missions, and potent use of sophisticated technologies by contributing states. These features highlight major challenges of transformation from peacekeeping to peace enforcement and robust mandates in peace support operations in disguise of counterterrorism operations. The challenges are manifold in nature.

First, the UN-led peace enforcement operations with robust mandates in missions aiming to protect, stabilise and sustain peace have accelerated global expectations at various levels. UN missions in Mali, Central African Republic (CAR) and DR Congo demonstrates that the UN troops were compelled to combat non-state faith based armed groups, which had further exacerbated the crisis. It is, however, a complicated issue now since multiple states are contributing into these endeavours which can no longer be considered as adhering to ideas of liberal peace. For example, there is an inward expectation from liberal peace framework or institutions, such as the United Nations, which aims that the peace operations ought to be able to achieve in terms of protecting vulnerable communities, preventing violent conflict, delivering lifesaving relief, supporting the establishment of legitimate and democratic states that respect human rights, and building sustainable peace. These expectations might have been seriously compromised when missions were designed with national or regional security concerns to combat an 'enemy' and where there is no peace to keep, no tradition of democratic governance or respect for basic human rights, and little goodwill between the conflict parties. It is hardly surprising that they often fall short of reaching the targets of the mission. UN peacekeepers and international peacebuilders cannot achieve these long-term and structural goals which is an uneven mixture of strategic and liberal objectives to attain peace.⁵⁰

Second, the contemporary counterterrorism campaigns have severely affected the principle of consent which was a sacrosanct factor for the UN peace support operations. Nevertheless, it is important to observe whether and how diluting the concept of consensus in hybrid or robust peace support missions would affect the impartiality principles for the actors involved in the conflict. This obviously will encourage asking a question, as posed by Thierry Tardy, regarding the extent to which robust peacekeeping is politically acceptable and operationally viable.⁵¹ On the other hand, another question would be whether or not the UN will consider factoring in the issue of consensus and impartiality in future peace support missions. The peace enforcement operations are not merely

technical solutions. These are susceptible to political dynamics. The 2015 HIPPO report indicates that the UN peace support operations are obliged to acknowledge and support a political strategy to sustain peacebuilding efforts.⁵² The political dynamics of peace enforcement in the era of countering faith based terrorism and stabilising a state after military interventions is more complicated than ever. This will surely highlight dichotomies between realist security concerns and liberal ideas of multilateral peacebuilding efforts.

Third, confusions may arise between strategic or kinetic objectives of counterterrorism (i.e., win the war and leave the battleground) and protracted objectives of peacebuilding that promotes a connectivity between security and development. This is an unresolved question—to what extent and how long contributing states will commit for sustainable peace in post-conflict environments, and at the same time, will try to resolve the anxiety between the idea of robust peacekeeping and humanitarian principles. Undoubtedly, both these issues consider political support and sufficient resources; however, it is yet a challenging task to establish a connectivity between winning a war against terrorists by peace enforcement and ensure humanitarian activities in the long run. The trust deficit will be a serious issue due to controversial dichotomous identities of the same actor/s—warmongers and humanitarian protectors. One can dig deeper to study roles of the United States and its allies in Afghanistan and Iraq after 11 September 2001. Liberal peace, as it is discussed earlier, should be able to flourish on the consent and cooperation of governments, communities and armed groups for any kinds of access. However, in counterterrorism operations, lack of consent and insufficient political support might undesirably influence the process of sustaining peace.

Fourth, the UN has delegated regional and sub-regional organisations to enforce peace, such as the ECOWAS in Liberia and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in the Balkans, to stabilise the region from conflicting parties. It has further assigned the African Union in Somalia and Mali. There is an argument that competent regional peacekeepers should offer more roles in robust peace enforcement operations, whereas the UN could focus on peacekeeping operations.⁵³ This seems highly unlikely in practice for two reasons. One, it is very difficult to comprehend whether or not peacekeeping roles really exist in the contemporary post-conflict situations. Two, the UN has already deeply engaged in multidimensional and robust peace operations, such as in Mali, Congo and Central African Republic. Bringing the UN back to its classical peacekeeping job is a liberal pathway; however, future peace support missions aspire for technological advancement so that they are equipped to combat asymmetric adversaries on the ground. Regional actors have their own strategic intentions within or beyond the regions.

Therefore, it is difficult to argue that the involvement of regional actors with UN mandates would make liberal peace plausible.

Finally, peace enforcement operations with robust mandates are significantly challenged by lack of political commitments, scarcity of trained manpower with sophisticated equipment, and reservations of some top troop contributors to embrace a proactive combat-like engagement in the ongoing conflicts.⁵⁴ It is due to the reason that states have primarily prioritised its national security concerns. International cooperation has hardly been immune from real-political demands of national interests of the states. Peace enforcement may not be the last resort for multilateral forums, such as the United Nations, in fighting terrorism. It rather exposes an irreconcilable difference between kinetic strategic force to win a counterterrorism war and liberal peacebuilding—i.e., building institutions, reforming governance, promoting rule of law and the like. Therefore, future peace enforcement operations may not only be a liberal intervention model of conflict resolution.

Concluding Remarks

This paper begins with a major research query—how is the struggle between the promotion of liberal norms and realist security concerns shaping the future UN peace support operations? In this context, the paper describes the discursive patterns of transformation of United Nations peace support operations. With the changing nature of conflicts and post-conflict mission environments, peace support operations become so diverse that a rigid mandate of a mission may fail to capture the changing nature of the context and risk the lives of peacekeepers. The paper has discussed how UN peace support missions, in practice, have adopted new mandates to enforce peace to adjust to the changing nature of the conflicts.

This paper illustrates on how various challenges, with a special reference to UN's role in counterterrorism, are evolved as inevitable realities, and it may pose existential threats for UN peace support endeavours in future. The discussion highlights two changing trends of liberal peace endeavours: (a) shift towards counterterrorism and stabilisation via 'robust' or 'multidimensional' operations and (b) regional military coalitions becoming part of the UN missions. Counterterrorism, with insights from Mali, offers a dilemma for the UN on both doctrinal and operational perspectives. In doctrinal perspective, counterterrorism reinforces more militarised mandates for UN missions by overlooking the ideas of consent and impartiality. In operational perspectives, counterterrorism encourages decision-makers at the UN Security Council to side with the host governments and may ignore their human rights

violations in order to gain their support in countering terrorism. Counterterrorism has a strong strategic aspect, which may also jeopardise UN's objectives of liberal peace—civilian protection, rule of law, governance, and the like. Furthermore, reliance on regional actors have often been recognised as counterproductive for the UN. Regional big powers have their own real-politic interests, which may have compromised UN's impartial image in a mission, risked the mandate and personal safety of the UN personnel—troops and police.

What is the future of UN peace support operations and counterterrorism? It may be highly likely that the UNSC deploys forces in Yemen, Libya, and Syria, which are shunned due to protracted asymmetric conflict and violent faith-based extremism. The post-9-11 experience of stabilisation and counterterrorism of the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan highlight targeted operations on drone strikes, special combat operations, and capacity building of local troops to fight terrorist groups. It aimed at targeting a strategic objective to defeat the enemy by using force to kill or capture enemy targets. This has broadly crafted the agenda and priorities of the UN peace support endeavours in the counterterrorism battlegrounds. Counterterrorism as a central mandate has sustained and legitimised the significance of peace enforcement as opposed to traditional liberal peacekeeping.

The article argues that the future peace enforcement missions may need to consider counterterrorism as an unavoidable 'strategic' objective and a necessary component to deal with state-building and stabilisation mandates. This will indeed obfuscate UN's impartial image and there will be risks that UN may become a party to the conflict by converging into the security interests of the host and its neighbouring contributing countries. Therefore, the real-political security concerns in counterterrorism operations exist and may affect the conventional ideas of liberal peace, which has been a flagship norm of the United Nations. The impact of transformation of UN missions—doctrinal and operational—on major contributors from non-African nations is the next major course of inquiry.

Finally, it is a critical policy decision for the UN to participate directly in a mission that mandates countering terrorism and violent extremism in a conflict environment. The UN has already experienced this in Mali, DRC and CAR and it could not save itself from being a victim of hybrid missions that addresses counterterrorism by other actors. Again, UN's experience with peace enforcement in hybrid missions suggests that one should not be utopian in drawing a clear operational distinction between peace missions and counterterrorism. Therefore, this paper reiterates the dichotomous complexities between strategic security concerns and liberal peace ideals of the UN and proposes that the UN cannot avoid its future

missions to be shaped by strategic needs of counterterrorism. It is rather smart to be prepared for future missions with context-bound mandates and flexibility for the stakeholders to the extent that would enhance their role in achieving multidimensional objectives. This paper finally argues that the future of peace operations are complex in nature and it requires cautious steps from the stakeholders to envisage changing patterns of peace operations. The United Nations must empower its contributors by enhancing its investment in new technologies in collaboration with the affluent member states. It should emphasise on the transfer of technologies from developed to developing countries who contribute more troops and police on the ground. The United Nations and members of the Security Council should be able to take the responsibility to assist others in coping with transformations in peace support endeavours.

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⁵⁴ Tardy, "A Critique of Robust Peacekeeping in Contemporary Peace Operations."



The Perspectives of International Relations on Human Migration: A Critical Review

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Abstract

The discipline of International Relations (IR) paid inadequate attention to migration till the last quarter of the 20th century. While pioneer IR scholars tended to examine migration through the prisms of national security, globalisation, political economy and nationalism, the post-September 11 era witnessed growing securitisation of migration. In the new millennium, however, global governance earns greater acceptance as a parallel theme. In this setting, the paper makes a critical review of IR's engagement with migration. Drawing on the main theoretical tenets of IR and based on extensive literature review, it argues that the realist perspectives not only dictate IR's understanding of migration but also ignore the inner dynamics of human security associated with migration. The limitations of global governance literature and the disciplinary and regional predisposition of IR in studying migration are also unfolded. In retrospect, the paper calls for adopting constructivist approaches by IR scholars to implement an all-embracing research agenda on migration.

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Introduction

Migration is an extensively researched field of study in the contemporary era. It is a continuous process, closely associated with the changes in demography, technology, economy and politics. Academics of different backgrounds have been trying to understand the dynamics of migration for centuries. One of the nineteenth century geographers, Ravenstein, developed the pull and push model to argue that people migrate because of factors pushing them out of their existing area and factors that pull them into another.¹ Classical economists, however, exhibit that migration is caused by geographical differences in supply and demand for labour.² Again, sociologists conceive migration as the product of social network that grows out of kinship, friendship and shared community origin.³ Political sociologists note that broader social and historical forces create conditions of widespread inequalities in access to resources, political power and prestige within and across communities which stimulate and constrain human migration.⁴

As an interdisciplinary subject, International Relations (IR) has its roots in the western political philosophy and the systemic order that developed after the First World War.⁵ Conventionally IR focuses on the global political system, different types of actors i.e., state, international institutions and international non-governmental organisations, and their action, reaction and interaction.⁶ The subject matter of IR traditionally included war and peace, diplomacy and negotiation, geopolitics, international institutions, international law, strategic studies, political economy and international security.⁷ The discipline embraced phenomenal changes in its understanding of the world after the end of the Cold War. Besides reviewing the existing subject-matters, new themes such as globalisation, development, global governance, refugee and migration, human rights and media studies were incorporated into IR curricula.⁸

In the above backdrop, the paper examines IR's interface with migration. It asks questions such as: What factors had prompted IR scholars to investigate migration issues? How are the contemporary cross-cutting migration issues conceptualised by IR scholars? Which theoretical and analytical categories dominate IR's engagement with migration issues? What should be the future research agenda? Essentially, the paper attempts to understand IR's past, present and future contribution to migration studies. Based on an extensive literature review, it takes a journey from the late 20th century to the present day to make a sequential analysis of IR's perspectives of human migration- both voluntary and forced.

The significance of the paper is driven by the rising importance of migration, its variants and its ever changing impact on world politics.⁹ Despite having a status as an inter-disciplinary subject and being offered by the reputed universities in the world at graduate levels, migration's interaction with IR was never sufficiently scrutinised. Inadequate research has been conducted to systematically inform us about the contribution of IR in migration.¹⁰ The paper also coincides with the celebration of IR centennial when academia seeks to see the discipline in retrospect. As a long-standing socio-political issue migration demands its share in this scrutiny.

The paper is framed into five sections. The introduction is followed by a discussion of the major analytical concepts, i.e. realist paradigm, securitisation and global governance - which underlie the arguments of this paper. The progressive development of IR scholarship on migration issues is discussed in the third section. Drawing on pioneer and contemporary literatures, the section also captures thematic shift from securitisation to global governance in IR's inspection of migration. The fourth section presents a critical analysis of IR's perspectives on migration. The concluding section summarises the main arguments and suggests methodology and agenda for future migration research in IR.

Analytical Concepts

Grand Theories of International Relations

Three tenets of grand theories - Realism, Liberalism and Marxism - dominate the discipline of IR in different capacities.¹¹ The realist theory sees nation-states as principal actors in world politics since they are not subject to any higher political authority. Realists also emphasise the ways in which the realities of international politics dictate the choices that foreign policy makers, as rational problem solvers, must make. States always seek self-help and power in their quest for interest maximisation. According to realists, respect for moral principles is a wasteful and dangerous interference in the rational pursuit of national power. Realism never entrust the task of self-protection to international organisations or to international law. Neorealism - a variant of realism - argues that the foreign policy making is significantly influenced by the structure of the system, not the interest of the states. The realist view conceives migration as an individual decision which should be promoted, regulated and controlled by states. As will be discussed later, this very perspective often overlooks human dimensions in migration.

Similar to realists, liberals also have a long tradition in IR. Liberals reject the realist notion that war is the natural condition of world politics and question the primacy of state as the main actor in IR. Assuming the perfectibility of human beings and their need for progress the theory believes that international organisations, multinational corporations and even transnational groups are central actors in international relations. There can be no such thing as national interest, since it merely represents the result of whatsoever bureaucratic organisations dominate the domestic decision making process. The liberalists do not conceive sovereignty as important as realists. Rather they emphasise the prospects of co-operation. Global governance of migration is seen by the liberal theorists as essential features of development.

In contrast to both realism and liberalism, Marxist theory shows that world politics take place within a world capitalist economy in which classes are the main actors since the behaviour of all other actors is ultimately explicated by class forces. States, multinational corporations and even international organisations represent the dominant class interest in the world economic system. The key feature of the international economy is the division of the world into core, semi-periphery and the periphery areas.¹² Within the semi-periphery and the periphery, there lies the cores tied to the capitalist world economy, and within the core there also exists peripheries. To Marxists, international capitalism is the dominant force in terms of governing the politics. Sovereignty here refers only to the political and legal matters that govern international political economy. Marxist theory offers the most critical view about migration as it conceives migration to be a structural consequence of the expansion of markets within a global political hierarchy.

More recently, social constructivism has emerged as an influential approach in studying International Relations. Having roots in Kantian philosophy, it questions the assumed orthodoxy of rationalist approaches to international relations and international system by asking how these are 'socially constructed'.¹³ Highlighting the importance of identity, culture, norms and social relations, social constructivism argues that the world around us is a result of both ideational and material forces and hence the existing knowledge and the methodology of its production should be questioned. This approach is of distinctive values in this paper in analysing the existing trends and suggesting what the future research agenda should be on migration in IR.

IR Theories of Security and Securitisation

As a sub-field of International Relations, the traditional Security Studies encompasses deterrence, power-balancing, arms race and military strategy

to preserve national security and interest.¹⁴ The advent of globalisation broadened the earlier narrow conceptualisation of security and questioned the monopoly of state as unit of analysis. Scholars urged for embracing alternative issues of concern, i.e. non-military threats. It is in this context that migration slowly gained traction in security discourses.¹⁵

A group of scholars at Copenhagen School provided a framework to determine how and when a military, environmental, economic, societal and political matter becomes securitised.¹⁶ The dynamics of each category of security are determined by securitising actors and referent objects. The formers are defined as 'actors who securitise issues by declaring something, a referent object, existentially threatened and can be expected to be 'political leaders, bureaucracies, governments, lobbyists and pressure groups'.¹⁷ Referent objects are 'things that are seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival'.¹⁸ A variety of things can be a referent object including state, sovereignty, national economy, collective identities, species or even habitat.

The Copenhagen school argues that a concern can be framed as a security issue and moved from the politicised to the securitised end of the spectrum through an act of securitisation. A politicised issue is 'part of public policy, requiring government decision and resource allocations or more rarely some other form of communal governance'.¹⁹ Finally, an issue is plotted at the securitised end of the spectrum when it requires emergency actions beyond the state's standard political procedures. To Buzan, Waever and Wilde, the securitisation is the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics.²⁰ The relevance of security and securitisation in this paper lies in analysing how realist scholarship in IR has securitised immigration and integration as more extreme version of politicisation.

Global Governance

Another relevant concept to the discussion of this paper is global governance. Keohane and Nye define global governance as "the processes and institutions, both formal and informal that guide and restrain the collective activities of a group".²¹ Institutions- both formally constituted organisations, rules and regimes, and informal practices and/or norms are important components of global governance.²² A diverse range of actors are generally involved in global governance through coordinated collective actions at the global level with an aim of providing global public goods on a range of matters covering peace, security, justice, environment, trade, market, health, migration and so on. However, the use of the word global, rather than international, to describe governance suggests that interactions

are no longer solely between states, but rather include a large range of actors.²³

The new millennia ushered an unprecedented hope of establishing global governance in international migration as international institutions and agencies included migration into their agenda. This development, paralleled by the mushrooming of migrant and civil society associations, attempted to uphold a rights-based approach to migration.²⁴ The inter-governmental consultative process proceeded with a global outlook in 2016 as the Heads of State and Government came together in the UN General Assembly to discuss issues related to migration and refugees and adopted the Global Compact for Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees. Several research and policy papers were published in response to this development adding a new dimension in IR's interpretation of migration and refugee issues which will be elaborated further in this paper.

IR's Engagement with Migration

IR's birth as an academic discipline can be traced back to the early twentieth century amid the hope of elucidating and promoting a new political order to maintain international peace and security.²⁵ The massive expulsion and population movement during the world wars accrued little attention from IR during its formative years.²⁶ It was not until 1980s - that IR took an interest in exploring migration. A number of scholarly work elevated migration as a matter of 'high politics' in the agenda of international relations. The end of the Cold War and changes in international political and economic order coupled with increased incidences of terrorism, surge of nationalistic sentiments and rise in the number of refugees and migrants stimulated IR scholars to study migration. Consequently, the 21st century witnessed thriving works on migratory movement's effect on the policies and politics of states. In the next section the paper maps the trajectory of IR's engagement with migration issues.

The Rendezvous

Myron Weiner was one of the pioneer security experts to analyse the ways in which population movements and international politics had influence on each other. He also identified migrants to be important political actors to have an effect on the migration policies of sending and receiving states.²⁷ Weiner wrote:

...[m]igration and refugee issues, no longer the sole concern of ministries of labor or of immigration, are now matters of high international politics, engaging the attention of heads of states, cabinets, and key ministries involved in defense, internal security, and external relations.²⁸

His leading account in the literature on migration in IR depicts migration as a potential threat to national security. To him, the relationship between international relations and migration unfolds in several ways: (1) relations between states are influenced by their actions or inactions vis-a-vis international migration; (2) governments affect international migration through their rules for the exit and entry of peoples; and (3) international migrants often become a political force in the country in which they reside and (4) the internationalisation of migration issues has introduced new and conflicting interests into considerations of policies affecting migration in both sending and receiving countries. Weiner's analysis clearly denotes the primacy of state over migration and national security.

In contrast, Hollifield offered a political economic perspective of IR about migration. To him, the necessary conditions for migration to occur may be social and economic, but the sufficient conditions are political and legal.²⁹ As opposed to economic theories of push-pull and the politics of migration, he called for developing a framework which would help understand the interaction of politics and economy of migration with special emphasis on the role of international and regional institutions. He was pioneer in highlighting the fact that international migration was caught between the need of the post-War international economic order and the national prerequisites of sovereignty and citizenship.

Castles and Miller added another dimension in the interaction of IR with migration.³⁰ Unlike Weiner, they claimed migration to be an essential feature of the age of globalisation and offered a comprehensive assessment of the nature, extent and dimensions of international population movements and of their consequences. Their esteemed volume eloquently captured the changes in the post-Cold War world and its effects on growing politicisation, feminisation, acceleration and globalisation of migration in that era. Nevertheless, a broader framework of security dominated their analysis as they mentioned:

Never before have had statesmen accorded such priority to migration concerns. Never before has international migration seemed so pertinent to national security and so connected and disorder on a global scale... [I]t affects more and more countries of the region and its linkages with complex processes affecting the entire world.³¹

Observing the rising ethnic and nationalist problem within states in the post-Cold War era, Douglas Messay and his colleagues predicted the centrality of migration to state politics and policies.³² To quote them:

Given the size and scale of contemporary migration flows, and given the potential for misunderstanding and conflict inherent in the emergence of diverse, multi-ethnic societies around the world, political decisions about international migration will be among the most important made over the next two decades.³³

Sarah Mahler brought yet another angle of IR to the study of international migration, as she argued that transnational migrants and other actors of migration have significant role in constructing the very notion of 'diplomacy' in IR.³⁴ Whereas in standard definition diplomacy means the conduct of negotiations between nations; migrants, according to Mahler, construct and exercise relations in a different way as they connect two areas.³⁵ Rejecting the general notion about migrants as agents of disrupting international relations, she argues that, migrants forge new ties between countries through new types of negotiation and relations.

The Era of Securitisation and Desecuritisation

Migration, nevertheless earned central place in IR after the September 11 terrorist attacks. The subsequent era marked fresh securitisation of migration. Researchers tended to see migrants and migration of all types through the prisms of national security, terrorism, xenophobia and integration.³⁶ The prediction of Massey and his colleagues was right as migration was elevated to the level of high politics in the 21st century's security agenda. The continuing global refugee crisis in the one hand, and the ongoing global terrorist attacks in Berlin, Brussels, Istanbul, London, Paris, West Africa and elsewhere on the other hand, heightened the centrality of and concerns about migration in IR. Researchers showed how migration impact a state's capacity and autonomy, the balance of power and the nature of violent conflict and how the weak and failed states face greater security challenges from migration in the new globalised security environment.³⁷ Some authors also researched extensively on immigration and border control.³⁸

A number of articles were also published in favour of desecuritisation. These articles explored the ways in which and to what extent immigration related issues have been securitised in the United States and Europe when elite actors inject 'low politics' public policy issues into the domain of 'high politics' by adopting the rhetoric of existential threat. Lazaridis, for example, described the securitisation of immigration as a 'top-down'

process, in which various political, societal and security elites' presented migration as [a] threat to fundamental values of societies and states. He also demonstrated how post–September 11 political and policy-making elites have rhetorically associated immigrants with numerous cultural, economic, and physical safety threats and, in so doing, precipitated or inflamed widespread popular insecurities and facilitated implementation of increasingly restrictive immigration and asylum measures.³⁹ Chebel d'Appollonia, however, observed that elite and popular anxieties about immigration's negative effects predate September 11 and the subsequent terrorist attacks in Europe and, thus, immigration have long been "securitised".⁴⁰ Echoing the classic securitisation theory, Chebel d'Appollonia argues that, the aforementioned events have transformed otherwise reasonable immigration-related concerns into security fears, thereby precipitating a "security escalation".⁴¹ In a similar vein, Bourbeau conducted a systematic comparison of the processes and actors of securitisation of migration in Canada and France.⁴²

The Literature Boom

In the new millennium, IR scholars have produced an expanding array of literatures to address a wide range of migration issues i.e., refugees and asylum seekers⁴³, irregular migration and trafficking⁴⁴ as well as nexus between environment, conflict and migration.⁴⁵

Recognising that the causes and consequences of, and responses to, human displacement are intertwined with many of the core concerns of International Relations, Betts and Loester published a volume on the understanding of the international politics of forced migration covering issues including international cooperation, security, and international political economy.⁴⁶ They engaged with some of the most challenging political and practical questions in contemporary forced migration, including peace building, post-conflict reconstruction, and state building.

Among the other authors who published on forced migration and security, Pickering traced the relationship between refugee and police; to explore how the deployment of sovereign-led responses of the Global North impact refugees in states that see refugee and terrorism as a 'policing problem'.⁴⁷ Examining the context of the Paris attack in 2015, Neil claimed that refugee crisis was never really separated from the crisis of terrorism as conceived by European states. Rather, migration is understood to be a form of barbarian warfare that threatens the European Union.⁴⁸ Kis-Benedek offered a comparison between American and European handling of refugees emphasising the effectiveness of the American refugee's processes.⁴⁹

Of late, state and social perspectives on irregular migration in Europe have also garnered attention from researchers in the West. These works focus on the experiences and policies of different EU member states, its management of irregular migration and border control and politicisation of immigrants and asylum seekers.⁵⁰ Geddes argued that a distinct range of social and political contention associated with migration and the presence of immigrants plays a big role in structuring responses to the relatively new migration challenges, such as, human trafficking and irregular migration.⁵¹ Taking the United Kingdom as a case, he showed, the state's capacity was tested by the acceleration of migration flows.

Other scholars also explored the relations between environment and armed conflict. Abel and his colleagues, for example, demonstrated that climate change was responsible for increase in seeking of asylum due to conflict.⁵² Using data on asylum seeking applications for 157 countries over the period of 2006 to 2015, they assessed the determinants of refugee flows to examine the causal link between climate, conflict and forced migration. Reuveny, on the other hand, explored the effects of environmental problems on migration and argued that people living in lesser developed countries may be more likely to leave affected areas, which may cause conflict in receiving areas.⁵³ Salehyan discussed ways to improve research on the linkages between climate change and conflict and outlined policy suggestions for dealing with this potential problem.⁵⁴

The Emerging Discourse of Global Governance

Besides growing securitisation, a new genre of migration and IR literature emerged on global governance of migration as part of global response to the crisis of migration during 2010s. Scholars attempted to bring forth the issues of global governance in migration into IR conversations through a detailed analysis of the nature of international institutional framework that regulates states' responses to migration.⁵⁵ To Betts, migration has become a politicised issue due to its quantitative growth and qualitative changes such as South-South migration and internationalisation of labour market.⁵⁶ He further explained, it has led states to collaborate and cooperate to maximise the economic benefits while minimising the economic cost of undesirable migration which was otherwise difficult for the states. Betts, however, criticised the formalised cooperation being limited.⁵⁷ Munck, another expert, offered a critical review of perspectives that pose migration as a global governance problem and the migrant as a potential terrorist.⁵⁸ Identifying the limitations of the dominant migration management paradigm, he advocated, a southern perspective on migration in contrast to the northern bias of the dominant discourses. Some IR literature also focused on the issues of migration management, international law and international organisation.⁵⁹ The

global compact for migration adopted in 2016 instigated further research on its prospect and challenges of implementation.⁶⁰

Critical articles were also published on global governance of refugees, and other types of forced migration. For instance, Benz and Hasenclever identified that the degree and quality of protection and assistance provided to forced migrants greatly varies across countries, regions, levels of analysis and types of forced migrants.⁶¹ Governance of forced migration cannot be regarded as global. According to these authors, global governance remains a vision rather than a description of 'the actual state of affairs'. Phillips and Mieres explored how the root causes of forced labour in global production network were framed in global governance debates.⁶² Biermann and Boas, in their research, raised the issues of whether the current institutions, organisations and funding mechanisms were sufficiently equipped to deal with the looming refugee crisis threatened by climate change.⁶³ Since the adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees, a number of articles and volumes came out analysing the efficacy and efficiency of the Compact.⁶⁴

Critical Analysis of IR's Engagement with Migration

The above findings demonstrate that albeit it's delayed departure, IR has travelled over a wide and diverse range of migration terrains. Yet, the IR-migration nexus demands a critical review.

The Realist Focus

While migration studies have its long tradition in geography, economics or sociology, IR scholars started to contribute at the later quarter of the 20th century. Pioneering works by leading researchers helped incorporate migration within the mainstream IR. Their focus on security, globalisation, political economy, ethnicity, nationalism and transnationalism demonstrated that realist paradigm shaped IR's views on migration. Realist understanding of the primacy and supremacy of state influenced the mainstream migration scholars in IR. Apart from this, IR's initial engagement with migration was marked by identifying migrants as agents who can adversely affect states' sovereignty, security and relations. It must also be mentioned here that the subject matter of IR concentrated more on the consequences than the causes or drivers of migration.

At the beginning of the millennium, securitisation appeared to be one of the most popular frameworks to analyse migration. The reliance on this realist lens to explain migration subdued use of neo-liberal and Marxist perspectives in number and content. Bigo identified three intersecting forces behind growing securitisation of migration.⁶⁵ First, politicians

feared loss of symbolic control over their country's territorial boundaries. Second, security professionals, with their socially learnt dispositions, skills, and ways of acting, took interest in immigration matters. Finally, many alienated citizens experience a sense of "unease" as a consequence of their inability to cope with the challenges and uncertainties of contemporary life.⁶⁶

A securitising actor articulates an already politicised issue as an existential threat to referent objects and asks the government to adopt extraordinary means.⁶⁷ Western politicians engage in discourses that frame immigrants as an existential, material, and/or physical threat for self-interested political reasons and/or in order to enhance the legitimacy of their privileged position. The same is true about scholars who note "Securitisation legitimizes the state in its attempt to introduce more restrictive measures".⁶⁸ Writing on the 'securitisation' of migration and its counter-narratives, Glover identified that policy framing technique based on securitisation can often leave migrant populations vulnerable, threatened and criminalised.⁶⁹ Drawing upon field research with immigrants and refugee activist groups in the United States, Glover showed that, the securitisation framework obscure the voices and fate of the migrants. It, therefore, questions the ethics of such research and knowledge production.

Oversecuritisation of migration further leads to disregard of the dimensions of human security- a paradigm developed by the United Nations highlighting seven categories of non-traditional security, i.e. economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security.⁷⁰ Koser, in this regard has correctly argued that, discussions about migration and security are generally viewed through a national security lens, but the concept of human security may provide greater clarity and perspective since a large number of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees face human security challenges, whether because they're fleeing persecution, dying in transit or facing discrimination in their new country.⁷¹

Call for Global Governance: Old Wine in a New Bottle

The emergence of the global governance as a framework of analysing migration is championed by some scholars as a positive sign of interstate relations. They argue that it helps manage risk and uncertainty. A survey carried out by International Organisation for Migration (IOM) revealed the largest ever migration-related academic output produced during the last two years came from international organisations on a wide range of migration issues. It is often considered as a triumph of neo-liberalism over realism.⁷²

As this paper argues, securitisation of migration and global governance of migration are not contending approaches that developed and replaced each other in particular historical moment. These are parallel approaches of IR to migration. Both the approaches have gained momentum and popularity after the end of the Cold War when states experienced difficulties to independently deal with the issues of xenophobia, terrorism and integration. The fear, apprehension and inability to tackle the problem of unease with migration – both forced and voluntary – on one hand, and the relative utility of using the cooperation model on the other, prompted states to respond internationally and globally to the question of migration. In these cross-roads, IR's contribution lies in illuminating and suggesting issues of global governance that remained unnoticed for years.

Despite the development of multifarious framework of analysis, the issue of migration continued to become complicated. In the short term, supranational authority helped production, dissemination and exchange of information, doing public research, imparting training, providing technical assistance, providing service, discussion, coordination and promotion of activities, standard setting, enforcement of immigration law and border control.⁷³ In the long run, however, global governance of migration clashes with the question of national sovereignty. This is why, despite repeated calls made by the United Nations, major migrant-receiving countries tend to retain control over their migration policies. Moreover, regional arrangements, such as Schengen agreements, suppress the spirit of global governance of migration by unilaterally imposing restriction on movement to and from outside the European Union.⁷⁴

This brings us to the next question: how does IR scholarship foresee the future of global governance in migration vis-a-vis multilateralism, regionalism and bilateralism? The studies and scholarship commissioned by the international organisations, such as ILO, IOM, UNHCR and other offices and organs of UN, as well as the development divisions of the International Financial Institutions and governmental agencies, led the IR scholars and experts produced plethora of research reports, advocacy and policy briefs, mapping and statistical updates. The implementation of the policies, nonetheless, depends on the priority and interest of the states. A salient example is the 1951 Refugee convention, which has so far not been signed or adopted by many countries including those in Asia which are larger producers and hosts of world refugees. The 1990 UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, on a similar note, took 13 years to come into force as it required ratification by 20 countries. In spite of developing numerous global and regional processes such as the Global Forum on Migration and Development, the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, the Colombo Process, the laws or rules of migration did not change significantly in favour of the migrants and ensuring their human rights. The world is

rather witnessing increased legal restrictions with regard to migration. Global governance, in effect, is still a bottom-up approach. One can notice that states are equally committed to ensuring human security of their citizens and thus serving their national interest in the name of controlling foreigners' entry.⁷⁵ In both cases, the state-centric realist approach dominates migration governance in guise of liberal movements.

Disciplinary Bias and Boundaries

A stocktaking of IR literature on migration reveals disciplinary and regional biases as well. IR, due to its disciplinary focus and boundaries, tends to study international migration. Nonetheless, it generally leaves out the issue of internal migration which has significant impact on regional and international security. IOM estimates that there are currently 272 million international migrants as compared to 763 million internal migrants.⁷⁶ Ironically, however, the overwhelming majority of contemporary migration studies focuses on migration across state borders and often overlooks population movements within states.⁷⁷ To quote Skeldon, the focus on international migrants is thus fundamentally "on a tiny proportion of the world's population and on a minority of all migrants".⁷⁸ While it is the state that generally develops and manages migration-related policies, the most important impacts of migration are essentially local.⁷⁹ The regional and global impacts of internal migration thus also demand extensive research.

In terms of subject-matter, state capacity, entry, exit, citizenship and border control dominate IR research on migration. Although these studies epitomise valid areas of concern, they often fall short of looking into the inner dynamics of human security, human rights and risks associated in migration at the individual and community level. There is also a dearth of diverse methodological approaches required to analyse the human security aspects of migration. Critical IR to analyse the above aspects are only in the formative stage.⁸⁰

Migration studies' researches suffer from regional biases too. Majority of migration occurs from and within the Global South.⁸¹ However, the geographic comparison of the primary affiliations of authors in selected journals of IOM shows that academic output on migration is dominated by perspectives and institutions from developed and destination countries, especially in relation to Europe. It indicates that, despite the recent explosion of work on migration in IR, most of the literature overlooks migration dynamics in the developing world, focusing instead on Western, industrialised states. Contemporary IR scholars are still preoccupied with migration dynamics in developing countries insofar as these population movements affect developed countries.⁸² When scholars

do consider migration in developing countries, the focus tends to be on the threat of terrorism from the Global South, the refugee crises in the developing world, or the prospects of an “invasion” of migrants from impoverished countries.⁸³ The political implications of migration in the Global South only becomes an issue worth consideration when population flows pose direct threats or challenges to the developed world.⁸⁴

In the migration literature, refugees accrue more attention as compared to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and stateless persons who comprises 41.9 million and 3.9 million of the 70.8 million forced migrants respectively.⁸⁵ Given their legal status, vulnerability and ‘humanitarian’ needs refugees receive greater attention while the issues of voluntary migration and internal displacement remains the sole preserve of states.⁸⁶ Biswas and Nair have rightly pointed out that refugees, asylum seekers and poor migrants have occupied contemporary ‘third world’ spaces of exception as they inhabit a variety of spaces or ‘zones of indistinctions’.⁸⁷ They comprise the ‘expendable bodies’ that the territorial and market-driven logic of current international relations simultaneously produces policies and excludes.⁸⁸ This narrative interrogates the logic of sovereign power.

Last but not least, growing inequality within and among states in the one hand, and mass population expulsion by state and non-state actors on the other, coupled with intense flow of information and transnational network have created conditions for which large number of people are moving out of their places.⁸⁹ The recent global refugee crisis proved that the boundaries between ‘regular’ and ‘irregular’ migration become increasingly irrelevant as millions of people from the Global South are bypassing the official legal channels of migration since all of them do not have access to the Global North creating a ‘mixed flow’ of people.⁹⁰ As these boundaries become increasingly blurry, so too must research on migration and IR, if we are to account for the complex inter linkages between IR and migration. While both forced and voluntary migration have been securitised over time, less attention is being paid in terms of exploring why and where often they merge and demanding newer types of categorisations and theorisation.

Conclusion

The discipline of International Relations paid scant attention to migration till the last quarter of the 20th century. Since inception, IR was inclined to see migration through the lenses of action, reaction and interaction of states. Put simply, the very subject matter of IR has become the framework of analysis of migration and, hence, the realist paradigm of

preserving national security and maximising national interest created profound effect on IR's understanding of migration.

A progressive assessment of IR's contribution to migration shows that IR had little contribution to migration before 1970s. Migrants – both voluntary and forced – were seen to be the agents of negative political transformation and thus a threat to international relations. Subsequent waves of globalisation and neoliberal thoughts, however, influenced some IR scholars to share critical thoughts. Recognising migrants' contribution to the host economy, they called for increased level of cooperation at the global and regional level and recommended increased role of international institutions to establish global governance in migration. Securitisation of migration, nevertheless, regained primacy in IR following 9/11.

Over the past two decades, IR studied many cross-cutting issues, such as terrorism, integration, immigration, globalisation, border control, global governance and so on. These issues relied on state-centric approach which proved that migration is only secondary to the concept of state and sovereignty. The paper argues that it is governed basically by the realist agenda which see state as the primary decision maker and interest maximiser in the anarchic world. IR's interest to examine state policies and politics perceive controlled migration to be an economic imperative for states and uncontrolled migration to be a national security threat.

It is this reliance on state-centric approach which led the discipline of IR to focus more on international than national migration, Global North than Global South regional realities and regular than irregular migrants. These prejudices often impede IR's contemplation of human security, risks and human rights of internal migrants and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Global South who face similar type of condition like refugees or international economic migrants.

There is a lack of sufficient methodological framework to conduct critical research. Not only the differences between regular and irregular, temporary and permanent as well as refugee and voluntary migrants are becoming indistinct in many instances but they are also calling for new type of knowledge. IR's traditional focus on global and state level and actors such as state, market and international organisations and subject matters such as traditional security, political economy, globalisation often reduces its capacity to see how poorly-organised everyday practices complicate the issues such as terrorism, border, immigration, integration or refugeehood and the strategies made by the migrants and refugees.

Future Research Agenda

From the above conclusion the paper suggests that IR should adopt a more expansive or open research agenda which will consider migration dynamics in a holistic perspective. Such research should have enough scope for theoretical innovation so as to see migration beyond binary divisions i.e., international versus internal, national versus human security, sovereignty versus global governance, regular versus irregular, global versus local dichotomies etc.

Migration is now commonly conceptualised as a cumulative effect of individual motivation, household strategy, historical-structural forces, transnational social networks as well as global forces.⁹¹ To understand migration in the above milieu, IR should circumvent its traditional theoretical and analytical biases. Drawing on diverse approaches and methodologies including ethnography, grounded theory and other eclectic methods, IR should explore the dynamic relationship of migration with global changes. A critical, constructivist and holistic approach to migration by IR scholarship using different levels of analysis will not only enrich migration studies, but will also contribute towards expanding the disciplinary focus and boundaries of International Relations.

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Discursive Constructions of Bangladesh in the International Media: A Study of News Magazines from 1991 to 2019

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Abstract

International news plays an important role in influencing audience perceptions and attitudes towards different countries, and, through the formation of public opinion, can trigger changes of foreign policy and transformation of international relations. The media play a crucial role in forming these perceptions, attitudes, opinions and policy. Research shows that international news most often covers extraordinary events, and that developing nations, in particular, are most likely to be framed in terms of crisis and conflict. This paper explores the discursive constructions of Bangladesh in the international news media, namely, weekly news magazines The Economist and Newsweek from 1991-2019. The study has found that Bangladesh is most often framed in the international news media as having a broken political system, and more recently, for its security issues.

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'Foreign news' is a misnomer. In this interdependent world, we are affected by almost any event almost anywhere. International news is not foreign; it is local, it is immediate, it is highly relevant to the nation and the people.

~Lester Markel

Pulitzer Prize-winning American journalist, editor, and founder of the International Press Institute, Lester Markel said the above of foreign news over half a century ago. In today's global village, international news plays an important role in both influencing audience perceptions and attitudes towards different countries, and through the formation of public opinion, can trigger changes of foreign policy and transformation of international relations.¹ International news is often the only source of knowledge the audience receive of foreign countries, and, due to the general lack of personal knowledge of foreign events, can have a greater agenda-setting effect than that of domestic news. While these dynamics may today be influenced by technological advancements, the internet and social media, news from mainstream outlets remain a major source of credible news both online and offline.

According to Lee and Hong, building and maintaining a positive national image enables a nation to achieve an advantageous position in global economic and political competition and may drive other nations' foreign policies to favour a country.² The media play a key role in constructing these images, both positive and negative, which also influence knowledge and public perceptions of them around the world. As stated by Shoemaker and Reese, several factors—individual, media routines, organisational, social-cultural, and ideological—influence media content.³ International news most often covers extraordinary events that occur as episodes rather than as ongoing issues, especially conflicts and disasters that have familiarity in terms of physical proximity to a nation. Greenwood and Jenkins have found that developing nations, in particular, are most likely to be framed in terms of crisis and conflict.⁴ The call for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) of the 1960s included the claim that the structure of news was imbalanced, with news from developing countries being biased and misrepresented, while more recent research also indicates that international news is most often visually framed in terms of violence and disaster, with developing nations most often framed in terms of crisis and conflict.⁵ Bangladesh, for example, is best known for its poverty, natural disasters, political instability, and, in recent decades, security issues.

In this context, this paper explores the discursive constructions of Bangladesh in the international news media, drawing upon Johan Galtung and Marie Ruge's seminal work "The Structure of Foreign News".⁶ It

examines news and images of Bangladesh published in British news magazine *The Economist*, and American news magazine, *Newsweek*, since 1991. The paper attempts to identify the key frames with which Bangladesh is associated and the discourses which are constructed around it.

Historical Context

Bangladesh is a country of nearly 165 million, where 89 percent of its population is Muslim, followed by Hindus, Buddhists and Christians. After gaining independence from Pakistan in 1971, the country was led by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Awami League until 1975, when the prime minister, along with most of his family members, were assassinated.

From 1975 to 1990, the country went through a prolonged period of military rule. In December 1990, what began with student protests against the dictatorship of General Hossain Mohammad Ershad, cumulated into a mass democracy movement in which the major political parties, the Awami League (AL), led by Sheikh Hasina, and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), led by Begum Khaleda Zia, joined hands to overthrow the autocratic government.

In 1991, after the country's first democratic elections, the BNP came to power. The AL won their first electoral victory in 1996, the BNP again in 2002. From the end of 2006 to 2008, Bangladesh went through a period of military-backed caretaker government rule. In 2009, the AL came back to power with a landslide victory, largely ensured by a younger generation won over by the highlight of the AL manifesto—justice for the war crimes committed during Bangladesh's War of Independence in 1971. The AL also won the national elections of 2013, where the majority of electoral seats went uncontested, and 2018, in an election strongly criticised for being unfair and ridden with irregularities.

Between 1990 and 2019, the country went through long periods of political instability and even violence, particularly during election season. It has, however, fared well in terms of its economic growth, from a GDP growth of 5.62 in 1990 to 7.86 in 2018, according to the World Bank, and has made major strides in education, health and poverty alleviation (having reduced poverty from 44.2 percent in 1991 to 14.8 percent in 2016/17).⁷

In terms of international media coverage, Bangladesh first made headlines during the 1971 Liberation War. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the country was largely known globally for its poverty, famines and natural

disasters such as cyclones and floods, contributing to a foreign audience's perceptions of Bangladesh as a country stricken by poverty and disaster.

From the 1990s and especially the 2000s onwards, international media coverage of Bangladesh increased and changed for various reasons, giving rise to particular frames and discourses, as this paper will show. For the most part, coverage has been problematic and largely negative, as is the case with foreign news in general and with regards to developing nations in particular. This will be discussed in the following section.

Literature Review

Bad (foreign) news is good news

Individuals learn about international news through media accounts, but some types of events get more attention than others. 'International news coverage is most likely to present unusual events, especially those involving conflict or disaster that takes place in industrialised nations and might have an impact on the viewer's home country'.⁸

Galtung and Ruge's primary thesis, upon which this work will draw, is that 'The lower the rank of the nation, the more negative will the news from that nation have to be'.⁹ This is discussed in more detail below.

Determinants of international news flow

Denis Wu, in his 'meta-analysis' of international news flow, identifies two broad determinants of international news flow.¹⁰ The first is gatekeeper perspective, which focuses on the social psychology of news professionals and how these characteristics affect the output of news flow, for example, editors' backgrounds, foreign language training, professional education, political ideology and availability of news hole and wire services. Other factors include geographical distance from and relevance to the home country, as well as organisational constraints on and cultural customs of news professionals. Wu also found that, despite the significant differences in journalistic practices around the world, overwhelming similarities remain in terms of topic selection of international news, i.e., political relationship between nations and domestic politics occurring in foreign countries.

Wu's second broad determinant, logistical perspective, examines the socioeconomic components and physical logistics of news gathering, arguing that the economic, social, political and geographic characteristics of a nation determine the amount of coverage it will receive in another country's media.¹¹ These factors include GNP per capita, index of

economic development, population or size of a nation, cultural proximity, former colonial ties, ideological groupings, language factor, regionalism, geographic proximity, elite status, media facilities and equipment, communication access and technologies, and international news service. Wu's comprehensive survey of the related literature found that, while Third World countries were largely covered in a formula of what Rosenblum termed as "coups and earthquakes"¹², there was actually little discrepancy in the coverage of the West and non-West, that is, the media generally tend to produce news that involves violence.

Buckman, among others, found geographical proximity to be a factor of newsworthiness, along with cultural, political and economic ties.¹³ He also found that the ideological bias of agenda setters was a factor. His study, however, contradicted previous research which suggested that news is defined by north-south or east-west relationships.

Guo and Vargo, however, found that not only do wealthier countries attract most of the world news attention, but they are also more likely to decide how other countries perceive the world.¹⁴ Wu in a later study also found that trade, population, news agencies and geographic proximity are conducive factors to transnational news flow.¹⁵ For example, Pratt found that American news magazines projected Africa as poor and 'struggling against a cornucopia of divisive, malignantly centrifugal forces that are somewhat paralleled in immutability by the fate that had befallen the legendary Sisyphus in his bid to push a boulder uphill'.¹⁶ Quantitatively, the coverage was 'miniscule', and qualitatively, the continent was portrayed negatively overall.

John Lent also concludes that foreign news coverage in American media is 'often determined by considerations of international diplomacy, national government and military policies, and historical-cultural heritage'.¹⁷ He also found that it is often crisis-centred; 'affected by censorship policies and image-building activities of other countries'; and influenced by a dwindling number of adequately-trained correspondents abroad and editors back home.¹⁸

The power of visuals

Schwalbe and Dougherty in their study of the visual coverage of the 2006 Lebanon conflict describe the power of news images.¹⁹ Photographs command more attention and are processed more quickly than words, helping readers make sense of news even if they do not read the text, though they do not necessarily lead to a deeper understanding of the issues portrayed. In their literature review, they also cited Griffin as arguing that 'most news photography reinforces existing ideas and

stereotypes rather than revealing new information or perspectives'.²⁰

Unequal representations

In her study of the coverage of international disasters, Susan Moeller notes that there is a hierarchy or process of selection at play even among the bad news. She finds that the American media in its coverage of international disasters focus on

just-breaking news, dramatic pictures, Americans at risk, situations that can be distilled down to uncomplicated controversy (he said, she said) or uncomplicated violence (such as that caused by natural disasters), quick and/or resolvable denouements and human anecdotes. Immediate actions are valued far more than process.²¹

According to Moeller, news of crisis is *sold* like any other merchandise. With regards to the same crisis, national and international news coverage tends to vary. For example, Dove and Khan conducted a study on competing constructions of the April 1991 cyclone in Bangladesh, largely drawing upon media accounts.²² They found that while non-Bangladeshi accounts of the calamity focused on poverty of individuals and structural inequities in society, Bangladeshi accounts focused on the natural origins of the disaster, irrational behaviour of individuals, limited resources of the nation, and links to global warming and greenhouse emissions of the industrialised nations, thereby, shifting the focus from internal to international problems of structure and equity. Interestingly, Penelope Ploughman in her study on the American media's framing of international natural disasters found that the media "constructed" these events as "natural" disasters despite clear evidence of their hybrid, natural-human origins'.²³

Wu concludes that 'the everyday representation of the world via news media is far from a direct reflection of global realities'.²⁴ Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi argued that the fall of the former Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, as well as a rapidly changing and complex media environment, had brought about significant changes in international news flow.²⁵ I would argue that the post-9/11 era along with an even more rapidly changing and diversified global mediascape, increasingly dominated by online and social media, have brought about even greater changes to international news flow and its implications for foreign relations, policy, and perceptions of people in foreign nations. This is apparent in the news coverage of Bangladesh in the international news magazines discussed, which focus less on natural disasters which mostly affect the country itself, and more on human-made disasters, including political instability and terrorism, which arguably have greater implications for the rest of the world.

Because of the importance of building and maintaining a national image in order to gain a more advantageous position in global economic and political competition and favourable foreign policies, many countries practice international public relations to improve their national images throughout the world, by launching government-sponsored international broadcasting channels and websites, hosting cultural exchange programmes, hiring public relations firms in target countries, and hosting global media events.²⁶ This is, however, beyond the scope of this paper, which shall focus exclusively on the media coverage of Bangladesh in the international press.

Method

This paper explores the discursive constructions of Bangladesh in international news magazines *The Economist* and *Newsweek* from January 1991 to December 2019. 1991 is commonly known to be the year of the advent of democracy in Bangladesh after a prolonged period of military and dictatorial rule from 1975 onwards. Using theories of framing and discourse, the paper will critically analyse the issues which put the spotlight on Bangladesh in the international media, how they are framed, and what discourses are constructed and promoted.

News magazines as cultural commentary

Much research on news framing and discourses have focused on the daily newspaper and so this paper explores the same but in weekly news magazines. Like other forms of media, magazines have evolved despite the difficulties caused by the digital shift, where weekly news magazines have been the hardest-hit genre within the industry, with circulation dropping from 9.3 million in 2003 to 7.7 million in 2012.²⁷ However, they continue to 'represent an important niche among consumer magazines, providing analysis of a variety of news topics to broad audiences on a weekly basis,' attracting clearly defined readerships and communities.²⁸ In-depth coverage and interpretation of news and events in news magazines make them an important and popular format among highly informed readers. Studies have shown, for example, that in the US, publications reach a national audience that is older and wealthier than the US population on average. 'Because news and public affairs magazines take a different approach to content and appear less regularly than newspapers, 'they serve as a kind of news digest – compressing, recapitulating, elaborating upon, and sometimes even critiquing the television and newspaper reports of a previous week'.²⁹ As Buckman puts it, 'the newsmagazine subscriber is looking more for the "why" and "how" of a story than for the "who," "what," "when," and "where"'.³⁰ According to Greenwood and Jenkins, the magazine industry emphasises publications

focused on specific content areas and aimed at an increasingly fragmented audience, which means that decisions about content selection and presentation, including the choice of photographs, may vary, reflecting a specific editorial perspective that appeals to the magazine's audience.³¹

While magazines have been the subject of less research compared to other types of media, news magazines have been described as 'important sites of cultural commentary and community-building', and, because of their combination of cultural commentary, news interpretation, and a professional audience, news magazines are 'important vehicles for analysis'.³² As such, international news magazines are a suitable content for analysis for this particular study.

Two international news and opinion weekly magazines, *The Economist* and *Newsweek*, have been examined for this purpose. *The Economist*, founded in 1843, is published from London. It is regarded as one of the world's preeminent journals of its kind. It does not publish bylines except for special reports, and has no masthead, thereby presenting a unified face to its readers. In 2009, the magazine had an international circulation of over 1 million. New York-based *Newsweek* was first published in 1933. It briefly switched to an all-digital format in 2013-2014, after which the print edition returned. At its peak, the magazine reached an international circulation of 4 million.³³

For the purposes of this paper, all stories on Bangladesh published in these two magazines during the aforementioned timeframe have been analysed in terms of frames and discourses.

Framing analysis

Framing analysis has most commonly been used to study news, particularly political communication. Frames are 'a central organising idea or story line that provide meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them'.³⁴ In the context of the media, Robert Entman states that framing is 'selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution', and as such are composed of a problem definition, a hypothesised cause, a moral evaluation and a proposed remedy.³⁵ Kinder notes that frames suggest how politics should be thought about, encouraging understanding of events and issues in particular ways and what, if anything, should be done about them.³⁶ A common frame, for example, is the human interest frame, which personalises, dramatises and emotionalises the news.³⁷ Another common frame is that of conflict.

According to Shanto Iyengar, frames can be episodic – isolated news events lacking broader context, or thematic—providing background and social context to issues and events.³⁸ Gitlin argues that media frames organise the world for both journalists and media consumers. Framing is effective because readers generally accept news stories as ‘transparent descriptions of reality... Although readers may question whether news organisations have the story right, this is not because they recognise news messages as social constructions, influenced by journalistic routines, economic limitations, or conflicting political ideologies.’³⁹ Cynthia Boaz argues that frames shape public opinion and public agenda.⁴⁰ Even more than news stories, photographs are also recognised as effective tools for framing and in a less obvious manner because photographs are expected to truthfully represent reality rather than being constructed messages made by people.⁴¹

Discourse analysis

Initially a linguistic concept referring to ‘passages of connected writing or speech’, discourse was defined by Michel Foucault more broadly as ‘the production of knowledge through language’.⁴² Discourse consists of language as well as practice. ‘Discursive practices may have major ideological effects’, producing and reproducing unequal power relations, ‘passing off assumptions (often falsifying ones) about any aspect of social life as mere common sense’.⁴³

According to Brian Paltridge,

Discourse analysis examines patterns of language across texts and considers the relationship between language and the social and cultural contexts in which it is used... the ways that the use of language presents different views of the world and different understandings... the effects the use of language has upon social identities and relations... how views of the world, and identities, are constructed through the use of discourse.⁴⁴

As such, discourse analysis examines representations of the world, identities and relationships of those being talked/written about as well as those doing the talking/writing.

In terms of media discourse, Majid Khosravini argues that the media play an ‘active, political role in cultural relations of power... active in the politics of sense-making thereby ‘play[ing] a crucial role in the persuasive production of dominant ideologies’.⁴⁵ Garrett and Bell summarise the usefulness of the study of media discourse, including the media’s being a ‘rich source of readily accessible data’, but more importantly, the media’s ability to convey ‘social meanings and stereotypes projected through

language and communication’ and to ‘reflect and influence the formation and expression of culture, politics and social life’.⁴⁶ As such, analysis of the media in relation to the production of frames and discourses on Bangladesh in the international news flow, is a fitting method of study for this paper.

The following section discusses the findings of this research.

Findings

Of the two news magazines, the print and online editions combined of *The Economist* carried the greater number of stories about Bangladesh from January 1991 to December 2019 – 264. The print and online editions of *Newsweek* carried 137 stories. The following table shows the number of stories printed in the two magazines each year between 1991 and 2019.

Table I: News stories on Bangladesh published in *The Economist* and *Newsweek* from January 1991 to December 2019

Year	The Economist	Newsweek
1991	5	1
1992	5	4
1993	2	2
1994	5	6
1995	5	2
1996	9	4
1997	4	2
1998	4	2
1999	2	1
2000	2	1

2001	5	0
2002	3	0
2003	5	3
2004	1	0
2005	4	2
2006	12	1
2007	22	8
2008	8	4
2009	11	3
2010	7	4
2011	17	2
2012	19	2
2013	39	2
2014	12	1
2015	14	20
2016	10	25
2017	13	16
2018	10	13
2019	11	6
Total	266	137

Bangladesh in The Economist – A broken political system

In *The Economist*, the greatest number of stories—117—were on politics, political instability and political violence. Of them, 18 were on national elections, and 17 on politics related to India. This was followed by stories related to the war crimes trial (19), economy (17), terrorism (12), and the Rohingya crisis (10). Other miscellaneous topics included

the environment, health and law, but there were only two or three stories on each of these topics over the 28 years examined.

Surprisingly, whereas Bangladesh seems to be internationally known for its natural disasters, only six stories in *The Economist* between 1991 and 2019 are on cyclones and floods. Rather, more stories have been published on human-made disasters such as factory building collapses and fires, and accidents such as airplane crashes. The greatest number of stories (39) on Bangladesh were published in 2013, comprising news of the war crimes trial, the Rana Plaza garment factory collapse and the elections held at the end of that year.

Most of these may be termed negative news, with even the headlines provocative, such as “Settling scores”, “A vote for Bin Laden?”, “Messy Bangladesh”, “Politics of hate”, “The battling begums,” etc. A major frame appears to be, as one headline goes “Why Bangladesh’s politics are broken.” The stories make repeated references to political instability and violence, kleptocratic regimes, threatened/failing/collapsed democracies. Politics of hate, revenge and violence are what characterise Bangladesh in *The Economist*. Stories question whether Bangladesh is “slithering into anarchy”, a country where “bombs are far from unusual.”⁴⁷ Often, violent and animalistic imagery are used, for example, “howls of protest from opposition leaders and human-rights campaigners” against a law in the offing. Very broadly, two themes can be noticed in *The Economist*’s coverage of politics in Bangladesh from 2000 onwards—as a kleptocracy during the rule of the BNP from 2002–2006, and increasingly as a one-party dictatorship during AL rule, particularly from the elections of 2013 onwards.

The magazine often reflects a pessimistic at best, judgmental at worst, tone about Bangladesh. For example, “The sad reality is that Bangladesh is a place where all governments, including military ones, fail—so daunting are the challenges.”⁴⁸ Even a story in which *The Economist* itself says Bangladesh had a “pretty clean election”, ends on a doubtful note in its reference to the incumbent prime minister, Sheikh Hasina—“With such hopes invested in her, she is almost bound to disappoint.”⁴⁹ The country’s inefficiency is often harped upon. A story on Bangladesh’s natural gas concludes with a discouraging prophecy of sorts, cryptically suggesting that “the gas could sit in the ground for another 20m years. A long delay, even by Bangladeshi standards.”⁵⁰

Politics in general and specific issues such as the war crimes trial are portrayed as personal issues of conflict and vendetta (“an intensely personal feud between two women”) between Sheikh Hasina and Begum Khaleda Zia, who from 1991 to 2009 alternated as the country’s prime minister, after which time the former has remained in power for three

consecutive terms. The women are commonly referred to as “bitter rivals”, “battling begums”, “drama queens”, “two mutually-loathing heads of feuding dynasties”, who trade “vitriolic insults”, their “vindictiveness” described as “legendary”. So much so, that a story on rising extremism in which Bangladesh is headlined as being a “State of denial”, claims: “It is the bitterness and lack of trust between these two women and their parties that has hijacked the democratic process, and encouraged the growth of extremism.”⁵¹ *The Economist* writes “Their rivalry is based in fathomless feelings of personal grievance... Their leadership claims are based on their personal loss and inherited martyrdom, of which their feuding is a constant reminder.”⁵²

The two leaders and their politics are likened several times to the Punch and Judy show, a famous British puppet show involving squabbles and even violence – “a Punch and Judy show of backbiting and violence between two parties led by women who cannot stand the sight of each other”⁵³; “a Punch-and-Judy show of non-co-operation and vindictive retaliation”⁵⁴; “Punch and Judy show of vicious political infighting”.⁵⁵ At one point, the magazine itself states: “Writing about politics in Bangladesh, this newspaper has often found itself drawn to the analogy of a Punch-and-Judy show. We now know this is deeply unfair – to a wholesome if brutal form of puppetry.”⁵⁶

This is also reflected in the images published, with the women either – and most often – looking angry and threatening, or else mischievous. Both women are pictured in their usual outfits of sarees with their heads covered, but one headline accompanying one of these images is a brutal evaluation of how “Bangladesh’s prime minister uses piety to mask misrule.”⁵⁷ One image is a Punch and Judy type caricature of the women confronting each other with baseball bats. Another image used in a story about the two leaders is of two wolves or fierce-looking dogs perched on two ends of a seesaw, fighting over a long piece of bone. Generally, too, in terms of visuals, common images of Bangladesh in *The Economist* are of political violence—street violence, protests, and arson—depicting the nation as being in a perpetual state of anarchy.

After politics, the second most-covered issue on Bangladesh in *The Economist* is the country’s war crimes trial and the tribunal set up to try those accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Bangladesh’s Liberation War of 1971. While controversy has surrounded the war crimes tribunal, the magazine’s tone leaves much to be desired in its labelling it simply as a means of settling scores. Headlines include “Justice and vengeance in Bangladesh,” “Justice in Bangladesh – Another kind of crime,” and “Bangladesh’s war crimes trial – Bloodletting after the fact”. Stories repeatedly refer to a “deeply flawed” tribunal. One story notes, “She [Sheikh Hasina] has settled scores that date back to the

struggle for independence. And she has gravely damaged the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) run by her arch-enemy, Khaleda Zia,”⁵⁸ as if these were the most important, if not sole, objectives of a war crimes trial under way to bring justice for war crimes committed four decades earlier. Also, sentences such as “Pakistani perpetrators have been always beyond the reach of the courts. So their Bangladeshi collaborators, including Mr Azam and Mr Nizami, have been prosecuted in their stead” imply that those being tried in Bangladesh’s war crimes trial aren’t as guilty as the Pakistani army in the war of 1971 and that the government is punishing them as they are not being able to punish the Pakistani perpetrators.⁵⁹

Where Bangladesh has been lauded for its role in the Rohingya crisis and for providing shelter to hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees with its limited land and resources, *The Economist* most often writes about what it has not done right. In a story called “Exile island” – the island where the relocation and rehabilitation of Rohingya refugees was being planned at the time – it claims that Bangladesh’s long-standing policy is to make itself “as unappealing as possible as a destination” for Rohingyas and that “Oppressed in Myanmar, Muslim Rohingyas are unwelcome in Bangladesh, too.”⁶⁰ There are a few references to Bangladesh as having been “remarkably generous” in letting in half a million Rohingya refugees, but even these cast doubt on how it plans to treat them in the long run.

Natural disasters, too, are given discouraging coverage, with headlines such as “Drowning” and “Bangladesh in troubled waters”. The last line of a story on a devastating cyclone also makes reference to the political situation, claiming that “Bangladesh would be hard enough to govern even if nature were on its side.”⁶¹ Whether on natural disasters or microfinance, positive or negative, almost all stories end up alluding to the unhealthy political environment of the country.

Even the rare positive story such as on the growing economy which refers to “Lessons from the achievements – yes, really, achievements – of Bangladesh”, has a taunting title – “Out of the basket”,⁶² and several other stories refer to Henry Kissinger’s famed labelling of Bangladesh as a “basket case”. Subjects such as microcredit and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are also given mixed treatment, where some stories are mostly positive, but still given a questionable spin, for example, “The other government in Bangladesh”, or “Helping or interfering?”, reflecting a tone of the increasing power of NGOs in Bangladesh and whether they are becoming “too powerful.”

A letter⁶³ from the Government of Bangladesh in response to articles published in *The Economist* claims, the magazine focused little on the positive aspects of Bangladesh, such as being termed a “model country”

by the United Nations Secretary General, and lauded by the American president and other foreign political leaders, for its economic growth, poverty reduction, strides in education, women's empowerment, reduction in maternal and child mortality rates, and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's role in making Bangladesh a development model. While it is true that the magazine focuses less on the positive accomplishments of Bangladesh, it does not, as the letter suggests, undermine the people of Bangladesh as much as it does its governments and political leadership. The letters from the Bangladesh government, however, focus on "the Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who has, through her extraordinary courage, personal sacrifice and inspiring visionary leadership, brought the country back on track of democratic governance, made the country a model for women's empowerment, food security, disaster management, poverty alleviation, and pursuing a people-centric peace building policy nationally as well as regionally and internationally. People in the region have already started enjoying the benefits of her government's strong stand against terrorism and extremism."⁶⁴

As *The Economist* writes: "In terms of international news stories per head of population, Bangladesh, a Muslim-majority country of more than 160m, is among the world's most underreported places. But recently it has been attracting headlines for ugly reasons." It mentions the religiously motivated murders of 2015 and 2016, and the war crimes trial and executions. The story continues: "Less reported is Bangladesh's remorseless descent into authoritarian rule. All three phenomena are symptoms of the same disease: a political culture that cannot brook dissent and which views power as a means to crush it."⁶⁵

Bangladesh in Newsweek – Struggling against forces of terror

In *Newsweek* magazine, in which there were 137 stories on Bangladesh published in print and online between 1991 to 2019, terrorism and religious fundamentalism account for the largest number of stories (42), followed by the Rohingya issue (15), and politics (12). Other topics include microfinance and factory disasters. The greatest number of stories on Bangladesh (26) is published in 2016, focusing mostly on targeted killings by religious extremists and the Rohingya crisis.

Newsweek's violent headlines such as "Battling it out in Bangladesh" and "Blood on the streets" are fewer. Though many stories focus on violence and terrorism, the headlines are more matter of fact, for example, "Bangladesh murders continue as Hindu monastery leader hacked to death". But stories often portray Bangladesh as "one of world's worst basket cases, desperately poor, racked by environmental disasters and plagued by corrupt and ineffective government", where politicians have

“bitter rivalries” and where the country’s leader “lashes out” at international rights organisations. Again, all these words and photographs depict an image of Bangladesh as chaotic, violent and stricken by terror.

Compared to *The Economist*, however, *Newsweek* does have some positive stories on NGOs, Bangladeshi culture and heritage, etc. Particularly in the early to mid-1990s, *Newsweek* focuses quite a bit on the rise of NGOs in Bangladesh and the challenges they faced against religious fundamentalists who were against NGOs in general and their emphasis on women’s empowerment in particular. But it also follows the development and spread of microfinancing, including in Grameen America, inspired by Bangladesh’s Grameen Bank.

In *Newsweek*, the greatest coverage is given to security issues – i.e., terrorist acts and religious fundamentalism. From back in 1994 with the fatwa (religious edict) by religious extremists against feminist writer Taslima Nasrin, which forced her into exile, to the religiously motivated killings and acts of terrorism committed in 2015 and 2016, *Newsweek* appears to have taken a keen interest in Bangladesh, and perhaps in the issue around the world since 9/11. Every incident is covered in detail and often with follow-ups on police operations and arrests or shootouts. As mentioned above, however, rather than taking on an editorial position or being cryptic in its use of language, the magazine’s coverage is precise, e.g., headlines such as “Editor of Bangladesh’s Only LGBT Magazine Hacked to Death”, “Bangladesh Siege: Forces Storm Café, Kill Six Gunmen.” *Newsweek* has a clearer and more direct approach, with factual headlines, detailed stories, and sometimes suggestions as to how the Bangladesh government has dealt or could/should deal with them.

The amount of and detail in coverage of such incidents occurring in Bangladesh, however, causes one to question the framing of the nation in the publication – as one where religious fundamentalism and terrorism are rampant. Generally, too, Bangladesh is framed as a very pious nation, with several references and photographs depicting mass prayers, religious gatherings and demonstrations and protests by religious groups. In addition, relatively small though arguably interesting incidents in Bangladesh are given coverage in this international news magazine, for example, a man watching pornography, stripping and masturbating on an airplane.

With regard to politics, *Newsweek* focuses more on issues than it does on the “battling begums” or the “dueling divas” as it once terms Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia, which *The Economist* often does in detail. When writing about political leaders, too, instead of taking on a commentator/editorial position of its own, *Newsweek* quotes other sources and critics, and also takes a less scathing approach than *The*

Economist. For example, when the statue of a Greek goddess was removed from the Supreme Court premises, giving in to demands placed by a religious group, *Newsweek* writes, “The country’s prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, head of the secular Awami League party, also criticised the statue, questioning the relevance of a Greek statue in Bangladesh. Critics have suggested that she is trying to win over the more conservative elements of Bangladeshi society with such a move.”⁶⁶ In fact, the magazine even gives political leaders positive coverage where due. In a story titled “Forget Aung San Suu Kyi. This is the real heroine of the Rohingya crisis” published on 29 September 2017, Sheikh Hasina is portrayed as having “greater compassion than many leaders from larger and richer countries”.

In terms of the war crimes trial, *Newsweek* does not appear as skeptical as *The Economist*. It does not give the political party implicated—Jamaat-e-Islami—and those accused and under trial, as much benefit of doubt, it does not question the official numbers of the dead and raped in Bangladesh’s war of independence, and while it mentions that the trial is controversial, it does not paint it in a negative light. While the magazine quotes sources as having “serious concerns” over the death penalties and the trial as being “a weapon of politically influenced revenge whose real aim is to target the political opposition”⁶⁷, it takes on less of an editorial position in itself.

Newsweek gives the country credit where it’s due: “In spite of sporadic unrest, rampant corruption and a polarised political system that’s all but dysfunctional, Bangladesh finds itself in the midst of a sustained boom.”⁶⁸ The story continues:

The Bangladesh boom defies some of development theory’s central tenets. For decades, experts have identified political stability and effective governance as critical prerequisites for economic takeoff. But this lowland nation of 145 million is making tangible progress largely without them. Bangladesh now leads South Asia in most social-welfare indicators – including female literacy and poverty reduction. Its fertility rate is near replacement level. And Bangladesh is the only South Asian country on track to meet its United Nations-mandated Millennium Development Goals of reducing poverty by half by 2015.

One of the most recent articles related to Bangladesh and climate change states, “Rather than accept its destiny—geographical or otherwise—Bangladesh had been preparing for the onslaught of fiercer and more frequent tropical cyclones that global warming would surely bring. The way it has gone about this holds valuable lessons for vulnerable coastal communities all over the world.”⁶⁹ It may be noted, however, that the

article was co-authored by the country's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon.

Discussion

The findings in this study show that *The Economist's* articles, and especially headlines, are more cryptic, as well as more creative, whereas *Newsweek's* are more factual. The same may be said of the issues covered, and the overall treatment in terms of language and images. While *Newsweek* appears to take a clearer, more direct and matter-of-fact approach to reporting events and incidents, particularly those related to security issues and acts of terror, *The Economist* takes more interest in the broader domestic politics of the nation with an editorial tone, often criticising the political leadership of the nation. The latter often includes background in its political stories of the history of dynastic and antagonistic politics of its former colony, presenting more thematic rather than episodic frames.

Analysis of magazine content has found that *The Economist* gives more credit to the people of Bangladesh and even the country's development, than it does to its politics and politicians. Several references are made to the people's tolerance and "astute political judgment" in spite of the chaos that is the political system, and that the country has "surprisingly" succeeded in improving the lives of its poor despite "dysfunctional politics and a stunted private sector."⁷⁰ A couple of stories focus on, and others refer, albeit briefly, to the rise in life expectancy, and developments in education and health. "How Bangladesh vanquished diarrhoea"⁷¹ makes a rather warlike reference to Bangladesh's battle against disease, and the building of outhouses/latrines/household toilets which have reduced by 90% deaths due to diarrhoea and dysentery and significantly lowered its child-mortality rate. Overall, the magazine acknowledges that, "in many ways, Bangladesh is a role model for South Asia"⁷² in terms of the growing economy and improvements in education and health, but that its politics is "grotesque." It concludes, "Bangladesh deserves better politics. That would be the best way of preserving its admirable economic progress."

In both weekly magazines, however, it is clear that nations such as Bangladesh most often make international news headlines when "bad things happen." The findings above show that, while much of what has been reported is accurate and, if studies were conducted, would prove to be consistent with how the local press covered such incidents as well, the absence, or at least sparseness of good news is glaringly obvious.

The findings above confirm Galtung and Ruge's over half a century old but seminal work on *The Structure of Foreign News* which proposed several hypotheses, of which the most pertinent is, 'The lower the rank of the nation, the more negative will the news from that nation have to be.'⁷³ Also applicable are the hypotheses that the more distant the nation, the more will an event have to satisfy the frequency criterion and the more consonant will the news have to be; the more distant an event, the less ambiguous it will have to be; and the lower the rank of the nation, the more consonant will the news have to be. Simply put, the further geographically and culturally a foreign nation is, and the "lower" it is ranked in the global hierarchy, the more must events capture attention easily such as natural disasters and accidents do; should be simple (as opposed to including the complexities of a different culture); the news should fit a pattern of expectation, for example, political instability; news that emphasises the difficulties that low-ranking nations face, such as poverty. All these support the overarching thesis mentioned above, which basically states that 'from the underdog nations of the world, typically, news reports will be overwhelmingly negative... positive things that happen in the underdog countries will go under-reported and this will promote an image of those countries as being unable to govern themselves, and as inherently inferior to the topdog countries.'⁷⁴

Thus, we see not only excessive coverage of politics as in *The Economist*, but also during particular events, for example, elections, military-backed caretaker rule, political violence, and the Rohingya crisis. We also see regular coverage of terrorism-related events such as in *Newsweek*. We find scattered coverage of issues related to the economy and health, all ostensibly challenges for developing nations. The old adage about bad news being good news remains true today, where a stable political system, a booming readymade garment sector and growing economy, and agricultural innovations and development are brushed aside for news of political instability and violence, factory accidents, and natural disasters.

For policy implications, I again draw upon Galtung and Ruge, who suggest that journalists should focus on long-term developments rather than events, report more on non-elite nations and people, even if trivial and not traditionally newsworthy, even if culturally distant and even if complex and ambiguous, in order to 'counter-balance the image of the world as composed of strings of dramatic events' and to make more reference to positive events overall.⁷⁵ If this were the case, for example, Bangladesh would make the news not only for negative events but also for smaller successes, such as in agriculture, industry, or even politics, not to mention greater focus on the strides it has made in health, education and poverty alleviation. It is important to make the audience understand that "Africa" and "Asia" as western accounts often categorise them, are not

poverty-ridden, violence-stricken, self-destructive nations and that good things happen there too in people's everyday, un-newsworthy lives.

Having said that, there are a number of issues beyond the scope of this paper which call for future studies. This paper does not address several aspects. Firstly, it does not look at how the Bangladeshi media have covered news during the time period studied here or how they have framed the issues covered by the international media. Secondly, it does not look at how other nations, both developed and developing, fare in terms of news coverage in comparison to Bangladesh. Thirdly, it does not look at audience perceptions formed by the news coverage studied here. A comparative study of Bangladeshi news media during the same time period would prove interesting, as would studies exploring the coverage of other nations and audience research and effects studies in order to understand not only audience perceptions of foreign nations as influenced by the media, but also implications for foreign policy.

Conclusion

This paper has explored the discourses surrounding news coverage of Bangladesh and the image it creates of the nation – as ridden with political instability, increasing terrorism, a growing economy and booming industries which make the news more for disasters than successes, and natural disasters. While these are all reality for Bangladesh, the fact remains that much more also happens which is not covered in the international press, and that which is, is not always given the treatment due. Such narrow frames contribute to the construction of limited discourses around nations as well as global politics, which in turn produce skewed audience perceptions as well as having possibly adverse foreign policy implications.

As Pratt pointed out several decades earlier,

The content of the international news media should... more closely reflect the multiple realities of a complex world in an era when advances in communications have created new interdependencies, when cooperation among nations is increasingly becoming a sine qua non, and when the news systems are wielding colossal and far-reaching influences in all dimensions of international affairs.⁷⁶

In today's digital world, access to information and its ease and speed of dissemination should make sharing of more balanced and diverse news and worldviews much easier. Yet, decades-old literature on international news flow shows that, while individuals using media and social media have brought some change, the mainstream media remains largely

traditional in its selection and framing of news, where developed nations still make the most and better news, and determine how developing nations will be portrayed and perceived by a global audience.

The author would like to acknowledge the contribution of research assistants Nusrat Zabin Biva and Tajwar Mahmud for their contribution to this paper.

Notes

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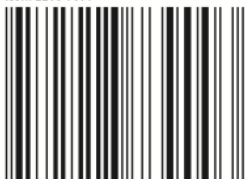
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ISSN: 2218-7391



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