

GLOBAL

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Bruce Cinnamon examines the emerging trend of “smart decline” where cities embrace their population shrinkage and opt to “right-size” their urban space



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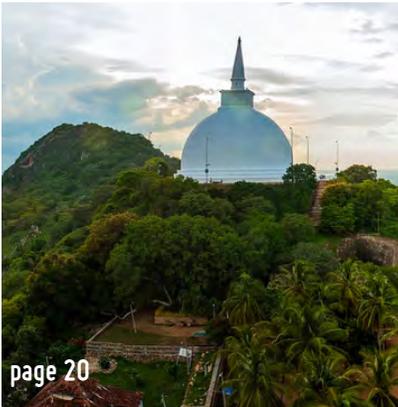
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Letter from the **Executives**

As the academic year comes to a close, we are excited to share the Spring 2018 Issue of Global Conversations. The articles within this issue explore a wide variety of topical events and issues, including the role of self-determination in advancing Indigenous healthcare in Canada, the implications of China's Belt and Road infrastructure initiative, and the overshadowed secessionist movement taking place in Cameroon.

The Global Conversations publication has experienced a number of new and exciting additions this year. We launched our first podcast on "Emerging Technologies: Bitcoin and Blockchain," featuring an MGA alumni working in the industry. Additionally, we partnered with various existing and new initiatives, including the Intersectional Feminist Collective and the International Mining Conference, on pieces that add diverse and underreported perspectives on important issues. We are grateful to our written contributors, editors, and directors for their talents and dedication to the student-driven publication throughout the year. We continue to encourage readers to regularly check and participate on the active digital platform, munkgc.com, for weekly NewsWatch articles that analyze underreported news events and critically interrogate mainstream media commentary. As the publication and online platform continue to grow, we are excited to expand the reach of these perspectives, and encourage people to read, respond to, and engage in conversations on the selected topics.

*Executive Producers,
Siobhan Bradley & Cadhla Gray*

Urban renaissance vs. smart decline: is there a model of “palliative care” for the world’s dying cities?

BY BRUCE CINNAMON



THE 21st century has been dubbed “the urban century” because of the unprecedented growth of the world’s cities. The numbers are clear, and they tell a compelling story: on 23 May 2007, for the first time in human history, more people lived in cities than in rural areas around the world. By 2050, two out of every three people will call a city home, and in 2100, a full 85 per cent of our species will be urban dwellers.

Everywhere around the world, cities are on the rise.

Accordingly, one of the most pressing questions of our time is how to address the variety of challenges posed by the massive influx of urban residents—from growing urban wealth inequality to the difficulties associated with integrating migrants.

Yet amidst all this breathless excitement over demographic trends—and hidden behind the nightmare image of the polluted, overcrowded metropolis—another question often goes overlooked: what about the

SOURCE: CREATIVE COMMONS, AMBER SIMS

cities that are rapidly losing their people, their major employers, and their hope for the future?

From Cuba to Italy, South Korea to Russia, dozens of large cities across the world are experiencing shrinking populations and declining per-capita GDP. The simple version of this narrative is that cities in the Global South are booming while former manufacturing hubs in the developed world are busting. But urban decline is a truly global phenomenon—some of the greatest rates of decline are in countries like China, Bangladesh, and Morocco.

Local leaders in dwindling cities face an entirely different set of challenges. What should one do—what can one do—if businesses are closing up shop, incomes are falling, and people are fleeing en masse?

There are two broad schools of thought on how best to tackle urban decline: “Urban renaissance,” where cities are saved through some combination of economic development initiatives, creative urban planning, revitalization megaprojects, and incentives to attract smart people, and “smart decline,” where cities embrace their shrinkage and opt to “right-size” their urban space for their reduced population rather than trying to entice residents back.

Urban renaissance is a familiar concept and, in many ways, the default mindset of urban policymakers and the general public. But smart decline deserves greater attention. Is it a good idea? Could it be a model for making urban life more environmentally and socially sustainable?

Detroit is the example par excellence of a declining global city. From a peak population of just under 1.85 million in 1950 to just over 670,000 in 2016, Detroit has faced its share of misery and garnered more than its fair share of headlines proclaiming its death.

In 2013, the City of Detroit unveiled the Detroit Future City framework—a plan to adapt the urban landscape for its reduced population over the next 50 years. The long-term plan is still in its early stages, but the city and its citizens have already implemented some smart-decline ideas, such as establishing urban farms where derelict factories once stood, and tearing down 10,000

deserted properties. Demolishing abandoned buildings and “rewilding” blighted areas could be a way to reduce infrastructure costs and to make the city more healthy and liveable for its remaining residents.

But Detroit’s smart-decline strategies face significant hurdles. Detroit has a long and racialized history of forcibly relocating its less-privileged citizens. The Detroit Future City framework seeks to offer incentives to expropriate properties rather than using “eminent domain,” in which a state invokes its right to seize private property for public use.

But what of the residents who refuse to leave blighted neighbourhoods that have been scheduled for demolition? The director of the Detroit Future City Implementation Office, Anika Goss-Foster, a Black woman herself, maintains that racial equality and community engagement are guiding principles for the plan. A recent study, however, found that 70 per cent of Detroit’s women of colour (who make up more than 90 per cent of the city’s female population) feel left out of the city’s revitalization plans.

It might be hard for their residents to hear, but some cities might just be doomed. Perhaps every city has a natural life cycle of birth, growth, decline, and death, but that doesn’t mean that declining cities can’t provide a high quality of life for their remaining residents. For that to happen, these cities need to take bold actions that reshape their urban environments—rather than praying for a renaissance miracle or “bribing people to stay.” Ultimately, the emerging trend of smart decline in shrinking cities can be a brilliant new policy paradigm. If it is to succeed, however, it must include the voices and interests of traditionally marginalized citizens.



Bruce Cinnamon is a second-year MGA student. His academic interests include economic development, innovation policy, international trade, and relations between subnational jurisdictions. In Fall 2017 he was on exchange to the Sciences Po Urban School in Paris, studying comparative policy in large metropolises around the world and how local governments are addressing global challenges.

Cameroon's separatist movements and the lingering implications of colonial rule

BY VANESSA HAYFORD



IN the past year, secessionist movements have taken up a lot of space in global mainstream media. From the political crisis in Catalonia to the push for independence in Kurdistan, stories of separatist movements have been well reported. Despite this in-depth coverage of secessionist movements around the world, the self-determination struggle that is taking place within Cameroon has been neglected.

Tensions in Cameroon mounted this past fall as administrative and civil service staff in the Anglophone regions of the country expressed deep-seated frustrations with the predominantly Francophone government. With

linguistic inequalities affecting all aspects of political, economic, and social life, Cameroon's Anglophones have taken to the streets to protest the broken constitutional promise of bilingualism.

Anglophone Cameroonians involved in the separatist movement have been calling for the creation of an independent state they wish to be called Ambazonia. In response, the Cameroonian government cracked down on the protests and has shut down internet access to the northwestern regions. As demonstrations turned deadly in recent months, more than 30,000 refugees fled to southern Nigeria.

Cameroon's Anglophone community represents roughly 20 per cent of the country's total population. Their minority status in the state has made it easy for the Francophone majority to enforce spoken and written French within central institutions. While the inequalities between both linguistic groups in the country are a current systemic problem, Cameroon's history as a victim of colonialism is largely to blame for this long-standing animosity.

A COLONIAL HISTORY

Cameroon is a central African state that was under German colonial rule until the early 20th century. In the aftermath of World War I Germany ceded the colony, which became a League of Nations mandate through Britain and France. The new colonial powers partitioned the state, with Britain assuming responsibility of a small portion of the northwestern territory and France taking over the rest.

Britain and France maintained control over the territory until 1960, when France granted its colony independence. In the following year Britain gave the people of the northwestern territory a referendum, which indicated the options to either join the former French colony or to join Nigeria. The option to become a separate, independent state was not included on the referendum.

As the ultimate decision was made to unite as one country, economic disparities and legal differences between the two countries were never addressed, resulting in the linguistic divisions that exist to this day.

THE SYMPTOMS OF COLONIAL RULE

The crisis in Cameroon is an example of the political and sociocultural damages that persist as a result of colonial rule. Africa's national borders were arbitrarily drawn during the so-called "Scramble for Africa" in the latter part of the 19th century. These borders were not drawn out of respect for the actual tribes and cultures that existed on the continent. As a result, communities that once coexisted have been separated, and others that had no history of living peacefully were forced to exist together.

African states have largely agreed to keep to the colonial borders in order to avoid conflict, but this decision has itself paradoxically been a source of conflict. The careless and selfish method of partitioning the continent has resulted in countless incidences of violence and political strife across Africa, and Cameroon is no exception. The choice to unify Cameroon was a choice to merge two histories, cultures, and various diverse communities with differences that are difficult to address.

Britain's insistence on maintaining control – even in the wake of independence – was also a contributing factor to the present conflict. The former colonial ruler created the 1961 referendum believing that its colony could not govern itself. Consequently, independence for Anglophone Cameroon was never an option.

The role of language is important. With the partitioning of the territory by Britain and France came the imposition of English and French on their respective subjects. The decision to unite the two colonies with such linguistic differences inevitably created institutional difficulties. These difficulties were further exacerbated by the fact that one language had stronger representation than the other.

Issues of secession and independence in Africa today are difficult to navigate. Time will tell what the fate of Cameroon's fragmented society will be, but ultimately this state will have to reconcile with the symptoms of its colonial history and arrive at an innovative and peaceful solution.



Vanessa is a first year student in the Master of Global Affairs program with the Munk School of Global Affairs. Prior to pursuing her Master's degree, Vanessa worked as a constituency assistant for Member of Parliament Julie Dzerowicz, with a focus on immigration casework, and as an equity assistant for Scotiabank Global Banking and Markets. As an avid writer, Vanessa served as a Junior Research Fellow for the NATO Council of Canada, and is currently a casual writer for a local Afro-Caribbean food blog. Her key topics of interest are immigration, humanitarian intervention, and international development.

The role of self-determination in advancing Indigenous healthcare

BY EMMA AMARAL



DESPITE regional disparities, Indigenous people around the world experience poorer health outcomes on average than non-Indigenous people. Indigenous people are disproportionately affected by poverty, among other social determinants of health, and are thus more likely to experience tuberculosis or malaria, maternal and infant mortality, cardiovascular illnesses, and HIV/AIDS. Environmental degradation and the loss of traditional territories and food sources are contributing to malnutrition. In turn, over half of Indigenous people over the age of 35 are diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, and the United Nations (UN) expects these figures to rise. These inequities are reflected in the stark gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. In Canada, this discrepancy is 17 years.

In a recent Series on Canada published by the Lancet medical journal, various reports describe the vast health inequities experienced by Indigenous communities across the country, including children who have died in hospitals while levels of government debated who was responsible for providing care. Executive editor Jocalyn Clark noted, “It looks to us as though there is a developing country within Canada’s borders.” She asked, “If you can’t be a leader at home on Indigenous health and equity, how can Canada be the leader we need it to be internationally?”

The UN notes that these health disparities, including mental health issues and substance abuse, are rooted in the “historical colonization and dispossession of Indigenous peoples, which has resulted in the fragmentation of Indigenous social, cultural, economic and political institutions.” According to a report by

SOURCE: CREATIVE COMMONS, PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION

the World Health Organization “one requirement for reversing colonization is self-determination, to help restore to Indigenous Peoples control over their lives and destinies.” The UN has found a strong correlation between the health outcomes of individuals and communities and their ability to exercise their right to self-determination.

The UN has provided a best practices guide in healthcare delivery by and for Indigenous people. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) locates health within the right to self-determination by asserting Indigenous peoples’ right to be actively involved in developing health programs and whenever possible, administering them through their own institutions. UNDRIP also affirms Indigenous peoples’ right to traditional medicines and health practices, and to access health services free from discrimination. It also places responsibility on governments to ensure that Indigenous people reach the “highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.” In the Canadian context, this is reflected in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)’s Calls to Action. Several of the TRC’s recommendations target health inequities, and call for the incorporation of Indigenous healing practices and the training of Indigenous health care practitioners.

A Canadian program that seems to heed these recommendations is the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) in British Columbia, the first province-wide health authority of its kind. In line with a self-governance and community-driven model, the FNHA has taken responsibility for the programs and services previously run by Health Canada’s First Nations Inuit Health Branch – Pacific Region. The FNHA works in partnership with First Nations communities from planning to the health service delivery stage, such as their response to the opioid epidemic, which includes harm reduction, accessible social and cultural treatment options, and supporting people on their healing journeys. Their operating principles follow a “wellness philosophy based on First Nations teachings” and define excellence as “implementing initiatives, programs, and services that brings the best in western medicine together with that of First Nations traditional knowledge and medicine.”

Other steps include \$6 million in funding within the 2017 budget for “culturally-safe” midwifery in First Nations and Inuit communities. The government has explicitly endorsed the importance of Indigenous women giving birth within their own communities instead of remote hospitals. Canada has also funded a knowledge-exchange project with Guatemala, tasked with reducing maternal and infant deaths by training Indigenous midwives.

The FNHA appears to be a step in the right direction for Canada to join other countries centering health care within self-determination. Australia, for its part, has embedded the right to self-determination within the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Sector (ACCHS) in response to discriminatory barriers within mainstream health services. It has also launched the Leaders in Indigenous Medical Education (LIME) Network, which promotes Indigenous health within medical education and supports Indigenous medical students. Chile, on the other hand, incorporated Indigenous Mapuche medicine within their Makewe hospital and launched Makelaen, the first chain of Mapuche pharmacies.

For Canada to be a leader in global health it must do more to improve Indigenous health equity domestically. As the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People states, this must be accomplished through self-determination initiatives. The international community has taken notice of the state of Indigenous health outcomes within Canada, including the nearly two-decade gap in life expectancy. If it fails to act, Canada is at risk of losing any moral authority on the matter.



Emma Amaral is a first year student at the Munk School of Global Affairs.

Emma graduated with an Honours Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Toronto, where she majored in psychology and minored in biology and Portuguese.

After graduating, Emma did social work for a non-profit organization in the field of mental health and housing, where she continues to volunteer. She also conducted psychological research on racial bias, fraud, and mental illness. Emma looks forward to expanding her perspective from the local (having lived in downtown Toronto all her life) to the global.

The diffusion of Daesh

BY TIMOTHY ROBINSON



FROM 2015 onwards, Daesh has been losing territory in both Iraq and Syria at a steady pace. The recapture of Raqqa and Mosul in 2017 marked victories that have left the group without control of any major settlement. Many are claiming victory over Daesh, yet this is a dangerous stance to take. Daesh, like its predecessor al-Qaeda, has been remarkably successful at spreading its extremist ideology to other conflict areas in the Islamic world.

Daesh, or the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, has become the most notorious Islamic extremist group in the world, eclipsing al-Qaeda as the principle threat in both the Middle East and the West. A long list of terrorist attacks during the past decade in Europe,

North Africa, and the Middle East has put the group on countless terrorist organization lists

Daesh emerged from the power vacuum created by the toppling of Saddam Hussein.

In the wake of the Iraq War, Daesh emerged from the power vacuum created by the toppling of Saddam Hussein. They garnered support from both the Iraqi

Sunni population and former members of the Iraqi army, which was disbanded following the US invasion. Daesh was able to dramatically expand its operations with the outbreak of the Syrian Civil war in 2011. The capture of Fallujah and then Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, signaled to the world that Daesh was poised to fundamentally challenge existing borders in the region. In 2014, Daesh claimed itself to be a modern Caliphate, attempting to reinstate the long extinct institution that asserts authority over the entirety of Sunni Islam.

It seems Daesh is trying to find the path of least resistance and has determined that Iraq and Syria are too difficult to maintain a permanent presence. Despite leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's dream of an entrenched Islamic political entity in the Levant, Daesh has been much more successful in its decentralized initiatives and diffusing into new regions of the Islamic World.

The first successful expansion of Daesh beyond Iraq and Syria was in Libya. The country, essentially a failed state since the NATO mission to topple Gadhafi left a tumultuous power vacuum, saw the group vie for large areas of territory with other Islamist groups and government forces. This reached its peak in 2016, with Daesh controlling key cities and towns along the Mediterranean coast. Since then it has been beaten back into the interior by a combination of strengthened government forces and NATO-led airstrikes. Despite these reversals, Daesh remains dangerous so long as the Libyan government struggles to assert a monopoly of force within its own borders.

Daesh has established another strong presence in Afghanistan. Its branch in Khorasan, a historical region covering a large area of central Asia, has carried out numerous terrorist attacks in Kabul and in Pakistan. A fractured society, coupled with a rugged geography, Afghanistan has become a bastion for Islamic extremist groups in the past four decades, and remains a haven for Daesh. It has also created a branch in the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt, where it has been carrying out an insurgency against Egyptian defence forces and infrastructure since 2011. Most famously, the branch claimed responsibility for the downing of Russian Metro-jet Flight 9268, which killed all 224 passengers in 2015. It has launched major attacks against the Egyptian military in the peninsula, as well as major

terrorist attacks against the country's Coptic Christian minority.

The last region with a significant Daesh presence is Yemen. The civil war between the Houthi rebels in the North and Saudi-backed Hadi government has created room for Daesh to operate in large areas of desert in the East of the country. With many of the same features present in the Syrian Civil War, Yemen is likely to be a destination for fighters coming from the Levant.

Yemen is likely to be a destination for fighters coming from the Levant.

In all these contexts, we can see similarities in geography and politics. Daesh can establish its presence in locations with large territories that are hard to govern, as well as among political systems with weak capacities that are often engaged in broader civil conflicts. There are many parts of North Africa and the Middle East which are a host to these attributes.

Finally, it also important to note that Daesh does not require territory to launch the kinds of lone-wolf terrorist attacks as seen in France, Belgium and the UK. As Daesh loses its presence in the Levant, it may seek to remind the world that it is still a legitimate threat by organizing more of these fear-inducing attacks on civilians in both the Islamic world and the West. In short, defeating Daesh completely will be more difficult than simply pushing them out of Syria and Iraq.



Tim Robinson is a first-year student in the Master of Global Affairs program. He completed his BA degree from Queen's University in 2016, majoring in African and Middle Eastern History. His areas of interest include the intersectionality of security, policy, and development in North Africa and the Middle East. He is also passionate about facilitating cultural dialogue understanding between Western and Islamic societies

A global economy, but on China's terms

BY TANVI SHETTY



ON New Year's day, a Chinese flag was hoisted on Sri Lankan soil to commemorate yet another Chinese acquisition of a national asset. China has acquired control of Sri Lanka's strategically located Hambantota port through a 99-year lease as part of a debt-reduction deal, in an agreement that some believe marks the beginning of a new era of creditor imperialism.

The lease takeover is part of China's ambitious Belt and Road initiative, a scheme which involves substantial Chinese infrastructure investments across countries in Africa, Europe, and Asia. In exchange for financing and building infrastructure in developing countries, China receives uncontested access to their national assets, including mineral resources and ports.

Launched in 2013, the ambitious policy consists of two distinct parts: the Silk Road Economic Belt, a physical road linking China to markets in Europe, and the Cen-

tury Maritime Silk Road, a sea-based network linking China's southern coast to Africa and the Mediterranean. Mr. Xi's bold policy stands in stark contrast to the strategies adopted by China's former leader Deng Xiaoping, whose philosophy of "hide your strength and bide your time" led China to adopt more inward-looking policies. Momentum began to change in 2000, as Beijing began to realise the importance of establishing foreign alliances, particularly as it sought to establish itself as a global power. With almost \$1 trillion dollars in investment, set to span across 60 countries, the "one belt, one road" initiative boasts a scope and scale that is incomparable in modern day history.

CHINA'S WIN-WIN STRATEGY

While Chinese officials claim that much of the policy is an exercise in altruism, these investments are clearly more strategic than philanthropic. The economic motivations are clear: Mr. Xi intends to create new

markets for Chinese companies. Faced with a slowing economy, and an excess supply of steel, cement, and machinery, he hopes to create new economic opportunities for domestic producers. Not only will this deepen China's economic ties in continents such as Africa and Latin America, where US engagement is receding, but it could also help bridge the rural-urban divide that China currently faces, by linking less developed border regions with neighbouring markets. Beijing also hopes that the scheme will prove to be a more profitable avenue for its vast foreign exchange reserves, most of which currently sit in low interest-bearing US government securities. China's fixation on a profitable bottom line is contradictory with its apparent willingness to invest in financially dubious projects as part of the scheme. Many believe that it is a gamble that China is willing to take, in the hopes that short term monetary losses will be outweighed by long term military and diplomatic gains. China has deployed this strategy in Pakistan, where it has invested heavily in power plant upgrades and port expansions. By promoting development in Pakistan, Beijing hopes to curb the flow of Pakistani terrorists into China's Xinjiang region, where a large population of China's Muslim minority resides.

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING

According to a recent study conducted by the Center for Global Development, the Belt and Road initiative could dramatically increase the debt risk for several countries. Amongst these countries is Sri Lanka, which currently owes \$8 billion in debt to state-owned Chinese firms. Seeking to mitigate some of the financial burden it faces, Sri Lanka has leased the Hambantota port to China in a deal that is worth \$1.1 billion. The acquisition serves several strategic goals for China, including greater proximity to India's booming market, and an advantageous position to deploy its naval forces. Critics have raised concerns that the agreement is lopsided, as it threatens Sri Lanka's sovereignty, and creates a worrying precedent for future debt relief deals. Some have gone so far as to call it a form of modern day colonialism. Sri Lanka's growing ties with China are not particularly surprising given that the two states have conducted business for decades. Following a brutal 26 year civil war with the Tamil Tigers, the Sri Lankan government received little help from Western states amidst accusa-

tions of state led human right abuses. China stepped in and extended millions of dollars in aid to help Sri Lanka rebuild its damaged infrastructure. Nevertheless, as China continues to delve deeper into Sri Lanka's territory for the sake of "mutual benefits", many believe that Sri Lanka's dependency on China will reach a point of no return.

TROUBLE AT HOME

While China continues to pour money into its ambitious policy across the world, it has faced severe backlash, both at home and abroad. Chinese banks are extending loans that run counter to common practices – loaning to states with weak economies, political instability, and widespread corruption. There is growing concern that such a risky gamble could end up hurting China's financial institutions.

Meanwhile, on foreign turf, governments have begun to realise the long-term consequences of Chinese loans, and are seeking to renegotiate their agreements. In Nepal for instance, a newly elected government vetoed its predecessor's decision to award China a \$2.5 billion deal to build an hydropower plant, in light of certain "irregularities" in the award process.

While the initiative has been described by some as a "symphony of all relevant parties," many remain wary of China's growing dominance. Yet, Mr. Xi's grandiose initiative has ushered in a new global economic order; one which unabashedly challenges the age-old Western dogma. While it is undeniable that Chinese money has helped spur progress in developing countries, the question of the hour is: at what cost?



Tanvi is a first year Master of Global Affairs candidate at the Munk School. She moved to Canada from Malaysia in 2009 to pursue a Bachelor's degree at Rotman. She completed her studies with a specialist in Finance and Economics, and proceeded to work within the capital markets division of RBC. She is aiming to pivot into policy analysis to pursue her research interests in developmental economics, focusing particularly in the region of South Asia.

A bump in the road: measles outbreaks quadruple across Europe

BY NATASHA COMEAU



EUROPE first pioneered vaccination in 1796 with the smallpox vaccine, and subsequently remained a leader in the field in both research and development. Yet Europe has recently experienced widespread outbreaks of measles across the continent. The number of reported cases of the virus quadrupled to more than 21,000 cases and 35 deaths last year. These outbreaks have been linked to declining vaccination rates in certain regions, largely the result of a growing anti-vaccination campaign sweeping across Europe.

Measles is among the world's most contagious diseases. However, a vaccination which treats measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) with 99 per cent effectiveness has been in use since the 1960s. Like many vaccinations which require a certain level of "herd immunity" to protect a population, MMR requires a 95 per cent vaccination rate. Declining immunization uptake across Europe has resulted in certain pockets operating at a rate closer to 85 per cent, including areas in Italy, Ukraine, and Romania, where the largest epidemics are occurring.

Measles is a highly treatable disease and the threat to

populations remains limited to those who are not vaccinated. Nevertheless, it presents a major risk to older populations, pregnant women, young children, and people with chronic illness. Low uptake of vaccinations could jeopardize the health of these vulnerable populations and disrupt the public good of eliminating measles globally.

Anti-vaccination campaigns are growing worldwide with politicians and celebrities alike spearheading the movement. The MMR vaccine was linked to autism in a study published in 1998 by British researcher Dr. Andrew Wakefield. The paper claimed that 12 children experienced brain damage due to the vaccine altering their immune systems. Dozens of researchers have since attempted to replicate these results and have failed. The British Medical Journal, as well as ten of the paper's co-authors, have since denounced the study as "fraudulent." Ultimately, this resulted in the paper being retracted, and Wakefield losing his license to practice, having been found guilty of "serious professional misconduct."

Nonetheless, two decades later, anti-vaccination follow-

SOURCE: CREATIVE COMMONS, STEVEFPB

ers continue to champion this study. President Donald Trump relentlessly promoted the link between vaccines and autism in his election campaign through speeches, tweets, and during Republican debates. However, one year into Trump's presidency he appears to have eased off the issue and abandoned any policies linking immunizations to autism, a celebrated move by experts in the field. In Europe, anti-vaccination positions have been strongly advocated for by populist anti-establishment politicians and even became a major platform issue in Italy's recent election.

Wakefield's study appears to continue to hold weight in certain circles, even after being retracted, because the cause of autism remains largely a mystery. Therefore, frustrated parents and politicians are looking to place blame, making vaccines an appealing culprit, especially to those who discredit the medical and pharmaceutical industry for its profit-driven operations.

With a strong and mounting campaign against vaccines, the World Health Organization, regional health advocacy agencies, as well as certain national governments, are pushing to counter harmful anti-vaccination rhetoric. Efforts to increase vaccination rates include making immunization mandatory, which is most effectively achieved through school-entry checks and national awareness campaigns. Italy and Romania have recently introduced school-entry laws in an effort to combat growing epidemics. Exceptions are permitted for medical, philosophical, or religious reasons, such as among Christian Scientists who do not believe in vaccination.

Additionally, "catch-up campaigns" are being implemented across the continent for children under 10 years of age. Countries like Ukraine have created a national task force and response plan to increase immunization coverage, secure long-term supplies of vaccines, and train health workers in identifying, reporting, and treating measles.

While Europe's measles outbreaks are shocking, Canada also saw a 400 per cent increase in the number of measles cases in 2017, jumping to 45 cases. Only two Canadian provinces, Ontario and New Brunswick, currently employ school-entry vaccination laws, mandating children's vaccinations in order to attend school. Violations of this policy include fines of up to \$1000,

or a school suspension of up to 20 days. In 2013, 900 high-school students in Ottawa were suspended for not having the proper vaccinations.

Regardless of these outbreaks, the threat of measles to developed nations remains relatively limited due to largely effective containment and disease surveillance mechanisms currently in place. The major threat to global health exists in developing regions, particularly in parts of Africa and Asia, especially for malnourished children and those living with chronic illnesses like tuberculosis or HIV/AIDS.

Strides are being made globally on combating measles, with vaccination rates up to 85 per cent globally in 2016, and an 84 per cent drop in measles deaths between 2000 and 2016, preventing 20.4 million deaths. With such a cost-effective and safe vaccine on the market, this is a major victory for global public health. The last remaining obstacles, availability and access, must be overcome to ensure all populations are protected from this disease, especially vulnerable groups.

Europe's current measles epidemic should be a lesson to populations everywhere, that no matter a country's wealth, healthcare access, and education, vaccines remain an essential aspect of public health. Furthermore, anti-vaccination campaigns need to be widely discredited, as they pose significant threats to "herd immunity," putting vulnerable populations at risk and ultimately doing more harm for healthcare than good.



Natasha is a first year Master of Global Affairs student and holds a BA Joint Honours degree in International Development and Political Science with a minor in Gender, Sexuality, Feminist and Social Justice Studies from McGill University. She is passionate about global health and gender equity, in particular reproductive health-care, combating gender-based violence, and human trafficking legislation. Recently Natasha wrote for the Montreal World Health Organization contributing four chapters for a reference guide, the chapters were on sexual violence, human trafficking, abortion, and compulsory sterilization. She hopes to pursue a career in the non-profit sector specializing in global health or the promotion of gender equity.

Womonomics: A ripple effect of change within Japan

BY HANNAH ROSEN



JAPAN is currently dealing with a low birth-rate, aging population, and low female economic participation rate. Together, these factors point towards a social and economic crisis within the nation.

As the third largest economy in the world, economists worry that Japan cannot sustain its population decline much longer.

Although one of the most highly populated countries in the world, Japan's low birth rate coupled with an aging population means that the Japanese population is likely to shrink dramatically over the coming years. Between the 2010 and 2015 national censuses in Japan, the population had already shrunk by one million people,

down to 127 million. According to the United Nations, this population will shrink an additional 15 per cent by 2050.

In Japan, the population aged 60 and over is more than twice the number of children.

In Japan, the population aged 60 and over is more than twice the number of children. This aging population

creates a system with an unsustainable number of retirees in comparison to workers, as measured by the Potential Support Ratio (PSR), or the number of people aged 15–64 per one person aged 65 or older. When a nation's PSR drops below two, it impacts health care and social protection systems, and Japan's PSR is the lowest in the world. These social services are already strained in Japan, and will likely only worsen under these conditions.

In addition, women's participation in high-level positions in the workforce is extremely low considering the advanced nature of the economic sector. In the government, only 9.5 per cent of parliamentary seats are held by women. Out of all the OECD countries, Japan falls third to last in terms of the gender wage gap. Although Japan has a higher female participation rate in the labour force than the United States, Japan needs greater and longer-term female participation at high-levels in order to sustain their economy as the population ages.

Cultural norms have proven to be one of the biggest causes of slowed economic growth in Japan. The Japanese business culture consists of 12-hour days, which makes having two working parents difficult. Because women are often not in high level positions, they are the partner that chooses to stay home. There is also a subsidy given to families who only have one working partner, meaning that women can often earn more through a stay-at-home subsidy than by joining the workforce.

Although some argue that Japan has waited too long to address these issues, Womenomics is pushing ahead as the solution to these issues. Prime Minister Abe founded Womenomics under Abenomics in 2012 with ambitious goals to put more women in high-level private sector and government positions, and to expand child care benefits.

Japan's Womenomics is novel for the nation. However, the country is still lagging in comparison to other developed nations globally. Japan has encouraged companies of 301 employees or more to put more women in executive positions. However, there are neither clear incentives to do so, nor repercussions if they do not cooperate. Even if women do make it to

these top tier positions, they are still subject to Japan's large wage gap.

Moving forward, Japan might look to Norway and Iceland as two countries that have seemingly experienced greater success in their gender policy.

Iceland was the first country in the world to eliminate the gender wage gap, in large part by simply making it illegal. Norway, on the other hand, has one of the best parental leave policies in the world, making it the number one place in the world to be a mother (Japan ranked 32nd). In Norway, parents are entitled to 49 weeks of earning the full salary of the job they held six to ten months prior to the parental leave, or 59 weeks at 80 per cent pay. The first six weeks of parental leave are reserved for the mother, but the maternal and paternal quotas are ten weeks each, encouraging the father to also take time off work. Indeed, paternity leave is expected of Norwegian fathers. In Japan, men are entitled to 12 weeks of paternity leave (but not at the same salary as Norway), yet only 2 to 3 per cent take it due to cultural stigma.

If Japan were to mimic Norway's parental leave policy, the birth rate could increase as women feel more confident leaving work. There would be more opportunities for women to return to the workforce after having children, as they would have sufficient and equal parental leave and an equal wage to their partner. With a comprehensive parental leave policy, women will not lose time or advancement in their position. If Japan is going to see drastic improvements through Womenomics, it will have to show that this is no longer just a 'women's issue,' and that to remain economically competitive, collective change must occur.



Hannah is a first year Master of Global Affairs student at the Munk School of Global Affairs. She recently obtained her Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Political Studies with a minor in Global Development Studies. Her focus is predominantly concerned with the correlation between gender and the field of military and defense. Her goals are to conduct her own research in the field while obtaining her PhD.

Militant Buddhists of Sri Lanka: A state of emergency

BY GITA GOOLSARRAN



ETHNO-RELIGIOUS tensions in the Kandy district of Sri Lanka devolved into intense violence and anti-Muslim riots recently, prompting the government to issue a state of emergency on March 6, 2018, including a curfew and restrictions on social media.

The violence was triggered nearly two weeks prior, after the death of a Sinhalese Buddhist truck driver following an altercation with a number of Muslims, who were reportedly drunk and attacked him because he did not give way to the rickshaws in which they were travelling. During the funeral procession, people from the Sinhalese community damaged shops and properties in Muslim-dominated areas of Kandy.

Sadly, Sri Lanka is one of several South-East Asian countries that have attracted attention for their militant Buddhists. In Sri Lanka they are credited with fueling rising tensions and anti-Muslim sentiments in the past several years, propagating the perception that Buddhism and the Buddhist majority are under threat. Sri Lankan Muslims are accused of amassing an excessive amount of

wealth, repopulating overly-quickly, and converting and desecrating Buddhist sites.

Sri Lanka is one of several South-East Asian countries that have attracted attention for their militant Buddhists.

While the minority Muslims—a portion of the country’s Tamil population, and 10 per cent of the total population—and the majority Sinhalese Buddhists have no ‘traditional’ grievances per se, the conflict can be connected to its historical roots in the anti- and post-colonial Buddhist revival. The “Great Chronicle,” or Mahāvamsa, is the story of Sinhalese nationhood crafted in defense of the Buddhist religion, and is often referenced as a justification for violence against

non-Buddhists. One notable tale equates the life of numerous Hindu Tamils taken in battle to “two and a half” Buddhists. This story, and stories like it, serve as the foundation of a kind of Buddhism perpetuated by extremists, which constantly seek unity in the persecution of perceived threats.

Though there have been demonstrations of protest and solidarity among the ranks of moderate Buddhist monks in wake of the attacks, the structural and pervasive conditions for violence remain. Among these lie the pervasive impunity and institutional dominance of the 75 per cent majority Sinhalese Buddhists. Beneath the nationalist sentiments of entitlement and ownership of the small island nation, there are laws enshrining the pre-eminence of Buddhism within the Sri Lankan constitution. Issues of impunity are further complicated by the reluctance of law enforcement to persecute religious leaders for comments condoning or inciting unrest.

In order to strengthen its transitional justice agenda in the wake of the Sri Lankan Civil War, the government of Sri Lanka faces the unenviable task of deconstructing institutionalised and socialised privileges of the majority ethno-religious group, as well as producing inclusive economic growth that might tame economic jealousies. The riots and attacks are not an isolated incident, but form part of the current ‘wave’ of anti-Muslim violence that began in February.

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The attacks on homes, mosques, businesses, and other property in Kandy have occurred in spite of longstanding government commitments to reconciliation and strengthening of the rule of law.



In 2015, the government of Maithripala Sirisena committed to an investigation of war crimes committed during the civil war with the Tamil Tigers. However, delays in the process and a general reluctance to enforce repercussions for perpetrators of pro-nationalist violence, have left the country unable to move forward.

Not quite a decade after the end of Sri Lanka’s civil war, this spate of violence raises concerns among human rights advocates that Sri Lanka risks repeating past crimes and abuses of communal violence. At the time of their election in 2015, the current government was perceived to be the minority-friendly choice. Despite these intentions, however, their actions have seemed performative at best to the outside world. Skeptics remain wary of the country’s most recent state-of-emergency, and the Sri Lankan government’s ability to affect meaningful structural changes.



Gita is a first year MGA student, and recent graduate of the University of Toronto. She obtained her Honours Bachelor of Arts degree specializing in Political Science, with a minor in History. She has strong interests in issues of the Global South, including the politics of religion and indigeneity, innovation policy, and the regional dynamics of economic development. Her long-term goals are to pursue these intellectual interests through a career in global policy. She is an avid reader and her passions include learning about the world through books and travel.

The strategic and ethical dilemma of mercenaries in modern warfare

BY GEORDIE JEAKINS



IN a shocking display, Cold War rivalries appeared to reignite when a regiment of suspected Russian mercenaries crossed the Euphrates River in Syria and entered a military base operated by the US-backed Syrian Defense Force. The attack, which occurred in early February near Deir ez-Zor, saw the advancing forces decimated by American artillery and air power. This event has drawn attention to important strategic and ethical questions on the use of mercenaries in

modern combat.

Mercenaries are hardly new to military history. For thousands of years, states, cities, and even individuals have employed mercenaries as armies-for-hire. Their unscrupulous reputation for deserting their employers and looting friend and foe alike made them a particularly hated institution. Nevertheless, the benefits of a ready-order, highly trained army made their usage

SOURCE: CREATIVE COMMONS, ALAN GOUDY

widespread, from the Condottieri and Landsknecht in Renaissance Italy and Germany, to the British employment of Prussian soldiers in the American Revolutionary War. In modern combat, mercenaries have been replaced by Private Military Contractors (PMCs). However, the distinction is purely semantic. PMCs continue to play the same role as their historical antecedents, maintaining many of the same benefits and liabilities.

PMCs play an integral role in 21st century warfare. Traditional explanations for the rise of military contractors focus on the end of the Cold War, and the subsequent push to downsize the armed forces. The invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 fundamentally changed the military needs of the United States and its allies in the War on Terror. In these conditions, where large-scale battles were replaced with localized counter-insurgency operations, mercenaries provided compelling advantages. The long and arduous processes of pacification and ‘nation-building’ which occurred in Afghanistan and Iraq are not conducive to a regular army force. Soldier morale is easier to maintain when the motivation for fighting is simply about money. Similarly, casualties among regular troops are far more damaging to public support for the war effort than when the deaths are among military contractors. The secrecy with which mercenaries operate compounds this benefit. By deploying contractors, military leaders are able to shield their operations from the transparency and oversight requirements that constrain regular troop deployments.

The strategic and political benefits of PMCs have made them attractive tools for other nations, namely Russia. In its interventions in both Ukraine and Syria, Russia has employed mercenaries to bolster its allies, all while maintaining plausible deniability that actual Russian soldiers are involved. In Ukraine, thousands of ‘little green men,’ armed with tanks and other heavy equipment, have flowed across the border to bolster rebels in the Eastern Donbass region. Russia has also deployed mercenaries to Syria to fight against the Islamic State, but with the underlying agenda of supporting the Assad regime as it attempts to reclaim the country. Russia’s deployment of mercenaries has allowed a level of separation between military actions on the ground and the political ramifications it might

otherwise cause in the Kremlin. This was evident in both the recent attack in Deir ez-Zor and the shooting down of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17. In both cases, Moscow escaped punishments that would be expected were these acts committed by a country’s own armed forces, and in which case would amount to a declaration of war .

Despite the benefits, military contractors carry significant liabilities. Their secrecy, in many cases, is a double-edged sword. Without transparency and oversight, PMCs are notorious for human rights abuses, in keeping with the infamy of their mercenary forbearers. Blackwater, renamed as Academi in 2011, committed numerous such abuses in Iraq, including the killing of 14 unarmed Iraqi civilians in 2007. Additionally, contractors do not have the same protections and access to due process that regular soldiers enjoy. Russian mercenaries in Ukraine, if captured, can be tried for suspected war crimes. Russia, unlikely to set aside its deniability, would almost certainly abandon these men and women.

In modern warfare, mercenaries will likely continue to be an integral element of a major country’s warfighting strategy. The benefits of ready-order, professional soldiers who are not grounded by the same political impediments of regular troops are too attractive for military leaders to ignore. Additionally, the strategic possibilities of mercenaries—either in maintaining an occupying force or in maintaining plausible deniability in combat—only adds to their case. However, the ethical implications of soldiers acting outside of normal channels of oversight, transparency, and law is a worrying trend, and one that will need to be addressed to curb the cancerous effect of mercenaries upon armed forces.



Geordie is a first year Master of Global Affairs student at the Munk School of Global Affairs. He holds an Honours BA degree from the University of Toronto, where he specialized in History and International Relations.

Although topics of security are a primary interest of his, Geordie also enjoys writing about issues of development, diplomacy, and trade.



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