

GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS

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IF EUROPE WANTS TO SUCCESSFULLY INTEGRATE REFUGEES, ITS MEMBER STATES MUST EMPOWER THEIR CITIES

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LOOKING BACK AT A DECADE OF UNDRIP

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ON THE COVER: photographs by MGA, Natasha Comeau, Leroy Skalstad, Cheryl Holt and Free-Photos.

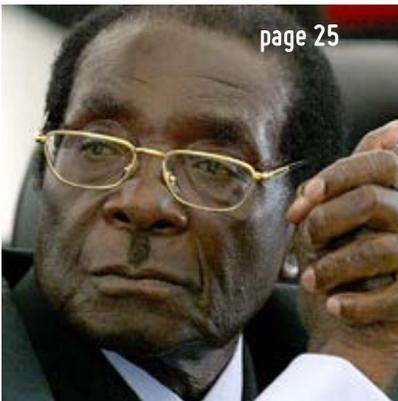
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Letter from the Executives

We are proud to be collaborating with the Hart House Global Commons to facilitate dialogue around the meaningful concept of pluralism, especially at a time where divisiveness and isolationism are increasingly common in political rhetoric. Global Conversations' 2018 Winter Issue is centered around the strengths, struggles, and solutions for "Achieving Peaceful Pluralism in a Globalized World." We hope that these articles complement the lived experiences shared during the Global Commons event on February 1st, 2018, and add to the diverse voices of students from the University of Toronto in Canada, the Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá, Colombia, the University of Cape Town in South Africa, and Indiana University in Bloomington, USA.

As the written contributors of Global Conversations make up a diverse group themselves, a multitude of definitions and notions of pluralism are referenced in this issue. Pluralism is discussed as it relates to cultural, religious, and ethnic minority groups' involvement in political processes, as well as in reference to systems in which two or more states, groups, or sources of authority coexist, successfully or not. Many areas of the world have historically faced challenges with pluralism—from the political complexities surrounding the status of Jerusalem to global discussions about reconciliation with Indigenous communities—and continue to face these same struggles today.

While highlighting the barriers that must be overcome to achieve peaceful pluralism, we also strive to elicit hope through stories about innovative solutions, such as European cities' strategies for integrating refugees, and collaborative approaches to environmental governance in South America that rely upon Indigenous knowledge. Technology too can hamper or facilitate pluralism within democracies, evident through the recent threat to net neutrality in the United States, and the rise of modern apps like 'Loomio,' which improve citizens' involvement in political decision-making. Even the threat of antimicrobial resistance can be addressed through the lens of a pluralist and multidisciplinary approach to medical diagnoses and treatment.

We encourage readers to continue the conversation beyond the Global Commons event, using the articles and new perspectives to spark further discussions with individuals that you may not share a common identity. Finally, we would like to thank Marco Adamovic for organizing a lively international dialogue as well as the Global Commons Advisory Committee members for their support.

*Executive Producers,
Siobhan Bradley & Cadhla Gray*

To read the rest of the Global Conversations Winter Issue, visit www.munkgc.com.

plu·ra·li·sm *n.* existence and tolerance of a variety of peoples, opinions, etc. in a society.

Diversity without plurality in the Persian Gulf

BY TIM ROBINSON



THE most commonly discussed perspective on the nature of plurality in the Middle East is that of religious and ethnic conflict. The marked difference between Christian, Jewish, and Muslim, Sunni and Shia, Arab, and Kurd, all reflect the long history of these different groups inhabiting the same area. One region, however, has a very different type of diversity that is the result of primarily modern events, and which is based upon the division between locals and foreigners.

The Persian Gulf experienced rapid change during the past half century, transforming from a relative backwater to one of the most affluent urban centres in the world. This rapid development, fuelled by the rise in oil prices during the 1970s, produced a dissonance with the continued desire to maintain the region's traditions and culture. It also became the catalyst for one of the largest mass migrations in recent history, which profoundly altered the demographics of the region.

Of great importance is the fact that there is no mechanism for permanent immigration or pathways to citizenship in Gulf States. Instead, these states utilize a system based on temporary work contracts, called Kafala, whereby a local employer must sponsor a foreigner's employment and residence status in the country. This system ensures that differences between citizens and non-citizens are deeply ingrained in the social fabric of the state.

“There is no mechanism for permanent immigration or pathways to citizenship in Gulf States.”

The present state of the Persian Gulf exhibits a strange form of diversity that completely lacks plurality. These societies are made up of different groups of people who are integral to its composition, yet operate in strictly segregated roles. In an almost dystopian fashion, people are divided into fixed social groups, organized in clear hierarchies, and experience limited inter-group interaction.

Citizens are entitled to social, political, and economic privileges that enable them to enjoy the fruits of the vast oil wealth that these countries have generated. They have become synonymous with extreme luxury and opulence, yet they maintain many of the strictly conservative traditions and religious customs.

Citizens, however, only represent a small slice of the population in the Gulf. States such as the United Arab Emirates and Qatar have huge numbers of foreign workers that completely dwarf the Indigenous population, comprising roughly 90 per cent of their total populations. The vast majority of these are migrant-labourers from states in South and South-East Asia, such as Nepal, India, and Bangladesh. This silent majority are only visible through their participation in the construction of the incredible architecture for which these ultra-modern cities have become renowned.

Their actual presence in public spaces is negligible, as is their ability to participate in the social and political activities of the state. This social invisibility is even more apparent when viewed through the lens of gender. A whole caste of women working as domestic servants are denied any exposure to society outside the mansions of their employers.

This silent majority of migrant labourers is subject to many dehumanizing practices, from arduous working and living conditions, to the denial of basic political rights. They are physically removed from public spaces and forced to live in camps outside the cities. Their sole function in society is that of a worker. Despite the significant contributions they make to the societies in which they live, their existence there is entirely provisional.

A third group exists in these states that traverses the space between citizens and migrant labourers.

Westerners are still temporary residents, yet they are entitled to a certain level of involvement within the social life of the state. They are free to enjoy public spaces and participate in some aspects of local society. At the same time, however, they are segregated into their own gated communities and are obligated to adapt their behaviour to local norms in public spaces. Even those who have lived for many years in the host country experience limited contact with non-Westerners outside of their compounds or places of employment.

In considering the goal of achieving peaceful pluralism in a globalized world, both the achievements and challenges created by economic progress in the Gulf States must be emphasized. The Kafala system has many issues that would need to be addressed in order to create more open and pluralistic societies in the Persian Gulf. Currently, the sharp division between citizens and foreigners holds the entire society back. Migrant labourers do not have adequate political and labour rights, or any acknowledgement of their importance to society. In addition, the separation of Westerners and locals has created an economy where the former dominates the private sector and the latter are concentrated in the powerful state institutions. This dynamic has hampered the development of local entrepreneurship and innovation.

These states must find a way to balance the preservation of their local culture with the acceptance of greater plurality in their societies. Only through dismantling segregation can these states truly advance for the mutual benefit of all their inhabitants.



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.

The fight for net neutrality is a fight in defense of human rights

BY SARAH COOPER



ON December 14, 2017, an independent agency of the United States government responsible for the regulation of interstate communications changed the internet as we know it. In a 3-2 vote, the United States Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted to repeal regulations, including the 2015 Open Internet Rules, that upheld net neutrality and promoted the democratization of the internet. The result of this decision has dangerous implications for human rights in the United States and around the world.

Net neutrality insists that internet service providers must not discriminate in their treatment of data on the internet. This data includes users, content, websites, platforms, applications, or methods of communication. Effectively, this assures that internet service providers, including major companies like AT&T and Verizon, cannot block or prioritize specific online content that a user accesses. Net neutrality works to safeguard the founding principles of the internet in which all traffic is treated equally.

With the FCC's change in regulations come changes in internet service provision.

"Net neutrality works to safeguard the founding principles of the internet in which all traffic is treated equally."

Users can expect that, over time, companies that provide them access to the internet will begin to strategically determine which content they prioritize. This makes private industry the new internet gatekeepers. As profit-motivated corporations, the decisions of these companies regarding which content to prioritize over another will likely fall in line with business interests.

Importantly, the public fight to maintain net neutrality is not only about what movies or music people can access on the internet, but about defending human rights around the world. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrines the freedom of expression, freedom

of peaceful assembly, and the right to education and cultural life. Since its inception, the internet has served as one of the most powerful tools for citizens to realize these rights.

In 2012, the Human Rights Council of the United Nations passed a resolution (A/HRC/20/L.13) which emphasizes the “promotion, protection, and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet.” The realization of this resolution was the result of years of consultation and a United Nations special rapporteur report which supported the calls to establish access to the internet as a human right. Following this, in 2016, the Human Rights Council passed a non-binding resolution that stated the disruption of citizens’ internet access constituted a human rights violation, further enshrining access to the internet as a human right.

With just one vote by the FCC, internet access in the United States can now be directed by the whim of private industry. Internet service providers can now prioritize the content of websites that can afford to pay and block the content of those who cannot. This grants an untethered ability for major corporations to determine which emerging companies succeed by blocking or slowing the content of competitors.

“Disrupting equal access...will have devastating consequences.”

The implications of this are not just reverberating through the business world, but across the political sphere as well. Voters rely on the internet as a medium to inform their decision making and engage in active citizenship. Disrupting equal access to the corners of the internet that represent a global diversity of perspectives will have devastating consequences and limit the plurality of voices and ideas shared.

Marginalized communities, who are consistently misrepresented and underserved by large media outlets, will be disproportionately affected by this decision. These communities, including people of color, the LGBTQ community, and Indigenous people, rely on an open internet

to organize, access opportunities, and push back against systemic discrimination. In the last number of years, the internet has had an overwhelming impact on activism and social movements around the world. Today’s social movements—from the Arab Spring to the Movement for Black Lives—rely on equal access to the internet. Without the ability to share content freely, particularly content that illustrates pervasive injustices, this information may no longer be disseminated as easily, and private industry could limit access to the tools outraged citizens use to communicate and organize.

For advocates of net neutrality, the fight to protect the open internet is far from over. Activist groups and tech companies have partnered up to take the FCC to court over this decision, and United States Democratic lawmakers are leading the charge to bring the debate to the United States Congress. Regardless of the results of these efforts, it is evident that the public is deeply invested in their right to a free internet, with petitions and commentary on the FCC’s vote amassing millions of contributions.

In an increasingly globalized digital world, the neutrality of the internet is an invaluable resource; a resource, many argue, is worth fighting to protect. The results of the fight in the United States to maintain an open internet may inform the decisions of governments around the world. Maintaining net neutrality does not simply mean maintaining existing standards. It means resisting authoritative power, and maintaining the ripples of a new fundamental human right in the digital age as well.



Sarah is a Master of Global Affairs candidate with diverse interests, often focusing their studies on the intersection of identity politics and human rights, with a growing interest in the policy challenges created by emerging technology. Sarah has held multiple positions in various not-for-profit organizations, has worked as a policy analyst for the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and most recently as a consultant for Youth LEAD in Bangkok, Thailand. They hold a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and Human Rights from Carleton University.

If Europe wants to successfully integrate refugees, its member states must empower their cities

BY BRUCE CINNAMON



AT the height of the European migrant crisis in 2016, residents of a wealthy Hamburg neighbourhood used their limousines and yachts to blockade roads and halt the construction of a hostel that would have housed 192 of the city's 40,000 refugees. This story perfectly illustrates one of the dominant narratives of the crisis: privileged Europeans engaging in shameless nimbysism while vulnerable refugees go without shelter. Indeed, the massive influx of migrants across Europe—often referred to as the biggest refugee crisis since World War II—has provoked an array of negative reactions that range from the absurd to the atrocious.

In the Netherlands, approximately 2,000 residents

rioted in the small town of Geldermalsen to protest the opening of a centre to house asylum-seekers. Police brutality in Calais, France has reached “excessive and life-threatening levels.” In Italy, refugees have been assaulted by police, have had their possessions stolen and burned by Italian residents, and have been shot in the head by mafia members. And in Germany, which has accepted more refugees than any other European country, there were nearly 10 attacks on migrants every day in 2016.

Scanning headlines, it seems as if every city in Europe is actively resisting the settlement and integration of refugees, whether through violence or through protest.

SOURCE: CREATIVE COMMONS, DUNCAN C

“It seems as if every city in Europe is actively resisting the settlement and integration of refugees, whether through violence or through protest.”



But as panic and paranoia have spread, municipal governments and neighbourhood-level organizations have risen to meet them with calm and coordinated action.

In Amsterdam, local authorities developed the Startblok Riekerhaven project to house refugees alongside Dutch university students, encouraging intercultural dialogue. In Paris, a group called Singa organized the *Comme à la maison* (CALM) initiative, which places refugees in private citizens' homes. Local authorities are trying to repopulate the shrinking community of Satriano, a town in southern Italy, by helping refugees find housing, get jobs, and complete their asylum applications. Not to mention practically every German city has developed innovative programs to encourage integration. For instance, the refugees in Berlin organize walking tours that put a human face to the crisis while Germans in Oberhausen are encouraged to learn Syrian cooking through Refugees' Kitchen food truck, which was created by a group of artists.

These lists could go on forever. In fact, transnational networks of local governments (Intercultural Cities, Cities of Migration, EuroCities, Integrating Cities, Solidarity Cities, Urban Refugees, the UK's City of Sanctuary, 100 Resilient Cities, etc.) have compiled endless troves of qualitative and quantitative evidence to support their claim that one of the best ways to adequately address the refugee crisis is through local initiatives, which are often cash-starved, threadbare operations.

Ultimately, Europe's refugee crisis is an urban crisis. According to 2016 data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than half

of all refugees live in cities. Most humanitarian assistance, however, goes to refugees living in camps (who represent only a quarter of the refugee population). If national governments truly wish to resolve the refugee crisis—and not only end the humanitarian disaster, but harness the economic potential that migrants represent for the continent's aging workforce as well—then cities must be given the financial assistance and a greater seat at the policymaking table.

Fortunately, some national governments are beginning to get the message. In December, German Deputy Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel spoke publicly about the need for Germany to provide greater support to its cities, saying that “municipalities should not face the decision of whether to integrate refugees or renovate their swimming pool.”

The faster other national leaders understand this message, the faster urban refugees can receive the settlement and integration services they need—and the faster European cities can achieve the ideal of peaceful pluralism.



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.

A global response to the territorial imperative: the UN resolution on Jerusalem

BY GITA COOLSARRAN



ON December 21, 2017, 128 countries voted to pass a United Nations resolution in an emergency session of the General Assembly, rejecting the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital by United States President Donald Trump. There were nine votes against the resolution and 35 abstentions.

The results came in the wake of Trump’s threat to “take names” of the countries who voted against the resolution, with implied consequences for the distribution of United States aid. A few days prior, the Security Council failed to adopt a resolution calling for a withdrawal of

Trump’s recognition of Jerusalem, owing to a negative vote by United States Representative Nikki Haley.

Having changed hands over 50 times in its long history, Jerusalem unsurprisingly represents a point of contention in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Referred to as the “Holy City of Jerusalem” in the United Nations resolution text, the city holds the Hebrew name Yerushalayim and al-Quds in Arabic. It is the focal point of shared historical-religious stories, and of reverence for all three “religions of the book.” Home to the Western Wall and Temple Mount, or Haram al-Sharif, with the Dome of

SOURCE: CREATIVE COMMONS, PHOTO-GATER

the Rock and al-Aqsa mosque, Jerusalem is the third holiest city in Islam, after Mecca and Medina, and the biblical home of the Jewish people. It was towards this city that Muslims originally prayed, and it is this city towards which Jews face when in prayer.

“Jerusalem unsurprisingly represents a point of contention in the Israel-Palestine conflict.”

In light of the 1967 annexation and continued occupation of East-Jerusalem—the Palestinian half of the holy city previously administered by Jordan—the city and its recognition as a state capital constitutes an object of importance in the psychological imaginings of nearly every political group of both Israel and Palestine, as well as the broader Arab world.

This territorial imperative to possess Jerusalem has persisted throughout the political history of both religions in question. Both might be described as distinct from a “modern” or “Western” model of political secularity in that their conceptions of legitimacy, both national and religious, are rooted in territorial possession of the Holy City. This centuries-long historical struggle is set to culminate in an eventual status recognition of Jerusalem, either as an internationalized domain, or as the capital city of an Israel and/or Palestine, when the time does come.

The text of the General Assembly resolution reaffirms a commitment to a two-State solution, and “demands that all States comply with Security Council resolutions regarding the Holy City of Jerusalem, and not to recognize any actions or measures contrary to those resolutions.” Though Israel has long since claimed the city of Jerusalem in its entirety as its capital, the 1980 declaration was never recognized by the international community, and any and all state embassies were moved to Tel Aviv. Previous United States presidents have established the precedent of waiving the existing agreement with Israel to move the United States embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Trump’s recognition of Israel’s claim, and



his declared intention to relocate the embassy in the face of international convention, is more than a threat to a fragile status quo.

The technically non-binding General Assembly resolution stressed Jerusalem as a “final status issue” not to be resolved unilaterally, but as the culmination of a peace process anchored by the Security Council. Should the United States not respect the resolution, it would constitute an almost willful sabotage of any potential peace process, even as its declaration lacks the legitimacy that an official recognition by the international community would otherwise bring.

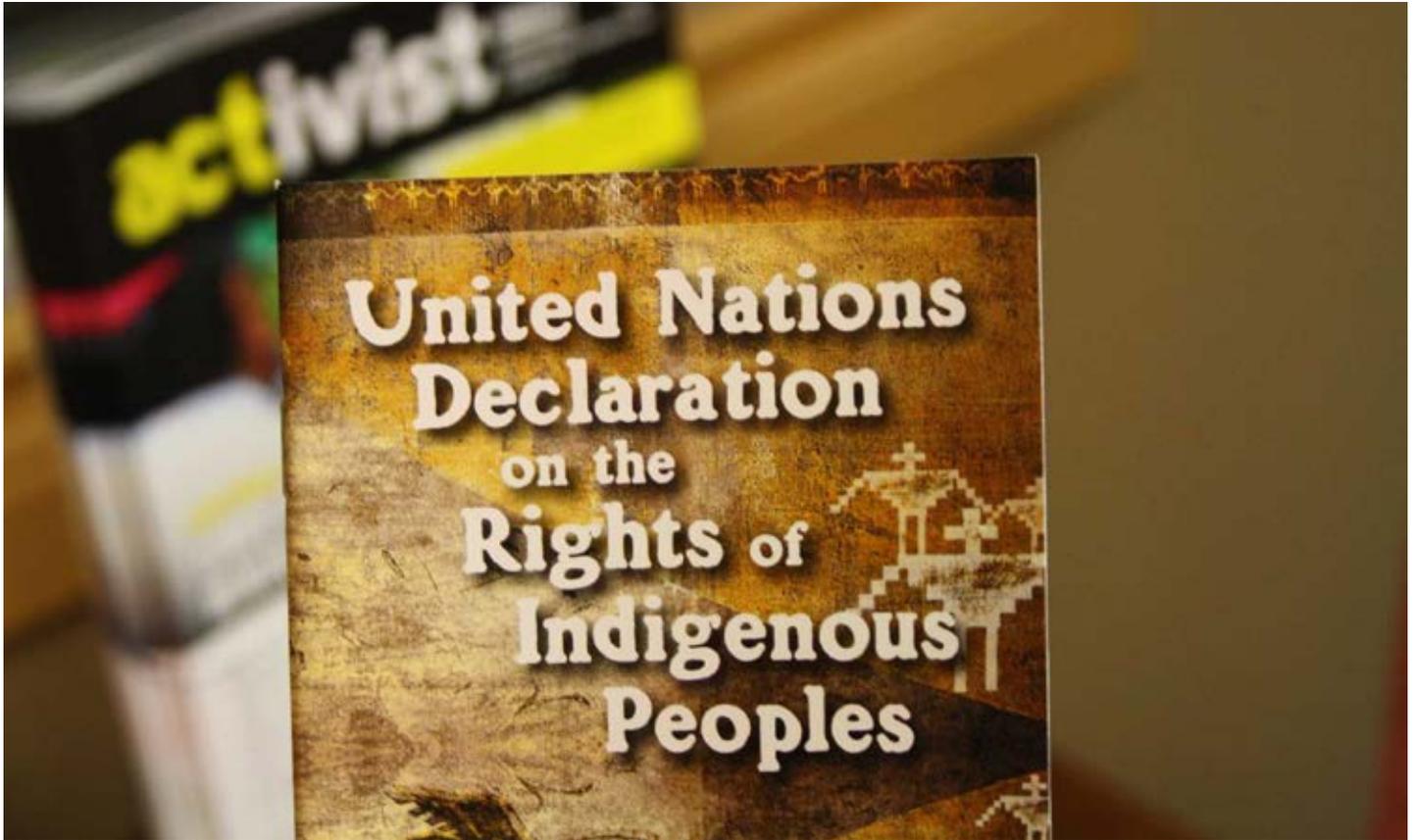
A Hamas statement has said that Trump’s announcement opened the “gates of hell,” and the Palestinian Liberation Organization has suggested revoking its recognition of Israel and any agreements with it. For one to imagine a future of peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians, or anything resembling a sort of prosperous pluralism, whether as neighbours or a singular state, the status of Jerusalem must continue to remain a “final status issue.”



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.

Looking back at a decade of UNDRIP

BY EMMA AMARAL



THE United Nations (UN) estimates that there are more than 370 million Indigenous peoples across 90 countries worldwide. Due to historically oppressive factors, such as colonialism and human rights abuses, Indigenous peoples account for 30 per cent of those living in extreme poverty.

In 2007, the UN adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) after two decades of drafting and negotiating with states and Indigenous peoples. UNDRIP is a comprehensive assertion of Indigenous rights, from land use and the control of natural resources, to self-determination, to free, prior, and informed consent, among others. UNDRIP passed with a majority of 44 votes in favour, four votes against, and 11 abstentions. Since then, Canada, the United States, New Zealand, and Australia have reversed their votes and endorsed UNDRIP.

“There are more than 370 million Indigenous peoples...worldwide.”

UNDRIP is not a legally binding template that can be copied and pasted around the world; it is an instrument of soft law that requires cooperation between individual states, corporations, and Indigenous groups. According to UN Special Rapporteur Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, the key step to implementing UNDRIP requires states to amend their constitutions and adopt laws consistent with the stated rights of Indigenous peoples.

Brazil has historically been a global leader in enshrining Indigenous peoples' land rights into law. In 1988, Brazil

rewrote its constitution to include Indigenous autonomy over their social organization, customs, languages, beliefs, and traditions, and original rights over traditional lands, confirming the duty of the federal government to demarcate those lands and protect their properties and assets. Brazil has titled over 100 million hectares of Indigenous land, and has instituted a disclosure of origin requirement into national laws, which includes proposals on how multinational corporations and Indigenous peoples can share the benefits gained from natural resources and medicines.

However, even in Brazil, threats to peaceful pluralism are growing as the current administration attempts to roll-back the land rights of Indigenous peoples. The Attorney General's office has recommended a legal time limit, signed by President Michel Temer last month, which states that any tribe that did not occupy its ancestral land in the constitutional year of 1988 will lose any future right to live there. Hundreds of Indigenous territories in Brazil are awaiting legal demarcation, but since many communities were forcefully relocated in the colonial and military eras, this time limit could result in the dismissal of 90 per cent of ongoing Indigenous land claims.

Critics of the government argue that President Temer is catering to the agribusiness sector (the ruralista bloc) made up of ranchers and wealthy farmers who have vested interests in acquiring Indigenous territories. This group holds economic power, as agriculture accounts for 23 per cent of Brazil's GDP, and is even more influential as Brazil experiences a deep recession. Consequently, tensions between agribusiness stakeholders and Indigenous peoples are rising over land disputes and the risk of tens of thousands of Indigenous people losing their land rights under the proposed time limit. In June, Indigenous community leader and healthcare worker Clodiode Aquileu Rodrigues was murdered by a gang of farmers who opened fire at a rally for Indigenous land rights. He was one of 61 land rights campaigners killed across Brazil last year.

Despite setbacks, UNDRIP has directly and indirectly contributed to shifting international norms around Indigenous rights. UNDRIP enshrines the principles of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC), required for relevant legislative or administrative policies. It also out-

lines guidelines for projects affecting Indigenous land, territories, and resources, and regulates any physical relocation of Indigenous peoples. The United Nations Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (UN-REDD) has implemented the FPIC process in Vietnam to ensure the participation of Indigenous peoples and to guarantee their right to provide or withhold consent to REDD+ interventions.

Tauli-Corpuz reports that the adoption of UNDRIP bolsters the confidence and commitment of Indigenous peoples and their movements both locally and globally in asserting their rights, especially surrounding land, resources, and self-determination. She also stated that UNDRIP gives Indigenous peoples' rights a higher profile. This is evident in the World Bank's commitment to FPIC, and Pope Francis' reaffirmation of Indigenous peoples' right to FPIC at the Indigenous Peoples' Forum this year.

There is still much to be done to fully realize UNDRIP. Obstacles to consistent implementation include discrepancies of land use rights across state boundaries, especially when Indigenous territories overlap various countries. Despite this, Tauli-Corpuz maintains that UNDRIP is the main remedial tool to overcome injustices, as it provides a framework for reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and states. She has been visiting countries around the world, consulting with Indigenous groups and governments, and will present her full report to the UN Human Rights Council in September 2018.



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 revolution will be polled online

BY AARON WYTZE



Meet Loomio, the online decision-making tool from New Zealand that's changing social movements around the world.

IN October 2011, the “Occupy Wall Street” movement sent shockwaves around the globe. The protesters in New York City’s Zucotti Park called for an end to economic inequality and popularized the slogan “we are the 99 percent.”

Soon afterwards, “Occupy” movements were popping up in cities like London, Paris, and Toronto. The protest leaders tried to embody ideas of inclusion and equality in their decision-making process, turning protest sites into miniature direct democracies.

As the weeks passed, politicians did their best to ignore the protests, the media lost interest, and supporters of the movement slowly dwindled. Occupy Wall Street leader Micah White later went on to call the movement “a failure.”

But in New Zealand’s capital city of Wellington, the Occupy movement never went away – it simply migrated to the internet.

Occupy participants Richard Bartlett, Jon Lemmon, and Ben Knight wanted to recreate the collective decision-making process they experienced during the protest and bring it to a global audience. They created “Loomio,” an online web platform that allows thousands of people to simultaneously decide on important issues.

Loomio works much like other polling tools seen on Facebook or Twitter, but doesn’t depend on “majority rules” to decide the final result. Users can start a topic on a decision that needs to be made as a group, and then vote “yes,” “no,” “abstain,” or “block” the decision. Loomio shows the results in a pie chart, and users can change their vote at any time during the discussion timeline. Instead of just achieving a simple majority, users can create consensus or build on a plurality of ideas.

SOURCE: CREATIVE COMMONS, VOICE OF AMERICA

The platform is open-source and free to use for NGOs and civil society groups with little to no budget. Loomio's creators sustained development by holding two rounds of crowdfunding and using a voluntary subscription model for large organizations and firms.

Micah Sifry—an influential thinker on digital democracy initiatives—says the platform hits “the sweet spot” between individual voice and collective decision.

Shortly after its release, the platform went viral with social movements that needed to make collective decisions on their next action and quickly gained traction around the globe.

“As soon as we released our prototype we were swamped by thousands of groups from around the world,” said Bartlett. “Everyone from student movements and city councils, to software projects and community groups.”

One of Loomio's early adopters was Podemos, a political party that emerged from Spain's cross-country “Indignados” protest movement in 2011. Podemos uses the platform to engage with its more than 489,000 party members. Local chapters of Podemos use Loomio to decide how to handle pertinent issues and the future direction of the party.

Podemos has become such a frequent user of Loomio that 60 per cent of the platform's traffic comes from Spain, with Podemos members creating over 900 discussion and polling groups on Loomio. Users decide how to select candidates for local elections, vote on how power is shared at the grassroots level, and discuss security issues with e-voting.

Half way across the globe in East Asia, Loomio was used by civic hackers in Taipei to coordinate logistics during the 24 day occupation of Taiwan's congress. Because Loomio is open source, coders were able to translate the platform to recognize traditional Chinese characters. Protesters inside and outside the congress building used Loomio to work out logistical issues.

Meanwhile in Venezuela, as protests rippled through the streets of Caracas over president Nicolas Maduro's disastrous economic policies, engineers at Loomio

helped groups use the platform to engage citizens in protest marches.

“[We need] to implement new ways of doing activism and political organization, that allow all citizens to participate in social and political ways, from their own realities and abilities,” said a member of DSDVzla, an advocacy group in Venezuela.

But Loomio isn't simply creating a new tool for civil society groups and activists to meaningfully engage with their supporters, it's pioneering a new business model where ownership of the platform is communal among all of Loomio's engineers, facilitators, and advocacy workers.

“We're building public infrastructure for decision-making held in the commons,” says Alanna Krause, a facilitator at Loomio.

Loomio uses a share structure that gives workers and investors “redeemable preference shares” in the company. Investors can buy shares in the company that provide an annual 8 per cent return, but cannot sell their shares. Loomio's creators believe this will primarily attract investors who share its values.

The platform has also caught on with some local governments, with a municipal council in Provo, Utah using Loomio to engage with residents.

But is Loomio ready for the big leagues? Could the platform foster peaceful pluralism in a country riven with economic or political divisions? At the current pace opposition movements are using Loomio, we won't have to wait long to find out.



Aaron has spent nearly a decade in East Asia, living in China for five years, and Taiwan for four. He's worked as a translator for Taiwan's APEC Task Force, a political officer for Global Affairs Canada, a primary school English teacher in China, a consultant for the University of Toronto, and a freelance journalist. His work has been published in Foreign Policy, Roads and Kingdoms, the Civicist, and the Taipei Times. He speaks Mandarin Chinese.

Accepting pluralism: what the ASEAN economic community may need to combat rising inequality

BY MARY-ANNE LAGUNA MEERASABEER



STRONG economic performance in the last 25 years has made the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) one of the world's most dynamic regions today. The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) has the potential to accelerate growth even further by increasing trade and investment flows, enabling freer movement of skilled workers, and strengthening regional institutions. Yet many are beginning to question whether economic integration is the best way forward.

In Southeast Asia, economic growth has brought rising disparities in income and opportunities. Approximately 179 million people are trapped in jobs with less formal arrangements, inadequate working conditions, and scarce social protection. 92 million people earn too little to rise above the poverty line. The ASEAN's track record of limited social protection and low enforcement of in-

ternational labor standards raises concerns in the global community that integration would only exacerbate such disparities.

The rise of inequality alongside economic growth is an inherent challenge of pluralist societies like those in Southeast Asia. Specifically, groups with lower socioeconomic status are unable to reap the benefits of economic growth and industrialization, given that they lack financial resources and required skills. Nobel laureate Simon Kuznets argued that those who have little money to begin with could see big gains from investment and thus benefit from economic growth, whereas those with nothing would stay rooted in poverty. This is true in Indonesia where youth from poor households have access to mediocre education and suffer from poor health and nutrition, which in turn determines the lives of low-

SOURCE: CREATIVE COMMONS, MARC BEN FATMA

skilled workers.

Ethnic minorities living in the peripheries of their country have especially low chances of benefitting from growth due to social and institutional barriers such as inequality before the law, limited civic participation, and discrimination in public and private sectors. Members of Myanmar's minority ethnic groups such as the Rohingya and Shan are targets for unpaid forced labor campaigns, scorched-earth policies that destroy farmland, and relocation programs by the military regime.

In a joint policy report, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) warn that ignorance of these rising inequalities will hamper poverty reduction, erode social cohesion, and spur political uproar. It also runs counter to the AEC's overarching goal of equitable growth. In turn, the report calls for the ASEAN to focus on three goals that will create more sustainable and inclusive development within the AEC.

First, member states should increase support for small enterprises, and invest in hard and soft infrastructure including education, skills development, and sound social protection systems. Second, member states should link wages to productivity gains by setting sound minimum wages and collective bargaining opportunities. Finally, national leaders should cooperate to achieve these goals and standards regionally.

Skeptics question the ability of the ASEAN to mitigate growing inequalities given its above-average levels of corruption and regressing forms of democracy. However, recent policies adopted by the ASEAN demonstrates that there is some room for optimism. The Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) focuses on accelerating economic development in the poorer Southeast Asian countries of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam (CLMV nations) and making this growth more inclusive.

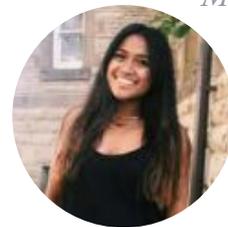
Currently, the ASEAN is in its third iteration of the project focusing on infrastructure development and promoting micro, small, and medium sized enterprises. The ASEAN is also moving closer to finalizing drafts to implement the Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection of 2013 to better enforce adequate social

protection measures, introduce social insurance to the informal sector, and provide social assistance to poor, at risk, and vulnerable groups.

Nevertheless, there is still more to be done. What is missing in numerous AEC policy recommendations are strict member country prescriptions that address structural discrimination against specific groups of society that make it impossible for them to find work. Considering the general norm of non-interference in the region, it is doubtful that the ASEAN institution will have much power over easing institutionalized inequalities against ethnic minorities. Instead, it will be the responsibility of the states themselves and their willingness to provide equal opportunities.

National leaders must realize that maintaining discriminatory politics and policies will only limit sustainable and inclusive economic growth. A potential first step would be to allow isolated groups to participate in politics and thus demand a redistribution of wealth. Expanding participation of non-governmental organizations, universities, and civil society groups would facilitate a stronger commitment to building a sense of community amongst all groups of society, as well as improve policy contextualization and implementation at local levels.

With plans to have the AEC in full swing by 2025, there is little time to continue to ignore the fundamental requirement of addressing societal pluralism in realizing the vast potential for economic growth and prosperity in Southeast Asia.



Mary-Anne is a 23-year-old first-year MGA in collaboration with CESEAS.

Her passion specifically lies in international trade policy, human rights protection, and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region and has thus done extensive research on the region. In particular, she has written on Sino-African development cooperation, economic growth and corruption in South Korea, and Business Process Outsourcing and sustainable development in the Philippines. This summer, she conducted field research during in China about the growth of lacrosse in Shanghai. Mary-Anne is also an attack player on the UofT Varsity Blues Women's Lacrosse team.

Antimicrobial resistance: fighting 'superbugs' with a pluralistic approach

BY NATASHA COMEAU

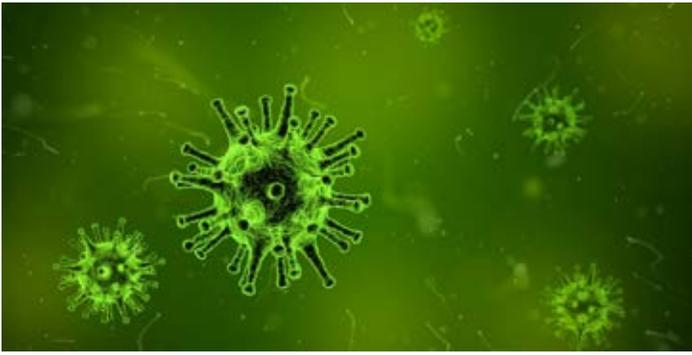


ONE hundred years ago the three leading causes of death were tuberculosis, influenza, and gastrointestinal infections. Today, these health concerns have been drastically reduced due to the development of antibiotics that can effectively prevent and treat such infectious diseases. Access to these antibiotics has saved millions of lives and contributed to numerous medical and surgical breakthroughs.

While antibiotics have vastly improved health standards globally, a new phenomenon has emerged, known as

antimicrobial resistance, that is impeding the effectiveness of such life-saving drugs. Antimicrobial resistance is when microorganisms, also referred to as 'superbugs,' build up a resistance to drugs, including antibiotics, antivirals, and antimalarials. The drugs become ineffective, leaving infections to persist in the body, prolonging illness, and increasing the likelihood of spreading diseases.

Antimicrobial resistance is a present and growing threat in every country, and therefore requires a global response with collaboration across governments, health



professionals, and society. The increasing resistance to antibiotics is threatening global public health, making it more expensive for governments to cover prevention and treatment of common infectious diseases. A pluralistic and holistic approach with global cooperation is necessary.

Resistance makes many common medical practices including transplantation, chemotherapy, surgery, and diabetes management high-risk procedures for patients. Antimicrobial resistance greatly increases the cost of health care, as patients require intensive and long-term attention. In countries reporting resistance to antibiotics in over half of those treated, entirely new treatment techniques are now being employed for common infections, including pneumonia, urinary tract infections, and gonorrhea.

“Resistance to antibiotics is a naturally occurring phenomenon that arises primarily through genetic changes.”

Resistance to antibiotics is a naturally occurring phenomenon that arises primarily through genetic changes. However, the increasing misuse and overuse of antimicrobials is accelerating the development of resistance. For instance, patients often incorrectly use antibiotics for viral infections, like cold and flu, without professional oversight, which decreases these drugs’ effectiveness over time and builds up a resistance to antibiotics in the body. Overuse of antibiotics occurs especially in animal

products, whereby animals are given excessive growth promoters to accelerate their development and antibiotics to prevent infections. The resistant-microbes can be transferred between people, and through the consumption of animal products.

PLURALISTIC COLLABORATIVE ACTION

Responding to the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance requires a multidimensional pluralistic approach. An existing example of such “medical pluralism” is the One Health policy currently employed in the European Union. This policy uses a multidisciplinary approach in combating infectious diseases, encompassing human, animal, and environmental health. One Health recognizes the interconnectedness of antimicrobial resistance and therefore the need for collaboration at local, regional, and global levels.

Another example of pluralistic action in response to antimicrobial resistance is the WHO Global Action Plan launched in 2015. In collaboration with the adoption of universal health coverage domestically, this initiative aims to increase access to antimicrobial treatment while reducing the emergence and spread of resistance.

Remote outbreaks in one corner of the globe do not remain isolated incidents. Rather, as has been seen with the spread of such epidemics as Ebola, they tend to spread rapidly. The additional threat of potential resistance to life-saving drugs increases the need for coordinated international action. Medical pluralism encompasses both public and private healthcare providers, as well as traditional medicine and biomedical treatment, with collaboration across all sectors to provide the best health outcomes.

A CLOSER LOOK AT MULTIDRUG RESISTANT TUBERCULOSIS

The emerging drug resistance is placing a substantial strain on the global fight against tuberculosis. Each year an estimated 600,000 new cases of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) develop, a form of tuberculosis that is resistant to the two most powerful antibiotics available. Extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR-



TB) is resistant to even secondary TB drug options, and makes up 9.7 per cent of those individuals with MDR-TB.

Treatment for MDR-TB is considerably more complex than normal tuberculosis, with longer (up to 2 years) and less effective courses of treatment, carrying significant side effects, including hearing loss, and drastically decreasing success rates of treatment. In 2014, only half of those diagnosed with MDR-TB were successfully treated, compared to the 83 per cent success rate of regular TB treatment courses.

The additional cost for treating MDR-TB, as opposed to TB, can be as high as 10,000 USD per patient. By 2050 this could cost the global economy up to 16.7 trillion USD and claim the lives of up to 75 million people. Left untreated, MDR-TB infected individuals pose a threat to the people around them as they can transmit resistant forms of TB to others. This risk compromises the global fight to prevent and fight tuberculosis.

"A pluralistic response in fighting resistance to life-saving tuberculosis drugs that would encompass all health sectors is required."

A pluralistic response in fighting resistance to life-saving tuberculosis drugs that would encompass all health sectors is required. Collaboration is essential to prevent the development and acceleration of resistance, to minimize the spread of resistance, and to treat those infected with MDR-TB. Pluralistic action would also look beyond the conventional human-centred health systems to include animal health and environmental health, as both can impact the spread of resistance.

One existing pluralistic response to MDR-TB is the Global Project on Anti-TB Drug Resistance Surveillance. This initiative aims to standardize methods for identifying resistance to TB drugs and sharing best practices for treating MDR-TB. In 2009, the World Health Assembly member states committed to achieving universal access to diagnosis and treat MDR-TB. This requires states to increase access to affordable second-line anti-TB drugs, strengthen advocacy, and improve monitoring systems.

The interaction with other health problems should also be considered in a pluralistic response. For instance, HIV positive individuals are more likely to contract tuberculosis, and institutional outbreaks of MDR-TB are found to primarily affect HIV positive patients.

Pluralistic healthcare responses expand the common understanding of simply diagnosing and treating antimicrobial resistance to include a multi-dimensional approach to prevention and alternative holistic methods for treatment.



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 healthcare, 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.

Mugabe's ouster and the future of pluralism in Africa

BY VANESSA HAYFORD



ON November 21, 2017, Zimbabweans finally got to say goodbye to the only president many of them have ever known.

In what was called a “soft coup d’état,” Zimbabwean military officials placed 93 year-old Robert Mugabe under house arrest and seized control of the country’s state broadcaster. Threats of impeachment and civilian protests ensued, and Mugabe was driven to resignation at long last. Almost instantly, 37 years of Mugabe’s autocratic rule came to a dramatic—yet peaceful—end. The Mugabe era was a dark chapter of Zimbabwe’s political history. After leading a guerrilla movement to win independence from Britain, the freedom fighter turned political zealot used violence and intima-

tion to prevent any challenges to his one-party state. The emergence of the country’s first major opposition movement, the Movement for Democratic Change, prompted decades of hostility toward opposition supporters and several rigged elections. Several government policies, such as the land reforms in 2000 that involved the seizure of agricultural land from white farmers, were enacted in an effort to take power back from ethnic groups in the country who posed a threat to the Zanu-PF government. The most disturbing example of this was the Gukurahundi massacres, during which 20,000 Ndebele people were killed by Mugabe’s Fifth Brigade in order to silence political opposition movements building within the ethnic minority group.

Such forceful suppression of political dissidence kept power highly centralized, eliminating any opportunity for civil society and other non-state actors to have any contribution in Zimbabwe's governance. The Zanu-PF government's refusal to embrace political pluralism in this respect contributed to serious economic difficulties and many social hardships for Zimbabweans.

WHAT LIES AHEAD

Zimbabwe's political history is one that has been repeated across the continent. An individual or political party gains power through a military coup or an independence movement, and proceeds to cling to power by any means necessary. Those means are typically at the expense of the welfare of the state's citizens, and are frequently used to eliminate opportunities for peaceful pluralism within the state.

Despite this trend, recent events have indicated that times may be changing. Mugabe's resignation rides the coattails of a terrible year for Africa's longest-ruling leaders. From the exile of the Gambia's Yahya Jammeh to the unexpected exit of Angola's José Eduardo dos Santos, the continent bore witness to the demise of some of its most infamous strongmen. Both of these autocratic leaders went to great lengths to centralize power and suppress dissent, all with a lack of regard for human rights and quality of life for their citizens.

With a priority on the consolidation and preservation of power over pluralistic, democratic governance, and socioeconomic development, many of Africa's authoritarian leaders have failed to account for the importance of the political legitimacy that comes from the presence of competing sources of power. The ousting of the three aforementioned authoritarian leaders has so far demonstrated that a rejection of pluralism will remove any ability for civil society and individual citizens to have any meaningful engagement with their government. It will also drive away productive and innovative ideas that may transform a state for the better. These factors will ultimately cause state and non-state actors to lose confidence in the state, resulting in a popular uprising or, in the case of Zimbabwe, a leadership change by way of military intervention.

Peaceful pluralism for states in Africa under authori-

tarian rule can only be achieved from within. Political elites in these states will need to eliminate any fears that pluralism will mean the end of their tenure, and should rather see it as a mutually beneficial arrangement. A diversity of political notions and economic ideals should be allowed to stand in competition with one another for the benefit of citizens and government institutions alike. Recent transitions in power, like the ones previously mentioned, have demonstrated that when the opposite is true, political leaders are contributing to the eventual demise of their own regime.

The responsibility to adopt pluralism, however, does not lie entirely on political leaders. Civil society groups in these states have a part to play in encouraging a decentralization of power. This is especially true in the case of states like Zimbabwe, that have recently experienced a peaceful transition of power. Civil society organizations can capitalize on the opportunity present during a transition to reclaim their place in the political process and highlight political and societal challenges that they wish to see addressed by the new government.

It may be several years before we know whether the removal of Mugabe and other autocratic victims of the past year will actually bring about democratic reform. Nevertheless, any political transition signals an opportunity for change, and the climate within African politics shows that the potential for change is there.



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.

Pluralism in Canada: Is this the real life? Or is this just fantasy?

BY ALEXANDRE LÉVESQUE



IN comparison to its neighbour to the south, Canada is often portrayed as a diverse, country-sized utopian family. Weekly news detailing blunders by the Trump administration continue to offer a platform for the Canadian government to project its dynamic pluralism. However, like in photography, an image is a subjective representation of reality, which is often only partially conveyed.

Indeed, Canada is often pointed to as an example of successful pluralism. With numerous generations of immigrants and refugees, a historic French-speaking community, and an Indigenous population, Canada is one of the world's most socially diverse societies. The fact that Canada is a member of the G7, or that it routinely ranks among the top ten countries in the United Nations' annual Human Development Reports, suggests that the country's diversity does not impede its ability to succeed. This positive view of Canada's pluralism has been particularly bolstered since the Liberals took power in 2015, courtesy of the inclusive attitude of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Yet, beneath the picture, is Canada truly a shining model of pluralism? From the outset, this is not a simple question, as one cannot precisely measure pluralism.

According to the Global Centre for Pluralism, created by His Highness the Aga Khan and inspired by Canada's "experience as a diverse and inclusive country," pluralist societies are "diverse societies that value and accommodate human differences," wherein "each person is able to realize his or her potential as a full member of the state without jettisoning distinct identities." To what extent does Canada live up to this definition?

THE CASE OF QUÉBEC

Despite having rarely been under the spotlight of nation-wide media since the 1995 referendum on sovereignty, the issues of Québec's political status and national identity are far from being solved. For instance, the federalist governing Quebec Liberal Party (QLP) surprised the federal government last year by asking them to re-open the constitutional dialogue. The objective was to negotiate new terms that would allow Québec to finally sign the Canadian Constitution, which was forcibly adopted without the province's consent in 1982. Justin Trudeau's answer to the QLP was an unequivocal but unsurprising "no."

Furthermore, latent support for the independence of Québec remains significant today. In recent years, between 30 to 40 per cent of Québécois would vote yes in a third referendum, and the latest data from March 2017 shows that 44 per cent of Francophones still support independence. This is so without any ongoing referendum campaign or public debate on the topic. However, the main parliamentary opposition and historic vanguard of sovereigntists, the Parti Québécois (PQ), promised it would not hold a referendum if it wins the upcoming 2018 elections. Even if it would, a PQ victory seems highly unlikely, given that the party's popularity reached a historical low this past autumn. The Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ), a federalist right-wing party, currently leads the polls.

Paradoxically, this shift does not indicate a disengagement of the Québécois towards nationalism. Under the motto "A strong Québec inside a strong Canada," a core objective of the CAQ is to rally Québec nationalists. However, while nationalism does not necessarily entail anti-pluralism, for instance by focusing on the promotion of self-determination ideals, the CAQ's nationalism is often tainted by a demagogic tone. Whether it's about promising to tighten immigration or attacking rival parties through a controversial ad that suggested supporting school teachers wearing a chador, the CAQ frequently targeted immigrants in general and Muslims in particular since its foundation.

Last summer, the François Legault-led party further denied the rise in activity of far-right extremism. Yet, allegedly combating the "Islamization" of Québec, groups such as La Meute, Storm Alliance, or Atalante gained an unprecedented mediatic coverage in 2017, namely with protests in August and November that attracted hundreds of sympathizers and Antifa counter-protestors. Even if far-right extremism did not snowball the way it has in the U.S. and Eastern Europe, one cannot pretend that the global Trump-related trend of isolationism and anti-multiculturalism has not reached Canada.

Both the PQ and the CAQ also opposed public consultations on racism last summer. Even the QLP followed this trend by cancelling these consultations in October, and further by adopting the controversial Bill 62, which restricts the use of the niqab in public places. The PQ and the CAQ are respectively proposing amendments or

a more severe version of the law aiming at broadening its provisions against religious signs.

That said, one must avoid concluding that all Québécois are xenophobic or Islamophobic, or that nationalists and independentists are systematically against pluralism. A good example is the province's third parliamentary opposition, Québec Solidaire, a left-wing party that supports independence alongside pluralistic and inclusive principles. It is also the only party that endorsed the National Council of Canadian Muslims' proposals to mark the Québec City mosque shootings with a National Day Against Islamophobia on January 29.

So, is Canada a pluralist country? If every policy maker answered this question with a unanimous "yes," it would not only imply turning a blind eye to legitimate contradictory narratives, but also potentially prevent efforts to address the struggles faced by some minorities.

Québec is only one example of the challenges to pluralism in Canada. Anti-multiculturalism and dissatisfaction with the federal system exist in other provinces. Trudeau's administration is not oblivious to these issues. His government has made some efforts to improve some minorities' issues with a focus on Indigenous peoples. Overall, however, avoiding sensitive debates and apologizing for past mistakes without delivering awaited change is not the best strategy to facilitate the emergence of an actual pluralist society.



Currently undertaking his first year of the Master of Global Affairs program at the University of Toronto, Alexandre has a wide range of interests towards diversified topics related to national level politics, international relations, global and regional security, as well as European, East Asian and North American affairs. Prior to moving in Toronto, he obtained an International Studies bachelor degree at the Université de Montréal with a specialization in political science. Alexandre's relevant experiences include an internship for a Member of Parliament, various international organizations' models, numerous events he organized for his student association, and a student exchange in Prague. Having also previously written for an independent media and student journals, he is now eager to pursue his hobby with Global Conversations.

Prosperity through pluralism: addressing the Central American refugee crisis

BY MIA FORTINO



THE number of asylum-seekers arriving in the United States from Northern Triangle nations (El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala) has increased by nearly fivefold since 2008.

“[T]hey’d kill me. Gangs don’t forgive...If they didn’t harm me, they’d harm my children,” a Salvadoran woman explained in a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) report on the crisis. Nearly 10 per cent of the population of the Northern Triangle region has fled due to endemic violence, mostly to the

United States. Many of those fleeing from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras are women and children, including over 66,000 unaccompanied and separated children in 2014 alone.

The UNHCR report highlights that the Northern Triangle is considered to be “one of the most dangerous places on earth,” with its inhabitants subject to direct threats and attacks by violent, transnational gangs. Women report sexual assault, the disappearance of family members, extortion, and the forcible recruitment of their young sons by these gangs. 10 per cent of

those interviewed also emphasized that the police were a direct source of their harm, suggesting the collusion of police forces and armed groups. This treatment, and evident lack of protection, likely falls within the scope of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, according to the UNHCR.

The legacy of violence in the region—and the fragile institutions and rampant corruption that accompany it—is recognized as the cause of the current crisis. However, its roots are arguably more complex, with several related phenomena exacerbating the prevalence of both gangs and their victims. Gangs continue to exist because youth face few alternatives to criminal behaviour; a lack of social mobility and persistent unemployment cap the potential of youth. Even if they try to break this cycle, social stigma associated with ex-gang members may prevent them from accessing job opportunities. Further, overpopulated and gang-run prisons, coupled with state policies of mass incarceration, suggest that a first-time offender is likely to become more deeply involved in illicit activity as a result of serving a prison sentence.

Social stigmas and insufficient state policies are also responsible for worsening conditions for those subject to gang violence. In all three nations, pronounced income disparities disproportionately disadvantage women, LGBTQ individuals, and ethnic minorities. These groups are routinely subject to discrimination and violence based on their identity.

In El Salvador, 52 per cent of transgender individuals suffer from death threats or violence and, in Honduras, 478 violent deaths of women have been recorded since 2015. While there is less documented evidence of violence against Indigenous peoples, these groups are also subject to high levels of social exclusion. 89 per cent of Indigenous and Afro-descendant children in Honduras live in poverty, Guatemala's Indigenous population suffers from a serious lack of education opportunities, and Salvadoran Indigenous peoples lack the land titles necessary for accessing financial credit.

These figures help illustrate that, while violence in the Northern Triangle is widespread, it is particularly acute along lines of age, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. Efforts are underway to ameliorate some of the root causes that are causing mass migration. The United States

government's Strategy for Central America and the Northern Triangle governments' Alliance for Prosperity both focus on creating economic opportunities, improving public safety, and strengthening institutions in the region. These areas are undoubtedly important to focus on, but they could be supplemented by the promotion of pluralism within society.

Violence in the Northern Triangle derives from stagnant economic growth and weak institutions, but it may be exacerbated by challenges to pluralism. Thus, addressing the refugee crisis might require a focus on the formation of gangs, their targets, and the influence of societal norms. To some extent, the Alliance for Prosperity fulfills this need; it includes stipulations related to creating opportunities for women and youth. This exemplifies an effort to accommodate diversity. But development strategies, especially in a region with systemic violence, may do well to go one step further, and recognize that achieving pluralism can be instrumental for development.

The full expression of one's identity is considered to be "an important development end in itself." If this is the case, then addressing the refugee crisis in the Northern Triangle could involve not just improving security and providing job opportunities, but also improving education about the importance of respect for diversity. Further, tackling violence would focus on dissolving gangs and the social channels that delineate who is subject to their violence. In this way, pluralism can be understood as a means through which sustainable peace can be achieved. As the world is currently being rocked by multiple refugee crises, this understanding may be critical in the Northern Triangle and beyond.



Mia is a 2018 Master of Global Affairs candidate, with a Honours Bachelor's Degree in Political Science. She has experience editing an academic journal and creating government documents at the municipal and federal levels. She is interested in international development, especially as it relates to health, food security, and sustainability. Mia believes that access to delicious and nutritious food is a universal right and is interested in investigating related policies and practices.

Russian disinformation campaigns expose rifts in Western societies

BY GEORDIE JEAKINS



IN a now famous speech to the Russian Academy of Military Sciences in 2013, Russian Chief of the General Staff Valery Geramisso laid out a vision to change the face of warfare. Geramisso postulated that global influence would no longer be exercised by military might, but instead through the “widespread use of disinformation, of political, economic, humanitarian, and other non-military measures deployed in connection with the protest potential of the population.” In his statement, Geramisso was not only speculating about the future, but also revealing important insights about Russia’s own evolving disinformation strategy to destabilize Western democracies.

The Kremlin uses a variety of means to achieve this objective. Thousands of fake social media profiles, believed to be operated by Russian “troll factories,” have pumped out a steady stream of disinformation on topics like

Brexit, the European refugee crisis, Ukraine, and American politics. These profiles work in tandem to spread each other’s misleading or blatantly false news stories, adding a veneer of legitimacy in the process. Along with fake online users, Russian state-run media organizations like RT and Sputnik amplify these messages by actively promoting conspiracy theories in the West.

Russia’s propaganda war against the West is regarded as a form of payback from inside the Kremlin. Russian elites have long maintained that the United States and its allies are engaged in their own campaign against Russia and her neighbours. The 2003 Rose Revolution in Georgia and the Ukrainian Orange Revolution the following year are viewed as American-backed efforts to roll-back Russian influence in post-Soviet states. The fear of Western influence in Russia was raised again when protests erupted in Moscow and St. Petersburg shortly before

Vladimir Putin's re-election to the Presidency in 2012. After the protests, Russian elites believed that American intelligence agencies had stirred up the public discontent, and many believed that countermeasures needed to be employed. From these fears sprung the current cyber doctrine, which allows a militarily and economically weak Russia to strike back at its perceived aggressors in Europe and the United States.

Russia's online propaganda techniques are hardly unique. China has ramped up its own efforts to promote a positive view of the country abroad through Facebook, a platform it bans domestically. The United States, too, is far from innocent in the rising war of digital disinformation. In order to destabilize the Castro regime in Cuba, the United States created a program to profile individual Cubans as either "pro-revolutionary," "apolitical," or "anti-revolutionary," and then set up a "Cuban Twitter" targeted at sympathetic users to sow division on the island.

"Influencing public opinion through propaganda campaigns can have a profound effect on electoral outcomes and, in effect, national policies."

What makes Russia's growing disinformation campaign particularly dangerous, however, is that its main targets—Europe and North America—are particularly vulnerable to these sorts of tactics. Europe and North America are made up, by and large, of liberal democracies. As such, influencing public opinion through propaganda campaigns can have a profound effect on electoral outcomes and, in effect, national policies. The election results of Brexit and the 2016 U.S. presidency—both of which are believed to have been widely targeted by Russian propaganda—have shaken the foundations of the West's post-Cold War international order.

The pluralistic nature of Western societies leaves them particularly susceptible to disinformation campaigns. For centuries, much of Europe and the United States have considered the diversity of views, beliefs, and peoples within their political systems to be an inherent strength. In this new age of cyber propaganda, however, divisions within society (be they political, ethnic, religious, or gendered) can be exploited to promote particular discourses within the body politic. The Kremlin has been unscrupulous in exacerbating these divisions, wherever they may be. In some instances, Russian trolls or Russian-bought ads on social media platforms have helped disseminate right-wing, anti-immigrant messaging. Some examples include a fear mongering article about Muslim women's support for candidate Hillary Clinton, or a fake story about a 13-year old German girl who was allegedly raped by refugees.

The threat of online disinformation puts Western pluralistic societies in a bind with how to respond. On the one hand, traditional retaliatory tactics like sanctions continue to offer a way to punish states for their subversion attempts. Yet the relative difficulty in affirming the party responsible makes retaliation unfeasible in many cases. Thus, interacting with profiles and stories requires a healthy dose of vigilance and skepticism, particularly regarding sensitive issues that could be used to divide society.

Scrutiny of claims made online can help users distinguish between what is fact, what is sensationalized, and what is false. In addition, it is critical to pay careful attention to digital security. Hacking online profiles is one of the most effective means of disseminating misleading or false information through otherwise trusted sources. In this new age of digital dangers, it is up to all of us to be careful, but also compassionate, when going online.



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.

"MeToo" except you-military exempt from stories shared and voices heard

BY HANNAH ROSEN



A social media campaign created over ten years ago by Tarana Burke turned into a social justice movement in the Fall of 2017, when “MeToo” shined a very bright light into the experiences of sexual harassment and assault survivors in Hollywood and beyond.

“MeToo” gives justice and solace to those survivors sharing their stories among family, friends, and coworkers. Various nations have their own version of the hashtag, such as France’s #BalanceTonPorc (snitch out your pig) and Italy’s #QuellaVoltaChe (that time when). However, there is a certain institution that seems unresponsive to this movement.

Military personnel, specifically those in the United States and Canada, report high levels of sexual harassment and assault within their positions. Although Canada has a smaller military than the United States,

percentages of sexual misconduct in the military are an estimated 1.7 per cent, and 1.5 per cent respectively for 2014. However, military institutions, so far, appear to be escaping the charge that is laid by “MeToo.” How could this movement not reveal the alleged Harvey Weinsteins of militaries globally?

In answering this question, attention should be paid to the culture of hypermasculinity that pervades the military, and how this reinforces systemic barriers to those survivors who wish to share their stories via the hashtag.

Diversity within militaries is relatively new for most countries. Those who identify as female, transgender, or with a sexuality that differs from heterosexual, have been, and in some nations continue to be, barred from joining the military. As a result, the military as an institution tends to reflect a pervasive culture of hypermasculinity, which can allow negative opinions and customs



to be formed against those who do not identify as a heterosexual cis-male.

This culture has helped foster a number of systemic barriers that prevents those in the military from being treated equally. In the United States, survivors of sexual assault in the military face unfortunate consequences if they choose to report sexual assault to a higher command. In 2016, the United States Department of Defence reported that 58 per cent of service members who reported an assault also reported retaliation from fellow personnel.

The military's abundant analytic and implementation resources, rigid hierarchical structure, and strict discipline could make it an excellent forum for creating and implementing solutions to sexual misconduct. However, instead these features act as barriers that internally constrain survivors' ability to share their stories.

Veteran Affairs of the United States prove that systemic barriers continue to impact survivors' ability to speak out even after they leave the institution. Veterans Legal Clinic of Harvard Law School states that behavioural changes due to the mental trauma of military sexual violence can result in increased infractions committed, however these infractions are attributed to bad character. Actions committed due to bad character are discharged dishonourably. Homosexual acts can also result in a dishonourable discharge.

This tendency to discount the experiences of women in the military is not only reflected within the military institution, but may exist within the population as well. The military, especially the United States military, is a respected institution. Many citizens' response to seeing personnel is often to offer sincere thanks for their sacrifices. Many political elites, such as John Kelly, Chief of Staff in the Trump administration, agree with these

sentiments. Kelly has stated that active duty servicemen and women are the best of the best of citizens. Meanwhile, the White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders responded with similar anecdotes to Kelly, saying that it was wrong to question a general. According to a survey by Pew, Americans trust the military to act in the public's best interest. With the notion that one trusts and does not question the morality of a soldier, it can be suggested that United States citizens may prove unwilling to hear of sexual misconduct allegations in the military.

If those in powerful positions and in the wider population hold military personnel in such high regard, without questioning their actions or privileges in their roles, does this not also deter survivors of assault from sharing "MeToo"?

Hypermasculinity and a lack of diversity has created systemic divides in the military. There needs to be a culture shift; a new age military structure that encourages pluralism and allows for those who experience sexual misconduct to come forward, and further, to banish it altogether from the institution.

In saying this, maybe the "MeToo" movement came just a little early. Operation HONOUR in Canada and Operation RESPECT in New Zealand are working towards creating institutions that are safe for women to work, live, and thrive without fear of sexual violence. They aim to ease the reporting process, offer post-trauma support, and systematically change the military culture away from hypermasculinity. These programmes encourage survivors to feel safe sharing their stories while bringing sexual misconduct and its perpetrators into the public's view.



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A united Africa - a distant dream or a plausible future?

BY TANVI SHETTY



“WE will follow two simple rules: buy American and hire American” declared United States President Donald Trump in his inaugural speech on January 20, 2017. In retrospect, Mr. Trump’s speech has aptly foreshadowed the rise of protectionist movements in 2017. The past year has seen the unravelling of several key trade agreements: The US withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the uneasiness surrounding the future of NAFTA, and the stalled negotiations at the World Trade Organization. Amidst the uncertainty, Africa had made significant progress through the establishment of its own regional free-trade bloc, the Continental Free Trade Agreement (CFTA).

The CFTA aims to promote sustainable economic development in Africa by creating a single unified market for goods and services across Africa. African countries trade

twice as much with Europe as they do with each other, with nearly 82 per cent of total African exports going to other continents. This trade imbalance can, in part, be attributed to the fragmented nature of African markets, which make it difficult to establish bilateral trade agreements between neighbouring countries. The CFTA aims to unify these fragmented economies under one single market, to allow for greater regional movement of African goods.

With an estimated market coverage of over 1.2 billion people, and a combined GDP of 2.2 trillion dollars, the CFTA is Africa’s most ambitious trade deal to date. Negotiations for the CFTA began in 2015, and although the exact details of the agreement will be finalised when the agreement is signed in March, the CFTA intends to eliminate tariffs on 90 per cent of products over the next ten years.

Promoting pan-African trade, and focusing on regional (rather than global) integration is likely to create greater economic gains in the short run, and facilitate the integration of African firms into global markets in the long run, according to a recent publication by the Brookings Institute. For small and mid-sized African firms, regional markets are more accessible and less rigorous than global markets, and provide a space where firms can “learn to compete” and “self-discover” before entering global markets. Establishing strong regional partners could be particularly beneficial for the lagging manufacturing industry in Africa (which presently only represents 10 per cent of total GDP), as structural transformations could lead to more foreign direct investment, diversification of the local economy, and job creation.

“Aside from the economic benefits, a unified African market will give the continent more political bargaining power when negotiating in the global arena.”

Aside from the economic benefits, a unified African market will give the continent more political bargaining power when negotiating in the global arena. Leveraging political power will be particularly important given the rising trend of isolationist policies, which could damage Africa’s existing trade agreements like the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act. This deal allows approximately 4,600 products from 38 Sub-Saharan countries to be imported to the United States, tax free. Given that US President Donald Trump is eager to dissolve any agreement that hinders US manufacturers, Africa may have to use its political leverage to prevent any unfavourable alterations, which will undoubtedly be easier if it stands as one united market.

A united Africa, however, is not necessarily on the agenda of all African leaders. Countries such as South

Africa and Nigeria are hesitant to implement free trade policies, fearing that they will lose control over industrial policy-making, and lose out on tariff revenues. These disagreements underline a key challenge facing the CFTA: managing the various vested interests of the African states. Given the diverse political, cultural, and economic agendas of all 54 African states, ensuring compliance of the CFTA is likely to be a challenge in the road ahead.

Although encompassing all 54 states, the CFTA does have limitations in its capabilities, as it only lays out a foundational agreement which, in itself, will only come into force once 15 countries have ratified it. Given that separate negotiations on competition, investment, and intellectual property rights have yet to take place, the true impacts of the CFTA may end up falling short of expectations. However, Africa has had success in establishing smaller free trade areas such as the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA), and a successful integration of the CFTA and TFTA could forge a way forward towards a united Africa.

Each year, on May 25, Africans celebrate Africa Day to commemorate the establishment of the first pan-African organisation: The Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Formed in 1963, the OAU was founded with the purpose of achieving political and economic unity in Africa. Fifty-five years later, the continent is taking a critical step towards realising this vision, through the establishment of the CFTA. Upholding the United Nation’s pledge that “no one will be left behind...starting with the furthest behind first” the CFTA is a refreshing take on trade, in an otherwise increasingly isolationist world.



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.

The role of green pluralism in improving environmental governance

BY HANNAH RUNDLE



FOR more than 400 years, Indigenous farmers of the Bolivian and Peruvian Andes have forecast weather and harvest patterns by observing the size and brightness of the Pleiades constellation. Year after year, the Indigenous farmers successfully predicted rainfall and subsequent crop yields for the following year. The Indigenous farmers can identify El Niño years, in which the region experiences diminished precipitation, and accordingly adjust their farming techniques to maximize harvest yields.

Benjamin Orlove and fellow anthropologists from the University of California validated the methods of these farmers by discovering that El Niño conditions in the Pacific Ocean alter the amount of high cloud cover, resulting in changes to the appearance of the Pleiades constellation. The ritual practices of these Indigenous farmers revealed a link between El Niño and tropospheric cloud cover that scientists were not previously aware of. This discovery, and many others resulting from the

traditional knowledge of Indigenous peoples, demonstrate the important role that diversity of experience and perspective have to play in understanding and managing the environment.

Historically, the environment has been managed by centralized regulatory regimes. However, collaborative approaches to environmental management, where the natural environment is managed holistically, beyond borders, by both governments and non-state actors, have gained popularity. This form of environmental governance, sometimes referred to as green pluralism, is broadening the horizon for cooperative management and the participation of a diverse groups of stakeholders. In green pluralism, diversity of knowledge and experience are key to better understanding the complexity of ecosystems on both local and global scales. There is an appreciation for the value of traditional environmental knowledge and its role in complementing modern science.

INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

Due to the rapidly evolving state of environmental change and degradation, the development of more effective strategies for conserving natural ecosystems has become increasingly important. Environmental issues are inherently global in nature, as most of the planet's natural resources and environmental systems cannot be confined within geographical boundaries. Yet the approach of most environmental interventions is fragmented, with various political regions pursuing different management strategies.

The limitations of traditional resource management have ignited a movement towards Integrated Natural Resources Management (INRM). INRM aims to avoid the downfalls of fragmented approaches to resource management by developing holistic management strategies that are developed collaboratively by governments and diverse stakeholders. Such management strategies thrive on diverse stakeholder perspectives and promote equality between resource users, developers, environmental organizations, and the broader community. Providing stakeholders with the opportunity for greater involvement in natural resource management helps to develop a shared vision and a sense of ownership among stakeholders, and avoid future conflict.

THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

Effectively managing ecosystems is a challenging feat due to the inherent complexity and uncertainty associated with the natural environment. The focused approach of modern science risks missing the greater environmental picture and could benefit from the profound knowledge resulting from generations of careful observation. Increasingly, traditional ecological knowledge is being recognized and promoted as a complement to modern science. Traditional ecological knowledge—exemplified by the knowledge of the Indigenous farmers of the Peruvian and Bolivian Andes—is the product of careful observation and a deep understanding of traditional territories, which evolves as it is passed through generations.

For thousands of years, Indigenous peoples have lived in harmony with their traditional lands. Moreover, they have long succeeded at what is arguably one of the modern world's greatest challenges: how to live off the land and harvest its resources while maintaining the integrity of the ecosystem itself. Traditional ecological knowledge generation and its practices have been so successful that, although Indigenous lands account for less than 22 per cent of the world's land area, their traditional territories are home to approximately 80 per cent of the world's biodiversity.

Despite being ignored for many years, traditional ecological knowledge is gaining recognition among both scientists and policymakers. In Alberta, an Indigenous Wisdom Advisory Panel has been established to provide insight and recommendations to the Environmental Monitoring and Science Division of Alberta's Department of Environment and Parks. The advisory panel works directly with Alberta's Chief Scientist, and oversees the development and implementation of new methods for applying Indigenous wisdom in a science-based system.

The consequences of changing environmental conditions are hard to ignore as the annual temperatures trend upwards, weather events grow more intense, and biodiversity continues to decline. On a global scale, environmental conservation efforts and action against climate change have largely fallen short. Green pluralism provides an important opportunity to mobilize diverse bases of knowledge and draw from varied perspectives. Going forward, the inclusion of non-state actors—such as private industry, NGOs, and Indigenous peoples—will be imperative to achieving holistic environmental governance.



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