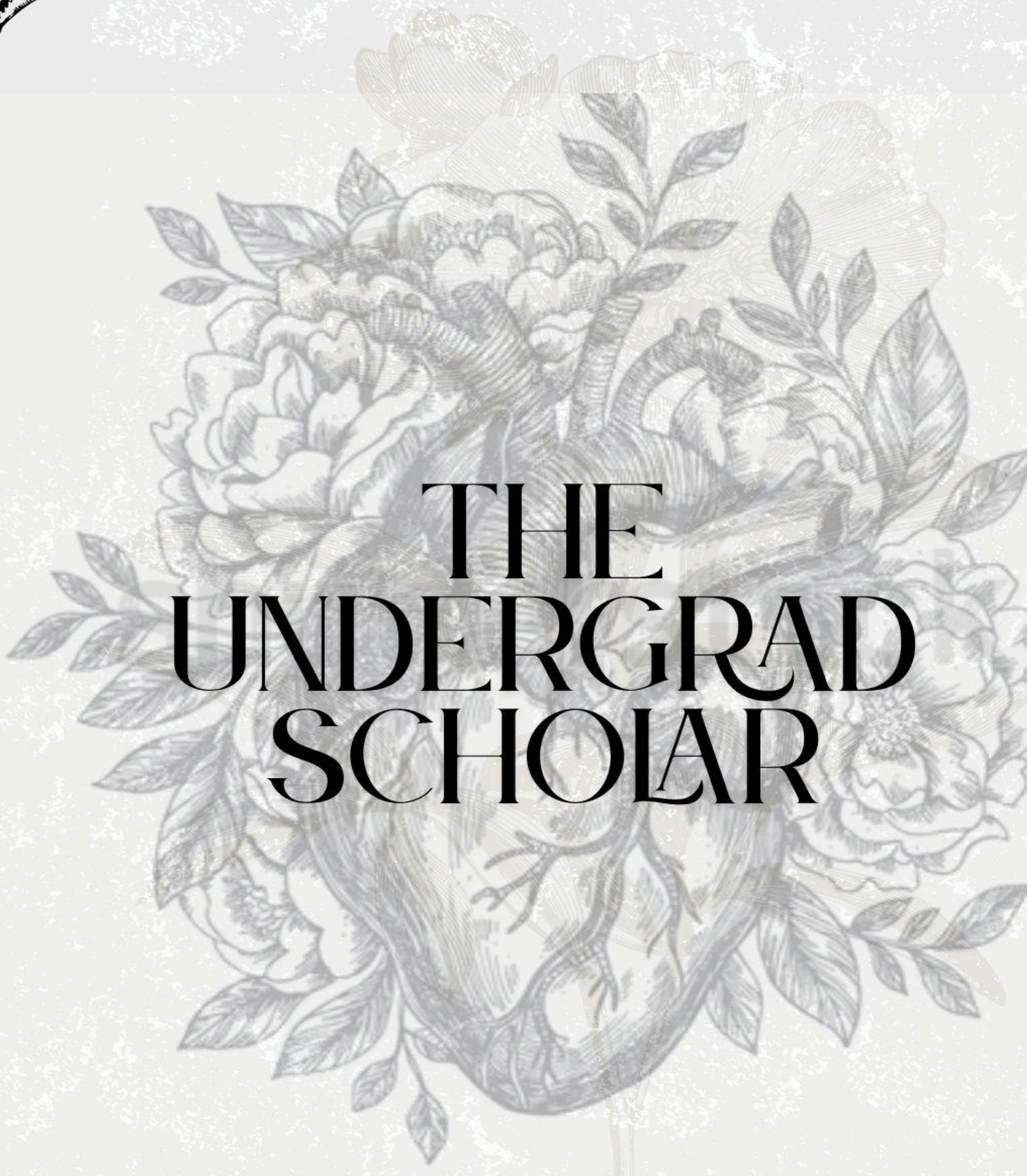
FACULTY OF ARTS STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

THE UNDERGRAD SCHOLAR



2025/26 Publication, 2nd Edition

FASA & University of Calgary Arts

Welcome to the second edition of The Undergrad Scholar, curated by the Academic team.

This journal represents the dedication, innovation, and scholarly excellence of our student researchers. Each paper showcases a commitment to critical inquiry, a passion for learning, and a desire to contribute meaningfully to contemporary academic conversations.

We are proud to provide a platform where emerging scholars can share their work, challenge ideas, and inspire future research. We hope this journal not only highlights the incredible talent within our community but also encourages dialogue, collaboration, and continued academic exploration.

Thank you for joining us on this journey of discovery.

With enthusiasm,

The Academic and Advocacy Team (2025/26) and Vice President Academic Saryssa Thiara

Student Research Index

The Colonial Legacy of the West: The Impact of Assimilation and Segregation on Racial Hierarchies and Cultural/Racial Distinctiveness

Claire Fayika Antoine

Department of Sociology, University of Calgary

Dr. Ayesha Mian Akram

March 21, 2025

Abstract

Across the West, racism and discrimination have been fundamental components of the systems that shaped societies in the Americas. European colonization brought with it slavery, genocide, segregation, and other forms of oppression. While Canada, the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean share key similarities in their colonial histories, there are significant differences in how racist ideologies manifested in each societies' policies and laws. The different colonizers, whether they be French, English, Spanish, or Portuguese, adopted distinct approaches to the common racist ideology of white superiority. This led to varying formations of racial hierarchies and cultural/racial distinctions. This paper will examine Indigenous peoples in Canada, Black Americans in the United States, and both Indigenous and Black populations in Latin America and the Caribbean. The central argument posits that the approach to race across regions may have been largely influenced by demographic factors. Larger racialized populations allowed for more fluid racial categories meanwhile larger white populations led to stricter divisions. More fluid racial categories allowed for less black and white hierarchies but nonetheless placed whiteness at the top of the hierarchy. In some regions, these dynamics may have also been shaped by labor and resource exploitation. Control of labor forces often encouraged segregation while land dispossession drove efforts to undermine Indigenous identities. These factors may explain the hierarchies of racialized communities across the West. Grounded in a comprehensive literature review, this paper aims to provide a theoretical framework for understanding these complex outcomes.

Keywords: Segregation, Assimilation, Indigenous Peoples, Canada, Black Americans, Latin America, Caribbean, Racism

Introduction

Since the beginning of colonization, systemic racism has had profound effects on marginalized communities across Canada, the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Each region has its own distinct history and relationship with racism. In some areas, racialized communities were subjected to physical segregation, which pushed them to the fringes of society and denied them access to essential resources (Thompson-Miller & Feagin, 2007; Brant, 2020). This often resulted in conditions of poverty, confinement to “ghettos” and impoverished neighborhoods, and erasure from mainstream society (Thompson-Miller & Feagin, 2007; Brant, 2020). In other regions, physical assimilation occurred, where racialized individuals were integrated into society based on class standing or lightness of skin color, but often without true social or cultural acceptance (Wade, 2019; Dubois, 2012). Another common form of marginalization was cultural segregation: where racialized people were excluded from “white” cultural spaces and denied participation in broader societal life (Branscombe, 1999). This led to the creation of distinct in-groups and out-groups. Conversely, cultural assimilation was practiced in some regions, where European ideologies and ways of living were forced upon racialized communities (Amir, 2018). This often resulted in cultural genocide, the erasure of diversity, and a push toward homogeneity (Amir, 2018).

In areas where the white population outnumbered racialized populations, interracial relationships were less socially acceptable (Jordan, 2014). A notable case in the Caribbean is Barbados in the early 1640s, which, unlike most of the Caribbean, had a white majority. And unlike most of the Caribbean, Barbados adopted the "one-drop rule" similar to that in the United States (Jordan, 2014). In regions like Latin America and the Caribbean, where racialized groups often outnumbered the white population, there was greater acceptance of racial intermixture.

Another notable case is South Carolina, which, unlike most of the United States at some point, had a Black majority. There, interracial relationships were more tolerated than in any other white-dominated colony, and mixed-race offsprings often attained higher status (Jordan, 2014).

This paper will argue that the demographic size of the racialized population compared to the white population and the exploitation of labor and resources may have affected segregational or assimilation policies. Black oppression in the United States and the resulting cultural distinctiveness between Black Americans and White Americans may have been shaped by a history of black labor exploitation and a white majority that pushed for segregation. In Canada, a white majority and the exploitation of Indigenous lands may have resulted in a mix of cultural assimilation and physical segregation (Brant, 2020; Amir, 2018). In Latin America and the Caribbean, a racialized majority may have been the key factor that led to policies and cultural beliefs that pushed for assimilation which in turn may have resulted in racial hierarchies that prioritized people with white or light skinned and oppressed those with brown or black skin (Wade, 2019; Kelly, 2024). Lastly, these combinations of oppression have contributed to the differences in the experiences of racialized communities.

Racism in the United States

The United States exhibited a strong aversion to racial intermixture compared to Latin America and the Caribbean. In most of the United States, where the white population was the majority, there was widespread opposition to racial intermixture and legislation was enacted to ensure racial segregation. This was characterized by anti-miscegenation laws that prohibited and controlled interracial relationships (Thompson, 2008). Anti-miscegenation laws were more extensive than legalized segregation and slavery and outlasted Jim Crow by more than a decade

(Thompson, 2008). Lastly, the labor-based plantation society in the United States required a large and enslaved population. Anti-miscegenation laws preventing black and white relationships and marriage were designed to maintain a black enslaved and impoverished workforce (Thompson, 2008). The desire to keep the labor force divided along racial lines and the disdain for racial intermixing may have led to prevalence of segregational policies.

Following the abolition of slavery in 1865, the white majority actively sought mechanisms to perpetuate the oppression of Black Americans. Numerous racist institutions emerged, succeeding in sustaining this oppression. One of the central legal frameworks that facilitated this was the Jim Crow system. This regime of legal segregation began in the 1870s and persisted until the 1960s. However, preceding this, another set of legal codes governed the lives of Black Americans and dictated their participation in public life. This was referred to as the "Black Codes." These laws severely restricted the freedoms of African Americans, prohibiting them from voting, attending public schools, accessing public hospitals, and utilizing public facilities such as hotels, parks, and transportation (Thompson-Miller & Feagin, 2007). The transition from the Black Codes to Jim Crow occurred following the pivotal 1896 Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which sanctioned the formalization of legal segregation (Thompson-Miller & Feagin, 2007). This era of segregation was characterized by a rigid separation of spaces for black and white individuals. Public institutions were divided along racial lines, with white spaces receiving significantly better resources (Thompson-Miller & Feagin, 2007). As a result, black communities were often deprived of adequate public services, further contributing to their impoverishment (Thompson-Miller & Feagin, 2007). When black communities managed to achieve prosperity, they were frequently met with violent resistance and a phenomenon referred to as "white jealousy" (Thompson-Miller & Feagin, 2007). Prosperous Black Americans faced attacks on their lives, property, and families at the hands of white individuals. A notable example is the destruction of Rosewood, a Black American town in Florida, which was decimated by a white mob in the 1930s, leading to the deaths of numerous black residents (Thompson-Miller & Feagin, 2007). Countless Black Americans across the South and border states endured grave physical and material harm, often without official acknowledgment or media coverage (Thompson-Miller & Feagin, 2007). Thus, not only were black communities marginalized and deprived of resources, but when they began to succeed, white communities actively sought to thwart their progress. The violence and systemic oppression of the segregation era had profound psychological effects, leading to what scholars describe as "segregation stress syndrome". Victims of racialized violence, including assaults and rapes, frequently experienced depression, anxiety, anger, and fear (Thompson-Miller & Feagin, 2007). This system of racial segregation helped to establish and entrench a clear division between "black society" and "white society". Even after the formal end of Jim Crow, the historical legacies of segregation likely contributed to the ongoing spatial and societal distinctions along racial lines.

The Transatlantic slave trade forcibly transported a variety of African ethnic groups, each with distinct cultures, languages, and belief systems, and subsequently homogenized them under a single racial identity: black. This imposed categorization, which brought together culturally diverse peoples, could have potentially hindered the development of a unified "black" identity in the United States. However, in contrast to such an expectation, a unique black culture has emerged in America. The formation of this distinct cultural identity may be attributed to the cultural segregation faced by Black Americans. In a society that adhered to a white supremacy ideology, racial segregation was not only institutionalized but reinforced by a pervasive disdain for racial intermixture. The "one-drop rule," which dictated that any person with African ancestry was deemed black regardless of their visible racial characteristics, further cemented this racial dichotomy (Jordan, 2014). This rule predominantly applied to those of mixed African and European heritage, while overlooking other forms of racial intermixture (Jordan, 2014). This physical segregation gave rise to a parallel cultural segregation, where white and black spaces were divided. White Americans were not only physically separated from Black Americans but were mentally conditioned to perceive them as incapable of full integration into mainstream society. This systematic restriction of white spaces led to the creation of black spaces. These black spaces, born of necessity, became the foundations where black culture was nurtured and created. The oppressive reality of exclusion from the dominant social order prompted the development of a resilient group identity in defiance of marginalization. In a situation where assimilation was an unattainable goal, the only option was to embrace the status as an out-group and construct an identity characterized by an oppositional culture against prevailing social norms. This process is integral to the formation of ethnic and cultural identities, which are often crucial determinants of health and psychological well-being among marginalized groups (T. B. Smith & Silva, 2011). The process of outgroup rejection, understood in the context of historical trauma, such as institutionalized racism, often strengthens identification with the ingroup (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999). “In other words, if one cannot gain acceptance in the group with much of society's power and prestige, the most adaptive response might be to increase one's investment in one's own group, or to "love the one you're with"(Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999). One compelling example of this creation of an oppositional culture is the emergence of rap music in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Rap music embodied a defiant response to the systemic oppression faced by Black Americans and was used to affirm Black American’s identities in the face of rejection (Martinez, 1997). Overall, the distinct formation of black culture in America can be understood as a complex interplay of forced categorization, cultural resistance, and the psychological need to assert a unique identity in the face of societal exclusion and oppression.

Racism in Canada

The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation of Canada (2015) states: “For over a century, the central goals of Canada’s Aboriginal policy were to eliminate Aboriginal governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of assimilation, cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada. The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which can best be described as “cultural genocide.” Canada's history of physical and cultural genocide against Indigenous populations resulted in a predominantly white society and a marginalized Indigenous minority. This demographic reality may explain why assimilation in Canada was primarily enforced through legal mechanisms and residential schools, rather than through racial intermixture. Though anti-miscegenation laws are largely attributed to the US, anti-miscegenation policies existed in Canada. Anti-miscegenation regimes in the Indian Act in Canada were concerned with drawing boundaries around who was acceptable as a sexual or marital partner (Thompson, 2008). The Indian Act that caused Aboriginal women to lose status for marrying outside their designated racial boundaries are comparable to anti-miscegenation regimes (Thompson, 2008). However, assimilation through enfranchisement was the goal of the Indian Act (Thompson, 2008). Lastly, resource exploitation was a key factor in assimilation policies. There was a state interest in gaining Indigenous lands through assimilative means (Thompson, 2008). A key example of this is that Indigenous peoples were provided land ownership rights in exchange for Indian status (Thomspon, 2008). This may have affected the two methods employed to erase Indigenous groups. One method was to erase them from the dominant society by pushing them to the outskirts and physically segregating them. The other method was to erase the Indigenous identity by utilizing a white superiority mindset that forced European ways of living onto Indigenous peoples. The first method allowed for access to the land and the second aimed to erase Indigenous peoples' cultural connection to the land.

The segregation of Indigenous peoples in Canada was systematically enforced through a variety of institutions, including the reserve system, residential schools, Indian hospitals, and others (Brant, 2020). Following the signing of the Numbered Treaties between 1871 and 1921, Indigenous peoples were forcibly relocated to small tracts of land designated as "reserves" (Brant, 2020). These lands were often the least desirable, both geographically and agriculturally, leading to significant challenges for the communities (Brant, 2020). For groups such as Inuit and Métis, who were not placed on reserves, displacement and land dispossession were common experiences (Brant, 2020). Inuit, in particular, were severely impacted by the High Arctic relocations of 1953 and 1955, which saw them forcibly removed from their homelands to less hospitable regions of the Arctic. Inuit were promised an abundance of wildlife but were instead given land that led to considerable hardships with lasting effects (Brant, 2020). Today, Indigenous communities living on reserves continue to face enduring socioeconomic disparities compared to non-Indigenous populations in Canada, with persistent inequalities in areas such as health, education, and employment (Salee et al., 2021). These inequities are a direct result of historical policies aimed at segregation, cultural suppression, and dispossession.

The forced cultural assimilation of Indigenous peoples in Canada is often described as cultural genocide due to the clear intention to destroy Indigenous values and cultures. "Cultural genocide is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group" (*Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future: Summary of The final report of the truth and reconciliation commission of canada,* 2015). Historically, Canada framed the existence and ways of living of Indigenous peoples as an "Indian problem" (Amir, 2018). This term, attributed to Duncan Campbell Scott of Indian Affairs, embodied a governmental goal to absorb all Indigenous individuals into the colonial body politic, thereby eliminating any "Indian question" (Brant, 2020). The infamous phrase "Kill the Indian, save the man" (Amir, 2018) epitomized this approach, serving as the foundation for various assimilationist policies. The “Gradual civilization Act of 1857” aimed to control Indigenous identity and promote European worldviews (Neeganagwedgin, 2019). Subsequent legislation, such as the *1869 Enfranchisement Act* and the *Indian Act of 1876*, further restricted Indigenous sovereignty and autonomy (Neeganagwedgin, 2019). These acts have been described as instruments of "paper genocide," by some Indigenous peoples (Neeganagwedgin, 2019). A central element of this cultural genocide was the establishment of residential schools. These institutions sought to indoctrinate Indigenous children into European cultural norms, often through coercive and violent means. Children were taught to feel ashamed of their Indigenous heritage, and many suffered physical and emotional abuse (Bombay et al., 2014). While not all Indigenous communities were directly affected by residential schools, many were forced to send their children to these institutions, where attempts to destroy Indigenous cultures were pervasive and deliberate (Bombay et al., 2014). The legacy of these assimilationist policies has resulted in significant psychological and social distress for Indigenous individuals and communities. Furthermore, the offsprings of residential school survivors have reported higher rates of childhood abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction (Bombay et al., 2014). As previously mentioned, ethnic and cultural identity plays a crucial role in determining health outcomes among minority groups (Smith & Silva, 2011). The systematic efforts to erase Indigenous identity have had significant impacts and have contributed to ongoing struggles for cultural preservation and health within Indigenous communities.

Lastly, due to the combination of physical segregation and cultural assimilation policies, there was a lack of cultural mixing in Canada. Although the Métis people in Canada represent a unique case of racial blending, transculturation between Indigenous, Métis, and the dominant white society did not occur on a large scale. Instead, distinct cultural groups, including First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and the majority white population, exist in a pluralistic manner, coexisting within Canadian society without forming a blended or "melting pot" culture as seen in regions like Latin America. The separation of these groups reflects the persistence of distinct cultural boundaries, rather than an integrated society.

Racism in the Caribbean

During the early colonization of the Caribbean, the introduction of European diseases resulted in the decimation of much of the Indigenous population (Chasteen, 2016, p. 34). This depopulation subsequently increased the transportation of enslaved Africans to the region, particularly in countries such as Trinidad, Jamaica, and Haiti, where individuals of African descent became the dominant demographic group (Chasteen, 2016, p. 34). In the Caribbean, assimilation into the dominant society was closely tied to class and skin color, with strict boundaries regarding participation in the dominant hegemonic society. In Trinidad, the class system operated similarly to a caste system, with skin color playing a pivotal role in the division of social classes (Braithwaite, 1953). Within this racialized class hierarchy, lighter-skinned and brown-skinned individuals were predominantly found in the middle class, while darker-skinned Black individuals were relegated to the lower class (Braithwaite, 1953). Social mobility between the lower and middle classes was constrained, with one of the few avenues for upward mobility being marriage to a person of lighter skin or someone with a higher occupational status, such as a doctor (Braithwaite, 1953). However, the divide between white and non-white populations were more rigid, resembling a caste system in which mobility was almost entirely prohibited (Braithwaite, 1953). In Jamaica, socioeconomic mobility was also linked to proximity to whiteness, which often translated into political power (Kelly, 2024). In Haiti, access to the hegemonic society was facilitated through interracial relationships, with mixed-race offspring often gaining access to power due to their white ancestry. Many mixed free people of color in Haiti had achieved wealth as a result of the common practice of white parents freeing and gifting land to their mixed-race children. These individuals, in turn, often became landowners and slaveholders themselves (Dubois, 2012). This dynamic highlights the complex intersection of race, class, and power within the Caribbean, where social stratification was shaped by physical appearance and proximity to whiteness.

In the Caribbean, interracial relationships often resulted in mixed-race offspring who had greater access to both the physical and cultural aspects of the dominant hegemonic society. Following emancipation in Jamaica, light-skinned Jamaicans made up a significant portion of the elite class (Kelly, 2024). Similarly, in Haiti, the mulatto elite held long-standing political and cultural dominance (Dubois, 2012, p. 87). In Trinidad, lighter-skinned individuals held financial dominance and occupied higher social ranks compared to their darker-skinned counterparts (Braithwaite, 1953). The ability of racialized communities to ascend the social hierarchy was often mediated by occupational status and skin color. This reflected a balance between the exclusion of racialized individuals from broader societal access and the limited pathways to assimilation. However, complete assimilation into the white-dominated group was strictly curtailed. For example, prior to the Haitian Revolution, mulatto groups in Haiti petitioned France for equal rights with the dominant white French society but were denied (Dubois, 2012, p.12). Thus, in the Caribbean, full assimilation into the white-dominated social structure was rare. Nevertheless, the social dynamics extended beyond a simple binary of white and black and allowed for more complex hierarchies where lighter-skinned racialized groups held greater power. In the case of Haiti, the early post-revolutionary leadership exemplified how aspirations for acceptance into European-dominated society shaped governance strategies. Haitian leaders, such as Jean-Jacques Dessalines, looked to European models of governance despite ruling over a nation that had suffered deeply under European imperialism (Dubois, 2012, p. 69). In 1805, Dessalines crowned himself emperor of Haiti, seeking respect from European nations (Dubois, 2012, p. 46). Although access to white society was largely limited, the desire to assimilate into European norms may have influenced the behavior of early Haitian leaders, diverting them from establishing a distinctly oppositional culture. This example illustrates how cultural assimilation can shape new forms of categorization and oppression. Furthermore, it suggests that cultural assimilation may shift the goals of racialized groups and orient some toward climbing the social hierarchy through socially constructed means. Meanwhile groups that have been entirely excluded from the dominant society may develop distinct cultures and oppositional goals.

Racism in Latin America

Latin America was the principal destination for enslaved Africans during the trans Atlantic slave trade (Chasteen, 2016, p. 3). By the 1550s, Spanish and Portuguese colonizers had imposed their languages, religions, and social institutions on Indigenous peoples and enslaved Africans (Chasteen, 2016, p. 9). In countries such as Bolivia, Guatemala, Peru, and Ecuador, Indigenous populations remained substantial. In others, such as Brazil, European diseases had decimated these communities (Chasteen, 2016, p. 3; *Indigenous Peoples in Latin American Countries,* 2021). Colonization caused significant displacement and fragmentation of Indigenous communities, and this often forced them to migrate to urban areas. These cities were also home to a significant portion of the white European population and urban slaves (Chasteen, 2016, p.

73). The physical presence of these three groups facilitated frequent interactions between racialized communities and the dominant white society (Chasteen, 2016, p. 73). In rural areas, the smaller population of white Europeans resulted in an inability for them to maintain exclusive social and marital relations within their own group. Consequently, interracial interactions between Europeans, Indigenous peoples, and Africans became more common (Chasteen, 2016, p. 73). The phenomenon of physical assimilation was further demonstrated through the intermixing of races, which often accompanied these social interactions (Chasteen, 2016, p. 73). This blending of racial groups played a crucial role in shaping the demographic and cultural landscape of Latin America.

A central concept in the formation of Latin American identity is transculturation, which refers to the process by which Indigenous and African cultural elements were not eradicated by European colonizers but rather combined with European influences to create a distinct Latin American culture (Chasteen, 2016, p. 68). This transculturation was often facilitated through interracial relationships, with both cultural and biological blending contributing to the formation of a new societal order (Chasteen, 2016, p. 85). The process of racial mixing, known as *mestizaje* or *mestiçagem*, became a defining feature of Latin America's history (Wade, Scorer, & Aguiló, 2019). As race mixing occurred, a complex racial taxonomy emerged, with as many as 16 distinct categories based on combinations of racial ancestry (Sanchez, 2021). This caste system afforded greater privileges to individuals with lighter skin and more European features, while those with darker skin or more pronounced African or Indigenous features faced greater marginalization (Sanchez, 2021). However, social mobility within this system was possible through interracial marriage and a process known as "mejorar la raza" (to improve the race) (Sanchez, 2021). This was a societal expectation that Afro and Indigenous Latinx individuals would marry lighter-skinned partners as a means of ascending the social hierarchy. The concept of "blanqueamiento" (whitening) further underscored the importance of skin color in determining one's social status in Latin America. This ideology promoted the gradual assimilation of Afro and Indigenous Latinx populations into whiteness, either through racial mixing or the acquisition of wealth and education (Sanchez, 2021). Additionally, class and economic status were crucial determinants of one's ability to "improve" their racial standing. For example, the phrase "money whitens" was the notion that individuals could purchase legal recognition of their whiteness from the Spanish Crown (Chasteen, 2016, p. 88). This flexible system of racial classification allowed for some degree of social mobility, in contrast to the more rigid racial binaries that characterized societies in the United States. In Latin America, race was viewed as a negotiable spectrum, and racialized communities had the potential to integrate into the dominant white society through the acquisition of wealth, education, or proximity to whiteness.

However, this system of cultural assimilation was far from egalitarian. It perpetuated a racial hierarchy that privileged whiteness and restricted full equality for Afro and Indigenous populations. Additionally, the *mestizaje* ideology, which emphasizes racial mixing, often downplays the privileges associated with phenotypically white characteristics (Chávez-Dueñas et al., 2014). White elites used this ideology to obscure their own privileges. They promoted the false notion of racial equality, while Afro-descendants and Indigenous people embraced it as a means of humanizing themselves (Chávez-Dueñas et al., 2014). Despite this, significant inequalities persist. For instance, in Colombia, Afro-Colombian regions are among the most neglected by the government and suffer disproportionately from violence and poverty: conditions akin to those of Indigenous reserves in Canada (Chávez-Dueñas et al., 2014). In Guatemala, Indigenous people make up 58% of the poor and 72% of the extreme poor (Chávez-Dueñas et al., 2014). Additionally, in many Latin American nations, the oligarchy remains almost exclusively white, while Afro-descendants and Indigenous peoples occupy the lowest rungs of the socioeconomic hierarchy (Martinez & Iyer, 2011). The *mestizaje* ideology thus serves to obscure the effects of the skin color hierarchy (Sanchez, 2021) and discourages Afro-Latinx individuals from embracing their African and Black heritage. This then leads to the internalization of racism and colorism (Sanchez, 2021). Ultimately, the blending of racial groups and the social mechanisms of *mejorar la raza* played a central role in the development of Latin America's unique cultural landscape and its racial hierarchies.

Conclusion: Relative Outcomes of Oppressed Groups

Though all these regions operated through a mindset of white superiority, there were different methods employed. One reason these methods may have been different could be due to the demographic sizes of each population as was mentioned. Regions with a relatively larger racialized populations such as Latin America and the Caribbean often had more fluidity around concepts of race and racial hierarchies. Regions with relatively smaller racialized populations such as Canada and the United States often did not have cultural widespread acceptance of interracial relationships. Nor were there specific “middle classes” formed for mixed offsprings that positioned them as privileged relative to non-mixed racialized groups but still as lesser than those of full European descent. Additionally, these regions had less cultural mixing and experienced more cultural distinctiveness. Therefore, demographic size may be an explanation for whether cultural mixing or cultural distinctiveness occurs. Because despite, Black Americans in the United States experiencing primarily physical and cultural segregation and Indigenous peoples in Canada experiencing cultural assimilation and physical segregation, there exists that key similarity of cultural distinctiveness. Additionally, the exploitation of black labor in the United States may have led to strong segregational policies whilst the desire for Indigenous lands in Canada may have led to use of both segregational and assimilation policies.

References

Amir, R. (2018). Cultural genocide in Canada? *It did happen here*. *Aboriginal Policy Studies, 7*(1). https://doi.org/10.5663/aps.v7i1.28804

Bombay, A., Matheson, K., & Anisman, H. (2014). The intergenerational effects of Indian Residential Schools: Implications for the concept of historical trauma. *Transcultural Psychiatry, 51*(3), 320–338. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363461513503380

Braithwaite, L. (1953). Social stratification in Trinidad: A preliminary analysis. *Social and Economic Studies, 2*(2/3), 5–175. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27850948

Branscombe, N. R., Schmitt, M. T., & Harvey, R. D. (1999). Perceiving pervasive discrimination among African Americans: Implications for group identification and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 77*(1), 135–149. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.77.1.135

Brant, J. (2020). Racial segregation of Indigenous peoples in Canada. *The Canadian Encyclopedia.* https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/racial-segregation-of indigenous-peoples-in-canada

Chasteen, J. C. (2016). *Born in blood & fire: A concise history of Latin America* (4th ed.). W. W. Norton & Company.

Chavez-Dueñas, N. Y., Adames, H. Y., & Organista, K. C. (2014). Skin-color prejudice and within-group racial discrimination: Historical and current impact on Latino/a populations. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 36*(1), 3–26.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986313511306
19

Dubois, L. (2012). *Haiti: The aftershocks of history*. Picador / Metropolitan Books.

Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future: Summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.*

Indigenous people Latin American countries 2021 | Statista. (2024, December 2). *Statista.* https://www.statista.com/statistics/1340373/percentage-indigenous-population-latin-american countries/

Jordan, W. D. (2014). Historical origins of the one-drop racial rule in the United States. *Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies, 1*(1). https://doi.org/10.5070/c811013867

Kelly, M. D. A. (2024). Skin color and socioeconomic inequality: The persistence of colorism among Black Jamaicans. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2024.2399717

Martinez, R. A. (1997). Popular culture as oppositional culture: Rap as resistance. *Sociological Perspectives, 40*(2), 265–286. https://doi.org/10.2307/1389525

Martinez, R., & Iyer, V. (2011). Latin America's racial caste system: Salient marketing implications. *International Business & Economics Research Journal (IBER), 7.* https://doi.org/10.19030/iber.v7i11.3308

Neeganagwedgin, E. (2019). The land since time immemorial: A review of the assimilation policies on Indigenous peoples through Canada's Indian Act. *Ab-Original, 3*(1), 136–142. https://doi.org/10.5325/aboriginal.3.1.0136

20

Salée, D., Newhouse, D., & Levesque, C. (2021, February 24). Quality of life of Aboriginal people in Canada. *Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP).* https://irpp.org/research studies/quality-of-life-of-aboriginal-people-in-canada/

Sanchez, D. (2021). Introduction to special issue on AfroLatinidad: Theory, research, and practice. *Journal of Latina/o Psychology, 9*(1), 1–7. https://doi.org/10.1037/lat0000186

Thompson-Miller, R., & Feagin, J. R. (2007). The reality and impact of legal segregation in the United States. In H. Vera & J. R. Feagin (Eds.), *Handbooks of the sociology of racial and ethnic relations* (pp. 23). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-70845-4_23

Wade, P., Scorer, J., & Aguiló, I. (2019). Introduction: Latin American and Caribbean racisms in global and conceptual context. In P. Wade, J. Scorer, & I. Aguiló (Eds.), *Cultures of anti-racism in Latin America and the Caribbean* (pp. 1–24). University of London Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvk8w0pj.5

Does the Minimum Wage Increase the Earnings of Low-Wage Earners?

By: Jonathan Barazzutti

Introduction

For decades, the minimum wage has been a significant policy debate within the field of economics. As one of the premier policies aimed at addressing poverty, heated debates have emerged surrounding its effectiveness in doing so. Many countries around the world have opted to implement a statutory minimum wage. For example, 30 of the 38 OECD countries have officially implemented a statutory minimum wage, ranging from 26 percent of the median wage of full-time workers in the United States to about 91 percent of the median wage in Colombia (OECD, 2023).

This paper examines the question, *"Does the minimum wage increase the earnings of low-wage earners?"*. Because the minimum wage is only binding for firms already paying low wages to workers, the minimum wage directly affects the labor markets where low-wage earners operate. In answering this question, this paper begins by examining empirical research testing the effects of the minimum wage on employment and prices, two variables of key concern for low-wage earners. This is because unemployment eliminates earnings entirely, while inflation reduces their purchasing power. After this, attention is given to research looking at whether the minimum wage lowers poverty, before concluding with key findings and research limitations.

The results of this paper suggest that implementing the minimum wage increases the earnings of low-wage earners. Firms appear to be relatively non-responsive in changing their employment levels or prices following minimum wage increases, and research suggests that the minimum wage reduces the proportion of the population below the poverty line. While there may be some minor adverse effects in terms of employment or prices, research suggests that the wage increase that low-wage earners gain from the minimum wage more than makes up for it.

The Effect of the Minimum Wage on Employment

The most intensely debated aspect of the minimum wage is its effect on employment. If too many workers end up losing their jobs due to a minimum wage increase, it may offset any wage gains for others, potentially harming low-wage earners overall. The competitive view of the minimum wage sees the minimum wage as creating a surplus of labor, as the supply of labor at the binding price exceeds the demand for labor by firms. The surplus can be dispersed in a number of ways, one of which is thought to be a decrease in employment (Wilson, 2012). Those who subscribe to a competitive view of the minimum wage are often skeptical of the policy, as it can harm low-wage earners the minimum wage intends to help depending on the size of the employment effect.

However, not all views of the minimum wage imply that it would have undesirable consequences. The monopsony view questions whether low-wage labor markets are competitive by arguing that they only have one buyer of labor. Because the firm becomes a price maker, it can set wages at a point that maximizes profit, which would be lower than the competitive equilibrium. By disrupting this process, a minimum wage can increase employment, bringing the labor supply closer to the equilibrium level (Wilson, 2012). Another view, the institutional view, questions whether the only channel of adjustment for a minimum wage is through labor market changes, arguing that there are other ways a firm can absorb costs. Firms may instead respond by expanding sales, improving service, economically expanding, changing internal wage structure, or even passing costs onto consumers through increasing sales prices. The institutional view suggests that a minimum wage can increase employment through increasing the demand for labor as firms expand their total output (Wilson, 2012).

In general, empirical evidence points to a modest negative effect of the minimum wage on employment, if there is any effect at all. For example, Hafner et al. (2016) conducted a meta-regression analysis of empirical research on how the United Kingdom's national minimum wage has affected unemployment and found no overall adverse employment effect, either in terms of employment hours or employment retention probabilities. A similar meta-analysis in the United States by Doucouliagos & Stanley (2009) found little to no evidence of a negative association between the minimum wage and employment after correcting for publication bias. Finally, Campolieti (2020) meta-analyzed research on the effects of the minimum wage on employment in Canada and found a minimum wage elasticity of approximately -0.27. This means that a 1 percent increase in the minimum wage is estimated to decrease employment by 0.27 percent, pointing to a relatively inelastic response by firms to shifts in the minimum wage. Taken together, these findings suggest a slight negative effect of the minimum wage on employment at most, with a lot of research suggesting no effect. While some firms may adjust to the minimum wage by reducing employment, the degree to which this happens is small relative to the increase in the minimum wage.

The slight negative effect of the minimum wage on employment stands in contrast to the monopsony view, which predicts a positive relationship between the minimum wage and employment. While many labor markets, such as markets for athletes, teachers, nurses and university professors might operate in relatively monopsonistic ways, labor markets that low-wage workers operate in do not appear to behave like monopsonies (Boal & Ransom, 2002). For the same reason, these results undermine the institutional view of the minimum wage. While minimum wages can lead to a modest boost to the economy by stimulating demand (Cooper, 2013), this boost does not appear sufficient to create a positive relationship between the minimum wage and employment.

The results on how the minimum wage affects employment are most consistent with low-wage labor markets functioning under conditions where the demand for labor is relatively inelastic. Exogenous increases in the price of labor, such as the minimum wage increase, do not significantly affect employment relative to the size of the increase. Consequently, minimum wage increases lead to a decrease in the profitability of affected firms (Draca et al., 2011; Babiak et al., 2019), as they struggle to effectively adjust to the changes. Substantial employment adjustments by firms are thus not a major concern, suggesting that minimum wages do not harm the earnings prospects of low-wage earners.

The Effect of the Minimum Wage on Prices

The institutional view of the minimum wage also points to the possibility of the policy leading firms to increase prices to absorb cost increases (Wilson, 2012). While research suggests that firms cannot wholly absorb cost increases from minimum wage hikes, the stimulated demand a minimum wage creates can potentially increase prices through a demand-side pressure. Furthermore, when minimum wages raise labor costs or increase the demand for goods and services, increasing prices can help a firm absorb some of the cost increases. Lemos (2008) surveyed the literature on how the minimum wage affects prices in the United States, reviewing and comparing nearly 30 studies. The author found that despite variation in methodologies, data periods, and data sources, most studies suggested that a 10 percent minimum wage increase raises food prices by no more than 4 percent and overall prices by no more than 0.4 percent.

Although price increases are modest overall, they will most likely disproportionately harm low-income earners. Beyond the reality that a low-income earner has their budget constrained to a greater degree from overall inflation, the price increases disproportionately target goods that low-income consumers spend a higher proportion of their income on. Low-income consumers, who will generally be low-wage earners, spend a higher proportion of their income on necessities such as food compared to more luxury goods. Because the price inflation is particularly high for food prices at 4 percent, it will take away a higher proportion of the incomes of low-wage earners. However, because these price hikes are significantly lower than the 10 percent increase in the wages of low-income earners who remained employed, this still suggests that the real earnings of these individuals increase substantially. This indicates a relatively inelastic response of firms' pricing decisions following a minimum wage increase.

In short, while the minimum wage has a modest effect on prices, it is substantially outweighed by the gains in earnings for low-wage earners. This is once again consistent with the minimum wage functioning as a progressive redistributive policy, ultimately increasing the financial well-being of low-wage earners.

The Effect of the Minimum Wage on Poverty

While the research on the minimum wage, employment and prices suggests that the minimum wage increases the earnings of low-wage earners, it is not direct evidence. Hence, attention should also be given to research directly assessing if the minimum wage lowers poverty, thus seeing if the policy increases the earnings of low-wage workers at the bottom of the income distribution.

Dube (2019a) examined how minimum wage policies in the United States affect the distribution of family incomes, specifically looking at the effects of higher minimum wages on the cumulative distribution of family incomes at the bottom. The author found that a higher minimum wage reduced the share of non-elderly individuals with incomes below 50, 75, 100, and 125 percent of the federal poverty threshold. In the long run, the minimum wage elasticity of the non-elderly poverty rate was between -0.22 and -0.55, suggesting that a 1 percent increase in the minimum wage decreases the non-elderly poverty rate by somewhere between 0.22 and 0.55 percent.

These results are what the research on the effects of the minimum wage on employment and prices would suggest – that while there can be small adverse effects of the minimum wage on certain macroeconomic variables, the policy nonetheless benefits the incomes of the most vulnerable. Similar results were found by Addison & Blackburn (1998).

Conclusion

In summary, while the minimum wage has some adverse effects, the policy in its historical implementation appears to have increased the earnings of low-wage earners. The minimum wage has either a small negative effect or no impact on employment and is associated with a slight increase in prices. Both effects are consistent with firms having inelastic responses to minimum wage hikes. Furthermore, direct evidence shows that the minimum wage has a redistributive effect, as increases are associated with a reduction in the share of families below the poverty line.

This research has two key limitations of note. The first is that it assumes that the elasticity of the effects of the minimum wage on the income of low-wage earners is identical depending on the initial starting point of the minimum wage. Intuitively, while a firm may be able to accept reduced profits by paying their workers a slightly higher wage without substantially changing employment, if they have to pay a significantly higher wage the story would be different. Increasing the minimum wage from $7.50 to $10 an hour may have little to no effect on employment and prices, but increasing it from $10 to $100 an hour would have a significant impact. Many firms would simply be unable to stay in business while paying their workers such high wages, leading to a significant increase in unemployment and thereby reducing the earnings of low-wage earners. Dube (2019b) finds that the best evidence across American states suggests that the minimum wage's employment effects, up to around 59 percent of the location’s median wage, are small. This indicates that the impact of the minimum wage on employment becomes more elastic as the minimum wage increases. In other words, firms become more responsive to greater increases in the minimum wage in ways that could harm low-wage earners.

The second limitation is that even though research examining the effects of the minimum wage on employment were discussed, other aspects of a low-wage earner’s employment experience were not addressed, despite their potential influence on earnings. For example, a firm may adjust to a minimum wage increase by reducing employees’ total hours, even if the number of employees stays the same. This may be more feasible for a firm due to practical considerations or as a workaround for labor regulations that make firing someone difficult. The number of hours worked would directly affect the earnings of low-wage earners in a way not captured by research on how the minimum wage affects employment. While research indicates that the policy reduces poverty, suggesting this is not a huge issue, future research should consider this nonetheless.

Despite these limitations, the research presented here strongly suggests that in terms of earnings, the minimum wage in its implementation across countries has done more good than harm for low-wage earners. Concerns that existing minimum wage policies have harmed those that they claim to help are not supported by the existing evidence.

References

Addison, J. T., & Blackburn, M. L. (1999). *Minimum wages and poverty*. ILR Review, 52(3), 393. https://doi.org/10.2307/2525141

Babiak, M., Chorna, O., & Pertold-Gebicka, B. (2019). *Minimum wage increase and firm profitability: Evidence from Poland* (IES Working Paper No. 14/2019). Charles University in Prague, Institute of Economic Studies (IES). https://hdl.handle.net/10419/203233

Boal, W. M., & Ransom, M. R. (2002b). *Monopsony in American Labor Markets*. Economic History Association. https://eh.net/encyclopedia/monopsony-in-american-labor-markets/

Campolieti, M. (2020). *Does an increase in the minimum wage decrease employment? A Meta-Analysis of Canadian studies*. Canadian Public Policy, 46(4), 531–564. https://doi.org/10.3138/cpp.2019-070

Cooper, D. (2013, December 19). *Raising the federal minimum wage to $10.10 would lift wages for millions and provide a modest economic boost*. Economic Policy Institute. https://www.epi.org/publication/raising-federal-minimum-wage-to-1010/

Doucouliagos, H. and Stanley, T.D. (2009), *Publication Selection Bias in Minimum-Wage Research? A Meta-Regression Analysis*. British Journal of Industrial Relations, 47: 406-428. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8543.2009.00723.x

Draca, M., Machin, S., & Van Reenen, J. (2011). *Minimum wages and firm profitability*. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 3(1), 129–151. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25760249

Dube, A. (2019a). *Minimum wages and the distribution of family incomes*. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 11(4), 268–304. https://doi.org/10.1257/app.20170085

Dube, A. (2019b, November 5). *Impacts of minimum wages: Review of the International Evidence*. GOV.UK. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/impacts-of-minimum-wages-review-of-the-international-evidence

Hafner, M., Taylor, J., Pankowska, P., Stepanek, M., Nataraj, S., & Christian, V. S. (2017, April 20). *The impact of the National Minimum Wage on employment: A meta-analysis*. RAND. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1807.html#citation

Lemos, S. (2008), *A Survey of the Effects of the Minimum Wage on Prices*. Journal of Economic Surveys, 22: 187-212. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6419.2007.00532.x

OECD. (2023) *Employment protection and minimum wages*. OECD. https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/employment-protection-and-minimum-wages.html

Wilson, M. (2012). *The negative effects of minimum wage laws*. Cato Institute. https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/negative-effects-minimum-wage-laws

Kyoto's Plights: A Realist Perspective on Behaviour of Kyoto Protocol Signatory States

Fara Bedrich

Department of Political Science, University of Calgary

POLI 483: International Law

Dr. Mark Machacek

July 17th, 2024

Introduction

Amidst the mounting climate crisis, international environmental law serves to unite the global community in mitigating environmental damage through individual state efforts. Yet the effectiveness of major efforts such as the Kyoto Protocol remains under scrutiny by states, scholars, and scientists alike. Negotiations seem plagued by power politics and outcomes are mixed. This research paper serves to examine what length the realist perspective explains the behaviors of member states during the negotiations, ratification and functioning of the Kyoto Protocol. The actions of certain member states of the Kyoto Protocol can be thoroughly explained using realist principles such as self-help anarchy, zero-sum relations, and relative gains actions as they prioritized their interests over international climate initiatives. As global temperatures rise, to what UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called not "just chart-topping, but chart-busting" (D'Andrea, 2024), understanding the values underpinning international efforts, and the areas of possible improvement is becoming more critical in damage limitation. Through examining the power politics navigated by Russia, the European Union and the United States in the case of the Kyoto Protocol, as well as its flaws and subsequent efficacy, this research paper will deconstruct the realist sentiments of member states of the international system in the context of protecting humanity's most important asset, Earth.

Literature Review

The literature surrounding the topic of general international environmental law commonly discusses factors of legitimacy, compliance, and enforcement. While not overtly negative, these discussions display an underlying uncertainty in the institutions, framework, and norms facilitating current international environmental law. Literature surrounding the Kyoto Protocol commonly focuses on the politics of great powers surrounding negotiations, such as Harris (1999) who focuses on the United States, or Henry and Sundstrom (2007), who focuses on Russia. Scholars such as Cirman et al. (2009) discuss the sheer variability of attitudes held towards the Kyoto Protocol, as each member state had a unique opinion on its implementation. Later literature, such as Rosen (2015), commonly discusses the Kyoto Protocol primarily in the context of its failures. Many scholars tended to view the Kyoto Protocol as an important milestone for international environmental law, yet inadequate in tackling carbon emissions, especially concerning exempt developing countries, such as Metz (2013). The realist perspective is commonly applied to analyzing the Kyoto Protocol, such as Kutney (2014), who argues of its failure due to differing interests of signatory states.

The Realist School of Thought

Realism as a school of thought is dominant within the field of international relations, first emerging after the disarray of World War II with scholars such as E.H Carr and Hans Morgenthau at the forefront (Donnelly, 2009). Realism views the international system through a lens of power struggles and the complex dynamics it creates between state actors (Mearsheimer, 2001). States grapple for power against each other, aiming to prevail over their competitors (Mearsheimer, 2001). To realists, states exist in a self-help anarchic system, meaning the international system lacks a centralized authority, and states must act in their own benefit to survive (Waltz, 1979). Realism is characterized by principal concepts such as zero-sum thinking, and relative gains. Zero-sum thinking postulates that there are always winners and losers, as one state's success is directly another state's loss (Mearsheimer, 2001). Relative gains involve states weighing their advantages in comparison to other states, in an effort to reap more when cooperating multilaterally (Mearsheimer, 2001) such as in the case of the Kyoto Protocol. While realism includes a variety of subsections, such as classical realism and neorealism, generally, the realism school of thought converges on competition and state-centrism (Korab-Karpowicz, 2023).

The Kyoto Protocol

The 1997 Kyoto Protocol is hailed as "the first international treaty to set legally binding targets to cut greenhouse gas emissions" ("Marking the Kyoto Protocol's 25th anniversary", n.d). A major milestone of international environmental law, the Kyoto Protocol was ratified by 192 Party States ("Marking the Kyoto Protocol's 25th anniversary", n.d). Importantly, the Kyoto Protocol designated limitations to countries based on their level of industrialization, as part of the "common but differentiated responsibilities" doctrine (Harris, 1999), focusing on developed countries. Despite being adopted in 1997, the Kyoto Protocol didn't come into effect until 2005, following a difficult ratification process ("What is the Kyoto Protocol?", n.d) that saw major players such as the United States withdraw, and Russia delay ratification. The behaviors of certain states during its negotiation, ratification and years onward, are indicative of the realist attitudes states employ on the international stage.

Russia and its Rewarding Delay

Russia's realist behaviors set an important tone in the ratification process and ultimately delayed the Kyoto Protocol entering into effect. Russia signed on to the Kyoto Protocol in 1999 and played a vital role during the later ratification stages (Tipton, 2008). To enter into force, the Protocol required at least 55 industrialized UNFCCC parties accounting for a minimum of 55% of global carbon emissions in 1990 to ratify it ("Questions and Answers: The entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol", 2004). Yet by 2004, the Kyoto Protocol struggled to meet this ratification

target, with parties accounting for only 44.2% of global emissions ("Questions and Answers", 2004). As the United States, which contributed 36.1% to global emissions, had withdrawn in 2001, the burden of ratification had fallen onto Russia, because their share of 17.4% would fulfill the minimum ("Questions and Answers", 2004). Despite this criticality, Russia's ratification would come after multiple years of consideration.

The road to ratification was strife with "mixed messages [that] emerged from Putin, his government, advisers, and the media, as to the country's stance on Kyoto" (Tipton, 2008, p. 69). In late 2003, Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that Russia's resolution on whether to ratify the Kyoto Protocol would align with Russia's national interests (Kotov, 2004), a notion already lending itself to the realist concept of self-help. Andrei Illarinov, former economic advisor to Russian president Vladimir Putin, was tasked with comparing Russia's national interest and Kyoto Protocol ratification (Sobisevich, 2020). In January 2004, he expressed it to have a disadvantageous effect on the Russian economy, calling it "discriminatory and not universal" as other major emitters such as the USA and China didn't take on any limitations themselves (Sobisevich, 2020, p. 75). In May 2004, President of the Russian Academy of the Sciences Yuri Osipov told Vladimir Putin that by ratifying the Kyoto Protocol, then "it would be impossible for its economy to double the GDP" (Sobisevich, 2020, p. 75), a goal born out of the 1998 economic crisis (Gusev, 2016).

Yet in late 2004, Russia suddenly changed its tune when an opportunity to gain arose. The European Union and Russia struck a deal for the EU to support Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization on the condition that Russia would ratify the Kyoto Protocol (Cirman et al., 2009), and this deal was realized. Membership in the WTO is advantageous to Russia, allowing them increased access to foreign markets, investments, and goods (Chowdhury, 2003). Russia's decision to ratify in 2004 is explicitly realist, as it chose to hold off its crucial ratification of the Kyoto Protocol because it deemed it disadvantageous at first, and once an opportunity for a relative gain arose, it decided to ratify. Scholars Henry and Sundstrom argue that it's, "clear that Russia's ultimate decision to ratify the Kyoto Protocol was not due to an ideational commitment to resolving climate change…ratification was based on a more instrumental view…as a means of realizing other desirable goals at the international level" (Henry and Sundstrom, 2007, p. 59). Delaying the Kyoto Protocol's complete ratification in order to weigh its gains and losses is indicative of Russia's realist mindset concerning international environmental law. This prioritization of Russia's relative gains over the absolute gains of mitigating climate change aligns with realism.

In 2011, prior to the second commitment period, Russia decided to withdraw from the Kyoto Protocol (Supamijoto and Yasmin, 2020). In 2020, Russia reported similar levels of greenhouse gas emissions to 2004 ("Total greenhouse gas emissions(kt of CO2 emissions) - Russian Federation", 2023), even though they are a party to the Kyoto Protocol's successor, the Paris Agreement (Gusev, 2016). Russia's behavior concerning the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, specifically their decision to weigh the benefits and downsides of ratifying even after signing on in 1999, can be interpreted through a realist perspective. Russia's usage of ratification instrumentally to gain the support of the European Union can be directly understood using the realist self-help lens, as Russia sought to achieve its goals in a manner that it thought benefited itself most. Delaying the Protocol's ratification and its subsequent limitations until it benefited them, as other member states had already ratified and placed their own constraints into place, is a quintessential example of relative gains. Russia's cooperation came only when they knew they would get something out of it.

The European Union's Negotiations

The central role of the European Union (EU) in the creation of the Kyoto Protocol cannot be understated, yet their enthusiasm to implement limitations can lend itself to non-philanthropic reasons. In his book, "Carbon Politics and the Failure of the Kyoto Protocol", Gerald Kutney (2014) remarks on the European Union's strategic goal setting during negotiations of the Kyoto Protocol in an effort to lessen necessary economic changes to meet emissions targets. He discusses that the European Union recognized the minimal necessary change they would need to facilitate to meet emission goals as compared to other developed countries, and purposely proposed goals that would be both easy for them to achieve and harder for other members to achieve (Kutney, 2014). The EU stood at an advantage in Kyoto Protocol negotiations as the newly post-Soviet Eastern Europe would have to do little to reduce emissions, given their economic implosion after Kyoto's 1990 tracking year (Kutney, 2014). Germany also took advantage of a situational advantage, as the collapse of the Berlin Wall had severely impacted emissions in former East Germany enough to account for the newly united Germany's targets (Kutney, 2014). The subsidization of Germany's coal sector (Kutney, 2014), post-Kyoto, doesn't bode well for the sanctity of their climate goals.

Additionally, during negotiations the European Union was against the implementation of flexible individual carbon-credit trading markets, rather advocating for an EU-only carbon-credit trading market (Yandle, 1999). Carbon credits, also referred to as carbon allowances or permits, are sold to companies by governments and serve to authorize carbon emissions ("Carbon Markets 101", n.d). An EU-only carbon-credit trading market is a policy the United States disagreed with as it allowed EU countries an advantageous flexibility in their limitations (Yandle, 1999). The European Union's choice to advocate for this is in line with the realist concept of relative gains, as the EU wanted to gain a relative advantage over other Kyoto Protocol member states. The choice to exclude the United States and Japan would disadvantage them, being "the two countries with the most to gain by trading and the most to lose if the trading option is foreclosed" (Yandle, 1999). Yet the European Union got its way with the introduction of the Emissions Trading System (ETS), thereby allowing the sale of EU carbon emissions allowances through carbon credits (Kutney, 2014), and the gift of flexibility inherent to it. This is despite shooting down proposals of the same mechanisms for other countries during Kyoto Protocol negotiations (Yandle, 1999). Kutney found the carbon credits to be a "disincentive" (2014, p. 183) for reducing emissions and argued they inversely subsidized emissions as a majority of European Union countries over-issued them within the first phase of the ETS.

The European Union's behaviors during the negotiations of the Kyoto Protocol can be interpreted as realist, due to its attempts, some successful, to prioritize the interests of the EU over other Kyoto Protocol member states. By taking note of its advantages and proposing goals that would require minimum effort to meet, they utilized the self-help nature of the international system in order to gain. By rejecting individual carbon-trading markets for Kyoto member states, only to separately introduce an advantageous Emissions Trading System that allowed EU member states flexibility with their emissions, the European Union sought to consolidate their relative gains.

The United States' Goes Its Own Way

The United States' influential role in the negotiations, ratification, and outcome of the Kyoto Protocol cannot be understated. During negotiations, the United States was particularly critical of the "common but differentiated responsibilities" doctrine, which placed the burden of KyotoProtocol targets solely on developed countries rather than the "less responsible and usually much less capable developing countries" (Harris, 1999, p. 28). During the 1990 Kyoto tracking year, the United States' emissions accounted for the highest individual numbers globally ("Questions and Answers: The entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol", 2004). Kyoto's negotiations saw a back-and-forth between the United States who wanted developing countries included, and developing countries who refused to take on limitations until the developed countries such as the United States took on binding limitations themselves (Harris, 1999). The United States was adamant that developing countries could make a significant impact (Harris, 1999), yet there remained a significant disparity in the United States' emissions versus other countries. Their proposals meant that the United States attempted to mitigate their comparative losses by advocating for more countries to implement limitations. Despite the disagreements, the Kyoto Protocol went forward with "common but differentiated responsibilities", and developing countries were not obligated to limit their emissions (Harris, 1999).

The United States signed on to the Kyoto Protocol in 1998 under the Clinton Administration, "in the firm belief that it will serve its environmental, economic, and national security goals." ("United States Signs the Kyoto Protocol", 1998). Once the ratification period began, the United States failed to pass legislation through the Senate (Hovi et al., 2010). In 2001, following the election of George Bush, the United States pushed for a formal withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol, saying to have "no interest in its implementation" (Borger, 2001, para. 1). The reasoning for the withdrawal is based on the belief that in comparison to other signatory parties, the limitations of the Kyoto Protocol would put an unfair strain on the United States' economy (Cirman et al., 2009). Additionally, "the total costs of Kyoto mandates have been estimated at roughly USD 5.5 trillion" (Cirman et al., 2009, p. 35), should the full extent of the Kyoto Protocol mandates be put into effect. The United States showed regard for their relative gains because although the Kyoto Protocol saw to limit all member states, the United States felt it would disadvantage them most in comparison to other members, and couldn't tolerate this to support the absolute gain of mitigating climate change. This consideration of power balances, and subsequent withdrawal, shows the United States viewed the Kyoto Protocol's aims from a realist perspective. Instead the United States, under the leadership of George Bush, pushed for a new domestic policy, called the "Clear Skies and Global Climate Change Initiatives", which was meant to curb greenhouse gas intensity (Cirman et al., 2009).

This policy has been called into question for ignoring projected increases in the United States' GDP, which would negate the benefits of reducing greenhouse gas intensity as the ratio's reductions would be overwhelmed by growth (Cirman et al., 2009).

The United States' decision to withdraw from the Kyoto Protocol out of fear of disadvantages, only to push a domestically-driven initiative with a questionably effective basis can be interpreted as realist behavior. Weighing gains and losses is distinctly zero-sum, and the United States' aversion to taking on limitations that would negatively impact their economy, despite the absolute global benefits of combating climate change, is indicative of a realist mindset. Prioritizing their domestic economy over an international climate initiative is realist, and further pushing a mediocre domestic climate initiative while preserving their key economies is pure realism.

The exclusion of the United States had a major impact on the efficacy of the Kyoto Protocol, as they made up 36.1% of global emissions in 1990 ("Questions and Answers", 2004). In 2022, the United States was the second-highest carbon emitter internationally (Richie and Roser, 2023). The true effects if the United States had ratified the Kyoto Protocol now remain unknown, though their influence on the global stage is undeniable, and their place in international environmental law appears to be central.

Conclusion

The power politics surrounding the Kyoto Protocol are undeniable, and realist explanations for delays, negotiations, and withdrawals are highly coherent in the context of international environmental law. Russia's hesitance to ratify the Kyoto Protocol at the expense of a multi-year delay until they deemed ratification beneficial to solicit the European Union's favor is a primary example of realist self-help and the prioritization of relative gains. The European Union advocating for an EU-centric carbon market despite opposing it during Kyoto Protocol negotiations, and the United States' decision to withdraw from the Kyoto Protocol altogether, despite being a major player in negotiations, both affirm the realist self-help perspective. Realism proves effective in explaining the shortcomings of the Kyoto Protocol, and subsequently international environmental law as a whole. Zero-sum actions, relative gains, and the state perspective of self-help are prevalent. Russia and the European Union sought to relatively gain from the Kyoto Protocol, or in the case of the United States, the absence of it. Due to these interests, the Kyoto Protocol experienced a multi-year delay in ratification and ultimately had little impact on our global emissions, which continue to steadily rise (Richie and Roser, 2023).

However, realism can fail to account for why, despite climate efforts being concentrated at the state level, the global initiative and messaging to solve climate change remains at the international level with an emphasis on institutional unity. The realist sentiment of zero-sum thinking doesn't account for the continued push for improved international environmental law globally, as relative gains might be perceived as weakened by the sheer number of member states for treaties such as the Paris Agreement. International environmental law remains a developing field, one of growing importance as the possibility of global climate disaster looms. The proceedings of the Kyoto Protocol example must be understood on a domestic and institutional level, to gauge the international attitudes towards climate initiatives. Earth's future will depend on the changing wills of the states that inhabit it, and our necessity to understand each other's interests. The dominance of national interests within a realpolitik-based international system can possibly be used to drive forward climate initiatives, using an individually tailored incentives-based participatory system that speaks to states' desire for relative gains. The debate surrounding international environmental law will remain for generations to come. The Earth's future is in our hands, regardless of the interests they serve.

References

Borger, J. (2001, March 29). *Bush kills global warming treaty.* The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2001/mar/29/globalwarming.usnews

Cirman, A., Domadenik, P., Koman, M., & Redek, T. (2009). The Kyoto protocol in a global perspective. *Economic and Business Review*, *11*(1). https://doi.org/10.15458/2335-4216.1259

Carbon Credits 101. (2024, June 26). *Carbon Credits.Com*. https://carboncredits.com/the-ultimate-guide-to-understanding-carbon-credits/

Chowdhury, A. (2004). WTO Accession: What's in it for Russia? *SSRN Electronic Journal*. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.486601

D'Andrea, Aaron. (2024). *Climate change 'speeding up,' UN warns as Canada braces for early wildfires.* Global News. https://globalnews.ca/news/10369394/climate-change-un-canada-wildfires-2024/

Donnelly, J. (2000). *Realism and International Relations*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511612510

Gusev, A. (2016). Evolution of Russian Climate Policy: From the Kyoto Protocol to the Paris Agreement. *L'Europe en Formation*, *380*(2), 39–52. https://doi.org/10.3917/eufor.380.0039

Harris, P. G. (1999). Common But Differentiated Responsibility: The Kyoto Protocol and United States Policy. *New York University Environmental Law Journal*, *7*, 27–48.

Henry, L. A., & Sundstrom, L. M. (2007). Russia and the Kyoto Protocol: Seeking an Alignment of Interests and Image. *Global Environmental Politics*, *7*(4), 47–69.

Hovi, J., Sprinz, D. F., & Bang, G. (2012). Why the United States did not become a party to the Kyoto Protocol: German, Norwegian, and US perspectives. *European Journal of International Relations*, *18*(1), 129–150. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066110380964

Korab-Karpowicz, W. J. (2023). Political Realism in International Relations. In E. N. Zalta & U. Nodelman (Eds.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2023). Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2023/entries/realism-intl-relations/

Kotov, V. (2004). The EU-Russia Ratification Deal: The Risks and Advantages of an Informal Agreement. *International Review for Environmental Strategies*, *5*(1), 157–168. Kutney, G. (2014). *Carbon Politics and the Failure of the Kyoto Protocol*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315851099

Marking the Kyoto Protocol's 25th anniversary. (n.d.). United Nations; United Nations. Retrieved July 17, 2024, from https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/marking-kyoto-protocol%E2%80%99s-25th-annive rsary

Mearsheimer, J. J. (2001). *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. WW Norton & Company. Metz, B. (2013). The legacy of the Kyoto Protocol: A view from the policy world. *WIREs Climate Change*, *4*(3), 151–158. https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.216

Questions and Answers: The entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol. (2004, October 22). European Commission.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_04_245

Ritchie, H., & Roser, M. (2024). *CO_2 emissions* [Dataset]. Our World in Data. https://ourworldindata.org/co2-emissions

Rosen, A. M. (2015). The Wrong Solution at the Right Time: The Failure of the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change. *Politics & Policy*, *43*(1), 30–58. https://doi.org/10.1111/polp.12105

Sobisevich, A. V. (2020). The Activities of the Russian Academy of Science's Council Concerning the Kyoto Protocol and Discussions Around Climate Change. *Abstracts of the Second Eurasian RISK-2020 Conference and Symposium*. https://www.academia.edu/42881316/The_Activities_of_the_Russian_Academy_of_Scie nces_Council_Concerning_the_Kyoto_Protocol_and_Discussions_Around_Clima te_Cha nge_Abstracts_of_The_Second_Eurasian_RISK_2020_Conference_and_Symposi um_RI SK_2020_12th_19th_April_2020_Balrampur_2020_Pp_74_75

Tipton, J. E. (2008). Why did Russia Ratify the Kyoto Protocol? Why the Wait? An Analysis of the Environmental, Economic, and Political Debates. *Slovo*, *20*(2), 67–96.

Total greenhouse gas emissions (kt of CO2 equivalent—Russian Federation. (n.d.). World Bank Open Data. Retrieved July 17, 2024, from https://data.worldbank.org

United States Signs the Kyoto Protocol. (n.d.). United States Department of State Archive. Retrieved July 17, 2024, from

https://1997-2001.state.gov/global/global_issues/climate/fs-us_sign_kyoto_981112.htm

Waltz, K. N. (1979). *Theory of International Politics*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company. *What is the Kyoto Protocol?* (n.d.). United Nations Climate Change. Retrieved July 17, 2024, from https://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol#:~:text=The%20Kyoto%20Protocol%20was%20adopted,Parties%20to%20the%20Kyoto%20Protocol.

Yandle, B. (1999). After Kyoto: A Global Scramble for Advantage. *The Independent Review*, *4*(1), 19–40.

Supamijoto, P., & Yasmin, N. (2020). Analysis of Russia's Approach to Kyoto Protocol: Russia's Withdrawal from Second Commitment Period (2013-2020). *Andalas Journal of International Studies (AJIS)*, *IX*, 116–130. https://doi.org/10.25077/ajis.9.2.116-130.2020

Femininity and Women in Shaktism Versus Vaishnavism: A Comparative Analytical Essay on Female Centered Faith and its Impacts

By: Kaitlyn Boyko

2025

Diverse expressions of gender and sexuality have existed throughout every civilization and era of humanity, however sometimes aspects of tradition and religion come into conflict with the ability for non-traditionally affirming individuals to express themselves and practice their religion the same way.

Hinduism has numerous diverse schools of thoughts and devotionalism committed to various regional gods and goddesses; this paper will make the case for the overall greater equality for women and other non-traditional gender affirming individuals found in Shaktivism than that of Vaishnavism comparatively, and seek to answer why this is. From the theology and female-centred worship and the uplifted place that women maintain, to the differences found in the traditional modes of worship, and cultural impacts that are extended beyond theology in each sect primarily are expressed through labels of 'purity and pollution'. First the traditional practices will be examined then a shift to how equality and opportunity for women and others is present or absent today.

Shaktism is centred around the worship and devotion of feminine energy and the feminine goddess known as 'Shakti' although she takes many forms similar to deities such as Visnu she is most commonly worshipped and represented as the goddesses Kali, Durga or Paravati (Anikita Chand, et al.2023, pg.1). Shaktism is an ancient religion that has branched off into three primary streams of practice, theology and worship; tribal, bhakti and yogic (Anikita Chand, et al.2023, pg.1). However for the purpose of this paper only bhakti devotional shaktism will be covered. Shakti devotees worship the goddess primarily through a means of festivals, puja and temple attendance. Shaktism in the bhakti school relies heavily on the idea of an intimate relationship between the goddess and each of her devotees (McDaniel, June. 2004. Pg, 146).

Vaishnavism is the devotion and worship of Vishnu and his avatars as the most powerful and greatest of all the other Hindu deities. By contrast the goddesses are seen as aids to the gods, rather than the source of worship as in Shaktism. The focus on male deities is the largest and most significant discrepancy in relation to gender roles and variations that may occur between the traditions from a base level analysis.

Similarly to Vaishnavism, Shavisnism is the worship and devotion to the god Siva and all his forms and avatars as the greatest of all the Hindu deities. With minimal focus on the goddesses themselves in comparison to the god Siva, although like Vaishnavism goddesses are still acknowledged in their existence and as maintaining certain roles and responsibilities such as being the romantic companion of a god much of their importance emerges from teaching a god (a man) how to love, for instance Radha teaching Krishna through sexual union (Lorea, Carola Erika. 2018, 176). Some of these theological descriptions of goddesses within these major Hindu traditions are naturally translated into real world expectations and responsibilities for women, such as the expectation of companionship, homemaking and other traditional feminine roles and attributes that are mirrored through depictions of goddesses. For instance within the tradition of Vaishnavism is Visnhu's partner Laksmi who depicts much of the traditional expectations as a wife, or the wife and partner of Krishna; Radha who like Laksmi is a goddess due to their relationship with the god and the important role they play for them. In the same way that traditionalism is present in the west is often attributed to biblical or religious interpretations of relationships and patriarchal structures still widely present today.

To expand on the sexual expectation of women in relation to divinity mentioned above, Radha the wife and consort of Krishna is described as being the perfect and complete example of femininity for women to aspire to within Vaishnavism as she works for Krishna's love which is the ultimate goal for all devotees (Lorea, Carola Erika. 2018. 177). The clear parallel from Krishna and the love for Radha to the love and pleasure of one's husband as the goal of a woman to accomplish can be a key idea in which some patriarchal and traditionalist ideals for women as homemakers and wives first can be found. Further sources back up this idea that being a good wife is the primary goal of a woman within Hinduist tradition that is not centered around the worship of the Divine female Goddess Shakti; a man is equivalent to a god for his wife and she is devotee she must sacrifice herself in every way she can to ensure the well being of her husband and family through herself (Tobler, Judy. 2001, 57). To examine this requirement for a woman from a non-theological perspective, the benefits to the society and the survival of the family unit through the loyalty and perseverance of a good wife is obvious. Historically, this cultural idea of the woman being the rock of the household and for her husband makes sense however over the centuries the maintenance of this ideology that a woman's primary goal is to serve her husband as a god can be a potentially very damaging ideal to adopt especially because it very easily allows for the abuse and mistreatment of another person in the name of culture and tradition. This issue exists everywhere in the world where traditional ideals, religion and values can be taken to an extreme, but this is why the existence of Shaktism with the female focus is so incredibly unique in its potential for female empowerment by contrast.

Within Shaktivism women are highly regarded as the goddess herself is the centre of all worship and power and is the embodiment of Divine Feminism, historically within Shaktivism women have been able to take a larger role in the tradition of worship of the goddesses in comparison to their roles in Vaishnavism or Saivism. Theologically the adoption of goddesses such as Kali as the main focal point of worship allow for a more diverse definition of femininity and show that women can exist apart from men who are at times more powerful than them, such as the famous depiction of Kali trampling over Siva. What could be a depiction of the ability of women to trample over the patriarchal and oppressive system pitted against them. Even through the goddess Sita a theme of rebellion and empowerment of women is present through her standing up for herself to Rama for doubting her faithfulness (Tobler, Judy.2001,64). As the wife to god Rama, she is recognized as a loyal and perfect example of a good wife who is always faithful no matter the circumstances (Tobler, Judy.2001, 64).

In more modern times various movements and sects have emerged to address inequality between genders and systematic barriers that have emerged based on faith and tradition. The emergence of Neo-Vaishnavism emerged as a social movement out of vaishnavism inspired by the bhakti movement's focus on individuality (Bora, Simashree.2018, "Women Devotees and the Literature of Neo-Vaishnavism") and holds some more progressive stances on the role that women play and can hold within the tradition. Similar to the emergence of bhakti as a response to social and hierarchical disparity that was frowned upon where the increased focus on religion as a experiential based relationship with a deity rather than an over reliance on institutions and rituals has opened the door for greater more interpretations and inclusivity to be interwoven into long standing traditions and customs overtime (Bora, Simashree.2018,"Women Devotees and the Literature of Neo-Vaishnavism"). Primarily the focus on Visnu alone is a unique feature that is inspired by bhakti philosophy that rejects the social order and religious order that facilitated the brahmin class in religion. Within the movement that pushed away the influence of female deities and goddesses recognized within traditional Vaishnavism which separates Neo-Vaishnavism further from Shaktivism theologically. However, through Neo-Vaishnavism the creation of the *Sattras* which allowed for the redefinition of gender and norms through the inclusion of women written into the *Sattras* by the monks, which was a massive step forward, as the *Sattras* dictated many of the societal norms and gender roles that were accepted at the time (Bora, Simashree.2018, "Enacting Gender Roles: Monks and Sattras of Majuli").

For Neo-Vaishnavism in particular, the increase in feminist-like ideals and more progressive stances towards topics such as sexuality are the main fruits of the movement later on from it's women saints such as Kanaklata Ai, women gained a larger voice and place within Neo- Vaishnavism though they still maintained the ended for males within their lives and alongside them (Bora, Simashree.2018,"A Space for Gendered Devotion: An Intervention"). In addition to this, the androgynous presentation of monks in their theatre, within their *Sankari* culture (Bora, Simashree.2018,"Cultural Performance and Gendered Roles") aided in blending gender lines further and fostering greater acceptance for women and femininity as their cross dressing honored them in (Bora, Simashree.2018,"Cultural Performance and Gendered Roles").

Gender fluidity in the form of cross dressing and behaviour has existed within Hinduism and its ancient text and Saints for centuries, the recent demonization and cultural expectations, Monks themselves within the Neo-Vaishnavite movement did not abide by certain gendered dress codes and were often dressed in a more gender fluid way, even cross dressing at times when they performed (Bora, Simashree.2018, "Cultural Performance and Gendered Roles).The practice of a male poet switching to take on a female voice or persona is also a very common practice within Hinduism as sexual love and the love for a god is expressed best, and the idea of women being more perfect in the eyes of god than men because of their ability to produce fluids (Lorea, Carola Erika. 2018, 178-179). This concept of women being superior due to their ability to excrete and produce more than men can be directly tied back to the idea of pure and polluted substances, with a prime example of that being milk as a life giving and sacred fluid (Lorea, Carola Erika. 2018, 178-179). Much of the modern day inequality and discrimination towards women is not based directly in historical Hindu poetry and literature, rather it can be more closely attributed to the societal and cultural norms adopted by the westernized and Abrahamic influence.

Purity and pollution of women in regards to menstruation and their role in producing children and breast milk also plays a significant role in their overall place in society outside of their ability to participate in religious ceremonies or entering sacred spaces. For instance, within some very devout Vaishnavites the practice of *aropa ("practice* *feminism")* through ingesting various feminine fluids in order to become more feminine themselves to achieve "*nari bhab"* (Lorea, Carola Erika. 2018, 181) because they view gender fluidity and femininity as a way to become closer to the love of Krishna and overcome eroticism in the process (Lorea, Carola Erika. 2018, 180). This practice can be a prime example of purity that is seen in all aspects of a woman and another example of the naturally gender fluid identity that is found in some orthodox Vaishnavism. By contrast however, the negative connotations and limitations surrounding menstruation and the inability of women to enter sacred spaces due to their state of pollution can create a deep feeling of separation between the female devotee and their god, likewise it may create a deep sense of self hatred in their femininity due to being labelled as a pollutant,.

Overall, all of the schools of hinduism that were covered within this paper provide their own unique and beautiful interpretation of devotion and translation of that into the cultural expectations and practices. Although Shaktism theologically has a higher level of importance that is placed on femininity and the role of women in comparison to the other schools of theology mentioned, Vaishnavism and Shaivism have also produced progressive moments in the direction of greater gender equality. The point of this short paper is not to dismiss other forms of Hinduism than Shaktism because Shakti and Divine Feminity is not at the centre, but rather to bring attention to the effects of society, culture and ideals that overtime have created the conditions for a patriarchy to thrive using Hinduism as a conduit. Hinduism by nature maintains many aspects that are gender neutral and female affirming, even going as far as to claim the androgynous nature god themself (Lorea, Carola Erika. 2018,179). How beliefs are reflected in daily life and culture is something to always be mindful of because it can help to explain the systematic inequality and prejudice we all have about people and groups. Awareness of the origin of our beliefs is crucial if we are to become more accepting and acknowledge our past while accepting and growing into the future just as Hinduism has done for thousands of years.

Bibliography:

Ankita Chand, Bimal Kinkar Chand and S. Biswas "Shaktism in Hindu Religion: Concepts and Chronology." *International Journal of Development Research*, n.d . June, 2023 .
https://doi.org/10.37118/ijdr.26713.06.2023.

Johansen Hurwitt, Sundari. "Good Queen, Bad Queen: Gender, Devotion, and Mythmaking in Women's Histories." *Religions (Basel, Switzerland)* 14, no. 8 (2023): 954-. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14080954

McDaniel, June. "Shakta Bhakti Devotion to the Goddess." In *Offering Flowers, Feeding Skulls*. United States: Oxford University Press, 2004.
https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195167900.003.0004.

Bora, Simashree. "Gendered Devotion in Neo-Vaishnavism: Women, Monks and Sattras of Majuli, Assam." *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 25, no. 3 (2018): 331–50.
https://doi.org/10.1177/0971521518785665.

Lorea, Carola Erika. "Pregnant Males, Barren Mothers, and Religious Transvestism: Transcending Gender in the Songs and Practices of 'Heterodox' Bengali Lineages." *Asian Ethnology* 77, no. 1/2 (2018): 169–214. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26604838.

Crawford, Mary, Lauren M Menger, and Michelle R Kaufman. "'This Is a Natural Process': Managing Menstrual Stigma in Nepal." *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 16, no. 4 (2014): 426–39. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2014.887147.

Tobler, Judy. "Goddesses and Women's Spirituality: Transformative Symbols of the Feminine in Hindu Religion." *Journal for the Study of Religion* 14, no. 2 (2001): 49–71.
http://www.jstor.org/stable/24764167.

A Critical Analysis of Adolescent Depression Typologies in Media

Malia Jolly

30148318

Department of Psychology, University of Calgary

PSYC 429

TA: Catherine Schmidt

March 31, 2025

Introduction

In an era where adolescents are constantly exposed to digital media, understanding how mental health issues are portrayed in popular outlets has become increasingly important. Media articles often play a significant role in shaping public perceptions about psychological conditions, including adolescent depression. These portrayals can either inform or misinform the public, influencing how parents, educators, and even adolescents themselves understand mental health issues. To build upon these initial insights, this paper will critically evaluate the article's claims and assess their alignment with empirical research in developmental and clinical psychology. The review will focus on the biological, cognitive, and social dimensions of adolescent depression, using peer-reviewed sources to explore whether these phenomenological typologies are both scientifically valid and clinically useful.

Summary of the Media Article

The article "3 Types of Adolescent Depression," published in March 2024 on Psychology Today, summarizes recent research into the phenomenology of adolescent depression. Based on a 2024 study published in Frontiers in Psychology, the article highlights the experiences of ten adolescents who were interviewed to better understand what depression feels like from their own perspective. Rather than approaching the topic through diagnostic criteria, the researchers explored adolescents' lived emotional experiences and identified three distinct depressive "modes" that characterize different expressions of teenage depression.

The first is the separated yearning mode, marked by a profound sense of alienation and emotional disconnection from the world. Teenagers in this state often feel like outsiders to life itself, struggling with a deep sense of loneliness and invisibility. The world no longer feels familiar or accessible, and while these teens often yearn for connection, they may not know how to seek it. This experience is difficult for adolescents to articulate, and the emotional pain involved is often internalized.

The second mode, the upset refusing mode, is dominated by feelings of anger, frustration, and rejection. Adolescents in this state often view the world as unfair and disappointing. They are easily irritated and hypersensitive to perceived slights, not only from others but also from themselves. They frequently express self-directed frustration over their own reactivity and emotional volatility, believing that their inability to regulate their emotions pushes others away.

The third mode is described as paralyzed and non-resonating. It reflects an experience of emotional numbness, apathy, and exhaustion. These teens report an absence of motivation and a sense that nothing in the world resonates with them emotionally. They feel disconnected not just from others but also from their inner emotional states. The researchers emphasize that this is not merely a mood but a deep, pervasive sense of being emotionally flat and physically drained.

In addition to summarizing the qualitative findings, the article connects them to the Unified Theory of Psychology, particularly the Behavioral Shutdown Model and the Influence Matrix. According to the Behavioral Shutdown Model, depression reflects a shift in motivation from active engagement with the world to emotional withdrawal and avoidance. This framework aligns especially well with the paralyzed non-resonating mode. The Influence Matrix, another concept from the Unified Theory, posits that human beings are fundamentally social and driven to feel seen, valued, and connected. When adolescents fail to thrive relationally, either due to rejection, isolation, or negative self-evaluation, they may experience different depressive responses. Those who withdraw may enter the separated yearning mode as a way of avoiding relational anxiety, while those who react outwardly may fall into the upset refusing mode, adopting a confrontational stance that, while defensive, ultimately leads to further social disconnection.

Together, these interpretations frame adolescent depression as a response to unmet emotional and relational needs. Instead of seeing depressive behaviors as signs of laziness or attitude problems, the article suggests understanding them as signals of developmental distress. Depression in adolescents may be better conceptualized as a state of shutdown or misalignment with their environment, which necessitates compassionate intervention rather than blame.

Critical Evaluation

The article's strength lies in its attempt to convey the heterogeneity of adolescent depression. Presenting depression as a spectrum of emotional experiences rather than a uniform set of symptoms mirrors current research, which increasingly supports dimensional models of mental health over categorical ones. For example, a study by Curry et al. (2006) conducted a latent profile analysis in the Treatment for Adolescents with Depression Study, identifying multiple co-occurring symptom profiles. These findings support the idea that adolescent depression is not a monolithic experience and align with the article's presentation of differentiated modes. Further supporting this perspective, Martel et al. (2011) conducted a factor analysis to explore depressive symptoms in adolescents and found that irritability and anger were significant components, especially in boys. This provides empirical validation for the upset rejecting mode and also highlights a common issue in adolescent mental health diagnosis: the tendency to overlook emotional dysregulation and misinterpret it as behavioral misconduct.

Adolescents, particularly males, may be less likely to exhibit classic symptoms of sadness and more likely to express depression through irritability and oppositional behavior. This misinterpretation can often result in disciplinary responses rather than supportive mental health interventions, thus compounding the underlying issue and making proper treatment more difficult to access.

McCabe et al. (2024) proposed a phenomenological model of depression that includes emotional disengagement and numbness. Their findings parallel the paralyzed non-resonating mode described in the Psychology Today article. The clinical language used in their study describes adolescents who experience an affective flattening, an inability to feel emotional highs or lows. This supports the notion that emotional numbing is not merely a lack of interest but a critical symptom indicative of more severe depressive pathology. The article's framing of this experience as a mode of depression is, therefore, not only relatable but also substantiated by contemporary research. However, the article could have strengthened its explanation by distinguishing between temporary emotional disengagement, which can be situational or reactive, and more chronic, clinical emotional numbing, which often signals deeper psychopathology and may require more intensive therapeutic intervention.

However, the article does not sufficiently address the biological mechanisms underlying these experiences. Neurobiological research has shown that adolescents with depression often exhibit altered activity in key brain regions such as the prefrontal cortex and amygdala, which are involved in emotion regulation and executive functioning. These changes can account for some of the behaviors described in the article, such as emotional reactivity or lack of motivation. Including this biological component would have elevated the article's credibility and helped bridge the gap between observable behaviors and underlying neural processes. For instance, adolescents who fall into the upset rejecting mode may exhibit heightened amygdala activity, making them more emotionally reactive and more prone to perceive threats or rejection even in neutral situations. Meanwhile, reduced prefrontal cortex activation may hinder their capacity to regulate these intense emotions effectively. By neglecting this biological dimension, the article may inadvertently reinforce the misconception that depression is purely emotional or behavioral rather than also physiological. This oversight is significant because it can shape how readers perceive the condition and what they believe are valid forms of intervention. Without acknowledging the role of brain chemistry, genetic predisposition, or the interplay between hormones and neurotransmitters, the article risks promoting a simplistic view that adolescent depression is merely a result of social stress or emotional sensitivity.

From a cognitive standpoint, Hammen and Rudolph (2003) argue that adolescents with depression often exhibit negative attributional styles. These are stable cognitive patterns where individuals interpret events in overly negative or self-blaming ways. This cognitive vulnerability can contribute to all three of the modes described in the article. For example, adolescents in the separated yearning mode might internalize their loneliness as evidence of personal failure or unworthiness. Similarly, those in the paralyzed non-resonating mode might engage in catastrophizing or all-or-nothing thinking, reinforcing their sense of hopelessness and detachment. Such thought patterns are not always visible to outsiders, which further complicates detection and diagnosis. The article could have been enriched by illustrating how these cognitive distortions manifest in day-to-day adolescent behavior, such as academic disengagement, social withdrawal, or avoidance of help-seeking.

The article touches briefly on the social context of adolescent depression but falls short of integrating this dimension meaningfully into its typologies. A more thorough treatment would consider how peer dynamics, family relationships, and socioeconomic factors contribute to the development and maintenance of depressive symptoms. For instance, Compas et al. (2017) highlight how exposure to chronic stressors, such as economic hardship or family conflict, significantly increases the risk of depression in adolescents. These environmental factors may also shape which mode of depression an adolescent exhibits. A teenager experiencing peer rejection may be more likely to fall into the separated yearning mode, while one facing harsh disciplinary parenting might manifest in the upset rejecting mode.

Additionally, the impact of bullying, academic pressure, and social media should not be underestimated. Contemporary adolescents live in an environment where their sense of self-worth is often closely tied to online validation. Negative experiences in digital spaces, such as cyberbullying, exclusion, or body image comparisons, can exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and push adolescents toward depressive states. Yet, the article does not touch on these modern social risk factors, missing an opportunity to connect traditional psychological concepts with the lived realities of today's youth. Moreover, the article lacks discussion about cultural and gender differences in how adolescent depression is experienced and expressed. Studies have shown that cultural norms significantly shape how adolescents understand and respond to emotional distress. In some cultures, expressing sadness may be stigmatized, leading adolescents to externalize their emotions as anger or defiance. Gender norms also play a role, with research indicating that girls are more likely to internalize symptoms while boys are more prone to externalize them. Without addressing these cultural and gender based variations, the article’s typologies risk being overly universal and not fully representative of all adolescents’ experiences.

The absence of intersectional analysis, which looks at how race, gender identity, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic background intersect to shape the experience of depression, also weakens the article’s applicability. For example, LGBTQ+ adolescents face unique mental health challenges related to discrimination, identity development, and fear of rejection, which may lead them to experience depression differently from their cisgender, heterosexual peers. Integrating such perspectives would enhance the richness and applicability of the typologies proposed.

The article also does not address the clinical implications of these typologies. While it implies that different modes of depression might benefit from different therapeutic approaches, it stops short of recommending any specific interventions. Empirical studies suggest that matching therapeutic interventions to symptom profiles can improve outcomes. For example, cognitive behavioral therapy, or CBT, might be particularly effective for adolescents with a strong cognitive distortion component. In contrast, interpersonal therapy, or IPT, could benefit those whose depression is closely tied to relational issues. A more detailed discussion of treatment modalities would enhance the article's practical relevance for clinicians and caregivers alike. Moreover, approaches such as dialectical behavior therapy, especially effective for adolescents who exhibit emotional dysregulation and self-harming behaviors, could be particularly well suited for the upset rejecting mode. Similarly, motivational interviewing may help engage adolescents in the paralyzed non-resonating mode who feel disconnected from therapy or resistant to traditional treatment.

Finally, the article misses the opportunity to advocate for preventive strategies. Evidence-based school programs focused on emotional regulation, peer conflict resolution, and stress management have shown promising results in reducing the incidence of adolescent depression. Highlighting such initiatives would not only inform readers but also empower them to advocate for systemic changes that support adolescent mental health at the community level.

Conclusion

The Psychology Today article "3 Types of Adolescent Depression" provides a thoughtful and accessible framework for understanding the varied presentations of depression in teens. Its strength lies in its effort to validate the diverse emotional experiences of adolescents, moving beyond a one-size-fits-all diagnostic label. The typologies it presents are, for the most part, consistent with empirical research, particularly in the areas of emotional expression, cognitive patterns, and behavioral symptoms. However, the article could be strengthened by a more comprehensive integration of biological, cognitive, and social perspectives. By comparing the media portrayal with current empirical research, this paper highlights the importance of nuanced, evidence-based discussions in public discourse about adolescent mental health. While simplification is often necessary in media reporting, it should not come at the expense of scientific accuracy or depth. Responsible journalism in psychology should aim not only to inform but also to educate, guiding readers toward a more complete understanding of complex mental health issues. Evaluating articles like this one through a critical, research-informed lens allows us to bridge the gap between public understanding and scientific knowledge, ultimately promoting better outcomes for adolescents struggling with depression.

References

Compas, B. E., Jaser, S. S., Bettis, A. H., Watson, K. H., Gruhn, M. A., Dunbar, J. P., Williams, E., & Thigpen, J. C. (2017). Coping, Emotion Regulation, and Psychopathology in Childhood and Adolescence: A Meta-Analysis and Narrative Review. *Psychological Bulletin*, *143*(9), 939–991. https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000110

CURRY, J., ROHDE, P., SIMONS, A., SILVA, S., VITIELLO, B., KRATOCHVIL, C., REINECKE, M., FEENY, N., WELLS, K., PATHAK, S., WELLER, E., ROSENBERG, D., KENNARD, B., ROBINS, M., GINSBURG, G., & MARCH, J. (2006). Predictors and Moderators of Acute Outcome in the Treatment for Adolescents With Depression Study (TADS). *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, *45*(12), 1427–1439. https://doi.org/10.1097/01.chi.0000240838.78984.e2

Davey, C. G., Yücel, M., & Allen, N. B. (2008). The emergence of depression in adolescence: Development of the prefrontal cortex and the representation of reward. *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*, *32*(1), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neubiorev.2007.04.016

Hammen, C., & Rudolph, K. D. (2003). Childhood and adolescent depression: Risk factors and intervention. In A. E. Kazdin & J. R. Weisz (Eds.), *Evidence-based psychotherapies for children and adolescents* (pp. 49–72). Guilford Press.

Henriques, G. (2024, March 2). *3 types of adolescent depression*. Psychology Today. https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/theory-of-knowledge/202403/3-types-of-adol e scent-depression

Martel, M. M., Nigg, J. T., & von Eye, A. (2011).

Martel, M. M., Nigg, J. T., & von Eye, A. (2011). How well do symptom profiles identify children with and without ADHD? *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology, 40*(5), 726–738. https://doi.org/10.1080/15374416.2011.597082

McCabe, C., King, K., & Hamilton, J. (2024).

McCabe, C., King, K., & Hamilton, J. (2024). A phenomenologically grounded specification of varieties of adolescent depression. *Frontiers in Psychology, 15*, 1322328. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1322328

Quebec's Religious Symbols Ban: Comparing the Ban to Canadian and French Policies

Raewyn Muller

Religion and Migration

September 10th, 2025

In the past few decades, migration to certain places of the world has increased. With this migration of people there has also been the migration of religion. This is making it important to look at the cross-section of religion and migration. When a person migrates it is not just their physical body and items that are moving to a new place. People who are migrating are also bringing their beliefs and values with them, as for some that is how they are going to create a home. This cross-section between religion and migration is important to analyze for a couple of reasons. It is important to help with understanding how someone who may migrate to a new place will assimilate, or how they will find their communities. For the country that is being migrated to, it is important to how people feel in that country. As migration has been a topic for many countries, so has religion. In recent decades there have been laws on religion in receiving states, some of which are exclusionary towards certain religions, this includes religious symbols ban. This paper is going to be examining the religious symbols ban in the province of Quebec, examining the French influence on Quebec policy, compared to that of Canada's policies, as Quebec is located in Canada. This paper will argue that Quebec follows the policies of France, when it comes to religious symbols, this is for colonial reasons, language claims, and protectionist policies.

In Canada there are ten provinces and three territories that make up the country. With this make up, Canada operates with a Federal system, which provides autonomy for each of the provinces, they have their own taxes, provincial government and some of their own laws, there is also a separation of powers between the federal and provincial governments, this means that the provincial governments have jurisdiction over areas such as education and healthcare. In addition, the Canadian Rights and Freedoms has a notwithstanding clause, which allows for the provincial governments to enact laws that could infringe on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as well as the Constitution. Quebec has enacted the notwithstanding clause to allow for a religious symbols ban, which can be argued that it can infringe upon the freedom of religion. Quebec is the only province that has this religious symbols ban, it is not a national law, it is not enforced by the federal government, only the province of Quebec enforces it.

There is a fairly good question as to why Quebec has a religious symbols ban, when the rest of Canada does not. It is through Bill 21 that Quebec is able to enforce this ban. Bill 21 bans the wearing of religious symbols in the public sector of Quebec, this includes those of hijabs, burkas, turbans, and visible crosses (Concordia university, n.d.). This bill is only able to operate with the use of the notwithstanding clause, as it does infringe on freedom of religion. In the writing of the bill, it is mentioned "the bill amends the Charter of human rights and freedoms to specify that persons must maintain proper regard for State laicity in exercising their fundamental freedoms and rights." (Bill 23). This indicates that one of the reasons that Quebec has implemented this bill is because they are wanting to keep their province as secular, keeping the state, or in this case the province and the church separate. It is important to note that Canada is a secular state but has no federal ban on religious symbols.

It should be analysed though the differences in the two religious symbols ban. In France this ban is just in public schools (Audureau, 2023), whereas in Quebec it is in the whole public sector. That means anyone who works for the province can not be wearing any visible religious symbols. Some of these jobs include that of judges, provincial police officers, and teachers in public schools. Under these conditions, Quebec took the ban a step further than France but followed France's lead in implementing a ban. A possibility for this may be that Quebec is an entity within an English-speaking country and therefore may find a more strict religious symbols ban to be necessary to have the same impact of the lesser ban in France. Other provinces in

Canada have yet to follow the suit of Quebec to implement their own. Many other areas of Canada denounced Bill 21, and it was said that the bill was xenophobic and sexist (Turgeon and Bilodeau, 2021), as this bill would disproportionally affect Muslim women. There was a clear difference between Canada and France's views on religious symbols, and Quebec followed the views of France.

France and Quebec have a very intricate relationship as there is a slightly possessive feeling that France has over Quebec. When The British won the 7 Years War they won all the land that would later become Canada. The area of Quebec had for a long time been populated and controlled by the French, as a result the language was there, and their systems were there. As a consolidation prize for losing the war the British allowed what would be considered Quebec to belong to France in a sense, they kept their language and they kept their legal systems, and the catholic religion. Due to this Quebec's official language is French, they use a civil law, although it is mixed with common law due to the criminal code being a federal authority and the rest of Canada using common law, which is a British system. As history progressed France continued to influence Quebec as there were the concerns for keeping the French language in place, and progressing the French culture in the province, which has led to much intertwining of the political (Cornut, 2016, p.164). Not only was France feeling as though Quebec was them due to their cultural similarities and colonial history, but Quebec also felt they belonged or related to France more than Canada, as they share so many shared cultural, legal and language aspects with France, whereas the rest of Canada was very English. This is the grounds that start relating Quebec to France's legal rulings and rights. Hence a religious symbols ban in Quebec, similar to that of France, and opposite to that of Canada.

All of this has an implication on migration. Both Canada and France are considered receiving states, as they usually are on the receiving end of migration. Now migration is very often discussed in the domestic politics of both the countries, as migration impacts many other areas of politics, with a heavy emphasis on the economy of countries. This can be problematic for migrants coming to receiving states as there can be this creation of an in-group and an out-group, which can be used to create hate, especially when there are visible religious differences. This is what happened in France as it became a society "where Islam was portrayed as an entirely foreign religion with no place in French society, where the terms “immigrant”, “Arab”, and “Muslim” were interchangeable in public discourse' (Glazier et al, 2022, p.6). When these words are interchangeable people feel left out, but they also may feel that their religion which can make them feel at home is something that cannot make them feel safe as it is making them ostracized in a new place. There are many reasons someone who has migrated to a new place may struggle to settle into that place and a difference in religion can be one of them. France made a law that would guarantee that that would happen, because religious symbols are more prevalent in certain religions than others. It is typically easier to hide a cross than to not wear a hijab or a niqab.

Then there is the matter of Quebec, which is the second largest province in Canada, population wise. Quebec is one of the main provinces that migrants migrate to. In fact, Quebec had around 260000 immigrants between 2019-2024, the 4th, 5th, and 6th countries are considered Islamic countries (Quebec Statistics, n.d.). This means there are a good number of migrants that will have to change their ways of being to be a public servant. In addition, as these statistics are public, it could be understood that Quebec knew Bill 21 would impact a lot of the migrants coming into the province. Bill 21 has led to hate against the Muslim communities in Quebec, "Justice Femme, a Montreal women’s rights group, reported receiving more than 40 calls from Muslim women reporting hate incidents, including verbal and physical abuse, being spat on and having people attempt to rip their hijab off"(Siddiqui, 2020). This religious symbols ban has a serious impact on people's lives, including those of migrants and whether or not they would feel safe migrating to a place like Quebec.

Now the question can be raised as to way Quebec follows the French view of a secular state that uses restriction to control it, and the rest of Canada does not restrict religion to stay secular. One of the reasons for this is the different theories that drive the politics and society in both places. The majority of Canada follows the theory of liberal multiculturalism, where as Quebec follows enlightenment liberalism, which is similar to France (Turgeon and Bilodeau, 2021). Liberal multiculturalism follows the views of liberalism which wants limits in government interference in the private sector but adds in the idea that people who follow different cultures should be considered as equal (Kymlicka, 2017, p. 81). This means that in the rest of Canada it does not matter what the cultural background the government should not be interfering in the culture of the citizens, which includes religion. Then Quebec is using enlightenment liberalism which was developed in the 18th century during the age of enlightenment. It emphasized natural law, which looks at right to liberty and property, but natural laws also distances from religion. This also what is used in France and with Quebec and its intricate relationship with French and French values this theory instead of the multiculturalism liberalism the rest of Canada follows. Thus, France has a large impact on Quebec, including influencing the religious symbols ban the Quebec has. As well as reactions towards migration, as religion and migration do have influences on each other.

Quebec is an interesting case study for the cross-section of religion and migration. This is because of how Quebec is closely related to that of France when it comes to political views and their legal system. This is part of the reason as to why Quebec has a religious symbols ban, whereas the rest of Canada does not. It has to do with the protection of the French language and culture, which includes making sure they are a secular entity. This was done with the religious symbols ban to restrict religion in the public sector, which is something France did before Quebec. Whereas the rest of Canada takes the approach to secularity that does not regulate religion in the public sector. This religious symbols ban also has to do with the colonial impact France had on Quebec, which allows for them to restrict religion, and therefore, restrict migration of certain religions in a sense, as this was what was done by the colonial power. Though Quebec is a part of Canada it has a different and more incorporated relationship with its colonial power of France. Then there are the different ideologies that France and Quebec use, compared to what the rest of Canada uses, one of which is more inclusive of religion than the former. This will be an interesting area to study as to see if this ban has potential to spread to the rest of Canada or create more of a rift between Quebec and the rest of Canada, and an expanded relationship with France.

Bibliography

About bill 21. Department of Education - Concordia University. (n.d.). https://www.concordia.ca/artsci/education/students/bill-21.html

Audureau, W. (2023, September 5). *France's century-long crusade against religious symbols at school, from the Crucifix to the abaya*. Le Monde.fr. https://www.lemonde.fr/en/france/article/2023/09/05/france-s-century-long-crusade-against-religious-symbols-at-school-from-the-crucifix-to-the-abaya_6124828_7.html

Bill 21. CCLA. (2025, May 8). https://ccla.org/major-cases-and-reports/bill-21/

Bilodeau, A., & Turgeon, L. (2021, January 18). *Why are Quebecers so keen to ban religious symbols? | openDemocracy*. openDemocracy. https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/global-extremes/why-are-quebecers-more-likely-other-canadians-support-restrictions-religious-symbols/

Cornut, J. (2016). The special relationship transformed. the Canada–Quebec–france triangle after De Gaulle. *American Review of Canadian Studies*, *46*(2), 162–175. https://doi.org/10.1080/02722011.2016.1187968

Glazier, R. A., Williams, C. J., & Kockaya, L. B. (2022, June). Banning the Veil: The Effect of Religious Clothing Restrictions on Attitudes towards Immigrants in Europe. https://www.rebeccaglazier.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Glazier-Williams-Kockaya-EPSA-2022-Veil-Ban.pdf

Institut de la statistique du Québec. (n.d.). *Immigrants by country of birth, Québec, 2019-2024 (in French only)*. https://statistique.quebec.ca/en/produit/tableau/immigrants-by-country-of-birth-quebec

Kymlicka, W. (2017). Liberal multiculturalism as a political theory of State–minority relations. *Political Theory*, *46*(1), 81–91. https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591717696021

Siddiqui, U. (2020, November 1). *Canada: Court to hear challenge to "religious symbols" law*. Al Jazeera. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/1/canada-bill-21

Liberal paradoxes leading to conservative realities: An analysis of the 2023 Saskatchewan Education Amendment Act

Ilana van der Merwe

Faculty of Arts, University of Calgary

LWSO 413: Liberalism

Dr. Mark Machacek

As part of the amendment to the Education Act of 1995 (Education Act, 1995), the Saskatchewan Government deemed necessary to legislate parental consent above the right of children to self-identify in classrooms. After issuing a formal denial for delay and disregarding Justice Megaw's ruling against the act, the Ministry of Education now enforces Bill 137: The Parents' Bill of Rights, through the invocation of Section 33 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982). How then does conservatism justify Bill 137 through the literature of Edmund Burke, and what is Locke's liberalism's response to this legislation? This paper argues that these ideologies align with this legislation's foregoing court case, and that liberalism's internal paradox results in Saskatchewan youth's conservative realities. UR Pride Centre for Sexuality and Gender Diversity v Saskatchewan (Education) (UR Pride Centre for Sexuality and Gender Diversity v Saskatchewan (Education), 2023) holds significance in exemplifying the political advantage granted to provincial conservatism through the paradox between liberal tenets of negative rights and constitutionalised limitations to government.

The Education Amendment Act of 2023 – UR Pride v Sask Education

In August 2023, the Saskatchewan Government legislated an amendment to the Education Act of 1995. Within this legislation is Bill 137 (2023), The Parents' Bill of Rights. This bill codified a requirement for parental consent for children younger than 16 to partake in sexual education and make any changes to their preferred name or pronouns within the classroom.

This bill did not go unnoticed by social justice groups in the province and country. Hoping to curb the speed at which Bill 137 was progressing through legislation, UR Centre for Sexuality and Gender Diversity (UR Pride) requested the government to suspend the policy (Loewan Walker, 2024, p. 1). The government declined the request. In response, UR Pride filed against the provincial government stating that it would have detrimental effects on trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse students. On September 19th, 2023, the case was heard by Justice Megaw of the Court of King's Bench.

The ruling for this case was hopeful. Justice Megaw determined UR Pride's role in representing the public, and ruled in favour of the injunction of this policy. In the development of each side's cases, Megaw stated that UR Pride's case was complex, well organized and developed. Justice Megaw saw lack of critical submission as well as incorrect filings (Lehmann, 2023, p. 95). Justice Megaw found that this bill had the potential to result in irreparable harm to youth who would lose the right in determining their name, pronouns, gender diversity or gender identity in schools.

To negate this ruling, the Saskatchewan government invoked Section 33 of the Charter. This allows for provincial legislatures to have the ability to control the jurisdiction of rights provided by the Canadian constitution (Pal, 2024, p. 549). The result was the enactment of Bill 137 in schools despite its lack of community support and Justice Megaw's ruling.

Conservative Sentiments

Edmund Burke's political philosophies founded the sentiments of modern conservatism (Jones, 2015, p. 1128). Burke's most influential works rose alongside the French Revolution, affirming normative prescriptions on how best to maintain societal order. From Burke's selection of literature, recurring beliefs can be identified as the principles of conservatism. Burke posits that above all else, conservative rationale is established around the maintenance of social order (Huntington, 1957, p. 455). With this tenet, further logical rationale can be drawn. Conservatism may be in favour of social change, as long as it does not threaten the continuation of social order. Conservatism may be in favour of legal reform, as long as it does not circumvent social order. Burke's elucidations further outline the values of Conservatism. An archetypal conservative social order is one that is cultivated systematically and maintained throughout considerable periods of history. This illustrates that values with a more established history would be considered fundamentally more favourable than those with less historical prominence. For this reason, history and its traditions are influential in determining social order (Wolin, 1954, p. 100). Given tradition's influence, driving factors thereof – religion, family and further proponents of what establishes communities – become active representations of conservatism (Bourke, 2018, p. 459). The ability to maintain social order then is granted to an overseeing institution that is appraised by morality established by religion and family. These conclusions postulate a final assumption that any abrupt, imposed, and antithetical developments in society will result in collapse of social order or critical societal rejection. Conservatism then resists social change that attempts to resolve social issues institutionalized by historic tradition, as it most commonly will result in further conflict. Any social change that is invoked is done so through perpetual and organic historical development. Through these terms, Burke has established the tenets of conservatism.

Considering these conservative values, it becomes evident why Bill 137 was prioritized by a primarily conservative provincial legislature. Trans-antagonism has been granted through the prominent lens of the patriarchy, which is upheld by the institutions of religion and family (Armstrong, 2025, p. 776). If conservatism holds that family and religion establish social order, it would be expected for governments to act in favour of these sentiments. For this reason, it is not in contradiction for conservative principles to align with heteronormative and cisnormative legislation (DeGagne, 2021, p. 497). Turning to further foundational principles of conservatism, the invocation of Section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Rights may be seen as a societal rejection of the imposed and inorganic social change invoked by the ruling in favour of UR Pride Center. It may be rational in conservative logics that this top-down social change was invoked in opposition to societal religious and familial evaluation of morality. A historical case with direct theoretical disposition from Burke is found in his speech on an amending bill to the British Marriage Act of 1753 (Burke, 1781, p. 128-136). The Marriage Act of 1753 (26 Geo. 2. c. 33) provided agency to individuals under the age of 21 and less authority to parents and the church to the rights to marriage. In this speech, Burke illuminates parents' authority over their children as an extension of religious socialization and conservative values. For the state to interject in this relationship between child and parent is seen by Burke as a threat against the social order. This is direct evidence pertaining to Burke’s potential stance on Bill 137. If religion organically and historically instills patriarchy within society, and patriarchy gives authority to the family and removes agency from the child, then the state has no jurisdiction to enforce laws contradicting this rationale. Just as Burke was against the amending of Marriage Act of 1753, conservatism elects the notwithstanding clause to Sections 2, 7 and 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to remove agency from children and provide authority to parents.

Classical Liberal Sentiments

By offering his revolutionizing sentiments on Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan, John Locke established the tenets of classical liberalism (Yelubayev & Olay, 2025). The core of Locke's liberalism is his social contract. This outlines that power is consensually afforded to the state through the willing participation of citizens in a social contract. Locke posits that this is a rational act on behalf of the individual. The individual, with aspirations of protecting their rights to life, liberty, and property, cedes some of their freedoms to the state. This results in a 'contract' between the ruling state and the individual. Locke foresees that this contract is upheld through natural law – under which all individuals are equal. Natural law exists in order to prevent actions that breach the contractual agreement (Bou-Habib, 2015, p. 16). Any laws which infringe on these rights are not considered just, and therefore may not be upheld as universal natural law. The resulting values born of these tenets emerge as follows: Toleration, empiricism, and equity under the law. For each individual to have the right to liberty, no one individual or state may restrict or require laws enforcing religion (Tate, 2017, p. 10). The outcome of this rationale is toleration. Locke posits that the state must be tolerant to diversity in religion, and therefore pluralism of views. For this reason toleration and the separation of the church from the state are exclusive (McArthur, 2019, p. 339). Empiricism is the derivative epistemology of tolerance – without the subjective evaluation of morality through religion, the observations from the material world become objective knowledge (Rockwood, 2018, p. 2). Empiricism then justifies the deontological reasoning that acts should be adjudicated in and out of themselves. Most commonly, these acts must adhere to the negative rights ensured by the social contract (Bradley, 2010, p. 838). Negative rights have no obligation on individuals or actors to provide rights or the circumstances to secure them, but rather, limit individuals and the state from imposing on the rights of the other. If any actor is to breach the social contract there will be state sanctioned consequences. In this, no person gains the authority through the social contract to act on the rights of another (Bou-Habib, 2015, p. 15). If any ruling body were to breach the social contract, Locke asserts the right to revolt. In this, a limited government is favoured against a government that imposes on negative rights. Through these rights, the state solidifies order through the individual's rational action to secure shared self-interest.

With study of societal beliefs on non-hegemonic sexuality and sexual orientation, it may seem evident that theorists and citizens of Locke's time would be in favour of any law supporting trans-antagonism. However, isolating Locke's social contract from contextual cultural influences reveals that the values upheld by Bill 137 would not stand in a functioning liberal social contract. Foremost, Locke's literature is intentionally vague on the matters of queer sexuality and orientation (Smith, 2023, p. 2). Locke not once outwardly defines homosexuality as an immoral act, therefore permitting it from being a view justified of tolerance under the social contract. Furthermore, if the social contract is to remove church from state affairs, there is no religious imposition on the 'immorality' of 'sexual deviance'. Even as Locke upholds the value of Christian tolerance, he does not denounce the morality of homosexuality, making Bill 137 an unjust law imposing on the liberty of those affected. Those affected, may they be the age of minority, are active participants of the social contract in Locke's definition of self (Bernasconi, 2021, p. 151). Locke defines any individual with a personal identity and consciousness for itself as a viable participant in the contract. For the affected youth to be considered 'property' or in 'jurisdiction' of their parental figure would break not only the social contract but also the rationale behind Locke's definition of personhood. Even if Bill 137 did not break the contract in its codification, the ability for jurisdiction to be turned from the state to the parent eliminates the right to equal consideration under universal natural law. Locke posited that the individual is incapable of the empiricism required to adjudicate their own cases, as it would lead to disproportionate punishment that is in ill nature of tolerance (Yelubayev & Olay, 2025, p. 261). Bill 137 provides adjudicative authority to parents. Without the social contract's intervention, who is to say parents would abstain from adjudicating the 'misdeeds' of their children with tolerance, pluralism and equal consideration under the law. This bill, then, is in direct violation of these children's negative rights, which has been acknowledged by the requirement of Section 33 of the Charter for it to be codified. Locke further reasons that the separation of the church from the state indicates that what is considered a 'sin' is not definitively what should be considered illegal (McArthur, 2019, p. 341). Without the morally subjective rejection of queer youth garnered from religion, no deontological reasoning can define being gender-nonforming as immoral. This sentiment is in direct support with what Judge Megaw identified as a lack of justification for the invocation of this policy (Lehmann, 2023, p. 4). Out of the breach of the social contract, denial of personhood, negation of negative rights, and inability to justify these acts as immoral through natural law, Locke's social contract would reject Bill 137.

Conservatism and the Liberal Paradox

The ideological differences between Burke's conservatism and Locke's liberalism mirror the UR Pride v Sask Education case. Similar to Burke, the case of the Saskatchewan government summarizes that parents hold certain rights over their children. This conservatism prioritizes hegemonic patriarchy and religious tradition over the well-being and rights of children. Locke's social contract, and Justice Megaw's ruling contest these tenets of conservatism. In consideration of these youth's agency, negative rights, and unjust labeling of immorality, Bill 137 would not be deemed permissible as natural law. This case carries much significance. In a country where both Liberalism and Conservatism are highly active, UR Pride v Sask Education shows the potential legislation like Section 33 of the Charter holds in determining which ideology rules. In regards to the general significance of this case, further research should be conducted on the apparent advantage provided to conservatism through the liberal paradox of federally codified negative rights and limited government legislation like Section 33. Would provincial conservatism always override federal liberalism in states providing notwithstanding clauses to their legislation? If a state does not provide a notwithstanding clause in the first place, can it even be considered liberal enough in principle to contradict conservatism? This case is significant in exemplifying this loophole in liberalism. This application of conservatism and classical liberalism to the case of Bill 137 posits that although liberalist philosophy rejects the encroaching of government on the individual rights to liberty, its tenet of limited government allows for conservatism to negate federal legislation and legislate tradition through policy.

References

Armstrong, M. (2025). “What they owe to their children”: Edmund Burke on parental love and liberty. *History of European Ideas,* 52(4), 770 – 784.

Bernasconi R. (2021). I am not myself: Augustine, Locke, and Levinas on the self. *Levinas Studies,* 15(1), 148 – 160.

Bourke, R. (2018). What is conservatism? History, ideology and party. *European Journal of Political Theory,* 17(4), 449 – 475

Bou-Habib, P. (2015). Locke’s Tracts and the anarchy of the religious conscience. *European Journal of Political Theory,* 14(1), 3 – 18.

Burke, E. (1781, June 15). Speech on a bill for the repeal of the marriage act. *The Project Gutenberg.* *https://www.gutenberg.org/files/16292/16292-h/16292-h.htm#BILL_FOR_THE_REPEAL_OF_THE_MARRIAGE_ACT*.

Bradley, A. (2010). Positive rights, negative rights and health care. *Journal of Medical Ethics,* 36(12), 838 – 841.

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, s 7, Part 1 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982, being Schedule B to the *Canada Act* 1982 (UK), 1982, c 11.

DeGangne, A. (2021). Protecting normative private and public spheres: The Canadian conservative denunciation of transgender rights. *Studies in Social Justice,* 15(3), 497 – 517.

Education Act, SA 2012, c E-0.3

Huntington, S. (1957). Conservatism as an ideology. *The American political science review,* 51(2), 454 – 473.

Jones, E. (2015). Conservativism, Edmund Burke, and the invention of a political tradition, c. 1885-1914. *Cambridge University Press,* 58(4), 1114 – 1139.

Lehmann, A. (2023). UR Pride Center For Sexuality and Gender Diversity v Saskatchewan (Education). *Saskatchewan Law Review,* 87(1), 93 – 96.

Loewen Walker, R. (2024). *Democracy's Sledgehammer: The Use of the Notwithstanding Clause for Saskatchewan's Bill 137* [Policy brief]. Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy. https://www.schoolofpublicpolicy.sk.ca/documents/research/policy-briefs/jsgs-policybriefs-bill-137.pdf

McArthur, N. (2019). A fearful asymmetry: Locke on legal moralism, toleration and sexual liberty. *History of Philosophy,* 36(4), 337 – 358.

Pal, M. (2024). Democracy and the notwithstanding clause. *Cambridge University Press,* 37(2), pp. 545 – 570.

Rockwood, N. (2018). Locke on empirical knowledge. *History of Philosophy,* 35(4), 1 – 27.

Saskatchewan (Minister of Education) v. UR Pride Centre for Sexuality and Gender Diversity, 2025 SKCA 74

Smith, B. (2023). Assessing "unnatural lusts": John Locke on the permissibility of male-male intimacy. *History of European Ideas*, *49*(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/01916599.2022.2040046.

Tate, J.W. (2017). Locke, toleration and natural law: A reassessment. *European Journal of Political Theory*, *16*(1), 109–121. https://doi.org/10.1177/1474885115609739

The Education (Parents' Bill of Rights) Amendment Act, SS 2023, c 46

UR Pride Centre for Sexuality and Gender Diversity v Saskatchewan (Education), 2023 SKKB 204, 2024 CanLIIDocs 895

Wolin, Sheldon. (2013). Hume and conservatism. *Cambridge University Press,* 48(4), 999 – 1016.

Yelubayev, B., & Olay, C. (2025). Lock and Rousseau: From natural freedom to the social contract. *Conatus - Journal of Philosophy,* 10(1), 255 – 274.

26 Geo. 2. c. 33

Asymmetrical Warfare During the Soviet-Afghan War: The Mujahedeen's Strategy Against a Superior Soviet Force

Selma von Maldeghem

#30205643

HTST 383

Dr. Wilkinson

April 11, 2025

Abstract:

From 1979 to 1989, a bloody guerrilla war raged in the highlands of Afghanistan, pitting the Afghan Mujahideen against the conventionally superior Soviet Army, which they successfully forced out of Afghanistan. This paper delves into the fundamental reasons why the Afghan Mujahideen were able to force a withdrawal, despite the asymmetrical nature of the conflict. Analyzing unconventional warfare tactics, operational terrain analysis, and foreign-supplied weaponry used to the fullest extent by the Mujahideen reveals lesser-known aspects of the conflict. By examining the conflict considering the historical legacy of the Mudjahideen's defence of their homeland, the conflict is reframed through the influence of religion, moral duty to defend, and external political influence. This revealed the resourcefulness of the Mujahideen, especially through the exploitation of the Soviet Army's weaknesses, challenging the notion that numerical and technological superiority would guarantee the Soviet's military success.

Afghanistan has long been a battleground for empires seeking to control its rugged terrain. Despite the persistent resistance of its warriors against foreign invaders, the country's history is riddled with conflict. Notably, during the Soviet-Afghan War, the Afghan Mujahideen demonstrated their remarkable ability to defend their land–especially due to the asymmetrical nature of the conflict–proving that conventional military tactics were inadequate in the context of Guerrilla warfare. The Soviet-Afghan war lasted from 1979 to 1989, pitting the Afghan Mujahideen Guerrillas against the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA)–a Soviet-sympathizing party–as well as Soviet Union troops. Ten years of conflict effectively wore down the Soviet coalition, despite their numerical and technological superiority, culminating in their full withdrawal on February 15, 1989. The significance of the victory gained by the Mujahideen is denoted by the fact that the Soviet (USSR) government was a pole in the global bipolar order of the period, thus posing the significant question, "Why were the Afghan Mujahedeen able to effectively combat numerically and technologically superior Soviet forces in the Soviet-Afghan war, despite the asymmetrical nature of the conflict?" By examining the underlying strategies employed by the Afghan Mujahideen, we can better understand how Guerrilla warfare enabled them to counter Soviet forces. The Afghan Mujahedeen's adept utilization of unconventional tactics, foreign-supplied weaponry and effective use of operational terrain analysis enabled them to counter the numerically and technologically superior Soviet forces, ultimately forcing a complete Soviet withdrawal despite the conflict's highly asymmetrical nature. This paper opens by analyzing the outcomes of the Mujahedeen's Guerrilla tactics on the Soviet troops, followed by their strategic use of foreign-supplied weaponry in order to reduce the technological asymmetry, as well as leveraging terrain analysis to exploit limited Soviet terrain knowledge.

The Mujahedeen's usage of Guerrilla warfare became their most effective method of neutralizing the Soviet Union's overwhelming military superiority. The unconventional warfare tactics employed by the Mujahideen significantly diminished the combat capabilities of the Soviet-Democratic Afghan Party coalition, with the Soviets emerging as the sole opposition of the Mujahideen following the initial invasion of 1979. Interestingly, the initial Soviet invasion of Afghanistan led to the subsequent collapse of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan's (DRA) Army, due to massive defection rates.[1] This development created a confrontational dichotomy between the native Mujahideen and the Soviet Union (USSR) troops, solidifying the political and social legitimacy of the Mujahideen as defenders of their homeland. Conversely, the adoption of Guerrilla or Unconventional tactics became the only viable option to defend their land, aiming to repel the technologically and numerically superior force. Thus, the asymmetrical nature of the conflict forced the Mujahideen to utilize Guerrilla tactics in an attempt to reduce the power imbalance through strategic exploitation of Sovietweaknesses. Utilizing relations built with farmers and other local leaders in the countryside garnered the key intelligence required to plan

[1] CJ Dick, "Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet-Afghan War," *ETH Zürich* (Conflict Studies Research Center, January 2002), 4, https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/96457/02_Jan.pdf.

the ambushes, raids, night attacks, communication disruptions, and sieges[2]. Strategic capitalization of the weaknesses of the static, cumbersome, and inflexible Soviet Army–released unprepared into Afghanistan–left many opportunities for the Mujahideen.[3] Through the integration of traditional tribal warfare knowledge with meticulously coordinated, targeted assaults on the unprepared conventional Soviet Army, the Mujahideen forces executed lethal, multifaceted attacks, inflicting substantial and protracted damage upon the Soviet military.[4]

Targeted hit-and-run strategies employed by the Mujahideen changed the balance of power in the conflict. Unpredictable Mujahideen attacks forced the Soviets to focus on defensive actions through the implementation of the "stronghold strategy." This emphasized protecting critical transportation networks, military and supply outposts, and large cities, in conjunction with attempts to subdue the Mujahideen through social, economic, and political warfare.[5] A prominent example of the response to these tactics is seen in the ambushes which occurred in the Mohammad Agha District of Logar Province, near the Mamur Hotel, a repeat target area for Soviet military columns passing between Gardez and Kabul.[6] Exploiting the Soviet or Red Army's inability to control large amounts of territory facilitated these targeted hit-and-run attacks on supply convoys, providing a dual advantage of sustaining minimal casualties, while inflicting

---

[2] Dick, "Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet-Afghan War," 6–9.

[3] Nasrullah Safi, "Society for Central Asian Studies Soviet Military Tactics in Afghanistan∗," *Central Asian Survey* 5, no. 2 (January 1, 1986): 107, https://doi.org/10.1080/02634938608400547.

[4] Imtiaz H. Bokhari, "The War in Afghanistan: A Study of Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency," *Strategic Studies*, vol. 5, season-01 1982, 20, https://www.jstor.org/stable/45181918.

[5] Scott McMichael, "The Soviet Army, Counterinsurgency, and the Afghan War," by U.S. Army War College, *Parameters*, 1989, 24, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA529242.pdf.

[6] Lester K. Grau and Ali Ahmad Jalali, *The Other Side of the Mountain: Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet-Afghan War*, Ebook (Pickle Partners Publishing, 2013), 30, https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/lib/ucalgary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4809419.

high attrition rates, as well as gaining critical supplies for the Mujahideen. Attacks such as these were facilitated by the decentralized, agile forces of the Mujahideen, consisting of small units with a unit leader. While these attacks were not random, but repeated at the same Mamur Hotel location, Soviet troops never adapted to the situation, failing to adapt in the face of failure as they continued to use the same conventional warfare tactics. The implications of these actions are broad, demonstrating the magnitude of the insurgency tactics, as "by consistently crippling counter-insurgent operations by attacking logistical supply lines, insurgent forces delegitimize host nations by showing their inability to deal with small guerilla raids, which often is used as propaganda to convince civilian forces that their best hopes of peace and stability are with insurgent forces."[7] Thus, the usage of Guerrilla tactics changed the conflict, favouring the Mujahideen by allowing them to leverage scarce resources, exploit Red Army weaknesses, and cause political and psychological damage to the counter-insurgency troops.

Systemic weaknesses in Soviet military doctrine created persistent vulnerabilities that the Mujahideen exploited through insurgency tactics—gaining not only tactical advantages but also critical political, social, and material advantages within Afghan society. Not only did the Red Army rely on the indoctrination of their own soldiers to maintain morale but, were completely lacking in the counter-insurgency training required to fight against unpredictable insurgents in foreign terrain.[8] This is predominantly seen in the Soviet Army's lack of adaptation to the local terrain and tactics, relying on conventional warfare to fight unconventional attacks in unknown terrain. After 1984, Soviet special forces increasingly relied on aerial assaults on Mujahideen

---

[7] Mark Galang Kahanding, "Out of Control: An Historical Analysis on the Soviet Afghanistan War," by Johns Hopkins University et al., *Johns Hopkins University* (2023), 40, https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/d85a1e64-938c-4729-a118-4cfeeb1aded4/content.

[8] Alexander Alexiev, *Inside the Soviet Army in Afghanistan*, 1988, 19, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA213733.pdf.

base camps rather than using ground troops, especially in the Alingar District of the Laghman Province–where the Mujahideen had repeatedly attacked Soviet columns.[9] After failing to repel Soviet helicopters one summer month in 1985, the Mujahideen implemented a coordinated fire technique that successfully forced the helicopters to land at a distance—a tactical innovation that caught Soviet intelligence completely unaware.[10] The mission's failure theoretically should have encouraged Soviet officers to refrain from relying on gunships as their primary cover while in a densely occupied area, a method not employed due to various structural issues, such as disregard for Afghan civilians, centralized command, and reliance on heavy vehicles. Certainly not considered to be isolated victories, reliant on sheer chance, these tactical successes dually achieved the goal of undermining Soviet counter-insurgency operations and gaining the Mujahideen substantial political legitimacy in the eyes of both the Afghan people, and the international community.

Political support gained through the consequential victories of Guerrilla operations strengthened ethnic-group cohesion, streamlined operations, and gained the support of anti-communist nations. Afghanistan consists of many different ethnic groups in various regions, organized according to tribal leadership structures. While inter-tribal conflicts did occur, the vast majority of Afghans united against the Soviets, setting aside ethnic goals in favour of gaining freedom from oppression and brutality for all Afghans. The truce between the Hezb-i-Islami Mujahideen groups, led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and the Jamiat-e-Islami, led by Ahmad Shah Massoud is one of many examples of Mujahideen groups concentrating their efforts on fighting a common enemy, rather than diverting resources, time, and soldiers towards promoting their

---

[9] Grau and Jalali, *The Other Side of the Mountain: Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet-Afghan War*, 206.

[10] Grau and Jalali, *The Other Side of the Mountain: Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet-Afghan War*, 210.

interests.[11] Inter-ethnic cohesion gained from uniting against a common enemy, garnered political and social support for the Mujahideen among the Afghans, granting them intelligence, food and shelter.[12] Portraying themselves as the defenders of the people, working for the people of Afghanistan also reduced the chances of the Red Army forming any sort of concrete peace agreement with a specific tribe or tribal alliance as was formed in the later years of the war. Greater unity gained by the threat of a common enemy provided the cohesion formerly lacking among the inter-tribal conflicts pre-dating the Soviet invasion, facilitating the strategic exploitation of the doctrinal weaknesses in the Red Army. Therefore, the significance of the Guerrilla tactics used by the Mujahideen lies in their ability to unify disparate tribal groups, disrupt Soviet strategies, and sustain a prolonged resistance that the Red Army could not decisively defeat. These tactics not only enabled the Mujahideen to outmaneuver a technologically superior force but also laid the groundwork for further success through the strategic optimization and adaptation of foreign-supplied weaponry suited to Afghanistan's rugged terrain and unconventional warfare demands.

While Guerrilla tactics provided operational resilience, the introduction of foreign-supplied weaponry—especially American-made Stinger missiles—alongside Islamic ideology amplified both the physical and psychological strength of the resistance. The year 1986 can be seen as a critical juncture in the Soviet-Afghan war, following six years of migratory genocide and "scorched earth" attacks capitalizing upon air superiority in order to subdue Mujahideen resistance.[13] Though this paper aims to focus on the military history aspects of this war, it is

---

[11] Kahanding, "Out of Control: An Historical Analysis on the Soviet Afghanistan War," 52.

[12] David N. Gibbs, "Reassessing Soviet Motives for Invading Afghanistan: A Declassified History," *Critical Asian Studies*38, no. 2 (May 17, 2006): 248, https://doi.org/10.1080/14672710600671228.

[13] Alan J. Kuperman, "The Stinger Missile and U.S. Intervention in Afghanistan," *Political Science Quarterly* 114, no. 2 (January 1, 1999): 220, https://doi.org/10.2307/2657738; James McGhee, "The Soviet Experience in

impossible to ignore the political aspects of the decisions leading to the provision of Stinger anti-aircraft missiles to the Mujahideen. Noting this, other nation's political interests play a role in the provision of weapons to the Mujahideen, crucially, the United States in supplying the Stinger Missiles through Pakistan as part of the top-secret Operation Cyclone initiated in 1979 by the CIA.[14] Political goals of the anti-communist countries were promoted through the provision of light weapons and training camps in Pakistan, from where weapons and fighter could rejoin Mujahideen units across the border. The protracted conflict in Afghanistan was seen as a proxy war between the two central poles of the post-WW2 global order: Russia and the United States. As a result, the Afghanistan-Pakistan border was a target of Soviet aerial bombing campaigns, with fixed-wing aircraft providing pre-emptive strikes–sometimes using napalm and chemical weapons–and helicopters to strafe Afghan civilians, indiscriminately targeting anything alive.[15] Combining Mujahideen attacks with Islamic ideology and access to weaponry later proved to be a lethal strategy crucial to challenging Soviet air superiority. Weapons necessitate motivation and physical strength for effective use, both of which were significantly enhanced by the influence of Islam on the Mujahideen, bolstering their morale and aspirations. RPGs, AK-47s, Stingers, and other light weapons funnelled through Pakistan at regular intervals, supplying the Mujahideen with critical tools necessary to overthrow Soviet air dominance. Overall, three hundred and thirty-three helicopters were lost during the war, demonstrating the monumental effect of

---

Afghanistan: Lessons Learned," n.d., 2, http://www.glscott.org/uploads/2/1/3/3/21330938/the_soviet_experience_in_afghanistan.pdf.

[14] Ruairidh Wood, "Promoting Democracy or Pursuing Hegemony? An Analysis of U.S. Involvement in the Middle East," *Journal of Global Faultlines* 6, no. 2 (December 1, 2019): 167, https://doi.org/10.13169/jglobfaul.6.2.0166.

[15] Edward B. Westermann, "The Limits of Soviet Airpower: The Failure of Military Coercion in Afghanistan, 1979-89," *The Journal of Conflict Studies* 19, no. 2 (September 1, 1999), https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/JCS/article/download/4356/5012.

introducing Stinger Missiles as a means of tipping the lever of power towards the Mujahideen.[16] This remains a monumental aspect of the changing balance of power in the ten years of protracted war, as Islamic ideology not only fortified the will to fight but also shaped the way weapons were utilized—transforming foreign-supplied arms into powerful tools of both resistance and religious conviction.

The role of religion in the optimization of weapons is often overlooked, despite providing moral support during critical times of need and motivating individuals to defend Afghanistan against the "infidel" Soviet invaders. Examining the fundamental reasons why the Mujahideen successfully leveraged new weapons technology against the much more equipped Red Army reveals a religious-nationalist zeal, characterized by the patriotic desire to defend the homeland and a higher religious calling. However, the core Mujahideen leaders were not strictly limited to native Afghans of various tribes, as Arab Islamists orchestrating an unofficial Jihad–religiously motivated holy war–formed the core of the Islamist renewal in Afghanistan.[17] Though the official declaration for jihad never occurred, the foundational principles of the minor jihad's struggle against oppression–the Soviet/DRA coalition– are seen, with the *Defensive Theory* being applied, morally permitting the use of violence in self-defence against attackers.[18] This movement was promoted as part of the larger political goals of the U.S., aided by Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan– where fighters participated in training camps, received weapons, and money–facilitating the flow

---

[16] Mohammed Yahya Nawroz, Lester W. Grau, and Foreign Military Studies Office Leavenworth, "The Soviet War in Afghanistan: History and Harbinger of Future War," *Military Review* LXXV (January 1, 1996): 8, https://www.culture-of-peace.info/soviet-collapse/Soviet_war_in_Afghanistan.pdf.
[17] Pervez Hoodbhoy, "Afghanistan and the Genessis of Global Jihad," *Peace Research* 37, no. 1 (2005): 25, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24469676.

[18] Niaz Shah, "The Use of Force Under Islamic Law," *The European Journal of International Law* 24, no. 1 (2013): 343, https://doi.org/10.1093/ejil/cht013.

of Mujahedeen and supplies into Afghanistan for insurgency operations against the Soviets. Considering this as part of a broader Islamic movement, the Afghan morale and motivations to utilize foreign-supplied weaponry continue to serve as fundamental driving forces for the Mujahedeen during the years of asymmetrical warfare. Inciting the Jihad was also a force multiplier, attracting faithful, yet radical Islamists from all over the Arab world to join forces against the threat of colonial Russia's anti-Islamic Communism.[19] Many challenges tested the resilience of the Mujahideen in the early years of the war prior to external support in the form of weapons, food, and fighters, exposing the fragile alliances of various tribes to the full conventional and technological supremacy of the Soviet troops. These challenges were not limited to direct attacks on the Mujahideen and their bases but extended to attacks on the general civilian population: families and social networks of the Mujahideen. Such resilience was evident during the Soviet assault on the Mujahideen base at Zhawar in Paktia Province—just four kilometers from the Pakistan border—on April 2, 1986; in a massive operation, the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan's 38th Commando Brigade, supported by helicopter and jet squadrons, bombed the cave entrances to rubble, sparking a firefight that raged for over a week.[20] Though the base sustained significant damage and occupation, it was shortly recovered by the Mujahideen. This battle not only demonstrated the extent to which Islamic ideology sustained Mujahideen morale and motivation under intense Soviet and DRA fire but also underscored the importance of operational terrain analysis in maximizing both defensive and offensive capabilities in highly asymmetrical warfare.

---

[19] Christian Parenti, "America's Jihad: A History of Origins," *Social Justice a Journal of Crime Conflict & World Order* 28, no. 3 (September 22, 2001): 33, https://www.jstor.org/stable/29768089.

[20] Grau and Jalali, *The Other Side of the Mountain: Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet-Afghan War*, 148.

Operational terrain analysis can be seen as one of the most significant advantages the Mujahideen possessed when engaging in insurgency operations, as the masterful use of Afghanistan's harsh terrain. Terrain knowledge provided bases of safety and retreat while being pursued by the Soviets, as well as a weapon to be used against the ill-prepared Red Army troops heavily reliant on airpower and mechanized warfare tactics. This in-depth knowledge gave the Mujahideen the ability to dictate the terms of engagement when conducting Guerrilla operations on Soviet/DRA columns, strongholds, and Lines of Communication (LOCs), a critical component of ensuring the success of missions conducted against conventionally armed forces. Afghanistan's terrain is extremely rugged, mountainous, and largely treeless, providing a tactical leverage to the Red Army, heavily reliant on the usage of helicopters and jets, as Mujahideen targets had little cover under which to hide.[21] Geography's impact on shaping both insurgency and counter-insurgency tactics is often underestimated despite its role as one of the primary factors determining the success or failure of missions.[22] The terrain consists largely of mountains, deserts, gorges, and plateaus, with peaks reaching 24,000ft.[23] Harsh environmental conditions facilitated the Mujahideen's strategic weaponization of the natural landscape in numerous missions, with one of the most notable being the Siege of Khost.

The Siege of Khost was not only a monumental display of masterful terrain knowledge by the Mujahideen but also a display of power in an asymmetrical conflict. The unique

---

[21] Anatol Lieven, "Afghan Terrain," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 25, 2001, https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2001/10/afghan-terrain?lang=en.

[22] Adil Hussain Butt et al., "The Influence of Geographical Factors on Historical Conflicts," by International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development, *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development* 8 (June 2024): 1115, https://www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd67071.pdf.

[23] Country Reports, "Afghanistan Geography, Maps, Climate, Environment and Terrain From Afghanistan | - CountryReports," accessed April 11, 2025, https://www.countryreports.org/country/Afghanistan/geography.htm.

geographical layout of Khost province, characterized by a bowl-shaped valley encircled by mountains exceeding 4,100 square kilometres, shaped by its rich cultural and strategic value, remained a contested territory between the Mujahideen and the Soviet/DRA coalition. A decade-long siege ensued, with the Mujahideen forces effectively trapping the Soviet/DRA troops by cutting off the 50-mile Khost-Gardez Highway connecting the town to the Soviet-controlled provincial capital of Gardez.[24] The final push for the liberation of Khost came after six weeks of desperate government airlifts—an effort to resupply the besieged town with food and weapons– as “attacking forces swiftly broke through the Sataw Kandaw Pass along the winding Gardez-Khost road, but were soon met with entrenched resistance. Between 6,000 and 10,000 Mujahideen fighters had already dug in.” Critical to the nature of asymmetrical, protracted warfare, operational terrain analysis reigns as one of the key pillars crucial to defeating better-equipped opponents: a fact proven by the ten-year siege of a strategic town by materially disadvantaged Mujahideen. Over the decade of protracted conflict, the Mujahideen’s ability to use Operational Terrain Analysis to their advantage bled Soviet/DRA forces through attrition of soldiers and weapons, gradually eroding their will and capacity to maintain control and ultimately transforming the physical landscape into a strategic weapon that neutralized the technological and numerical superiority of their adversaries.

The Soviet-Afghan War is regarded in the post–Cold War era as one of the most significant case studies exemplifying the failure of conventional military doctrine in combating adaptive insurgencies—remembered not only as a critical juncture in the evolution of Islamic Mujahideen warfare, but also as a key factor in the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union. The

---

[24] John Greenwald, “Afghanistan Fighting for the Road to Khost,” *TIME*, January 11, 1988, https://time.com/archive/6711244/afghanistan-fighting-for-the-road-to-khost/.

Afghan Mujahedeen's skillful use of unconventional strategies, foreign-supplied arms, and thorough analysis of the harsh terrain allowed them to challenge the numerically and technologically advanced Soviet forces, ultimately leading to a full Soviet withdrawal despite the evident asymmetry of the conflict. The Mujahideen's strategic use of Guerrilla tactics—rooted in tribal warfare traditions—disrupted Soviet operations and reframed the war as a struggle of patriotic resistance versus foreign occupation, with the implication of successful missions reaching beyond pure military significance. These efforts were amplified by foreign-supplied weaponry, particularly the introduction of Stinger missiles, and by the ideological motivation drawn from Islamic fundamentalism combined with Afghan nationalism. Most critically, their mastery of Afghanistan’s terrain turned the land itself into both refuge and weapon. Ultimately, the Mujahideen’s fight against the Soviet Army in a decade-long asymmetrical conflict challenged the notion that the technologically-based conventional warfare doctrine reigned supreme, diminishing the notion that sheer strength alone could defeat motivated, knowledgeable, and resourceful insurgents–highlighting the critical need to expand beyond the scope of traditional military strategies further into non-conventional strategies.

Bibliography:

Primary Sources

Alexiev, Alexander. *Inside the Soviet Army in Afghanistan*, 1988. https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA213733.pdf.

Dick, C.J. *Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet-Afghan War*. Conflict Studies Research Center, ETH Zürich, January 2002. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/96457/02_Jan.pdf.

Grau, Lester K., and Ali Ahmad Jalali. *The Other Side of the Mountain: Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet-Afghan War*. Ebook. Pickle Partners Publishing, 2013. https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/lib/ucalgary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4809419.

McGhee, James. "The Soviet Experience in Afghanistan: Lessons Learned." n.d. http://www.glscott.org/uploads/2/1/3/3/21330938/the_soviet_experience_in_afghanistan.pdf.

McMichael, Scott. "The Soviet Army, Counterinsurgency, and the Afghan War." *Parameters*, 1989. https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA529242.pdf.

Nawroz, Mohammed Yahya, Lester W. Grau, and Foreign Military Studies Office Leavenworth. "The Soviet War in Afghanistan: History and Harbinger of Future War." *Military Review* 75 (January 1, 1996). https://www.culture-of-peace.info/soviet-collapse/Soviet_war_in_Afghanistan.pdf.

Secondary Sources

Bokhari, Imtiaz H. “The war in Afghanistan: A Study of Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency.” *Strategic Studies*. Vol. 5, season-01 1982. https://www.jstor.org/stable/45181918.

Butt, Adil Hussain, Yasir Arfat, Shameem Ahmed, and Toiba Gulnaz. “The Influence of Geographical Factors on Historical Conflicts.” *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development* 8 (June 2024): 1115. https://www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd67071.pdf.

Country Reports. “Afghanistan Geography, Maps, Climate, Environment and Terrain from Afghanistan | - CountryReports.” Accessed April 11, 2025. https://www.countryreports.org/country/Afghanistan/geography.htm.

Gibbs, David N. “Reassessing Soviet Motives for Invading Afghanistan: A Declassified History.” *Critical Asian Studies*38, no. 2 (May 17, 2006): 239–63. https://doi.org/10.1080/14672710600671228.

Greenwald, John. “Afghanistan Fighting for the Road to Khost.” *TIME*, January 11, 1988. https://time.com/archive/6711244/afghanistan-fighting-for-the-road-to-khost/.

Hoodbhoy, Pervez. “Afghanistan and the Genesis of Global Jihad.” *Peace Research* 37, no. 1 (2005): 15–30. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24469676.

Kahanding, Mark Galang. “Out of Control: An Historical Analysis on the Soviet Afghanistan War.” Master’s thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 2023. https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/d85a1e64-938c-4729-a118-4cfeeb1aded4/content.

Kuperman, Alan J. “The Stinger Missile and U.S. Intervention in Afghanistan.” *Political Science Quarterly* 114, no. 2 (1999): 219–63. https://doi.org/10.2307/2657738.

Lieven, Anatol. “Afghan Terrain.” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, October 25, 2001. https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2001/10/afghan-terrain?lang=en.

Parenti, Christian. “America’s Jihad: A History of Origins.” *Social Justice: A Journal of Crime, Conflict & World Order*28, no. 3 (September 22, 2001): 31–38. https://www.jstor.org/stable/29768089.

Safi, Nasrullah. “Soviet Military Tactics in Afghanistan.” *Central Asian Survey* 5, no. 2 (1986): 103–10. https://doi.org/10.1080/02634938608400547.

Shah, Niaz. “The Use of Force Under Islamic Law.” *The European Journal of International Law* 24, no. 1 (2013): 343–65. https://doi.org/10.1093/ejil/cht013.

Westermann, Edward B. “The Limits of Soviet Airpower: The Failure of Military Coercion in Afghanistan, 1979–89.” *The Journal of Conflict Studies* 19, no. 2 (September 1, 1999). https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/JCS/article/download/4356/5012.

Wood, Ruairidh. “Promoting Democracy or Pursuing Hegemony? An Analysis of U.S. Involvement in the Middle East.” *Journal of Global Faultlines* 6, no. 2 (December 1, 2019). https://doi.org/10.13169/jglobfaul.6.2.0166.

End.

Thank you!

On behalf of the Academic Team, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to this edition of the Undergrad Scholar. This publication would not have been possible without the incredible dedication, insight, and passion of our student researchers, faculty mentors, peer reviewers, and supporters. We would like to especially thank Dr. Mark Machacek, Dr. Ayesha Mian Akram, Dr. Gbenga Adejare, Dr. Brandy Callahan, Dr. Mark Baron, Dr. Maria Victoria Guglietti, and Dr. Anuradha Gobin for their meaningful contributions and insights that helped shape this journal.

Your commitment to advancing scholarly dialogue and fostering a spirit of inquiry embodies the very mission of our team—to champion academic excellence and empower student voices. We are proud to celebrate the diverse range of research presented in this journal and look forward to witnessing the continued impact of your work within and beyond our academic community.

Thank you for helping us build a foundation for future innovation, critical thinking, and advocacy.

With appreciation,

The Academic and Advocacy Team (2025/26) and Vice President Academic Saryssa Thiara