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**TOWSON UNIVERSITY
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

I am excited to share with you the Fall 2022 edition of the Towson University Journal of International Affairs. I am proud to present four distinctive articles covering a range of topics. The authors represent a broad range of disciplines including history, geography, political science, and international affairs, and their research draws from an impressive breadth of intellectual traditions. Additionally, the authors represent various academic institutions, including our own Towson University.

In the first article, entitled “*Unholy Alliances*,” Matthew Price uncovers an historical episode that is likely to be unfamiliar to many readers, examining the unexpected alliances that formed during World War II between Nazi Germany and both Palestinians and, most surprisingly, Zionist Jews in the Middle East. The author explores how these “unholy alliances” were part of Germany’s war strategy to conquer British-controlled regions in the Middle East, and he shows that Germany perhaps took on more than it bargained for in trying to work with these rivals.

In the second article, entitled “*Illegalized Bodies: Addressing Disabled Vulnerabilities and Adaptation to Climate Change*,” Lindsey Parnas explores how climate change has disproportionately impacted disabled people, especially those with multiple marginalized identities (gender, ethnicity, race, and class). Drawing on the insights of intersectionality, she utilizes cases studies taken from both the United States and the Philippines to show that preexisting social practices that dehumanize less privileged citizens in both states yield magnified consequences when natural disasters require large-scale ameliorative interventions. Her findings lead her to recommend that both humanitarian organizations and governments should include the voices of members of the disabled community when crafting disaster policies in order to reduce the chances that disaster relief strategies will entrench the marginalized status of these communities.

In the third article, “*Yemen’s Stubborn Conflict*,” Dr. Charles Schmitz provides a brisk but densely packed overview of the background and complex dynamics surrounding the conflict in Yemen. Dr. Schmitz offers historical background to shed light on the context and key players involved in this international tragedy, while also elucidating the geopolitical and economic factors that have contributed to the course that events have followed. On the basis of this analysis, Dr. Schmitz is able to offer a possible, if somewhat grim, prognosis of how the conflict in Yemen might finally find resolution.

In our final article, entitled “*Trauma-Informed and Restorative Justice-Informed Approach to the Global Rise of Far-Right Extremism: A Case Study on the United States*,” Lindsey Parnas uses the United States as a case study to explore the increase in far-right extremism around the world. The author argues that the United States could benefit by drawing on the lessons available from other states who have been grappling with their own challenges with extremism. In particular, she encourages the adoption of a trauma-informed approach to deradicalization a restorative justice approach that echoes successful strategies employed in other volatile contexts, from the Maldives to Pakistan.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to all the members of the journal staff and Dr. Paul T. McCartney, who have been beyond dedicated throughout the semester and worked to overcome a number of considerable, unforeseen challenges, in order to complete and bring to our readers this journal. Together, we are all honored to present Volume LVI Number 1 of the *Towson University Journal of International Affairs*, and we hope that you enjoy reading it as much as we have enjoyed working with these terrific, erudite authors.

Sincerely,

Alexia Fitz

Editor-in-Chief

December 14, 2022

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**Trauma-Informed and Restorative Justice-Informed Approach to the Global Rise
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Lindsey Parnas

Unholy Alliances

Matthew Price*

Abstract: *While Nazi Germany's failed attempt to conquer British-controlled regions of the Middle East such as Egypt during the Second World War has been widely studied, less is known of its meddling in Palestinian affairs before and during the war. From 1917 to 1948, Britain had a mandate on Palestine with a promise of creating a Jewish National Home, ostracizing many of the region's Arab inhabitants. When the Nazis rose to power in Germany in 1933, they saw benefits to both cooperating with Zionist Jews to encourage them to leave antisemitic Germany and Arab alliances in Palestine to create chaos in a British controlled region. In doing this, they tested British control of the region by supporting the Arab Revolt with its prominent nationalist leaders like Amin Al-Husayni. By the fall of the Reich, whether the Nazis wanted it or not, they had sped up Zionist dreams of a Jewish National Home in Palestine while worsening their Arab allies' position in the region.*

Keywords: *Palestine, Nazi Germany, Britain, Zionism, World War Two, Arab Revolt, Immigration*

Introduction

The fire crackles away in a cave near the outskirts of Arura in late 1944, on a hot October night. One of the men hiding in the cave, a former Jerusalem native, wipes his forehead clear of sweat and dust as he looks down at his worn khaki uniform illuminated in the fire light. He had received the uniform back in Germany, where he was given military training by the Grand Mufti Al-Husayni himself, with the assistance of the Reich's notorious SS. Despite this training and being so close to the home he hasn't seen since the Arab Revolt, nothing could have prepared Abdullatif Zul el-Kifel, known as Latif, for this operation. He has barely slept or ate since he was dropped into the region a few days ago. The distant echo of dogs barking breaks Latif's thoughts. It has become an all too-familiar sound, but these noises are closer than before. British search dogs are constantly on their tail while Royal Air Force (RAF) planes search for them from the sky. As Latif huddles around the campfire, he knows the game will soon be up; soon he will be

apprehended and most likely interrogated.¹ Even he is confused about how he got here: an Arab sent on a German expedition to sabotage Jews in Palestine, now being hunted by the British. Latif does not realize it then, but he is simply a pawn in a game between desperate factions and unusual alliances.²

When the Nazis rose to power in Germany in early 1933, the government immediately began disenfranchising Jewish people. First, they boycotted Jewish businesses and then passed legislation that prohibited Jews from participating in many aspects of public life, ranging from holding political office to mundane activities such as attending a movie theater. Then the Nuremberg Laws were passed, which completely segregated Jews from other Germans in all aspects of life, especially marriage and procreation. Facing punitive legislative actions and constant physical harassment by Sturmabteilung (SA), the Nazi party's militant wing, by the 1930s, Jews came to realize that the new German regime no longer welcomed them in the country. Along with Bolshevism, Jews were the Aryans' arch enemy, labeled a major threat to a prosperous Germany and its people, the Volk. However, neither victim nor perpetrator could have predicted during the pre-World War Two years of Nazi Germany's reign a Final Solution or mass genocide of Jews. Thus, before World War Two plunged the world into chaos, the Nazis

*Matthew Price is a student at Towson University working towards a bachelor's degree in history, expected in December 2022. He is particularly interested in military history focusing on World War Two and the U.S. Civil War. In addition to the U.S., he has studied and worked in Europe and Australia, and is planning further overseas travel following graduation.

¹Perry Biddiscombe, "The Mufti's Men: Haj Amin Al-Husayni and SS Parachute Expeditions to Palestine and Iraq, 1944-1945," *Journal of Military History* 82, no. 3 (July 2018): 806.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hia&AN=130321453&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

² Abdullatif Zul el-Kifel was an expatriate of Palestine and member of the Palestine Arab Party (PAP) before he moved to Iraq to study at university. Here he became involved with Al-Husayni, an Arab nationalist, and his inner circle. Al-Husayni and his inner circle, including Zul el-Kifel, led a failed coup in Iraq in 1941. Husayni, Zul el-Kifel and many others fled to Germany afterwards. Encouraged by Husayni, Zul el-Kifel took part with four others in the SS supported parachute drop into Palestine, October 1944. On the morning of October 16, most of them were discovered and apprehended by British patrols hunting them with search dogs and scout planes. The opening of this paper is a summary and recreation of these events.

and Hitler saw benefit in helping Jews emigrate from Germany to British Mandate Palestine, one of the few countries to welcome a mass influx of Jews with its promise to create in Palestine a Jewish National Home. This shared goal between the Nazis and the Zionists manifested in economic and even political cooperation.³ This, however, left Germany at odds with many Arabs and increased their nationalist sentiment. Arabs in Palestine were becoming more frustrated with wave after wave of Jewish immigrants; they were hostile to Zionism and the British regime in Palestine.

Though originally supporting Jewish immigration to Palestine, the Nazis kept close ties with Arab nationalists in Palestine. Through the 12-year period of the Nazi Reich, the Nazis oscillated between cooperating with Jews and Arabs in Palestine, depending on their interest and goals at any given time.⁴ In the early periods of the Reich, the Nazis supported Jewish immigration to Palestine, while on the eve of war, the Nazis hesitated on which faction to fully back and veered between continued support of Zionism to supplying arms and money to Arabs during the Arab Revolt in Palestine against the British. With the outbreak of World War Two against Great Britain and France, Nazi interests shifted firmly towards the Arabs in order to undermine the British in the region. Nazi/Arab relations stabilized for the duration of the war, with the Germans supporting Arab revolts against the British and cooperating with certain Arab nationalists such as Amin Al-Husayni. In response to Nazi interference, British policy and actions in the Palestine region shifted depending on current threats and influences, from the 1939 White Paper, indirectly helping the British feel they had fulfilled their pledge in establishing a Jewish National Home, to increased paranoia and policing of the Palestine region out of fear of

³ Klaus Polkhen, "The Secret Contacts: Zionism and Nazi Germany, 1933-1941," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 5, no. 3/4 (1976): 54.

⁴ R, Melka, "Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question." *Middle Eastern Studies* 5, no. 3 (1969): 221. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206908700130>.

German and Arab spies and saboteurs. Overall, the Nazi impact on British Palestine ensured one thing by the end of the Second World War: whether the Nazis supported it or not, they had directly and indirectly sped up Zionist dreams of a Jewish National State, and in retrospect, hurt their Arab allies.

Zionist Collaboration with the Nazis

When Hitler ascended to power in late January 1933, roughly 500,000 Jews lived in Germany. Of these, the majority saw themselves as Germans first, while only a minority were Zionists.⁵ Zionism's main ideology is for a Jewish National State, and thus Zionism and Fascism carry similar ideological traits, chiefly in their emphasis on ethno-nationalism, the former Jewish, the latter White Christian. In his "The Secret Contacts: Zionism and Nazi Germany, 1933-1941," Klaus Polkhen compares the two ideologies and notes the similarities, writing "the fascists as well as the Zionists believed in unscientific racial theories, and both met on the same ground in their beliefs in such mystical generalizations as 'national character'"⁶ The Nazis were sworn antisemites; however, it is no easy task removing 500,000 people from a country's population, even through boycotts and disenfranchisement. Therefore, the Nazi Party saw the Zionists as a potential ally. Alfred Rosenberg, a Reich minister in the Nazi Government and one of the chief ideologues of the party, said in 1937, recounting the Nazi position on Jews in 1933: "Zionism must be vigorously supported so that a certain number of German Jews is transported annually to Palestine or at least made to leave the country."⁷ Similarly on June 21, 1933 an official Zionist declaration was released in response to the new Nazi Government, imploring Jewish immigration to Palestine and cooperation with the new German government, "In our

⁵ Polkhen, "The Secret Contacts," 55.

⁶ Polkhen, "The Secret Contacts," 57.

⁷ Polkhen, "The Secret Contacts," 57.

opinion one of the principles of the new German state of national exaltation would make a suitable solution possible.”⁸ Thus Zionists and the Nazis created an unholy alliance that would see non-Zionist Jews punished and would change the scope of Palestinian politics.

An unholy alliance typically refers to two allied factions antagonistic to each other, making the alliance unnatural and often unpredictable. Although the Nazis’ disenfranchisement of and crackdown on many Jewish businesses and organizations had begun in 1933, the Nazis turned a blind eye to Zionist organizations and newspapers. A January 1936 article in the *Palestine Post* demonstrates the Nazis’ official stance on Zionists, in an interview between the German press and Herr Hinkel, the commissar for Jewish Affairs in the Reich. He explained that the Nazis continued supporting Zionist emigration because they are the only Jews that have given a formal and acceptable guarantee of cooperation with the Reich government.⁹ Economic agreements between the Zionists and Reich Government were meant to complete this immigration to the Holy Land.

As early as 1933, the Nazis began economic cooperation with Zionists through the Haavara Agreements, completed between various Zionist organizations including the World Zionist Organization (WZO) and Zionist businesses in Palestine on the one hand, and the Nazi Reich’s Ministry of Economics on the other. The deal was finalized by August of 1933.¹⁰ In essence it allowed German Jews to move goods and finances from Germany to Palestine. Polkhen describes the process a Jewish emigrant would undertake:

... the Jewish emigrant paid his money... into the German account of the Haavara (at the Wassermann Bank in Berlin or at the Warburg Bank in Hamburg). With this money, the Jewish importers could purchase German goods for export to Palestine, while paying the equivalent value in Palestinian pounds into the Haavara account at the Anglo-Palestine

⁸ Polkhen, “The Secret Contacts,” 59.

⁹ Palcor, “Nazi Opinion of Zionism.” *The Palestine Post*, January 29, 1936.

¹⁰ Melka, “Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question,” 221.

Bank in Palestine. When the emigrant arrived in Palestine, he received from this account the equivalent value of the sum he had paid in Germany.¹¹ In “Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question,” R. Melka explains that the Haavara Agreements allowed German Jews emigrating to Palestine to essentially deposit their capital into an account in Germany and upon arrival in Palestine be reimbursed with the money that was put into the account.¹² Many Jewish organizations and businesses in Palestine found the Haavara Agreements absolutely necessary for economic and infrastructure growth within the Holy Land to accommodate the influx of Jewish immigrants.¹³

German Jews immigrating to Palestine were able to transfer considerable wealth to the region and continue to invest in businesses and property in Palestine through this system. This Haavara process was typically only available to wealthy German Jews, as the minimum deposit into the German accounts that would be transferred to Palestine was around 1,000 Reichsmark. Polkhen accredits the Haavara agreements with helping boost Jewish capital in Palestine and partly aid in the establishment of Israel, stating, “Indeed, prior to the founding of Israel, the Haavara transfer was a huge booster for the Zionist economy in Palestine. Zionist sources speak of a sum of 139.6 million Reichsmarks -- an enormous sum for that time, being transferred from Germany to Palestine.”¹⁴ He later goes on to say that after the foundation of Israel many of the key leaders in its economic industry and projects such as the largest foundry in the country were owned by former German immigrants who came in the pre-war Nazi period.¹⁵

As early as summer 1933, the Haavara agreements and immigration to Palestine were in full swing. A *New York Times* article from July 19, 1933, said in reference to Jewish immigration

¹¹ Polkhen, “The Secret Contacts,” 64.

¹² Melka, “Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question,” 221.

¹³ Yfaat Wiess, “The Transfer Agreement and the Boycott Movement: A Jewish Dilemma on the Eve of the Holocaust,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 26 (1998): 132.

¹⁴ Polkhen, “The Secret Contacts,” 66.

¹⁵ Polkhen, “The Secret Contacts,” 67.

to Palestine that four thousand German Jews had already migrated to Palestine within the last three months.¹⁶ Melka's article highlights a report from His Majesty's Government on total Jewish immigration statistics to Palestine. It shows that from 1932 to 1938, Germany had a total of 40,000 Jews immigrate to Palestine, while Poland was the largest contributor of Jewish immigrants overall, with a total of about 80,000 in that period. However, Germany had more Jewish immigrants than Poland in the year 1938, contributing to over 50% of all Jewish immigration in that year.¹⁷ On top of that, due to the Haavara Agreements, the German immigrants arrived with considerably more wealth and property compared to their Polish and other Eastern European counterparts.

Zionist cooperation with Nazi Germany was not limited to economic agreements. In the pre-war years, the Nazis turned a blind eye to Zionist institution building in Germany while sabotaging other Jewish religious and communal organizations. Zionists in Germany and Palestine also opposed international boycotts against Nazi Germany trade in foreign ports. In the pre-war years, many industries and ports boycotted German goods because of the Nazis stance on Jews especially in Britain and the United States. In the hopes of getting more and more Jews to immigrate to Palestine, Zionists again turned their backs on other Jews and supported German trade. Polkhen notes how Wilhelm Stuckart (Secretary of the Reich Minister of the Interior) in a memorandum emphasizes how crucial the Haavara Agreements are to the German economy, stating: "The main advantages [of the Haavara agreement] are the following: the influence of the Haavara group in Palestine has led to the unusual but hoped-for contingency wherein of all

¹⁶ "4,000 German Jews Reach Palestine: Zionist Body Reports Half of the Recent Immigrants Support Themselves." *New York Times* (1923-), Jul 19, 1933. <https://proxy-tu.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/4-000-german-jews-reach-palestine/docview/100628804/se-2?accountid=14378>.

¹⁷ Melka, "Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question," 230.

places, Palestine is the country in which German goods are not boycotted by the Jewish side...”¹⁸ Zionists even bought a shipping company in Palestine that would ship Jews from Germany to Palestine that raised the Nazi swastika on its ships’ masts.¹⁹

Zionist and Nazi cooperation prospered to the point that Reich officials, using the WZO shipping company, visited Palestine to promote Zionism back in Germany and encourage more immigration of German Jews. Joseph Goebbels even produced propaganda pieces about it, including a medal struck on one side with a swastika, the other the Zionist star.²⁰ Adolf Eichmann, who later in the war became one of the chief architects of the Holocaust, was invited to Palestine in 1937 by Zionists.²¹ British officials would later refuse Eichmann and his SS entourage entry into Palestine, and he would end up going to Egypt. His intentions to visit, whether it was to meet with Zionists or with Arab nationalists, are highly debated among scholars. In any case, Eichmann and other Nazi officials used Zionist ships to enter Palestine. Nazi visits to Palestine, along with Zionist economic and political cooperation, not only helped the Nazi’s goals of a “*judenrein*” or “Jewish free Europe”, but it also boosted their economy. In turn, such trade and property boosts to the Nazi regime helped them in military re-armament. Zionists undermined the British who were in control of Palestine at this point. In an effort to forward their own goals of a Jewish National Home, they supported a totalitarian regime instead of rallying around the British, who were desperately trying to thwart Germany from launching

¹⁸ Polkhen, “The Secret Contacts,” 65.

¹⁹ Polkhen, “The Secret Contacts,” 66.

²⁰ Souvenir Coin with a Swastika and Star of David Owned by a Young German Jewish Girl, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, Gift of Mara Vishniac Kohn, Washington D.C. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, Gift of Mara Vishniac Kohn, Washington D.C.
<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn517746>

²¹ Polkhen, “The Secret Contacts,” 73.

Europe into another war. The Zionist-Nazi collaboration not only did nothing to stop the impending war; it actually helped encourage the war.²²

Polkhen, at the end of his article, concludes that the Zionists were crucial to the Nazis and detrimental to the Allies and other Jews in Europe by stating: “The Zionist leaders not only did nothing against fascism; they even took action that sabotaged the anti-fascist front (through the prevention of an economic boycott by their Haavara agreement).” In practice, they also rejected attempts to save the German Jews which did not have as their aim the settlement of the Jews in Palestine.²³ There is little doubt that this large transfer of wealth and Jewish immigrants, with the help of Nazi Germany, only distilled further anger and dissent into the local Arab population of Palestine, and that British control of the region would soon be tested.

The Nazis and the Arabs

Before the large-scale 1936 Arab Revolt in Palestine, in reaction to increased Jewish immigration and their large capital growth, Nazi ideology was not unpopular among Arab nationalists. Arabs nationalists and the Nazis shared nationalism as a trait. The Nazis wanted a unified German population, the Arab nationalists wanted a unified Arabic population; they also shared a common struggle between the Jews and the British. Germany lost the First World War along with significant territory, while Arab regions of the former Ottoman Empire fell under British and other imperialist powers. In *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, Barry Rubin and Wolfgang Schwanitz highlight the similarities between Germany’s fascism and Arab nationalism: “Nazi Germany and its ideology became popular among Arabs for many reasons. They, too, saw themselves as a weak, defeated, and humiliated people...

²² Polkhen, “The Secret Contacts,” 81.

²³ Polkhen, “The Secret Contacts,” 81.

Germany was also an enemy of Britain.”²⁴ Certain Arab nationalists began to look up to Nazi Germany. In “Arab Nationalism and National Socialist Germany,” Francis Nicosia says on the Arab reaction to the Nazis rise to power, “The new regime in Germany in 1933 generated a high degree of enthusiasm throughout the Arab world.”²⁵ In 1933, *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler’s autobiographical manifesto, was translated into Arabic and became a best seller the same year in Arabic regions.²⁶ The narrative of a humiliated Germany rising back to power, throwing off the West’s influence and having antisemitic beliefs was clearly inspiring for many Arabs who wanted to thwart off Zionism in Palestine.

Amin Al-Husayni, an Arab nationalist, had a deep fascination with Hitler and his ideology. Originally, Husayni cooperated with the British regime in Palestine, becoming Grand Mufti of Jerusalem in 1921 and one of the most powerful Arab political leaders in Palestine with a network of allies and influence.²⁷ With his position, he had control over some of the most holy Islamic sites in Palestine, in addition to religious funding and endowments. In the Arab world he was a heroic leader for Muslims. To the British, he was a moderate among Arab Nationalists who could be worked with, unlike more radical nationalists. However, by 1933 Al-Husayni became fed up with British rule in Palestine in the face of ever-increasing Jewish immigration to the region. That same year, he met with the German consulate for the first time, expressing anti-Jewish sentiment and admiration for the new Nazi regime.²⁸ Al-Husayni, like many other Arabs, was tired of growing Jewish immigration to Palestine and the exponential capital growth of Jews.

²⁴ Barry M. Rubin and Wolfgang G. Schwanitz. *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 4.

²⁵ Francis Nicosia, "Arab Nationalism and National Socialist Germany, 1933–1939: Ideologic and Strategic Incompatibility: The Weimar Precedent." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 12, no. 3 (1980): 351.

²⁶ Rubin and Schwanitz. *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 4.

²⁷ Biddiscombe, “The Mufti’s Men,” 783.

²⁸ Francis, “Arab Nationalism and National Socialist Germany,” 352.

He had concluded by 1933 that cooperation with the British was fruitless, and Zionism was a direct threat to Arab well-being in Palestine. He needed other allies.

Unfortunately for Al-Huysani and other radical Arab nationalists, Nazi Germany was not at that point interested in an alliance with Arab nationalists. Many Arabs admired Nazi Germany simply because they were at odds with the British. As Nicosia says, “The consensus among German diplomats in the Middle East was that Arab enthusiasm for National Socialist Germany was devoid of a real understanding of the significance of Adolf Hitler and the goals of the National Socialist movement.”²⁹ Hitler and the Nazis saw Arabs and their Islamic beliefs as subhuman, similar to how the Nazis saw the Jews. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler stated that he saw natives of colonized regions such as the Middle East as inferior peoples.³⁰ In *The Arabs and the Holocaust: The Arab-Israeli War of Narratives*, Gilbert Achcar highlights that the everyday Arab population would have detested Hitler and the Nazis if they understood the real content of Nazi doctrine.³¹ He then goes on to argue that Arab leaders like Al-Husayni concealed this truth from much of the Arab population in order to gain as much support as possible and thwart the British rule from Palestine, to eliminate any chance of a Jewish National Home.

By April of 1936, tensions between Arabs and Jews in Palestine had come to a boiling point. Arabs had gone on general strike and on April 25, Al-Husayni took leadership of the Arab High Committee, essentially becoming the leader of the strike. The goal was simple: pressure the British to end Jewish immigration and end the Zionist dream of a Jewish National Home. In the coming months, the strike escalated into full-on revolt with violence and death in the thousands. Arabs engaged in violence against Jews and British forces, and the British had to send in

²⁹ Nicosia, “Arab Nationalism and National Socialist Germany,” 353.

³⁰ Gilbert Achcar. *The Arabs and the Holocaust: The Arab-Israeli War of Narratives*, (Picador, 2011), 136.

³¹ Achcar, *The Arabs and the Holocaust*, 137.

thousands of troops and policing units to restore law and order. The British issued a warrant for Al-Husayni's arrest, and he fled first to Iraq and then later to Nazi Germany in 1941. Though prior to the Arab Revolt, Germany appeared firm on its domestic policy of moving Jews to Palestine, the onset of violence during the Arab Revolt in Palestine caused German officials to vacillate between continued cooperation with the Zionists and support for the Arab nationalist cause which made it difficult for the British Empire to maintain rule in Palestine.

The Arab Revolt and Nazi Germany's Influences

The Reich government shifted its policy in 1936 on Palestine in response to the Arab Revolt. Certain officials within its government, mainly consulate officials dealing in Middle Eastern affairs, began to feel that Zionist support was no longer in Germany's interest, and a debate within the Government began. Polkhen states, "Only after the outbreak of the Palestinian Arab rebellion of 1936 did the first difference of opinion set in amongst the various fascist institutions about the usefulness of continuing the Haavara transfers."³² Arab delegations, already knee-deep in the Arab Revolt and needing support, were adamant with Reich consulate officials that continued Nazi support for Zionist immigration to Palestine could create serious problems for the Germans down the line. They warned of a potential "Jewish Vatican" in the Middle East, as well as Arab dissent towards Germany if they did not end their support for Zionism.³³ Melka describes a report from German Foreign Minister von Neurath that support for Zionism should cease: "The formation of a Jewish State or a Jewish-led political structure under British mandate is not in Germany's interest, since a Palestinian State would not absorb world Jewry but would create an additional position of power under international law for international

³² Polkhen, "The Secret Contacts," 67.

³³ Melka, "Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question," 221.

Jewry, somewhat like the Vatican State...”³⁴ Others in the Nazi government argued similar points, contending that the creation of a strong “Jewish Vatican” would only hurt Germany later on and that the Arabs could be a potential ally against the British.

However, others within the Government, especially those who helped set up the Haavara agreements, like von Hentig, head of Middle Eastern affairs, wanted to continue the cooperation. The debate eventually was put to rest by Adolf Hitler himself, who in July 1937, in a Ministry of the Interior report, affirmed that Jewish immigration to Palestine should be supported. Hitler argued that Jews concentrated in one small region would be easy to deal with later on and that this region would be plagued with internal strife. As German influence and power grew, they would have no problem dealing with this inferior Jewish state.³⁵ Still as Arabs desperately urged, Nazi cooperation with Arab nationalists began. As the Arab Revolt continued, Nazi shipments of arms and money flowed covertly into Palestine under the British authorities’ noses, as well as anti-British propaganda broadcast into Palestine by German radio stations.

On the surface, at the beginning of the Arab Revolt, Germany appeared to be indifferent to the uprising in Palestine. The German press in 1936 was only mildly critical of British policies which may have led to the revolt.³⁶ Likewise it was still official Nazi party policy in 1936 that party members in Palestine have nothing to do with the Arab movement.³⁷ The German Reich did not want to aggravate the British Empire as it continued its own re-armament. Though this was the party’s official stance, its actions could not be more to the contrary.

³⁴ Melka, “Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question,” 222.

³⁵ Melka, “Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question,” 223.

³⁶ Nicosia, “Arab Nationalism and National Socialist Germany,” 356.

³⁷ Melka, “Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question,” 225.

Al-Husayni sent his ally, Musa al-Amini, who shared similar pro-German views, to Europe multiple times to collect German arms and money for the Arab nationalist cause. Al-Husayni sent similar envoys to Rome, and to German ambassadors stationed in the Middle East to collect weapons and money.³⁸ As Germany and Italy sent in arms beginning as late as 1937, the arms would first be smuggled to German consulates and embassies before being sent into Palestine. Rubin and Schwanitz describe the process: “Al-Husaini mobilized Arab rules and radical groups, as well as Italy and Germany’s sponsorship, for his intifada. From March 1937 on, he led delegations to Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries for this purpose. Syrian and Transjordanian border guards looked the other way as arms were smuggled into Palestine.”³⁹ The arms and money were mostly supplied by the Abwehr, the Reich’s military intelligence department, similar to America’s Central Intelligence Agency. The Abwehr also helped the German propaganda ministry, headed by Joseph Goebbels, reach Palestine with anti-British and antisemitic messages: “This theme of common opposition to Jewry also figured heavily in Nazi propaganda for Arab consumption... German Arabic radio services, which began broadcasting in 1938, found Palestine an inexhaustible source of stories – true, half-true, or false – illustrating Jewish and British wickedness, and permitting lavish expressions of German sympathy for the Arab cause.”⁴⁰

With the help of this support, Al-Husayni and his allies were able to keep the Arab Revolt going until 1939. In addition, through this cooperation of shipments of guns and capital, Al-Husayni was able to establish better contact with the Nazis and further grow his network of allies and spies. He began to align more with the Nazis’ ideological beliefs as well. Al-Husayni

³⁸ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 96.

³⁹ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 95.

⁴⁰ Melka, “Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question,” 226.

shared many of Hitler's views on the world especially when it came to the Jews. In 1937, he publicly advocated for Arabs to commit genocide against Jews in his speech, "Appeal to All Muslims of the World."⁴¹ The Nazi ideology was resonating in some Arab nationalist minds, and it was having a profound effect on British Palestine, furthering unrest and violence during the Arab Revolt years, during which hundreds of Jews died. Thousands more Arabs were killed, wounded, and arrested amid the fighting and British reprisals.

Still despite military support for the Arabs and fraternization with Al-Husayni and other Arabs, the Nazis continued their emigration of Jews out of Germany. Along with the top brass of the Reich government affirming in 1937 and again in January 1938 that the Haavara agreements would continue, a *New York Times* article from September 1939 highlights that despite the outbreak of war, the Nazis were still shipping Jews to Palestine. "Germany has permitted the emigration of seventy-seven Jewish children holding certificates for entrance into Palestine, despite war conditions and rumors that emigration from Germany has ceased..."⁴² The onset of war and the fact that the Nazis by now heavily favored the Arab cause did not result in a cessation of Zionist immigration in 1939. It can be inferred that the Nazis are simply attempting to undermine the British regime as much as possible and create division and chaos within British Palestine, having little actual care for the Arab cause. This inference may be supported by a meeting of Nazi high command that took place in mid-July 1938. The meeting included the top brass, such as Hermann Goering (head of the Luftwaffe), Heinrich Himmler (head of the SS), and Hitler himself. At the meeting, Hitler discussed that the planned attack on Czechoslovakia

⁴¹ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 94.

⁴² "Nazis Free 77 Children: Permit More Jewish Youngsters to go to Palestine." *New York Times* (1923-), Sep 10, 1939. <https://proxy-tu.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/nazis-free-77-children/docview/103062078/se-2?accountid=14378>.

should coincide with heightened conflict in Palestine.⁴³ The Nazis were attempting any division and chaos they could within the British Empire in order to distract Britain from its own territorial desires in Europe.

In late 1936, the British government sent six delegates to Palestine, in order to determine the causes and roots of the massive insurgency. Known as the Peel Commission, it finalized a 400-page report that was released publicly on July 7, 1937.⁴⁴ In its length, the report identified Jewish immigration from Nazi Germany as one of the key causes for the Arab Revolt. In *Britain, Palestine, and Empire: The Mandate Years*, historian Penny Sinanoglou writes: “The rise in Jewish immigration in 1928 and early 1929 was blamed for the disturbances of 1929 just as the rapid influx of Jews fleeing Germany after Hitler’s ascendance in 1933 was said to have caused the 1936 rebellion.”⁴⁵ The commission also noted the rise in nationalism among Arabs. While Nazi Germany cannot be directly credited for starting the Arab Revolt, it is evident that the Nazis’ sense of nationalism and propaganda inspired and had a profound effect on Arab nationalists, as well as instigating further violence once the revolt kicked off through aid and propaganda.

The Peel Commission’s report of 1937 concluded with a plan to partition Palestine, known as the Peel Partition. It divided up the territory between Jews and Arabs with most of the land mass going to Arabs but putting vital seaports in Jewish hands. This did little to quell the unrest as both Zionists and Arab nationalists publicly denounced the partition. Violence ramped up for the duration of 1937 and 1938. All the while, Nazi weapons, finances, and propaganda were being shipped discreetly into the region for support of the Arabs. At the same time German

⁴³ Nicosia, “Arab Nationalism and National Socialist Germany,” 364.

⁴⁴ Penny Sinanoglou, “The Peel Commission and Partition, 1936-1938” in *Britain, Palestine and Empire: The Mandate Years*, ed. Rory Miller, Ashgate, 2010, 119.

⁴⁵ Miller, *Britain, Palestine and Empire*, 136.

Jewish immigrants still came in monthly from Germany. The Nazis were fanning the flames on both sides of the conflict.

In 1939, with war on the horizon, the British were forced to make another policy shift, one that would truly quell the unrest in Palestine, at least temporarily. They issued the 1939 White Paper, passed in Parliament a few months before the outbreak of World War Two. It heavily limited Jewish immigration for the next five years and after those five years allowed Arab officials to have a say in Jewish immigration. The new policy also limited Jewish purchases of land in Palestine. The White Paper outraged many Zionists, some of whom resorted to terrorism, while also not satisfying some Arabs. Among them was Al-Husayni, partly because the White Paper had not gone further and partly because he, like many Arabs, completely mistrusted Britain. The policy had generally calmed the region and was Britain's last effort to keep the region in relative peace as war in Europe was loomed closer.⁴⁶ Melka argues why Britain moved to the White Paper:

Nazi Germany had been a prime mover in the abandonment of the Peel Commission's proposals. Although Arab-German collaboration on Palestine was, as we have seen, very limited, the threat was there, and it was used by the Arabs. Pan-Arab conferences in 1937 and in 1938 bluntly told Britain that if she continued to give preference to Zionist aims, the Arabs would seek friends among Britain's enemies. The White Paper, as Zionists have always said, was Chamberlain's appeasement of the Arabs.⁴⁷

Miller also argues the White Paper was in direct response to Nazi Germany's rise and influence, saying the paper signaled "British desire to win the Arab world to its side in the rivalry with Nazi Germany and fascist Italy."⁴⁸

On the eve of war, Germany had directly and indirectly altered the political atmosphere of Palestine, for Arabs and Jews alike. It had helped Jews grow in numbers and capital but at the

⁴⁶ Achcar, *The Arabs and the Holocaust*, 143.

⁴⁷ Melka, "Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question," 228.

⁴⁸ Miller, *Britain, Palestine and Empire: The Mandate Years*, 169.

same time had shaken the British enough to drastically shift its own policy and appeal to Arabs. While Germany certainly demonstrated how it could flaunt its power outside of Europe and within the British empire, Nicosia argues it was wasted potential. He concludes with primary accounts from high-ranking German officials such as Chief of the General Staff, Franz Halder, that German policies towards the Arabs were “wasted opportunities” in that, “Germany failed to utilize Arab hostility towards Britain and France, and friendship for Germany to promote German political and economic influence in the Middle East.”⁴⁹ While Germany had a profound effect on the region in the prewar years, it could have utilized its influence further, which in turn could have altered Germany’s chances once the war began, especially when it came to oil resources and Palestine’s proximity to the Suez Canal, a crucial shipping lane. This can be primarily blamed on Hitler and the Nazi’s stubborn racist views on the world, seeing Arabs as inferior while also ridding Germany of the also-inferior Jews.

World War Two

Though the Nazis zigzagged between alliances with Zionists and Arabs on the eve of the war, Nazi Germany was essentially forced to align with Arab nationalists as the war escalated. As the common saying goes, the enemy of my enemy is my friend. Likewise, many Jews previously sympathetic to Zionist cooperation with the Nazis on immigration policies were forced to throw their support in with the Allies as the war expanded in scale, and Nazi policies towards Jews all over Europe become increasingly genocidal. Berlin encouraged all efforts to incite rebellion and insurgency within Palestine and anywhere else in the British sphere of influence in the Arab/Muslim world. On October 18, 1940, Von Weizsacker, a German foreign minister, met with one of Al-Husayni’s envoys and read them the official declaration of Italian-

⁴⁹ Nicosia, “Arab Nationalism and National Socialist Germany,” 366.

German support for the Arab cause in the Middle East. Later, in January 1941, the Germans and Italians issued a declaration of support for Arab independence, which was broadcast on Germany's Berlin Arabic radio, the same radio station that broadcasted propaganda all over the Arab world.⁵⁰ The Nazis supported the Arabs in Palestine for another major reason. With the outbreak of war, there was a dire need for raw materials. Germany required more oil than ever for its mechanized resources. Palestine was near oil-plentiful regions as well as the Suez Canal.⁵¹

Nazi support for Arab nationalists in Palestine essentially came in two forms. The first was military aid, which involved arm shipments, supporting sabotage teams, and training by the Reich's military branches: SS, Abwehr, and Wehrmacht. The second was through propaganda, primarily by the radio station which was launched during the Arab revolt. While the radio broadcasts targeted the entire Middle East, its propaganda was mainly aimed at Palestine, the region thought to be the most hostile to British rule and where Al-Husayni had a substantial network of intelligence.

The radio station, located just outside of Berlin, was in fact one of the most powerful shortwave radio stations in the world at the time. The station could be listened to thousands of miles away in Africa and Asia. Jeffrey Herf, in "Nazi Germany's Propaganda Aimed at Arabs and Muslims During World War II and the Holocaust: Old Themes, New Archival Findings," describes the importance of this radio station: "The Arabic propaganda campaign, especially with shortwave radio, was far more extensive than the previous focus on the Mufti alone would suggest...radios were often heard in cafes and other public places, and listening was a kind of collective experience. Radio was crucial to the propaganda efforts in the Middle East in this

⁵⁰ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 124.

⁵¹ Biddiscombe, "The Mufti's Men," 787.

period because rates of illiteracy were so significant.”⁵² The goal of these broadcasts were to rile the Arab population into revolt against the Jews and British. The broadcasts took place seven days a week and into the night. In the daytime, the station usually aired a mixture of music and news while in the evening it contained about two hours of commentary news. Fascist propaganda was mainly projected at this time.⁵³ The programs were called “Voice of the Free Arabs”⁵⁴ and other similar names. The radio was headed by pro-Nazi Arab exiles like Taqi ad-Din al Hilali, an Arabic professor who, after years of travelling, found a job at Bonn University and fell in line with Nazi ideology and started working for the Nazis via the radio station.⁵⁵ Al-Husayni, who ended up in Berlin after the failed Iraq coup, made many appearances on the radio between 1941 and 1945. One of his most notable broadcasts is his “Kill the Jews” speech, which was given at the height of General Rommel’s advance of the Afrika Corps into Egypt in 1942:

Kill the Jews who took your valuables. Arabs of Syria, Iraq, Palestine, what are you waiting for? ... According to Islam it is a duty to defend your lives. This can only be fulfilled by the liquidation of the Jews. This is your best chance to get rid of this dirty race. Kill the Jews! Set their possessions on fire! Demolish their shops! Liquidate those evil helpers of British imperialism!⁵⁶

Antisemitic, violent, aggressive messages were commonplace on the radio. Another example is when Fritz Grobba, a Reich foreign minister who was chiefly involved in Arab affairs, got the radio to broadcast anti-American propaganda. After Operation Torch (Allied landings in North Africa), the radio aired speeches claiming all Americans are secretly Jewish puppets and that Franklin Roosevelt may even be a Jew himself.⁵⁷

⁵² Jeffery Herf, “Nazi Germany’s Propaganda Aimed at Arabs and Muslims During World War II and the Holocaust: Old Themes, New Archival Findings.” *Central European History* 42, no. 4 (2009): 714 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40600977>.

⁵³ Herf, “Nazi Germany’s Propaganda,” 714.

⁵⁴ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 142.

⁵⁵ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 137.

⁵⁶ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 142.

⁵⁷ Herf, “Nazi Germany’s Propaganda,” 727.

Husayni's relatively late arrival at the radio station outside of Berlin in late 1941 was because he was previously involved in staging a coup in Iraq against the British-friendly regime. The regent of Iraq was pro-British, while many military officers and government officials were pro-German. The coup was staged by militant pro-Nazis like Husayni and others including as-Sabawi (the man who translated *Mein Kampf*) and al-Kailani, who headed the coup.⁵⁸ They set up the Arab Cooperation Committee to stage the government overthrow and collaborate with the Germans for support. Hitler gave his personal support to the coup, which began on April 1, 1941.⁵⁹ The insurrectionists initially had high hopes. They overthrew the regent and installed a pro-Nazi government, but it quickly fell apart under the weight of a British army counterstrike. The Nazis could only send piecemeal military support, as they were focused on their upcoming invasion of the Soviet Union. The new Iraqi leadership was also plagued with incompetence. One example of this occurred when the Germans sent a small squadron of Luftwaffe planes, bombers and fighters to aid the coup. One of the planes was accidentally shot down by the Iraqis themselves. That plane carried Axel von Blomberg, the man sent by Hitler to command the German military mission there.⁶⁰ By the end of May, British forces had overwhelmed the Iraqis, and coup leaders like Al-Husayni fled.

Though this uprising took place outside Palestine and was a complete failure for the Germans and Arab nationalists, the coup diverted considerable amounts of British resources and instilled a looming sense of paranoia for the British for the duration of the war in the Middle East. It reminded Britain that their Eastern holdings were not entirely safe from German influence, and further security over their oil regions was needed. Britain would later launch

⁵⁸ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 127.

⁵⁹ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 127.

⁶⁰ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 131.

invasions into Syria and Iran, simply out of fear of potential Nazi-friendly regimes. While the threat may have been minimal in these countries, the Nazis were surely sending a message to Britain that insurgency and Nazi-backed saboteurs could strike anywhere.

After the failed Iraq coup, the Germans and Husayni attempted to restart the Arab revolt within Palestine under the leadership of Fawzi Bey el Quwuqji, one of Husayni's key leaders during the Arab Revolt.⁶¹ Most of the Arab fighters in the Iraq coup did not flee to Germany and were either captured or fled to Vichy France or Syria. Here the Abwehr, under Husayni's intelligence advice, smuggled arms into Syria, where Quwuqji and hundreds of his men planned to sneak into Palestine and create insurgency or another Arab Revolt. In "The Mufti's Men: Haj Amin Al-Husayni and SS Parachute Expeditions to Palestine and Iraq, 1944-1945," Perry Biddiscombe says, nothing went according to the plan: "On 8 June 1941, the British attacked Syria, quickly reaching Damascus and thus stripping away the launching pad for Quwuqji's mission. Quwuqji himself was wounded and evacuated..."⁶² This was Husayni's last shot toward helping the Nazis incite a popular rebellion and control in Palestine or nearby regions. The Nazis lost their main chances with the Arab Revolt and the Iraq coup. Though another brief glimmer of hope for insurgency in Palestine arose in mid-1942, when Axis forces reached the Caucasus from the north of Palestine and Egypt west, the Germans' window of opportunity was slim and brief, as their resource situation had become dire. Husayni could only sit on the sidelines during this short interval and chant antisemitic propaganda on the Arabic radio or help the SS train the few Arab volunteers the Germans received. Rommel's advance seemed to have no effect on everyday Palestinians and resulted only in minor demonstrations in Cairo.

⁶¹ Biddiscombe, "The Mufti's Men," 791.

⁶² Biddiscombe, "The Mufti's Men," 792.

Although the chances of damaging British control of Palestine had disappeared by the end of 1941, Husayni and the Nazis had not given up. Throughout Husayni's tenure in Germany, he helped train Arabs in exile into German divisions. In 1942, Husayni promised the Germans he could give them 100,000 Arabs to fight for the German war effort. While Husayni and other Arabic leaders in Germany found plenty of success recruiting Muslims from the Balkans, they were able to recruit just 243 Arabs; of these, it is estimated around 100 were from Husayni's homeland of Palestine.⁶³ Balkan Muslims were far easier to recruit since they were already under direct Nazi occupation and did not have to be lied to about the fact that they were actually going to fight in the Soviet Union, and not the Middle East to liberate Arab lands from the British, a falsehood that Husayni told the few Arabs who signed up to bolster recruitment.

The propaganda aimed at Palestinians and other Arabs seemed to have little impact. Husayni's calls for jihad against the British and Jews mostly fell on deaf ears. There was never a popular uprising again, and Husayni's influence had diminished. A *New York Times* article from October 1939 criticizes the Nazi propaganda in the Middle East as being futile, arguing that Arabs are better off working under the British for self-determination. A Beirut resident voiced his opinions on the Nazi radio's messages: "whoever prepares these Arabic broadcasts, in my opinion is a big fool if he believes the Arabs are listening to them or are in any way influenced by them... We know our lot would be probably even worse than that of the Jews."⁶⁴ As Achcar puts it: "In the space of ten years, Husseini had plummeted from the peak of his prestige at the

⁶³ Rubin and Schwantz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 145.

⁶⁴ "Nazi Propaganda Fails Among Arabs: Moslems Fear Suppression of Religion if Dominated by Either Hitler or Stalin Democracies Their Hope Anglophobia a Political Device Some Still Pro-Hitler Scoffs at Propaganda," *New York Times* (1923-), Oct 08, 1939. <https://proxy-tu.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/nazi-propaganda-fails-among-arabs/docview/102674281/se-2?accountid=14378>.

1931 Jerusalem Islamic conference to disgrace...”⁶⁵ It is estimated that through the entire duration of the war, a total of 1,300 Arabs from Palestine, Syria, and Iraq served in the German military. This is a meager amount compared to the tens of thousands who served in Allied uniform, including 9,000 Palestinians in the British Army.⁶⁶ Most everyday Palestinians had lost faith in Husayni and his allies. An anecdote that supports this is the Italians’ attempt to recruit an Arab Legion of their own, similar to that of the Germans. In 1942, with Afrika Korps successes in Egypt, Germany transferred 250 Palestinian prisoners of war (POWs) captured from the British Army to the Italians. The Italians attempted to recruit them to fight for the Axis. They recruited just 18 and of these, only eight did not desert.⁶⁷

It was evident by 1942 that most Arabs had little enthusiasm for the Nazis and a potential uprising against the British. The failed Arab Revolt had crushed many nationalist networks and the White Paper had eased Arab tensions with the British, at least for the time being. Likewise, while in the prewar years Nazi ideology was inspiring to the Arabs, during the war, many felt it fruitless as the Nazis failed to prove any tangible military success when it came to liberating the Middle East or knocking Britain out of the war. As Rubin and Schwanitz put it, “The worse Rommel did at the front, the less eager were Arabs to join the Axis cause.”⁶⁸ To everyday Arabs, the Nazis represented a distant radical ideology that could no longer benefit them in self-determination or rid them of Zionism.

By 1943, the Axis themselves began to realize that Husayni was of limited use to them. His recruitment was minimal, and the intelligence and spy networks he had promised the Abwehr would be of great use had gone nowhere. Biddiscombe points out that by 1943 the

⁶⁵ Achcar, *The Arabs and the Holocaust*, 145.

⁶⁶ Achcar, *The Arabs and the Holocaust*, 145.

⁶⁷ Achcar, *The Arabs and the Holocaust*, 145.

⁶⁸ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 143.

Abwehr and its respective agency in Italy had grown tired of Husayni and had lost faith. Husayni then began to gravitate towards cooperation with the SS.”⁶⁹ For the duration of the war, Husayni continued his work with fascist propaganda but also helped the SS with sabotage teams that would operate in the Middle East.

One such example is Operation Atlas, which was launched as the war was in its final stages in October 1944. The SS continued to pressure Husayni and his men into instigating trouble in Palestine, anything that could distract the British this late in the war as the Allies crept closer to Germany from all sides. Husayni worked closely with the SS to train and prepare the men who would undertake parachute landings into Palestine. The team comprised five men, a mix of Palestinians in exile such as Abdullatif Zul el-Kifel, mentioned in the anecdote above, and Germans with mixed Palestinian heritage like the team’s leader, Kurt Weiland. Like previous German plans to provoke unrest in the region, the operation was a disaster. During the week the parachutists had in Palestine before being captured by the British, they were constantly in hiding from British forces, harassed by locals, or struggling to recover much of their equipment that was dropped in with them.⁷⁰ Though this event seems largely insignificant, a desperate last attempt by the Nazis and radical Arabs to implement trouble in Palestine, the British investigation into it discovered the operation had the potential to be much more. Firstly, there was the debate over exactly what the parachutists’ intentions had been in Palestine. Biddiscombe explains that the agents were not clear on what their objectives were. German factions in the planning of Operation Atlas wanted the agents to support another large scale Arab Revolt,⁷¹ while Husayni wanted them to strictly focus on sabotaging Jewish infrastructure and

⁶⁹ Biddiscombe, “The Mufti’s Men,” 793.

⁷⁰ Biddiscombe, “The Mufti’s Men,” 806.

⁷¹ Biddiscombe, “The Mufti’s Men,” 800.

killing Jews, and not go directly into conflict with the British in the hope that British retaliation would not exist or be minimal: “Significantly, Husayni insisted that the ‘Atlas’ raiders refrain from confrontations with the British, thus avoiding one of the mistakes of the 1936-39 Revolt.”⁷²

This leads to the final point that the British investigators discovered: the raiders possessed large amounts of arsenic oxide, which during their investigations and interrogations supports the fact that the raiders’ main objective was to sabotage Jewish infrastructure and kill Jews. There were over ten boxes of the arsenic oxide; each box had the capacity to kill 15,000 people.⁷³ Biddiscombe says on the intent of the poison: “A number of factors – the Mufti’s instructions to the parachutists, the large scale maps of Tel Aviv; the familiarity of Wieland, Frank, and Salama with the Tel Aviv area – suggest that the arsenious oxide was intended to poison the Tel Aviv water supply.”⁷⁴ These supplies gave the raiders the potential to kill hundreds of thousands of people. Further increasing British and Jewish paranoia of Nazi-backed saboteurs was the fact that two of the five raiders were not initially captured like the other three. A large-scale manhunt for them lasted until after the war was over, when one of the members was finally captured and the other completely avoided capture. The British believed the uncaptured men may have been using invisible ink or radio codes to communicate with Germany, so the British implemented mass testing of letters and correspondence within Palestine as well as close monitoring of radios.⁷⁵ Biddiscombe describes one the main reasons for the attack: “It was a political strategy meant to alert both Palestinian Jews and the British to the fact that Arabs still retained an ability to project force violently...”⁷⁶ It was also one of the first acts

⁷² Biddiscombe, “The Mufti’s Men,” 797.

⁷³ Biddiscombe, “The Mufti’s Men,” 803.

⁷⁴ Biddiscombe, “The Mufti’s Men,” 803.

⁷⁵ Biddiscombe, “The Mufti’s Men,” 808.

⁷⁶ Biddiscombe, “The Mufti’s Men,” 812.

of state-sponsored terrorism in the region, a strategy that would become a reoccurring theme in the 20th century. As Biddiscombe concludes, these acts convinced the British there may have been a Nazi fifth column operating within the country.⁷⁷

Post World War Two

As World War Two was beginning to end in 1945, it was clear that any chance of success for Husayni's and the Nazis' efforts to provoke the Arab population in Palestine to revolt against the British had vanished. Even further, attempts to recruit Arabs into the German military were futile, and sabotage raids into Palestine and other Middle Eastern regions proved failures, although they were symbolically important for the Arab cause. It appears that as Nazi Germany fell, the story of the Arab-Nazi alliance does as well; a partnership that had potential but was ultimately fruitless. However, this is not the case. While the Reich government had gone, its ideological impact continued to influence many Arab nationalists, including the concepts of opposition to Zionism, dictatorships, and anti-democratic values. Many of the key leaders in the post-World War Two Middle East had collaborated with the Nazis at one point or another. Husayni, though his reputation had diminished, returned to the Middle East after the war and continued his anti-Zionist fight against the Jews in British Mandate Palestine and then in the new Israeli state. Future presidents of Egypt Gamal Abd an-Nasir and Anwar as-Sadat were both sympathetic to the Nazi regime during the war, with as-Sadat leaking British military information to the Afrika Korps in 1941 and 1942. Both were involved in anti-British demonstrations in Cairo in 1942.⁷⁸ These men would later overthrow the British-friendly regime in Egypt and launch wars against the new Jewish state of Israel.

⁷⁷ Biddiscombe, "The Mufti's Men," 809.

⁷⁸ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 140.

While Argentina and Spain have a reputation for being a haven for Nazis after the collapse of the Reich, however in fact, far more Nazis fled to the Middle East than to Argentina or Spain. It is estimated that while several hundred Nazis connected to the war effort or war crimes fled to Argentina, about 4,000 Nazis fled to the Middle East, finding safe harbor with radical Arab nationalists at least temporarily before travelling back to West Germany.⁷⁹ These officials, like Fritz Grobba, who helped coordinate the Iraq coup with Arab nationalists, were able to escape prosecution and continue their antisemitic goals, even after returning to West Germany years later. Rubin says on the issue: “While the West German government as a whole made a break with the past, these individuals in its ranks continued to hold their pre-1945 views and to advocate similar Middle East policies. They remained hostile toward a Jewish state and soft on radical Islamism and Arab nationalism.”⁸⁰ Post-war, Nazism and its antisemitic beliefs helped fuel the fire of tensions between Jews and Arabs, further increasing the number of hardline Arab nationalists who were uncompromising when it came to a partition of Palestine post war, and resorted to violence as the British Mandate was beginning to end.⁸¹ Rubin and Schwanitz open their concluding chapter on Nazi influences in the region by stating:

Hitler committed suicide, Nazi Germany disappeared. But the era’s legacy continued to shape Middle East events long afterward through their allies in the region. Al-Husaini emerged as a Palestinian Arab and Islamist leader; many of the collaborationist nationalists and Islamists became top officials or leading forces in their countries; and there was continuity between the Arab nationalist and Islamist ideologies that had led them to collaboration with Nazi Germany and those that dominated the Middle East during the seven decades after Hitler’s fall.⁸²

Conclusion

⁷⁹ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 209.

⁸⁰ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 232.

⁸¹ Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 200.

⁸² Rubin and Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, 233.

Though the Nazis' antisemitic ideology lived on with many Arab leaders after the fall of the Reich, post-war they hurt their former Arabic allies, indirectly aiding renewed Jewish immigration to Palestine. The Nazi genocide of Jews left millions of Jewish peoples displaced and without a home. While the British attempted to honor the White Paper and limit Jewish immigration to Palestine in quotas, it was no use. The British forced back ships with thousands of Jewish immigrants, many holocaust survivors, and placed them in internment camps on Mediterranean Islands to process them. This galvanized western public opinion against British policy despite the fact that the policy respected the White Paper and Arabic wishes. In 1946, President Truman pressured the British to let 100,000 Jews immigrate into Palestine.⁸³ The flood gates had now been opened, with waves of thousands of Jewish immigrants into Palestine. This influx, combined with many Arabs' newfound radical ideologies, attributed to the Nazis they had collaborated with, created a powder keg for violence and war in Palestine.

While Nazi Germany cannot be solely blamed for the unrest and violence in a prewar and postwar Palestine, it certainly contributed to it. The Nazis attempted to play both Zionists and Arab nationalists like puppets to whatever goals were convenient for them at the moment, with little regard for the lasting effects in the region, similar to the region's colonial powers like Britain and France. The Nazis were directly responsible for escalating the Arab Revolt through arms shipments and financial aid, and to which in response, the British killed thousands of Arabs in reprisals for the insurgency. The White Paper, a last resort by the British to quell the region in direct response to Nazi Germany's rise, had the lasting implication of hurting a fully-fledged Nazi/Arab alliance during the war. Though unsuccessful, Nazi Germany made British control of

⁸³ Arieh Kochavi, "The Struggle against Jewish Immigration to Palestine," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 3 (July 1998): 148, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263209808701236>.

Palestine far more tenuous through sabotage and insurgency, which also caused the British to believe a Nazi fifth column existed even after the war.

Although by the time the war had begun the Nazis firmly supported the Arabs, they had failed to do so earlier during the Arab Revolt, which was the most crucial time to do so. As Nicosia pointed out in his article “Arab Nationalism and National Socialist Germany, 1933-1939,” German prewar relations with the Arabs were characterized by wasted opportunities, and they hurt their Arab allies by supporting Jewish immigration to Palestine at the same time.⁸⁴ In retrospect, it is clear the Nazis damaged their Arab allies both prewar and postwar by speeding up Zionist dreams, initially through the Haavara Agreements and then indirectly after the holocaust when millions of Jews wished to flee Europe.

Adding fuel to the fire, Nazi ideological impacts on many key Arab leaders greatly influenced the Middle East for decades after the war, fanning the flames of war and violence in Palestine. Their violent and uncompromising methods, exemplified by Husayni’s propaganda and plans, only worsened their chances of holding onto territory in Palestine post war. The Nazis helped aid a legacy of hate and war in Palestine and the Middle East that continues today and left a great mark on Palestinian 20th century history. As R. Melka concludes his article on Nazi Germany and its relations with Palestine, “Nazi Germany had ultimately proven a disaster for the Arab cause, which in the critical years after 1945 was further weakened by the Mufti and his friends' wartime collaboration with the Axis Powers.”⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Nicosia, “Arab Nationalism and National Socialist Germany,” 366.

⁸⁵ Melka, “Nazi Germany and the Palestine Question,” 230.

Illegalized Bodies: Addressing Disabled Vulnerabilities and Adaptation to Climate Change

Lindsey Parnas*

Abstract: *Climate change disproportionately impacts disabled people. Although people with disabilities experience multidimensional inequalities, which heighten their vulnerability to climate change, they are often absent from climate change discourses. The main argument of this article is that although climate change will likely further worsen disabled vulnerabilities, climate change and natural disasters can become a site for adaptation and resilience for disabled communities. This article will use disability justice, critical human security literature, environmental security, and migration studies literature to prove that disabled people are powerful agents of change and their full participation is critical to the success of adaptation and mitigation policies and programs as key climate stakeholders. Using the case studies of the United States during and after Hurricane Katrina and the Philippines during and after Typhoon Haiyan, this article will discuss how American and Filipino disabled people experience climate change and, more specifically, climate-induced migration. The main research questions will be what vulnerabilities do disabled people experience in the face of climate change, how those vulnerabilities differ based on their multiplied identities (such as gender, ethnicity, race, and class), and how can adaptation better include disabled migrants? This document will also function as a working paper, providing recommendations for how humanitarian organizations and governments can better include the disabled community in their work, such as including disabled people in decision-making processes and employing a twin-track approach.*

Keywords: *Disability, disability studies, Hurricane Katrina, Typhoon Haiyan, climate change, climate-induced migration, disabled migrants, twin-track approach, vulnerabilities, adaptation*

Introduction

Approximately 15-20% of the entire world or over one billion people identify as disabled.¹

This article defines disability as “people with physical impairments, people who belong to a

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¹ Maria Pisani and Shaun Grech, “Disability and Forced Migration: Critical Intersectionalities,” *Disability and the Global South* 2, no. 1 (2015): 421-422.

sensory minority, people with emotional disabilities, people with cognitive challenges, and those with [mental or physical] chronic/severe illness.”² In fact, disabled people are the world’s largest minority group.³ Additionally, there are currently at least five million people who have been displaced reported to global non-governmental organizations (NGOs)- although this number is likely much higher due to underreporting; however, Oxford University’s Norman Myers predicts that there will be 200 million refugees and internally displaced people as a result of climate change by 2050.⁴

Climate change disproportionately impacts disabled people. Disabled people are four times more likely to die during a natural disaster as they are often abandoned due to decreased mobility and are among the first to die as a result of dehydration, lack of medication or medical services and food, heat strokes, limited ability to swim, inadequate humanitarian intervention, and increased risks of violence, robbery, rape, trafficking, and abuse.⁵ Natural disaster will be defined as “catastrophic events with atmospheric, geological, and hydrological origins... e.g., droughts, earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, landslides[, typhoons]... that can cause fatalities, property damage and social environmental disruption.”⁶ Natural disasters can also be compounded by human and political actions that contribute to climate change, by carbon emissions resulting in melting ice caps and thus raising water levels. In general, disabled people are also more likely to become more disabled because the migration process and evacuation

² “Mission and Vision,” Sins Invalid, Sins Invalid, accessed April 30, 2022, <https://www.sinsinvalid.org/mission>. I will use the term person with disabilities and disabled person interchangeably.

³ Emma Calgaro, “Climate Disaster Risk, Disability, and Resilience,” *Current History* 120, no. 829 (2021): 320-325.

⁴ Pisani and Grech, 428; Alex Ghenis, “Climate Change, Migration, and People with Disabilities,” New Earth Disability Blogs, World Institute on Disability, October 21, 2015, <https://worldinstituteondisabilityblog.files.wordpress.com/2018/09/migration-blogs-take-2.pdf>.

⁵ Pisani and Grech, 428; Judy Heumann and Pauline Castres, “Environmental Justice and Disability with Pauline Castres,” YouTube, December 22, 2021. Video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFSTW3wKbQk>.

⁶ Jiuping Xu et al., “Natural Disasters and Social Conflict: A Systematic Literature Review,” *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 17 (2016): 38.

shelters are not accessible to their needs.⁷ Although people with disabilities experience multidimensional inequalities, which heighten their vulnerability to climate change, they are often absent from climate change discourses.⁸ However, disabled people are powerful agents of change and their full participation is critical to the success of adaptation and mitigation policies and programs as key climate stakeholders.⁹ The main argument of this article is that although climate change will likely further worsen disabled vulnerabilities, by following the recommendations at the end, climate change and natural disasters can become a site for adaptation and resilience for disabled communities.¹⁰ This article will discuss how disabled people (looking at all types of disabilities) experience climate change and, more specifically, climate-induced migration. Migration will refer predominantly to internal displacement as most climate-related migration will be within national borders.¹¹ Internal displacement will be defined as “the forced movement of people within the country they live in.”¹² Therefore, the main research questions will be what vulnerabilities do disabled people experience in the face of climate change, how those vulnerabilities differ based on their multiplied identities (such as gender, ethnicity, race, and class), and how can adaptation better include disabled migrants?

The article will draw upon critical human security literature, environmental security, migration studies, and disability studies. It will also examine two different case studies: the

⁷ Heumann and Castres.

⁸ Cadeyrm J. Gaskin et al., “Factors Associated with the Climate Change Vulnerability and the Adaptive Capacity of People with Disability: A Systematic Review,” *Weather, Climate, and Society* 9 (2017): 801.

⁹ This is inspired by Bernadette P. Resurreccion and Edsel E. Sajor, “The Smokescreen Effect: Rethinking the Gender Dimensions of Climate, Migration and Security,” *Climate Change, Migration and Human Security in Southeast Asia* no. 24 (2012): 66.

¹⁰ Inspired by the use of water as a tool of cooperation in Marwa Daoudy, “Water Weaponization in the Syrian Conflict: Strategies of Domination and Cooperation,” *International Affairs* 96, no. 5 (2020): 1348.

¹¹ Sarah L. Bell et al., “Seeking a Disability Lens Within Climate Migration Discourses, Policies And Practices,” *Disability and Society* 35, no. 4 (2020): 685.

¹² “Internal Displacement,” Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, accessed May 2, 2022, <https://www.internal-displacement.org/internal-displacement>.

United States and the Philippines. 61 million American adults (approximately 26% of adults) live with a disability; however, this figure is likely underrepresented due to internalized ableism, fear of repercussion, and undercounting of mental illnesses.¹³ The United States is home to the origins of disability justice with significant disability advocacy, leadership, and scholarship; Hurricane Katrina will act as an example of the failure of humanitarian policy to save disabled migrant lives. The Philippines also presents a specific narrative about how Southeastern Asian Island countries are facing the loss of their land to sea levels rising, focusing on the event of Typhoon Haiyan (also referred to colloquially as Typhoon Yolanda). The rate of disability in the Philippines is also incredibly high: 12% of Filipinos 15 years and older reported severe disabilities, 47% reported moderate disabilities, and 23% reported mild disabilities (only 19% reported no disabilities).¹⁴ Therefore, migration, especially for disabled people, becomes more challenging.

This document will also function as a working paper, providing recommendations for how humanitarian organizations and governments can better include the disabled community in their work. Disability studies will be critical to this analysis as using the social model of disability reveals the structural and cultural violence of disability, migration, and climate change beyond the physical impacts. The article will draw upon primary sources like unilateral and multilateral legislation as well as blogs, United Nations (UN) and NGO reports, podcasts, performances, and YouTube videos created by disabled individuals.

Theoretical Introduction: Human Security, Disability Studies, and Disability Justice

¹³ “Disability Impacts All of Us,” Center for Disease Control, accessed April 23, 2022, <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/infographic-disability-impacts-all.html#:~:text=61%20million%20adults%20in%20the,is%20highest%20in%20the%20South>.

¹⁴ “Disability Spares No One: A New Perspective,” Philippine Statistics Authority, Republic of the Philippines, May 3, 2019, <https://psa.gov.ph/ndps/disability-survey-id/138567>.

Who is human has historically been constructed as a “masculine (white, heterosexual, able-bodied) subject;” however, this is exclusionary as disabled people are seen as less human than others and are more vulnerable if they hold other marginalized identities.¹⁵ This article will pull from a critical human security perspective which “shift[s] the referent object from the (nation-)state to the individual.”¹⁶ Historically, human security has ignored how disabled people are seen as easy targets for companies to use as test subjects for toxic waste and chemicals for capitalism, demonstrating how these communities are further marginalized by climate change. However, by looking at the structural factors and sources of insecurity,¹⁷ as well as adding a disability studies lens, this article will help illuminate upon disabled vulnerabilities.

Disability studies and disability justice emerged in the 1980s due to a perception of disabled people as inferior, especially because of widespread Social Darwinist views and policies.¹⁸ Social Darwinism calls for the survival of the fittest, often not including disabled people, and even promotes eugenics. Eugenics is defined as the scientific theory that humankind can be improved to create a largely white able-bodied population via “involuntary sterilization, segregation and social exclusion [to] rid society of individuals deemed... to be unfit”, largely people of color and disabled people.¹⁹ Despite common perceptions that Social Darwinism and eugenics have been fully debunked, forced sterilization against disabled people and genetics

¹⁵ Natasha Marhia, “Some Humans are More *Human* Than Others: Troubling the ‘human’ in human security from a critical feminist perspective,” *Security Dialogue* 44, no. 1 (2013): 24.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 20.

¹⁷ Edward Newman, “Human Security: Reconciling Critical Aspirations with Political ‘Realities’,” *British Journal of Criminology* 56, no. 6 (2016): 1173, 1178.

¹⁸ Frances Condon, “Disability and Migration: How Systems of Violence Intersect With the Production and Experience of Disability For Migrants in Morocco,” Independent Study Project, SIT Study Abroad/ SIT Graduate Institute, 2019, 6, https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4179&context=isp_collection.

¹⁹ “Eugenics and Scientific Racism,” National Human Genome Research Institute, National Institute of Health, accessed April 5, 2022, <https://www.genome.gov/about-genomics/fact-sheets/Eugenics-and-Scientific-Racism>.

counseling based on these theories have continued throughout the 21st century.²⁰ Therefore, human security and society at-large fail to acknowledge the perception of an able-bodied body-mind and how that structures the world, creating a dominance not just of Whiteness but also of able-bodiedness.²¹

Disability studies challenge this dominance, centering on “the social model of disability, which defines disability not as the product of individual impairment but the result of barriers created by inaccessible social, economic, and political structures.”²² Under disability studies, disability is not seen as an incidental or exceptional condition of structural violence, such as migration and climate change, but as an expected result.²³ Disability justice, the second major advocacy movement from the disability studies field, promotes ten major principles: intersectionality, leadership of those most impacted, anti-capitalism, cross-movement solidarity, recognizing the multiplicity of identities and experiences of individuals, sustainability, commitment to cross-disability solidarity, interdependence upon other community members in times of need, collective access, and collective liberation.²⁴ In the face of people creating policies based on the struggles of disabled people, the motto of the disability justice movement became “nothing about us without us,” arguing for the necessary integration of disabled perspectives into the experiences they endure.²⁵

²⁰ Alexandra Stern, “Forced Sterilization Policies in The US Targeted Minorities and Those With Disabilities- And Lasted Into The 21st Century,” University of Michigan Institute for Healthcare Policy & Innovation, University of Michigan, accessed December 1, 2022, <https://ihpi.umich.edu/news/forced-sterilization-policies-us-targeted-minorities-and-those-disabilities-and-lived-21st>; Nancy E. Hansen et al., “21st century eugenics?” *The Lancet* 372 (2008): S104-S107.

²¹ Alison Howell and Melanie Richter-Montpetit, “Is Securitization Theory Racist? Civilizationism, Methodological Whiteness, and Antiracist Thought in the Copenhagen School,” *Security Dialogue* 51, no. 1 (2020): 11.

²² Condon, 6.

²³ *Ibid*, 16.

²⁴ Sins Invalid, *Skin, Tooth, and Bone: The Basis of Movement is Our People* (Berkeley: Sins Invalid, 2019), 23-27.

²⁵ David Lewis and Keith Ballard, “Disability and Climate Change. Understanding Vulnerability and Building Resilience in a Changing World,” CBM, CBM, accessed April 6, 2022, https://www.cbm.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/Disability_and_Climate_Change.pdf, 7.

Disability justice activists have experienced severe marginalization on environmental issues and have advocated based on their own experiences. For example, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, a member of Sins Invalid, a performance-based intersectional disability advocacy NGO, identifies the link between her community's disablement and environmental injustice:

When the wind blew from Norton's ceramic abrasive tile plant, you wanted to puke at my school, 500 yards away. Every year, another teacher came down with alopecia. Another teacher got breast or colon cancer. I was nineteen when my mother was diagnosed with stage four ovarian cancer The first girl I ever kissed grew up in Leicester, where there was a little uranium leak in the 80s. She found out she had invasive cervical cancer at 28, in her first Pap smear in 10 uninsured years.

Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha highlights how queerness and disability in her life live on the backdrop of capitalist environmental injustice and the lack of access to health resources such as insurance. Nevertheless, companies and able-bodied people perpetuate Social Darwinism because they believe that some people, specifically disabled people, are not fit to survive in general, let alone in climate catastrophe.²⁶ Disability justice sees disability as a result of capitalism and environmental structural violence without devalorizing the individuals with disabilities, so it can help provide a multidimensional understanding to tackle climate change.²⁷ Next, this article will continue to draw from critical human security, disability studies, and disability justice, as well as migration studies and environmental justice literature, to discuss the existing literature and projects engaging with the vulnerabilities and adaptation of disabled individuals.

Literature Review

Disabled Vulnerabilities: An Intersectional Perspective

²⁶ Julia Watts Belser, "Disabled People Cannot be 'Expected Losses' in the Climate Crisis," TRUTHOUT, September 20, 2019, <https://truthout.org/articles/disabled-people-cannot-be-expected-losses-in-the-climate-crisis/>.

²⁷ Julia Watts Belser, "Disability, Climate Change, and Environmental Violence: The Politics of Invisibility and the Horizon of Hope," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (2020): 1.

Disabled people often already experience serious multidimensional vulnerabilities prior to climate change that depend on their specific disability as well as their other identities.

However, climate change often worsens these vulnerabilities.

Vulnerability will be defined as “a ‘complex social and ecological situation’ that is related to and works in connection with ‘social and economic entitlements’ of a specific community or context.”²⁸ As global development professor Bernadette Resurreccion and resources and development scholar Edsel Sajor state, “Vulnerability is not intrinsic to, nor does it derive from, any one factor, such as ‘being a [disabled person]’ or ‘being a migrant.’ Instead, some groups and persons are more vulnerable than others because of the processes and power relations embedded in particular societies.”²⁹ Hence, this article will engage with the power relations that impact disabled people prior to and during climate crises. Additionally, critical geography scholar Farhana Sultana declares it is important to interrogate the “intersectionalities of social difference... to differentiate the ways in which the impacts of climate change are experienced and responded to.”³⁰ Therefore, the following paragraphs will go into the chronic vulnerabilities of disabled people, and the ones that develop with climate change, as well as the intersectionalities of social difference that create the social and ecological situation of disabled climate migrants.

As disability studies scholar Julia Watts Belser states, “if we persist in framing disability and climate change as a problem of *physical vulnerability*, we miss the underlying realities of structural violence: how ableism, racism, class inequality and other forms of oppression work

²⁸ Marwa Daoudy, *The Origins of the Syrian Conflict: Climate Change and Human Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 18.

²⁹ Resurreccion and Sajor, 61.

³⁰ Farhana Sultana, “Gendering Climate Change: Geographical Insights,” *The Professional Geographer* 66, no. 3 (2014): 372.

together to compound and intensify risk.”³¹ Disabled people experience numerous inequalities based on the combination and power of their identities, which result in varied risks from climate change.³² As Alyssa Gutnik and Marcie Roth of the disability non-profit Humanity and Inclusion (HI) argue, “certain drivers of vulnerability, such as gender, age, race, and ethnicity all occur independently of disability, however, other drivers such as social status, wealth, and level of education are proven to be closely linked to disability and the correlation is positive: the presence of disability often indicates lower social status, less wealth, and fewer years of education attained.”³³ Disability often inherently means less economic capital, although this is not always true. According to forced migration scholar Maria Pisani and editor-in-chief of the *Disability and the Global South* journal, Shaun Grech, poor or low-income disabled people “often lack the economic capital necessary to travel, the cultural capital required to access information, and the social capital and networks required to negotiate a new space.”³⁴ Therefore, class does not solely have economic impacts but social and cultural impacts as well, and all of these types of resources have the power to further hinder migration. Human geographer Emma Calgaro also found that gender has historically been a marker of vulnerability in cases of climate change as disabled women are often more likely to be stranded at home while disabled men may get better medical assistance, access to food relief, and long term monetary assistance because of the assumption women stay at home and men are more likely to provide for their families.³⁵ Thus, gender can be a source of vulnerability that impacts the acquisition of aid. Vulnerabilities

³¹ Watts Belser, “Disabled People Cannot be ‘Expected Losses’ in the Climate Crisis.”

³² Gaskin et al., 801.

³³ Alyssa Gutnik and Marcie Roth, “Disability and Climate Change: How Climate-Related Hazards Increase Vulnerabilities Among The Most at Risk Populations and the Necessary Convergence of Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation,” *Lyon: Humanity and Inclusion* (2018): 28.

³⁴ Pisani and Grech, 429.

³⁵ Calgaro, 322.

can also be intergenerational due to generations of lead or pesticide exposure, often also linked to racism and classism, which pass down to their descendants. The following quote from Watts Belser provides the example of Puerto Rico to explain how structural violence and colonialism impacted disabled people after the hurricane in 2018:

Take the case of disability communities in Puerto Rico, who faced catastrophic harm in the wake of Hurricane Maria in 2018. To call the hurricane a “natural disaster” is to obscure the way United States colonialism laid the groundwork for the devastation. U.S. economic austerity policies left the island subject to poor infrastructure, a shaky electrical grid, patchy medical systems and inadequate public services — all of which were stressed to breaking point when the hurricane hit. And when it comes to disability, eligible Puerto Ricans receive an average of \$74 a month, a fraction of the disability benefits provided to U.S. citizens on the mainland. People with disabilities experience inequalities in income, employment, education, health, housing, nutrition, age, ethnicity, and community participation.

A person with a disability experiences the same emergency situation that everyone else faces in addition to the extra challenges they face on a daily basis; the emergency is likely to exacerbate these daily challenges.³⁶ In 2011, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees explained the experience of migration for those with disabilities as follows: “persons with disabilities... are at heightened risk of violence, including sexual and domestic abuse; exploitation by family members; discrimination; and exclusion from access to humanitarian assistance, education, livelihoods, health care, nationality, and other services.”³⁷ According to Pisani and Grech, disabled people, especially poor and low-income disabled people, suffer from increased barriers to migration and adaptation such as problems in accessing food and water; inaccessible food distribution lines; poor sanitation and inaccessible toilets; inaccessible living quarters; limited access to assistive devices; inaccessibility to government social services or medical care such as benefits, providers, social service programs; barriers to accessing information and education such

³⁶ Gutnik and Roth, 28.

³⁷ “People with Disabilities,” United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2011, accessed May 3, 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/persons-with-disabilities>.

as lack of Braille, sign language, and interpreters in early warning systems; and “cultural mediators, translators, humanitarian actors, policymakers and others untrained in disability issues.”³⁸ Alex Ghenis of the World Institute on Diplomacy notes that disabled people also “often rely on interpersonal support networks, such as groups of family, friends, or caregivers... If [disabled people] choose to move, they will have to manage the logistics of moving in coordination with their entire support network, do so with a severely reduced support group, or figure out a way to establish a new network at their destination; however, many cannot move at the same time or to the same place.”³⁹ Therefore, being disabled means increased barriers in nearly all areas of life and increased risks of violence due to climate change, and climate change-related migration can even destroy networks of care. Furthermore, Pisani and Grech also nuance that many migrants of climate change are more likely to remain in these disaster settings because of the need to rebuild support, their homes may no longer be accessible, and accessible transportation and information may not be available.⁴⁰ Hence, disabled people may experience more prolonged situations of displacement due to additional accessibility challenges.

Especially given the possibility of protracted living in unsustainable environments, climate change and migration can also result in the aggravation of existing disabilities and chronic illnesses or the creation of new conditions. For instance, Humanity and Inclusion (HI) experts Gutnik and Roth found that climate change could cause respiratory illnesses like asthma due to pollution, conditions related to heat or water or food, posttraumatic stress disorder, and other mental health conditions.⁴¹ Mental health conditions specifically are very common, with

³⁸ Pisani and Grech, 431.

³⁹ Ghenis.

⁴⁰ Pisani and Grech, 432.

⁴¹ Gutnik and Roth, 22. HI is an NGO that focuses on disabled people in humanitarian emergencies.

widespread prevalence of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder.⁴² Public health researchers Emily Ying Yang Wong and Rosamund J. Southgate also discovered that migration from climate change and other natural disasters can worsen existing chronic diseases or cause new chronic diseases to arise.⁴³ Thus, disabled people can suffer from new or worsened physical vulnerabilities, in addition to the social vulnerabilities mentioned above.

Furthermore, one of the biggest challenges with social vulnerability is that disabled people are frequently excluded from leadership and participation in disaster management prior to disasters and once disasters happen.⁴⁴ Calgaro writes that there is a “lack of clear pathways and platforms for people with disabilities, their representative organizations, and disability advocacy groups to be routinely included in disaster risk reduction policy, planning, and implementation processes [because] these processes are largely top-down and rigid, lacking adequate mechanisms (such as cross-sector policies and structures) to ensure inclusion.”⁴⁵ Hence, social barriers to becoming engaged with disaster management make the process extremely difficult and inaccessible to people with low capacity, mental, or psychological disabilities, preventing disabled people from ensuring their own survival.

Thus, the following section will discuss the benefits of the international framework on disabled rights, as well as how the history of disabled resilience and adaptation can prove beneficial to surviving climate change.

Resilience and Adaptation

⁴² Ibid, 22.

⁴³ Emily Ying Yang Chan and Rosamund J. Southgate, “Chapter 5: Responding to Chronic Disease Needs Following Disasters: A rethink using the Human Security approach,” in *Human Security and Natural Disasters* (New York: Routledge Humanitarian Studies Series, 2014), 77.

⁴⁴ Gutnik and Roth, 29.

⁴⁵ Calgaro, 323.

Vulnerability is often inherently linked with resilience and adaptation because they are some of the predominant coping mechanisms to vulnerability. Geographers and development professors Wisner et al. define resilience as “the characteristics of a person or group and their situation that influence their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural hazard.”⁴⁶ Unfortunately, there is not significant research on disabled resilience, likely because of the focus on disabled disempowerment in academia and society at-large due to the sheer number of barriers disabled people face. Disability studies professor Gregor Wolbring defines adaptation as “refer[ring] to a process, action or outcome in a system (household, community, group, sector, region, country) in order for that system to better cope with, manage or adjust to some changing condition, stress, hazard, risk or opportunity. Adaptation can encompass [international,] national or regional strategies as well as practical steps taken at the community level or by individuals.”

Individual approaches to adaptation can be critical to survival and disability empowerment. For example, a systematic review conducted by health researchers Cadeyrm Gaskin et al. about individual strategies to climate resilience concluded that disabled people with formal education, financial and social “support from mainstream organizations, disability organizations, family, and friends” and emergency-preparedness coped better with climate change-related natural disasters.⁴⁷ Thus, governments, social networks, and multilateral and humanitarian organizations should invest in these areas. Additionally, most published research about disabled resilience and climate change focuses on multilateral or international strategies.

⁴⁶ Wisner et. al., in Marwa Daoudy, “Rethinking the Climate-Conflict Nexus: A Human-Environmental-Climate Security Approach,” *Global Environmental Politics* 21, no. 3 (2021): 8.

⁴⁷ Gaskin et al., 801.

In the 21st century, there has been an increase in disability laws on the international level. The most notable piece of disability-rights legislation is the 2008 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). With respect to climate change, Article eleven of the Convention applies specifically to disabled people in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies, stating that “parties shall take, in accordance with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disaster.”⁴⁸ Thus, there is a non-binding but customary obligation to protect disabled people in the event of climate change emergencies. Furthermore, the 2015-2030 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction has expanded upon the UNCRPD to valorize the vulnerabilities and assets of disabled people; “the Sendai Framework recognizes that not only are women and disabled people disproportionately affected by disasters, but – crucially – that their knowledge and leadership skills are essential for building resilient, inclusive and equitable societies.”⁴⁹ The Sendai Framework then calls for the inclusion of disabled individuals in ensuring climate resilience.

Despite the existence of all these laws, there is a disconnect between disability rights-based laws and disaster risk policies and practices, so disabled individuals continue to be erased and not included in mainstream policymaking.⁵⁰ The next section will compare the existing literature and draw from especially primary sources to examine the cases of disabled

⁴⁸ “Article 11- Situations of Risk and Humanitarian Emergencies,” Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs- Disability, May 3, 2008, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-11-situations-of-risk-and-humanitarian-emergencies.html>.

⁴⁹ Gutnik and Roth, 40.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 322.

vulnerability and adaptation in Hurricane Katrina in the United States and Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

Case Studies on the United States and the Philippines

United States: Hurricane Katrina

Hurricane Katrina was a Category 5 Hurricane that caused significant damage to New Orleans and the surrounding areas in August 2005. Hurricane Katrina demonstrated how disabled people, especially people of color, were seen as inferior because there was a complete silence on their treatment and preparedness in the case of emergencies. Thus, Hurricane Katrina resulted in the intensification of vulnerabilities for most minority communities in New Orleans. Hurricane Katrina is relevant to the context of climate change because studies have shown that the hurricane and flood damage would have been less dire if the sea level had been lower like in similar years.⁵¹ The consequences of the hurricane were worsened by political mismanagement and neglect. To understand the impact of Hurricane Katrina on the disabled community, it is necessary to have a baseline assessment and understand the previous conditions of New Orleans before the hurricane.

Historically, New Orleans has treated minorities as inferior, relying on the exploitation of minorities through persecuting indigenous and Black people in the Trail of Tears and slavery, even at the expense of the land. The dependence on the fertile land through slavery and sharecropping made the land sink, so a levee system was built in 1936 to prevent.⁵² The levees were rebuilt in the 1970s and 1980s, but the government considered it too expensive to make it stand up to Category 4 hurricanes, so they made it safe enough only for a Category 3 Hurricane,

⁵¹ Olúfẹ́mi O. Táíwò, *Reconsidering Reparations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 150.

⁵² *Ibid*, 152.

let alone for the Category 5 level of Hurricane Katrina.⁵³ Hence, the government's choice of cost over emergency preparedness contributed to the deaths and injuries of many New Orleans' residents. Before Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans already hosted many types of marginalized groups: "67.3 percent of the population was African American, 50 percent was below the poverty line, and 23 percent had some type of disability."⁵⁴ There was a high prevalence of poverty and disabilities as well because of the government's culpability in economic and health inequality. Racial and ethnic communities in New Orleans were historically located in hazardous areas which increased the rate of asthma and other disabilities, especially from lead poisoning.⁵⁵ While the national average of adults living in rental property is 31%, 51% of pre-Katrina New Orleans residents lived in rental property as a result of redlining which was ill-equipped to deal with natural disasters.⁵⁶ Thus, many historically marginalized groups already experienced worse living conditions in New Orleans because they were not considered as human as white, able-bodied, middle- and upper-class individuals through entrenched physical and economic inequality.

Therefore, the hurricane continued the legacy of marginalization by predominantly striking minority groups who had unstable housing to deal with a Category 5 hurricane. 1,464 people died during Katrina, many of them older, disabled, and Black: "while the pre-Katrina population over the age of 60 was only 16%, nearly 75% of the people who died were over 60, and Black individuals were over-represented in each age category."⁵⁷ Therefore, Hurricane

⁵³ Ibid, 153.

⁵⁴ Molly Walsh-Warder, "The Disproportionate Impact of Hurricane Katrina on People with Disabilities," *Verge* 13 (2016): 8.

⁵⁵ Shirley Laska and Betty Hearn Morrow, "Social Vulnerabilities and Hurricane Katrina: An Unnatural Disaster in New Orleans," *Marine Technology Society Journal* 40, no. 4 (2006): 18.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 21.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 20-21.

Katrina often worsened inequality based on age and race, especially because Black individuals were often renters. During this period, 183,000 housing units were badly damaged or destroyed, mostly rental properties, so predominantly Black renters often experienced extensive damage to their properties and economic recovery.⁵⁸ Furthermore, the Road Home housing recovery program was the largest in history, but because white owned property had higher appraisal values, white people received higher buyouts.⁵⁹ Due to the lack of funds for economic recovery provided to Black people, one in three Black residents have not returned to the city.⁶⁰ Older and disabled Black people and renters experienced serious economic and health vulnerabilities but they did not receive the tools for economic adaptation to continue to live in New Orleans.

Although 80% of people evacuated from New Orleans, many people with physical and mental chronic illnesses experienced significant migration challenges, constituting a majority of hospitalizations and receiving a majority of total medical care.⁶¹ Hurricane Katrina resulted in the largest interstate migration of citizens since the Dust Bowl, where 27,000 people evacuated from the Superdome in New Orleans to the Astrodome in Houston.⁶² Many people with chronic mental illnesses lacked disaster preparedness plans due to depression or lack of mental capacity, so many had no plans to evacuate to Houston.⁶³ Additionally, people who were hard of sight or hearing were unable to obtain information because television stations and websites did not comply with regulations to provide accessible information, so not even one broadcast system was

⁵⁸ Ibid, 21.

⁵⁹ Taiwo, 156-157.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 157.

⁶¹ David P. Eisenman et al., "Variations in Disaster Preparedness by Mental Health, Perceived General Health, and Disability Status," *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness* 3, no. 1 (2009): 34.

⁶² DM Bloodworth et al., "Impairment and Disability in the Astrodome after Hurricane Katrina," *American Journal of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation* 86, no. 9 (2007): 770.

⁶³ David P. Eisenman et al, 33.

accessible.⁶⁴ Deaf and blind people then did not know the extent of the dangers or their options for evacuating. For those who could make plans, while many chronically ill residents were physically unable to evacuate, others evacuated without their medications, which then exacerbated their illnesses.⁶⁵ Thus, many experienced the decrease in their health during the recovery “as chronic illnesses may worsen with the lack of food and clean water, temperature extremes, and physical and mental stress.”⁶⁶ Because often chronically ill people did not have the adaptation tools they needed to succeed with them during evacuation, the hurricane intensified their chronic illnesses. Evacuees to the Astrodome in Houston, Texas, were further disadvantaged by the lack of accessibility of evacuation transport, difficulty accessing restrooms, inability to see and hear, and other challenges.⁶⁷ Because the Astrodome and its evacuation process compounded vulnerabilities for chronically ill people, 24.3% of the 21,673 health care visits during and following Hurricane Katrina were for chronic disease–related conditions and 28.7% of chronically ill people were hospitalized compared to 10.9% of able-bodied people.⁶⁸ The pre-existing conditions of chronically ill people, combined with the lack of accessibility of the evacuation environment, resulted in the decline of their overall health. Evacuation was also made more difficult based on class as many disabled individuals from New Orleans did not have the money for accessible transportation, money to pay for gasoline and food, and accessible lodging for evacuation.⁶⁹ Hurricane Katrina also hit two days before the end of the month payday and for Social Security, so many did not have the money to leave.⁷⁰ Looking at the intersecting

⁶⁴ Walsh-Warder, 9-10.

⁶⁵ Eisenman et al., 34.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 34.

⁶⁷ DM Bloodworth et al., 771-774.

⁶⁸ Eisenman et al, 34.

⁶⁹ Laska and Morrow, 19.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 20.

axes of class and disability, many people did not have the economic or physically accessible tools which would empower them to migrate.

Disabled people also suffered dehumanizing treatment and insufficient resources when finding shelter. Many general shelters were inaccessible, and many also “refused to admit people with disabilities, in part because the American Red Cross had decided to reject disabled people, on the basis that they did not have enough supplies to care for them along with everyone else... even though general shelters were legally required to shelter people with disabilities.”⁷¹ Therefore, because of the ableist policies making them unable to enter general shelters, many disabled people received insufficient care and became separated from their families. This separation put them in more dangerous situations, especially “since people with disabilities have a higher probability of experiencing sexual violence than those without disabilities.”⁷² Thus, many people were forced to stay in special needs shelters where they were in isolation without accessible medical care, restrooms, and food.⁷³ The toll of these shelter conditions likely amplified their psychological and physical vulnerabilities because they were completely neglected and at risk of violence.

Although the local and national government implemented some adaptation strategies to ensure accessibility for disabled people, these policies were largely insufficient. For example, in terms of mobility, there were some donations of wheelchairs, walkers, and crutches, which increased within the first few days.⁷⁴ However, “despite instruction from trained staff, eager volunteers did not always comply with proper transfer techniques for the disabled.”⁷⁵ While it

⁷¹ Walsh-Warder, 12.

⁷² Ibid, 12.

⁷³ Ibid, 12.

⁷⁴ DM Bloodworth et al., 771.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 771.

was beneficial to provide disabled people with accessible mobility equipment, equipment without training does not result in disability empowerment and likely contributed to disabled vulnerability.

Despite the national policies of adaptation, disabled people have struggled to adapt with their pre-existing and new vulnerabilities following Hurricane Katrina due to the lack of accessible housing, support networks, and policymaking. During the recovery stage, disabled people were often unable to find accessible housing because “[Federal Emergency Management Agency] (FEMA) guidelines required that reconstructed houses should be raised three feet. These houses typically only had steps to reach the elevated house, not ramps, which made them inaccessible to many people with mobility impairments.”⁷⁶ Hence, the FEMA policies explicitly only built houses that many mobility-impaired disabled people could not live in. Furthermore, many disabled people struggled during the reconstruction process because they “lost caregivers, assistive devices, service animals, and government aid”.⁷⁷ Social, physical, and financial support systems are critical tools that create disability equity through interdependence. Without these, many people struggle to navigate a society created for able-bodied people. Since Hurricane Katrina, disabled people still have not been included in emergency planning or policymaking, and there are fewer marginalized people able to remain in the city. Only 30% of New Orleans residents returned, with many of them being able-bodied, white, higher income, etc., and their return has opened the way for gentrification.⁷⁸ Because able-bodied people have maintained the silence on disabled needs and leadership following the disaster, people do not have the coping strategies to change the situation, or even live in New Orleans.

⁷⁶ Walsh-Warder, 13.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 13.

⁷⁸ Ghenis.

The Philippines experiences similarly high rates of disability but little inclusion of disabled people in decision-making. In the case of Typhoon Haiyan, vulnerabilities became apparent such as that disabled people were often left to die, but there were also more measures of adaptation and resilience compared to the United States Hurricane Katrina case. The Typhoon Haiyan case will be analyzed below.

The Philippines: Typhoon Haiyan

Vulnerabilities during Typhoon Haiyan

The Philippines is the second highest country worldwide at risk of natural disasters, experiencing on average twenty tropical typhoons annually, with the rate and severity of typhoons increasing due to climate change.⁷⁹ Therefore, Typhoon Haiyan was one of the strongest tropical cyclones ever recorded, striking the Philippines on November 8, 2013, with strong winds of over 300 km/h.⁸⁰ Typhoon Haiyan also resulted in the escalating of vulnerabilities for disabled people in the Philippines; however, because of additional national coping strategies, surviving disabled people were able to gain some resilience after the typhoon.

Typhoon Haiyan led to the amplification of health and housing vulnerabilities across the Philippines, as 16 million people experienced the typhoon, in which 4 million people became displaced, 6,293 people died, 28,689 people were injured, and 1,061 people are still missing and possibly dead to this day.⁸¹ Additionally, due to the collectively traumatizing event, in a survey conducted by psychiatrists who served the population, after Typhoon Haiyan, 50% of the test subjects reported post-traumatic stress disorder.⁸² Thus, many people lost family members,

⁷⁹ Michelle McPherson et al., "Responding to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines," *WPSAR* 6, no. 1 (2015): 1.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁸² Imelu G. Mordeno et al., "PTSD's Underlying Dimensions in Typhoon Haiyan Survivors: Assessing DSM-5 Symptomatology-Based PTSD Models and Their Relation to Posttraumatic Cognition," *Psychiatric Quarterly* 88, no. 1 (2017): 9.

homes, and also became physically or mentally disabled or experienced increased disability. The added challenges of being displaced and away from home environments where people had their resources for their individualized needs also reinforced feelings of helplessness. Reports differ widely on how many of those affected were disabled, as some reports state that 40% of those affected had a severe disability whereas others state that they believe it was closer to 11.9%.⁸³

Prior to the typhoon, disabled people in the Philippines already reported ableist treatment and silence around their needs through a lack of general resources and widespread discrimination.⁸⁴ Disabled children also often experienced educational segregation through special needs classes, so while mainstream classes taught students about dealing with natural disasters, disabled students were often infantilized and not provided with the same quality of education.⁸⁵ Disabled people often were then unaware of their rights as well.⁸⁶ Disabled Filipinos were also unable to get medical diagnoses at times because the Filipino medical infrastructure remained unable to deal with all of the medical needs of able-bodied people, let alone disabled people. Most of the health services were in the capital Manila, and in the region most hit by the typhoon, there were only four psychiatrists and seven doctors who could address mental illnesses and psychological disabilities.⁸⁷ Hence, disabled people could not even be empowered by knowledge or treatment for their conditions due to medical overcrowding and educational discrimination.

⁸³ Boris Budosan et al., "Up Scaling Mental Health and Psychosocial Services in A Disaster Context: Lessons Learnt From The Philippine Region Hardest Hit by Typhoon Haiyan," *International Journal of Medicine and Medical Sciences* 8, no. 10 (2016): 113; Manfred Morchen et al., "Climate Change, Vulnerability, and Disability: Do We 'Leave No One Behind'?" *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness* 15, no. 5 (2021): 537.

⁸⁴ Morchen et al., 537.

⁸⁵ Ha Nguyen et al., "Review of Gender Responsiveness and Disability-Inclusion in Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia and the Pacific," *UN Women* (2020): 43.

⁸⁶ David S. Coble, "Typhoon Haiyan One Year On: Disability, Poverty, and Participation in the Philippines," *Disability and the Global South* 2, no. 3 (2015): 691.

⁸⁷ Budosan et al., 113.

During the disaster, like Hurricane Katrina, many of the most marginalized, especially poor disabled people, were the ones who suffered or even perished. According to the Filipino medical team Mylene Rose Benigno et al., The Philippines Development Plan 2011-16 states that disabled people are the poorest in the country with very low rates of education.⁸⁸ A high number of disabled people struggling with class vulnerabilities already lived in the Philippines prior to the typhoon. During the typhoon, many poor disabled families helped their female family members and children evacuate to storm shelters while men stayed with their homes and belongings.⁸⁹ Hence, most of the men of low-income families that included disabled family members died while women were left on their own, at risk of sexual and physical violence and trafficking and often lacking formal employment.⁹⁰ However, approximately 64% of the people who died during the typhoon and immediately after were women because of high rates of sexual and physical violence, trafficking, and starvation.⁹¹ Additionally, even for those who did evacuate, many hard of hearing people struggled with the emergency response because interpreters were unable to communicate with them due to the dozens of signed languages in the Philippines as interpreters did not know sign language or only knew the standard sign language.⁹² Similar to New Orleans, disabled Filipinos already experienced high levels of poverty and mistreatment prior to the natural disaster due to structural violence. The patriarchal

⁸⁸ Cobley, 691.

⁸⁹Pauline Eadie et al., "Livelihood and Vulnerability in The Wake of Typhoon Yolanda: Lessons of Community and Resilience," *Natural Hazards* 103 (2020): 218.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 218.

⁹¹ Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), "Typhoon Haiyan Claims Lifetime Loss and Damages for Women in the Philippines," United Nations Climate Change, United Nations, accessed May 1, 2022, https://seors.unfccc.int/applications/seors/attachments/get_attachment?code=50OG4R4YB27W6H1RS8R3L8L5RTU06ZFS.

⁹² Jason Strother, "For Filipinos With Disabilities: Climate Change and Natural Disasters Are A Dangerous Mix," Climate Change, The World, July 13, 2018, <https://theworld.org/stories/2018-07-13/disabled-community-coastal-philippine-city-feels-forgotten>.

targeting of single women in disasters, as well as neglect of hard of hearing people, resulting in the death of many women and ableist treatment of many hard of hearing people.

The recovery and aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan also has exacerbated disabled vulnerabilities by destroying homes and health infrastructure. Even years after the cyclone, many disabled people are still living in an emergency shelter because their homes have not been rebuilt.⁹³ Hence, many are unable to reestablish safe accessible homes where they can best cope and develop permanent social and economic lifestyles. Typhoon Haiyan further weakened the Filipino medical system, resulting in the deaths of many health workers, and many hospitals, physical therapy locations, and shops that sold assistive devices were completely destroyed.⁹⁴ Some limited services restarted a few weeks after the typhoon, although by this time, many disabled people who needed care for their chronic conditions during the typhoon already had experienced the exacerbation of their health.⁹⁵ Additionally, until the typhoon, there were no standard policies on funding for disability inclusion and mainstreaming.⁹⁶ However, prior to then and since, numerous laws have been passed around disaster management and disability rights to contribute to disabled adaptation and resilience.

Adaptation and Resilience

The Filipino government and Filipino disabled people have collaborated through local and national strategies of adaptation and interdependence to survive before and since Typhoon Haiyan. However, there is still little to no enforcement of policies, and many policies worsen problems of dependence instead of reinforcing agency.

⁹³ Morchen et al., 537.

⁹⁴ Mylene Rose Benigno et al., "Responding to the Health And Rehabilitation Needs of People With Disabilities Post-Haiyan," *WPSAR* 6, no. 1 (2015): 54.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 54.

⁹⁶ Nguyen et al., 41.

The Philippines has issued approximately six different laws prior to and since the typhoon to improve disabled survival. The most important Filipino disability law is the 1992 Magna Carta for Disabled Persons which regulates accessibility in the public and private sectors, mandates informal education, and offers discounts on medical products.⁹⁷ While the Magna Carta does provide more parameters around accessibility, there is little to no enforcement, and it does not specifically mention disaster management.⁹⁸ Additionally, the Magna Carta definition only looks at the medical factors of disability, neglecting the social vulnerabilities of disability represented in the social model.⁹⁹ Hence, the Filipino government has not yet comprehensively recognized the societal challenges Filipino disabled people experience or included them in disaster response.

However, many Filipino civilians, both disabled and able-bodied, and the government collaborated to ensure mutual survival during Typhoon Haiyan. For example, “in many cases,... it was the practical support of relatives and neighbors that enabled participants to survive a storm.”¹⁰⁰ Therefore, disabled people’s social support networks maintained their interdependence and allowed them to adapt to the typhoon. Additionally, Haiyan ultimately helped build up the infrastructure for disabled communities. During the typhoon, the Filipino government coordinated 150 foreign medical teams who implemented “20,000 consultations and more than 5000 surgeries, delivered over 500 tons of medical equipment and supplies, and trained [approximately 1500] health care workers in key areas” such as mental health.¹⁰¹ Thus, many disabled people were able to get the services they needed during the typhoon, yet because there

⁹⁷ Cobby, 691.

⁹⁸ Nguyen et al., 41.

⁹⁹ Cobby, 691.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 694.

¹⁰¹ McPherson et al., 1.

were approximately 300,000 poor disabled people in the typhoon zone,¹⁰² it was likely still insufficient.

Even after the typhoon, the local and national government executed several accommodations for the health sector and future disasters. The Filipino Federal Department of Rehabilitation published “*A Directory of Health, Rehabilitation and Disability Services*” with multi-stakeholder recommendations for how to advocate for disabled people in the health field and ensure they are being accommodated.¹⁰³ Health staff also received training on how to improve disabled resilience. Although it is inspiring that the government wanted health workers to better respect and accommodate, there have been no studies of its impact, and it is unclear whether the directory and training were developed and implemented by disabled individuals or organizations. Furthermore, “five months post-Haiyan, the Filipino government created a Department of Rehabilitation Medicine that increased the coverage of rehabilitation services to include not only physical therapy but also psychiatric consultations, occupational therapy sessions, and provision of prostheses and orthoses.... The number of patients receiving rehabilitation in the regional hospital grew from 533 patients per year before Haiyan to 1547 in 2014.... Expansion of services in the region [also] helped decentralize specialized disability services that were previously only available in Manila and Cebu.”¹⁰⁴ Thus, after the complete destruction of health infrastructure, rehabilitation services nearly tripled, became more varied, and spread out beyond the capital, giving disabled people outside of urban areas more coping strategies to deal with their disabilities on a regular basis. The city of Tacloban which was hit heavily by the typhoon also developed an accessible early warning system with flags and audio

¹⁰² Benigno et al., 4.

¹⁰³ Benigno et al., 56-57.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 56-58.

announcements for visually and hearing-impaired Filipinos, “ new sign-language gestures for words like typhoon, storm surge, and signal numbers in communities where these terms do not already exist,... [as well as] adding closed captioning to television broadcasts... to minimize the potential harm of a weather-related disaster for the deaf.”¹⁰⁵ Hence, the national infrastructure following Typhoon Haiyan expanded the amount of health adaptation strategies through additional resources, and local strategies were implemented to prevent the neglect of hard of sight and hard of hearing people in future disasters.

Much of this national infrastructure was built because of the advocacy and resilience of the Philippines’ extremely active local civil society organizations.¹⁰⁶ One such organization, Simon of Cyrene, is a local civil society organization made up of and led by disabled Filipinos that has been active in the Bicol region of the Philippines since 1982. Simon of Cyrene also “successfully advocated for the representation of people with disabilities in municipal [disaster risk reduction and management] DRRM councils, leading to disability-inclusive DRR activities and evacuation procedures.”¹⁰⁷ Simon of Cyrene is a great example of the benefits of disability inclusion as they have built up disabled capacity and leadership in disaster management nationwide.

In contrast, the activities of international organizations such as HI have occurred with mixed results. HI instated a cash transfer program in the impacted region in the Philippines with 900 recipients, of whom approximately 100 were disabled or the family member of a disabled person receiving money on their behalf.¹⁰⁸ This program accommodated disabled people by giving them contextually appropriate, meaningful jobs based on their abilities and strengths,

¹⁰⁵ Strother.

¹⁰⁶ Eadie et al., 224.

¹⁰⁷ Nguyen et al., 42.

¹⁰⁸ Cobley, 695.

which created a sense of economic capital and dignity among disabled workers.¹⁰⁹ While HI's program localized their responses and focused on building the already existing assets of disabled people, other programs often did not examine the economic situations of the region and created situations of dependence. For example, the results of most programs disrupted the economic competition in the post-disaster period as they would give free cash or limited jobs, creating a dependency mentality because the money would end once the organizations left.¹¹⁰ Hence, people would no longer have the same economic opportunities, and these projects proved unstable to continue without foreign funding. To improve gender-inclusion, a few cash aid projects also provided money to disabled women; however, much of the money went to women who had never run businesses before, so this led to an increase in competition that put others out of business.¹¹¹ Therefore, to improve strategies for resilience and adaptation, international organizations need to follow HI's model by contextualizing projects to the geographical and economic market needs of an area as well as the individual strengths and weaknesses of disabled people, while also ensuring the projects are sustainable and do not reproduce dependency.

While the situation of the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan was better than New Orleans post-Hurricane Katrina, there is still a lot of room to improve to create disabled adaptation and resilience so disabled people receive the equity they need to receive equitable treatment to other groups. The section below will begin with generalized recommendations for disabled empowerment in climate change from existing literature and then contextualize within based on the two case studies.

Recommendations

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 698.

¹¹⁰ Eadie et al., 221.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 222-223.

These recommendations will build from the general recommendations suggested across the existing literature, with specific references of how to tailor to the United States and the Philippines.

Looking at an individual level, it is necessary that disabled people worldwide, including in the United States and the Philippines, work with their medical and social support teams to write a plan in the event of an emergency.¹¹² Disabled people should have a physical preparedness kit with a brief medical history and the written names and dosages of their medications, with early refills when disasters can be predicted, special supplies such as any required dressings and ostomy or catheter site supplies, and a list of any equipment to grab if possible, such as a wheelchair, crutches, insulin, etc.¹¹³ Because disabled people have the most awareness of their own needs, they can work with their support networks to ensure they have all necessary resources to maximize their resilience in climate-related disasters.

On a more collective level, the most important recommendation is including disabled people in decision-making processes surrounding climate change, natural disasters, and consequent migration.¹¹⁴ As Calgaro contends, “Disabled people are the experts on their own lives, so they are best placed to inform and shape disaster risk reduction and response plans that are inclusionary and in compliance with UNCRPD and the Sendai Framework.”¹¹⁵ Given disabled people’s histories of and skills at adapting to their own realities and crises, aid responses should include disabled people and put them in leadership positions. For example, the United States could work with disabled individuals and the disabled NGO Sins Invalid whereas the Philippines could work with individuals and the NGO Simon of Cyrene. Because disability

¹¹² DM Bloodworth et al., 772.

¹¹³ Ibid., 772.

¹¹⁴ Cobley, 689.

¹¹⁵ Calgaro, 323.

survival relies upon interdependence with their social networks, decision-making should also encourage coordination with family, friend, and caregiver networks.¹¹⁶ HI also suggests the “‘twin-track approach’” to disability participation which “‘promotes both ‘specialist disability initiatives’ designed to include and empower disabled people and the ‘mainstreaming’ of disability inclusion into all policies, strategies, and activities.’”¹¹⁷ Therefore, this recommendation could apply in the Philippines and the United States to work within existing institutional processes and structures and create new landscapes of power collectively.

Following the twin-track model, many scholars and practitioners suggest ‘specialist disability initiatives.’ For example, Gutnik and Roth suggest national disability laws for national disasters and climate change as well as more local projects to mitigate climate change including people with disabilities.¹¹⁸ In the Philippines, there had been no comprehensive local DRRM plans before Typhoon Haiyan, especially that included disabled people.¹¹⁹ However, after the typhoon, the national government, the city of Tacloban, and the municipality of Tanauan implemented recovery roadmaps or plans for future disasters.¹²⁰ Furthermore, disability inclusion can also adapt from the work done to improve gender equity and participation in climate change decision-making. For example, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change has created the position of “‘gender focal points’, people who assist in gender-related decisions about the climate.”¹²¹ Disability focal points could be a specialist disability initiative in the United States, Philippines, and other countries which encourage disabled expertise. Similarly, the Philippines

¹¹⁶ Ghenis.

¹¹⁷ Lewis and Ballard, 7.

¹¹⁸ Gutnik and Roth, 51.

¹¹⁹ Eadie et al., 221.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 221.

¹²¹ Hannah Dines, “The Climate Revolution Must be Accessible – This Fight Belongs to Disabled People Too,” *The Guardian*, October 15, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/oct/15/climate-revolution-disabled-people-activism>.

has a wide range of gender specialist initiatives that they could remodel to focus on disabilities, such as the Philippines Commission on Women which is a primary policymaking body on gender equality that also participated in the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.¹²² Thus, a similar Philippines Commission on Women could be created to also participate in the council and pioneer disability equality.

Another disability specialist initiative that could be implemented in any country would be creating a registry of disabled people for responders to seek out these individuals, especially those with multiple marginalizations, such as low-income, rural, incarcerated, Black, queer, etc.¹²³ During disasters, these individuals should receive additional care, especially those who need daily medical care, or they risk death, such as those who need insulin or go under dialysis, because they may die if they do not receive chronic treatment, even and especially in disasters. However, it is important that any registry created would not be used for nefarious purposes or for surveillance of marginalized populations.

Concerning disability ‘mainstreaming’ initiatives, all climate funds should include disabled people in emergency and development programs in areas affected by changing climate, and disabled people and their families should be participants and leaders in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), food production, energy programs, etc.¹²⁴ There must be an intersectional approach to mainstreaming as “Agencies which address the needs of all other intersecting vulnerable populations must also address their constituents with disabilities.”¹²⁵ Hence, disabled people will also be addressed in ways that recognize their other forms of identity. Given the

¹²² Nguyen et al., 41.

¹²³ Marsha Saxton and Alex Ghenis, “Disability Inclusion in Climate Change: Impacts and Intersections,” *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Equality and Diversity* 4, no. 1 (2018): 14.

¹²⁴ Lewis and Ballard, 8.

¹²⁵ Saxton and Ghenis, 22.

general lack of knowledge about disability inclusion, mainstreaming disability inclusion into climate change policymaking requires “educat[ing] funders about disability inclusion as a fundamental element of all of their projects, but under the guidance of disability inclusion experts” because often disability inclusion education is conducted by able-bodied people who already work in organizations which prevents disability partnerships and economic empowerment.¹²⁶ By educating people about disabled people in an empowering way, funders will hopefully include more disabled people and be able to develop projects that echo the resilience of disabled people. Scholars Gutnik and Roth also claim that “vulnerability and capacity assessments must include information about people with disabilities.... In order to accomplish this, disability must be included in any baseline assessments in addition to disaggregating the data.”¹²⁷ By collecting more knowledge about the disabled community and including them in analyses, there will be more knowledge about their needs. However, it is also important that the baseline data about disabled people is not used by any powerful actors to target or hurt them.

Another principal recommendation is enhancing individual and community resilience by reinforcing physical, political, and economic structures to ensure disability empowerment. Lewis and Ballard advocate that “existing emergency infrastructure should be assessed for accessibility while reconstruction of public buildings, housing, as well as water and sanitation points should address universal accessibility standards.”¹²⁸ Improved infrastructure would improve resilience because disabled people would be able to move around all buildings which would help them not

¹²⁶ Gutnik and Roth, 51; Alice Wong and Kera Sherwood-O’Regan, “87: Climate Action,” produced by the Disability Visibility Project, *The Disability Visibility Project*, October 5, 2020, Podcast, <https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/2020/10/05/ep-87-climate-action/>.

¹²⁷ Gutnik and Roth, 47.

¹²⁸ Lewis and Ballard, 8.

stay in disaster settings for prolonged periods. Furthermore, infrastructure should include, but not be limited to, “fully accessible housing, public transit, or public spaces (including businesses),... medical support systems - [such as] functioning hospitals, medication provisions,... financial support such as Social Security, health insurance from Medicaid-type programs, disability-focused employment support, and personal attendant agencies (i.e. In-Home Supportive Services).”¹²⁹ Hence, by creating a whole-of-society approach to disability accessibility, resilience can address the multidimensional political, economic, physical, and social inequalities disabled individuals face.

Additionally, the response to disabled individuals within the climate change movements needs to be intersectional and relies upon challenging the oppressive forces of capitalism, poverty, and racism that worsen the social barriers to disabled people. In the case of New Orleans, it is necessary that activist groups and governments challenge gentrification, recognize the legacy of slavery and colonialism, create affordable housing, heavily strengthening the levees, and more. Philosophy and African studies professor Olúfẹmi O Táíwò examines climate change generally and in New Orleans from a race and indigenous lens, arguing that “Climate change will compound and lock in the distributional injustices we’ve inherited from history or even reverse gains towards justice, ushering in ‘climate apartheid.’”¹³⁰

Conclusion

Climate change has demonstrated that governments have increased the vulnerability of disabled people in the event of natural disasters, specifically Hurricane Katrina in the United States and Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. Thus far, disabled people have not yet been treated as equal humans to able-bodied people in natural disasters, and the American and Filipino

¹²⁹ Ghenis.

¹³⁰ Táíwò, 162.

governments have been silent and neglected their needs. However, recommendations such as creating specialist disability initiatives and mainstreaming disability and recognizing the intersections of racial violence can possibly help to make climate change an opportunity for adaptation, resilience, and increased racial and disabled equity.

Furthermore, there is little to no research on the intersection between climate change, migration, and disability, especially recognizing the other nuances of identity, such as class and gender, that can cause additional vulnerability or resilience. The research that has been created often focuses on disabled vulnerability, so more research on disabled resilience and adaptation can create a more empowering portrayal of disabled people. Most governments also don't have comprehensive records about the numbers and conditions of disabled people in their countries or may have poor archives and recordkeeping due to histories of conflict or inefficient bureaucracies, so additional research is necessary to create a disability baseline and assess how many people need support and what kinds of support. More research about the impacts of climate change and climate change-focused migration by disabled people can also contribute to changing the balance of power from predominantly able-bodied people writing about this topic to mostly disabled people, who also live through the disasters. Additionally, articles by more disabled people can help to provide more specification on certain disabilities as most of the literature focuses on disabilities at-large without narrowing to more specific conditions, so more specification can help to best provide individualized resources. There are also few local, regional, and national case studies about the intersection between climate change and disabled people in localized contexts, so more case studies that recognize the cultural and geographical nuances can help work towards better emergency preparedness and disability understanding. The author attempted to develop additional case studies on Morocco and Syria. However, the

research on disability and climate change-migration in these two cases was insufficient, with more research either looking at the fate of disabled people in general in these countries or conflict-related migration and disabled people, as seen in the case of Syria. As climate change continues to intensify, this kind of research and the recommendations above will become increasingly necessary to ensure disabled survival and resilience.

Yemen's Stubborn Conflict

Dr. Charles Schmitz*

Abstract: *This article distills insights shared by Dr. Charles Schmitz during his delivery of the Dr. Belgrad Speaker Series event on October 24, 2022. It draws on extensive research to unspool the complexity of the conflict in Yemen. The background and context of the war that it provides is meant to help readers understand not only key domestic actors but international actors as well, including the diverse and often conflicting regional agendas that they pursue. Domestically, the key actors include the Houthis and their multiple opponents, including the Republican government, Secessionists, and others. International actors like the Arab Coalition, the United States, the Saudi/Emirati, and Iran, also each have their own objectives in Yemen. After offering these snapshots of the various actors embroiled in the Yemeni conflict, this article elucidates the geopolitical factors that have shaped and deepened the complexity of the conflict. These include Yemen's economic collapse, the challenges of the wartime economy, and the nuances of Saudi blockade. The war in Yemen is currently in a ceasefire, which leaves the question, what is going to happen next? This article argues that, while there is a likelihood that fighting could resurface in Yemen, a transition to partition appears more likely as a permanent solution. Considering all domestic and international actors and geopolitical complexities, the war in Yemen is very unlikely to end with a peaceful settlement in any near future. This article helps readers to understand why that is the case.*

Key Words: *Yemen Conflict, Houthi, Zaydis, Hussayn al-Houthi, United States, Saudi Arabia, Saudi/Emirati Campaign in Yemen, Blockade to Yemen, De Facto Partition of Yemen, Yemen War.*

Introduction

In April 2022, at the beginning of Ramadan, all sides in the war in Yemen agreed to a two-month ceasefire, which was extended twice until October 2nd when the agreement expired. Sporadic small-scale fighting has erupted since, but large-scale fighting has yet to resume. The Houthi attacked oil ships along the southeastern coast of Yemen disrupting the flow of oil from what remains of Yemen's small reserves, but the attacks appear to be cards to play in negotiations rather than a new military offensive. Everyone is still talking, including separate talks directly between the Saudis and the Houthi, and the Houthi even made a rare invitation to their Yemeni opponents to visit Sanaa for the funeral of Abd al-Aziz al-Maqalih, Yemen's

national poet. While fighting could resume, more likely is a slow transition to a permanent partition, at least in the medium term. The distance between the warring parties is too great to expect a negotiated settlement.

Military exhaustion led to the ceasefire. Since Biden's inauguration in January 2021, the Houthis hoped Biden's criticism of the Saudis would weaken US military support for the Kingdom and allow the Houthi to take Marib Governorate in the east of Yemen, home to some of Yemen's oil and gas reserves, the main electrical generator for the capital, Sanaa, and the Safer oil refinery that provides ninety percent of Yemen's cooking gas. But the Saudi air force and Yemeni ground troops repelled Houthi advances, though they came within just a few miles of the provincial capital of Marib. The tremendous cost in lives and material forced the Houthi to give up the fight and agree to the April ceasefire.

And exhaustion has for some time motivated the Saudis to extract themselves from the Yemeni conflict, or at least reduce the cost. The Saudis expected quick victory in March 2015 when they initiated their military campaign dubbed operations Decisive Storm. They even paused their air campaign in the summer of 2015 thinking the Houthi might respond positively to a halt in the fighting, a glaring misreading of Houthi intentions and capabilities. Instead, the Saudis found themselves stuck in a costly, protracted, unwinnable conflict, a Saudi Vietnam, an outcome seemingly everyone except Crown Prince, now Prime Minister, Mohammad bin Salman foresaw.

The Houthi and the Republic

The war is often characterized as a Saudi war on Yemen, the Houthi push this narrative because it makes them the sole Yemeni party to the conflict, but in Yemen the war pits the Republican government against the Houthi coup. The Houthi entered the capital, Sanaa, on 21

September 2014 by force of arms, but instead of installing their own government, they agreed under UN auspices to the appointment a new technocratic government under Republican President Hadi in a move that seemed to signal Houthi willingness to participate in the political process of the Republic of Yemen. However, Houthi quickly installed “supervisors” in government ministries to “oversee” the work of the government, belying true Houthi intentions. The straw that broke the government’s back was the Houthi kidnapping of Ahmad bin Mubarak, Hadi’s chief of staff (and current foreign minister), upon his attempt to deliver the new constitution proposed by Yemen’s National Dialog Conference.¹ The government resigned, the Houthi put the entire government under house arrest and shortly afterward declared that the country would be led by Muhammad al-Houthi, brother of Houthi leader Abd al-Malek al-Houthi. The coup was complete.

The fact that the arrival of the proposed constitution forced the issue is significant. Houthi objections to the proposed constitution focused on the proposed division of the country into federal districts. Yemenis believed that a federal government would relieve the country of political dominance by one geographic region, a common historical complaint. But the Houthi (and the southerners) saw in the proposed federal districts a design to weaken Houthi (and southern) power. Houthi objections to the federal divisions were not without merit, however the Houthi resort to kidnapping high government officials to prevent the delivery of the proposed constitution highlighted the ambiguous relationship of the Houthi to the Republic itself.

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¹ Schmitz, Charles. 2014. “Yemen’s National Dialogue.” Middle East Institute. 10 March 2014. https://www.mei.edu/publications/yemens-national-dialogue_

Zaydis and Houthis

The Houthi are often described as a Zaydi revival movement. Zaydism is a form of Shiism that now exists only in Yemen. It came to Yemen in the ninth century CE and became the predominant school of Islam in the northern highlands. Zaydism along with the other versions of Shiism claims the Prophet chose Ali to succeed him and that leadership of the Muslim community is restricted to the descendants of the Prophet through Ali and Fatima, the Prophet's daughter. In Yemeni Zaydism, selection of the leader, the Imam, is through political competition, the contender that garners the most support becomes Imam. In time, there emerged in Yemen a substantial class of people who claimed descent from the Prophet and thus were eligible for leadership.² The leading *Sada*, as they are titled, saw themselves as a political/religious elite, and the Imamate relied upon the *Sada* to staff the state's bureaucracy, in as much as one existed. Most *Sada* lived simply in tribal communities, providing religious/judicial services to tribesmen.³

Zaydi jurisprudence does not specify a form of state, only that it be led by a qualified Imam. The Zaydi heartland is deep in Yemen's northern tribal territory, and for most of Yemen's history, the Imam relied upon the tribes to govern. The Imamate never developed much of a state in the modern sense.⁴ But following the British conquest of southern Yemen in the mid-nineteenth century, the Ottomans occupied northern Yemen to check British expansion. The Ottomans created a proto state that Imam Yahya inherited when the Ottomans evacuated following their defeat in WWI. Imam Yahya then established the Mutawakkilite Kingdom of Yemen to govern in line with the other kingdoms emerging on the Arabian Peninsula at the time

² Haider, Najam. 2014. *Shi'i Islam: An Introduction*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

³ Dresch, Paul. 1989. *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

⁴ Dresch, Paul. 1989. *Tribes, Government*.

following the British example. He was assassinated in 1948, but his son Ahmad maintained the reign of the Kingdom until 1962 when Yemeni military officers inspired by Gamal Abd al-Nasser's revolution in Egypt overthrew the Kingdom and established, after an eight-year civil war, the Yemen Arab Republic.⁵

The Republican principle of equal citizenship rejected the privileged role of the *Sada* in government and while many *Sada* supported the revolution, Republican leaders looked suspiciously at the *Sada*, fearing the return of the Imamate. Republican Islam mixed new and existing Sunni influences with Zaydism to weaken the influence of the *Sada* in the north. In the 1990s after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the unification of former Soviet backed People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (British Yemen) with the Yemen Arab Republic in the north to form the Republic of Yemen, Zaydi youth in the north created a Zaydi revival movement to reconstitute Zaydism within the Republican environment. The main means of the movement was summer schools for children that competed with Saudi backed Sunni summer schools.⁶

Hussayn al-Houthi

In the 2000s, however, Hussayn al-Houthi politicized the movement and brought it into conflict with the Yemeni government. Hussayn was inspired by the Iranian revolution and Khomeini, though not because it was Shia. In fact, Hussayn admired Khomeini precisely because he saw Khomeini rejecting traditional Iranian Shiism. Khomeini's brilliance in Hussayn's eyes was his use of Islam to cultivate Muslim political activism. Similarly, Hussayn al-Houthi rejected traditional Zaydi jurisprudence, which he said led to passivism and domination by foreign powers. Hussayn agreed with Khomeini not in jurisprudence but in geopolitics: the principal enemies of Islam were Israel and the United States, and the role of Islam was to

⁵ Dresch, Paul. 2000. *A History of Modern Yemen*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

⁶ Weir, Shelagh. "A Clash of Fundamentalisms," *Middle East Report* 204 (Fall 1997).

motivate Muslims to overthrow the dominance of the non-Muslim foreigners in the Muslim heartland.⁷

Hussayn al-Houthi was irked by Yemen's alliance with the United States in the war on terror, and in the lead up to the unpopular invasion of Iraq, Hussayn stepped up his very public campaign against the United States and by implication, the Yemeni government. In January 2002, Hussayn launched his famous slogan which became the Houthi mantra plastered in red and green everywhere: God is Great, Death to America, Death to Israel, Curse the Jews, Long Live Islam.⁸ Houthi supporters took to chanting the mantra in mosques in the north and the capital Sanaa, much to the irritation of Ali Abdallah Saleh, longtime ruler of Yemen. In the tensions following the US invasion of Iraq, Saleh ordered Hussayn's arrest, but Hussayn's supporters resisted, resulting in a short-lived insurgency. Hussayn was killed by government troops in the summer of 2004, but his elderly father unexpectedly declared he would lead his son's rebellion and fighting renewed. Six wars ensued from 2004 to 2010 between the government and Houthi insurgents in which, in effect, the government enabled the Houthi insurgency to spread and gain force. Government counterinsurgency tactics drove much of the north into the hands of the insurgents while at the same time giving the Houthi valuable military experience.

The Houthi movement was born of a cultural revival movement in children's summer camps, hijacked by Hussayn to become a political movement, then forced into a military insurgency under the leadership of his brother, Abd al-Malek al-Houthi, the current leader, by the tactics of the Yemeni government. Yet with the Houthi now firmly ensconced in the northwest highlands with the upper hand in the military balance, the Zaydi Imamate, the

⁷ Haykel, Bernard. 2022. "The Houthi Movement's Religious and Political Ideology and Its Relationship to Zaydism in Yemen," in Hamidaddin, Abdullah, ed. *The Huthi Movement in Yemen: Ideology, Ambition, and Security in the Arab Gulf*. New York: I.B. Taurus.

⁸ Abu Awadhah, Yahya Qassim. 2018. *Al Masirah al-Quraniah fi al-Yaman*. Beirut: Dar al Maaref al-Hikmah.

cornerstone of Zaydi jurisprudence, has yet to appear. After their overthrow of the Hadi government, the Houthi created first the Revolutionary Committee under the leadership of Abd al-Malek's brother, Muhammad al-Houthi, to lead the country, but as the Houthi succeeded in repelling the Saudi Emirati backed attacks, the Houthi began to think about long term governance. In 2016, the Houthi created the Supreme Political Council and proposed a new constitutional government. Significantly, the Supreme Political Council is led by non-*Sada* Houthi, Mahdi al-Mushat currently, in pointed contrast to the Zaydi requirement of leadership by descendants of the Prophet. The proposed Houthi constitution also contains no language contravening the guarantee of equal citizenship for all. To be sure, everyone knows that authority in Houthi Yemen lies with Abd al-Malek al-Houthi, but the fact that he is not head of state and plays no official role in government is a significant symbolic statement. The Zaydi Imamate has not reappeared, at least not in official form.⁹

The Houthi have transformed the education system to emphasize the Houthi worldview, including the religious view that the Prophet appointed Ali successor and that leadership of Islam lies in the hands of the Prophet's family. However, the core of the Houthi worldview is geopolitical. Yemen stands with the Axis of Resistance along with Iran and Hizballah in a struggle against American and Israeli designs for the region. The Saudi and the Emirati militaries serve the interests of American empire, and Yemen is an immovable obstacle to imperial designs.¹⁰ The Houthi are ecstatic when Members of U.S. Congress critical of the Saudi intervention characterize the war as the Saudi war on Yemen because it obscures the Houthi coup and the legitimacy of the Houthi opponents in Yemen. Yemen becomes David and the

⁹ Schmitz, Charles. 2022. "Huthi Visions of the State: A Huthi Republic with an Unofficial Imam," in Hamidaddin, Abdullah, ed. *The Huthi Movement in Yemen: Ideology, Ambition, and Security in the Arab Gulf*. New York: I.B. Taurus.

¹⁰ Haykel, Bernard. 2022. "The Houthi."

Saudis Goliath. Republican opponents of the Houthi coup are nowhere in the equation, the Houthi dub them ‘mercenaries’ of the foreign intervention.

Houthi Opponents: Republicans, Secessionists, and Others

Those the Houthi call mercenaries are an incoherent array of political groups, including the internationally recognized government, that share only opposition to the Houthi coup. These are the Islah Party, a conservative Islamic oriented party that was since 1990 the second largest political party behind the former ruling party and probably would have won a majority were elections held during the transitional period in 2014. Other groups include southerners; many of which are secessionists who see the Houthi as northern invaders; Salafi groups from all over Yemen targeted by the Houthi, the remnants of Ali Abdallah Saleh’s Republican Guard that defected from the Houthi north after the Houthi killed Saleh in late 2017, and other local groups opposed to the Houthi. These groups share an enmity to the Houthi, but little else. The Hadi government found itself in 2019 in open warfare with Emirati backed southern secessionists in the Southern Transitional Council. Tareq Saleh, Ali Abdallah Saleh’s nephew who leads the Republican Guard in Taiz, did not recognize the Hadi government (but is a part of the post-Hadi Presidential Leadership Council). Southerners and Tareq Saleh are opposed to Islah supporters in Marib. The Houthi have clearly benefited from infighting among their opponents.

The Arab Coalition – A Separate Agenda

Following the Houthi coup in early 2015, President Hadi escaped house arrest in Sanaa and fled first to Aden then to Saudi Arabia when the Houthi bombed the presidential palace in Aden. Officially, the Saudi intervention was at the behest of Yemeni President Hadi, but the Saudis were eager to rid Yemen of what Mohammad bin Salman described as a new Hizballah on the Saudi border. The Saudis patched together a coalition of countries to intervene, the Arab

Coalition, all of which owed substantial political or economic debts to the Saudis, but the main support came from the Emiratis and the Saudis. (A large contingent of Sudanese troops fought in the early years of the war.)

The Saudi intervention was ill-conceived, and what was planned as a quick shock and awe operation to overwhelm the Houthi became an endless quagmire replete with devastating damage to civilian infrastructure and high levels of civilian casualties. As the ineffectiveness of the air campaign became clear, the bombing took on a vindictive tone, repeatedly bombing infrastructure such as bridges and symbolic targets such as the tomb of Hussayn al-Houthi. Several high-profile attacks on civilians, such as a large and prominent funeral party in Sanaa¹¹ and school busses in Sadah¹², served to highlight the incompetence and brutishness of the Saudi air campaign. As military victory became clearly out of reach, the Saudis had to recalibrate their strategy, but they have yet to find an acceptable solution.

The Saudi always look upon Yemen through the lens of security. Yemen is poor and populated, Saudi Arabia is relatively wealthy, and the countries share a long porous desert border. The relationship between Yemen and Saudi Arabia has many similarities to the US Mexican relationship. The Saudis are concerned about Yemen's poverty spilling into the Kingdom as well as about the possibility that Yemen's political chaos allows enemies to use Yemen to stage attacks on the Kingdom, as al-Qaeda has done. The Saudis try to maintain a variety of channels of influence in Yemen to reduce perceived threats depending upon circumstances. The Houthi themselves are not a threat to the Saudis, but the Houthi relationship

¹¹ Hubbard, Ben. "Saudi-Led Coalition Says It Bombed Yemen Funeral Based on False Information." *New York Times*. Oct. 15, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/16/world/middleeast/saudi-led-coalition-says-it-bombed-yemen-funeral-based-on-false-information.html>

¹² Almosawa, Shuaib and Ben Hubbard. "Saudi Coalition Hits School Bus in Yemen, Killing Dozens." *New York Times*. Aug 9, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/09/world/middleeast/yemen-airstrike-school-bus-children.html>

with the Kingdom's archrival, Iran, is a threat, in Saudi eyes. In 2015, the Saudis wanted to impose their will on Yemen militarily, in support of the government of Yemen against the Houthi coup, but the Saudi agenda is first to secure Saudi Arabia. Thus, having failed to achieve their initial agenda of restoring the government, the Saudis are currently talking directly with the Houthi without the participation of the Yemeni government. For the Saudis, restoration of the government of the Republic of Yemen is a means to Saudi security; if they can secure the Kingdom by other means—a separate peace with the Houthi—they will.

Similarly, the UAE has its own agenda in Yemen. The Emirates aspires to maritime military power and commercial dominance in the region, and it wants to root out political groups based upon religious ideology such as the Muslim Brotherhood. The Emirates took primary military responsibility for the southern governorates of Yemen where many southerners want to secede from the Republic of Yemen and recreate the southern state that existed before unification in 1990. The Emirates allied with secessionists and with non-political Salafis and secular groups such as Tareq Saleh's supporters. These groups were sometimes opposed to the Saudi backed Hadi government located primarily in Marib, former north Yemen. Thus, Emirati goals have also diverged from both the Saudi agenda and that of the Yemeni government.

The United States and Saudi Arabia

And the United States bears responsibility for the Saudi military in the sense that without the United States, the Saudi military cannot do much. Most Saudi military equipment is American, the US trains Saudi pilots and military officers, and Americans maintain Saudi military equipment in the Kingdom. The American Saudi relationship established long ago – on a ship in 1945 in the Red Sea between Franklin Roosevelt and King Abd Aziz ibn Saud, the founder of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – assigned responsibility for the defense of Saudi

Arabia to the United States, but during the Arab Spring and then the negotiations for the Iran nuclear deal, the Saudis began to doubt the US commitment to Saudi defense, at least as the Saudis saw it. The crown prince and now prime minister, Muhammad bin Salman, determined not only to bring the country out of its social isolation and transform its oil-based economy, but also to transform its defense strategy. The Saudi intervention in Yemen was a major first step in Saudi Arabia's new defense posture, one that Saudis led and implemented rather than depending solely upon the US. The US was informed of the intervention only shortly before it began.

The Obama administration did not forcefully object to the Saudi campaign in Yemen, perhaps because the US wanted to avoid further Saudis doubts about US intentions after the Iran nuclear deal. The US sent a team to help with targeting to avoid unnecessary destruction. But after the attack on the funeral party in Sanaa, Obama pulled the targeting assistance in protest. The Trump administration had no such qualms, but regardless of targeting assistance teams, the US carries most of the responsibility for Saudi military capabilities.

The US has an ambiguous relationship with the Saudis, but the term schizophrenic might be more accurate. For the US defense establishment, the Saudis and the Gulf Cooperation Council along with Israel have been the foundation of US defense strategy in the Middle East since WWII. The US Fifth Fleet is based in Bahrain, a Saudi dependency, and US air bases dot the Gulf States, the largest in Qatar. The Saudis and the Gulf States were a backwater of the Middle East until the Yom Kippur War in 1973 and the dramatic hike in oil prices transformed the Gulf States major economic players in the Middle East. As the US public became more aware of the nature of Saudi society and the Kingdom, criticisms of the US alliance with the Saudis occasionally began to surface. Journalists criticized Saudi society during the Gulf War in 1991, and critics claimed that the Saudis had a role in the 9/11 attacks and created bin Laden

through their spread of Salafi Islam. But when Mohammad bin Salman began his transformation of Saudi Arabia intended to open and integrate the Kingdom into international society, criticisms of the Kingdom increased significantly, in part because outsiders had more access to the Kingdom, but also because bin Salman courted public opinion. He granted rights to women and instituted elections precisely because the Kingdom had been criticized on these accounts in the past. Of course, the ultimate purpose of the reforms is to preserve the absolute rule of the House of Saud, so political opposition bin Salman does not tolerate.

The attention Mohammad bin Salman attracts highlights the tensions between the extensive military relationship between the US and the Kingdom, and the fraught relationship the Saudis have with the US public. The US Saudi relationship even became material for presidential politics: Trump courted the Saudis (and the Saudis courted Trump); Biden was a major critic—his campaign promised to make bin Salman an international pariah because of the Khashoggi killing and to reconfigure US defense strategy because of the war in Yemen. Most recently, the Saudi cutting oil production to sustain prices in conjunction with Russia just before the midterm elections provoked criticisms from Democrats in Congress and the White House.

The Saudis are a foundation of US defense in the Middle East, but Saudi society and the Kingdom do not reflect American social or political values. Mohammad bin Salman wants to build the foundation of a post-hydrocarbon economy based upon opening the Saudi Arabian society to the world but retain his autocratic power atop the Kingdom. Bin Salman can grant women the right to drive, but female activists for that right languish in prison. Obama wanted to defuse the Saudi Iranian competition that ignited the Middle East by giving Iran a stake in a stable Middle East, but the key American allies—the Saudis and the Israelis—opposed the policy vehemently. The Saudis embarked on their campaign in Yemen independently of the US

precisely because the Saudis believed the US was turning from essential Saudi security concerns, though, of course, the Saudi military relies heavily upon the US. Trump backed the Saudi Israeli position of maximum pressure on Iran and delivered missile defense systems to the Saudis to defend from Houthi attacks but to no avail, Houthi and Iranian missiles and drones demonstrated they could hit key Saudi oil facilities with impunity. Biden promised to end the war in Yemen, but immediately upon taking office, the Houthi launched a major offensive in the east that the American supported Saudi military played a major role in stopping, which in turn led to the current ceasefire.

The Saudi/Emirati Campaign in Yemen

Inconsistency and incoherence extend into the Saudi coalition campaign in Yemen. The Saudi/Emirati strategy relied upon a Saudi air campaign and funding for Yemeni forces in the eastern desert, and Emirati leadership and reorganization of Yemeni forces in the south. The Emiratis and Saudis are close allies that agree to disagree, and their disagreements exacerbated existing cleavages in Yemeni politics. A critical point of contention between the UAE and Saudi Arabia is relations with political Islamic groups. Islamic political groups potentially challenge the Saudi state because Saudi legitimacy is based upon Islamic credentials – maintenance and protection of Islam's holiest sites. An Islamic political opposition might challenge Saudi claims. Thus, the Saudis and the Emiratis prefer quietist Salafi groups that profess allegiance to the existing ruler, logically. And both the Saudis and the Emiratis forcefully opposed the rise of Islamic political groups in the Arab Spring. Egyptian strongman Sisi was generously funded by the Saudis and Emiratis when he overthrew the elected government of Muslim Brotherhood leader Muhammed Morsi. But the Saudis have less aversion to Islamic groups than the Emiratis (ironically since the Saudi regime counts on Islamic credentials whereas the Emirati regime has

no Islamic credentials, it is a tribal principedom). The main Sunni oriented Islamic party in Yemen is Islah. Saudi Arabia was a major backer of the Islah party since its inception and continues to support Islah affiliated military units and political leaders in the eastern desert region of Marib.

The Emiratis take a hard line and do not support Islah. The Emiratis prefer secularists or quietist Salafis. The Emiratis took responsibility for military operations in the south of Yemen where they supported existing popular defense organizations fighting the Houthi invaders from the north. Emirati forces built new military units from local recruits in each governorate of the south. Locally recruited military units have greater incentive to fight because they defend home territory, but the local recruiting also gave the Emirates influence over each of the southern governorates.

Emirati backed forces in the south were associated with the southern secessionist movement. Secession and rebuilding the former southern state had strong support among southerners following the civil war between north and south Yemen in 1994. The Houthi assault on the south following their coup in 2014 appeared to southerners as another northern attack on the south. Support for secession is strongest in the western portion of south Yemen, less so in the eastern portion. However, northern opponents of the Houthi, concentrated in Marib, are ardently opposed to secession, particularly in the current circumstances because the south constitutes the bulk of territory outside Houthi control. Secession now would mean northern opposition to the Houthi would be isolated in Marib and Taiz.

Emirati differences with Saudi Arabia overlap and exacerbate differences between the Yemen factions opposed to the Houthi, principally the Southern Transitional Council that now controls the western portion of south Yemen and the Islah party that controls Taiz, Marib, and the interior of Hadhramawt. The southern forces succeeded in pushing the Houthi out of the

south. Emirati backed forces also launched a successful campaign against al-Qaeda that had taken control of coastal Hadhramawt in 2015. Saudi backed forces in Marib had less success because their task was more difficult. Houthi forces successfully used the rugged mountains east of Sanaa to defend against attacks from the eastern desert despite complete Saudi control of the skies. But while the Houthi are unified and capable, the Saudi and Emirati backed Yemenis are fractured into many different factions reflected in the eight diverse representatives on the Presidential Leadership Council formed in April to replace the Hadi government.

Economic Collapse

The war was fought not only on the ground but also in the economy, and for most Yemeni, the economic war has been more damaging than the military war. The main contributor to hardship in Yemen is simply the collapse of the economy—GDP halved since the onset of hostilities. Since the late 1990s, the Yemeni economy grew at a pace slightly faster than the rapid population increase, allowing per capita income to rise. Oil exports were the foundation of growth, contributing about a third of GDP and eighty percent of government revenue in the 2000s and early 2010s.¹³ Government oil revenue flowed into the economy through public sector salaries that directly supported 1.2 million Yemenis or about ten percent of the workforce. Yemen's oil resources were limited, however, peak production occurred in 2002, but revenue remained high through the 2000s due to a sustained peak in world oil prices. By the onset of the Arab Spring, Yemen's oil economy was in rapid decline and the war punctuated the end of Yemen's oil era. Without oil, the economy collapsed, per capita income fell by more than half.

The military war did exacerbate the humanitarian crisis, of course. The destruction of transport infrastructure raised transport costs, increasing final consumer prices for goods. Prices

¹³ See Index 1 on pg. 26

also rose because Yemen depends entirely upon imports for many basic commodities making Yemen extremely sensitive to swings in global commodity prices such as in the recent price spike after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. But despite the new difficulties of getting goods to market, markets generally remained stocked with goods. Reports from the UN inspection regime that monitors goods transported to the Houthi port of al-Hudayda show increases in food imports over the period of conflict through al-Hudayda¹⁴. The conclusion of researchers from ACAPS is similar.

Import data and anecdotal evidence from sources in Yemen monitoring local market dynamics indicate that there are sufficient wheat supplies in the country. Wheat is readily available for purchase. The problem is affordability¹⁵. The major factor in Yemen's humanitarian crisis is not lack of goods but rising prices at a time when income is dramatically declining. Suffering is compounded by the collapse of the health sector and the displacement of people in conflict zones.

The Yemeni economy now depends upon remittances and international aid for half, if not more, of its income.¹⁶ The core of the domestic economy is now agriculture along with commerce and construction, which generate few exports to pay for importation of Yemen's essential food and fuel commodities. Yemen now depends upon foreign aid, mostly in the form of in-kind food transfers, and remittances sent from relatives abroad. Foreign aid staffs the remaining medical facilities.

¹⁴ United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen (UNVIM). 2022. "Operational Analysis – September 2022." https://www.vimye.org/doc/SAMonthly/Monthly_Situation_Analysis_September2022.png.

¹⁵ ACAPS Thematic Report. 2022a. "Yemen: Global wheat supply dynamics and their impact." 25 August 2022. https://www.acaps.org/country/yemen/special-reports_

¹⁶ World Bank. 2022. *Yemen Economic Monitor: Clearing Skies over Yemen?* Spring 2022, Washington DC: World Bank.

Wartime Economy

Of course, the collapse of oil exports is not the only reason Yemenis are suffering, the wartime policy exacerbated the downturn. Each side attempted to maximize its revenues while undermining the revenue of the enemy. Upon taking power, the Houthi began transforming the economy to transfer private assets and revenue into Houthi hands as well as increase state revenues. The Houthi routed oil importation and distribution through the hands of Houthi supporters, transferred cell phone, internet, and communications companies to Houthi officials and supporters, took over real estate in Sanaa, began confiscating assets of their opponents, and took over the distribution and sale of cooking gas (90% of which is produced in Marib under the government's control). While there are no official statistics, some research suggests the largest revenues to the Houthi appear to come from various forms of taxation including tariffs, religious taxes, and commercial taxes.¹⁷ About seventy percent of Yemenis live in Houthi controlled territory, so the bulk of economic activity and therefore tax and tariff revenue are under Houthi control. In addition, the Houthi have taken control of humanitarian aid in their territory, sometimes installing Houthi supporters in aid organizations, other times directing the aid to Houthi supporters and preventing aid to others.¹⁸

In response, the Hadi government not only took measures to bolster its own economy but also to counter Houthi attempts to control Yemen's economy. The first measure was to move the Central Bank to Aden. Yemen's Central Bank, both the treasury and the reserve in Yemen, is located in Sanaa. At the time the Houthi entered Sanaa in 2014, about 4 billion USD in foreign

¹⁷ Saleh, Wafeeq. 2022. "An Economy with Many Branches: special report." *AlMasdarOnline*. March 9, 2022. <https://almasdaronline.com/articles/247870>.

¹⁸ UN Experts. Saleh, Wafeeq. 2022. "An Economy with Many Branches: special report. Muqbil, Ali. 2022. "Importing Oil under the Houthi: deceptions and sources of wealth." *Al Mushahid* February 21, 2022. <https://almushahid.net/92558/>.

reserves remained in the bank, built up during the good years of oil exports. In the summer of 2016, however, the Houthi stopped paying government salaries because the reserves were exhausted, and the Houthi were diverting new government revenues to wartime expenditure. The Hadi government reacted by creating a second central bank in Aden and ordering tax and tariff revenue be sent to the Aden office. The Hadi government then began printing new money to cover current expenditure, and the Houthi responded by effectively banning the use of the new currency in Houthi controlled territory. Now Yemen has two monetary zones, one using only old bills (Yemen is a cash economy) in the Houthi areas and another using old and new bills in the coalition areas. However, inflationary printing of new money in the coalition zone drove down the value of the Rial in the coalition zone but not in the Houthi zone. The exchange rate in the Houthi zone remained stable at about six hundred Rial to the US dollar whereas in the coalition zone, the Rial fell to about one thousand one hundred to the US dollar. Undermining the value of the Rial drove commodity prices up for those living in the coalition government zone because most of Yemen's goods are imported.

The latest round of economic warfare is the Houthi attack on oil exports. The Houthi claim to be the sole government in Yemen, accusing Houthi opponents of being mercenaries of foreign powers rather than a legitimate government. The Houthi thus claim that oil reserves and exports belong to them, not the coalition backed government and recently threatened to use force to prevent oil exports from Yemen's southern coast. Since the end of the official ceasefire in October, the Houthi made good on their threats attacking oil tankers approaching the southern ports with drones and effectively cutting off the coalition backed government's only export.

The Blockade

The move that generated the most media attention was the Saudis blockade of oil imports to al-Hudayda, the main Houthi controlled port. Following UN resolution 2216 of April 2015 that forbids weapons sales or transfers to the Houthi, the UN created a verification and inspection mechanism, UNVIM, to verify that cargo ships entering the Houthi controlled ports on the Red Sea, principally al-Hudayda, were not carrying weapons. The UNVIM is funded by the European Union, USAID, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, UKAID, New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade. The UNVIM data on shipments to al-Hudayda shows the continued flow of goods into the Houthi port over the course of the war except for a year-long period in which oil imports declined. From late 2020—around the time Biden was elected—until the ceasefire in April 2022, Saudi warships at the request of the Yemeni government prevented most oil tankers from entering al-Hudayda though they had been cleared by the UNVIM to enter.¹⁹ The Saudis and the Yemeni government were upset that the Houthi were using revenue from oil imports for their war effort in violation of the Stockholm Agreement of 2018.

In 2017, Emirati backed troops drove up the Red Sea coast from Aden and southward from Saudi Arabia in an offensive designed to take the entire coast from Houthi control. The offensive reached al-Hudayda, but international humanitarian concerns about a large-scale urban conflict prevented coalition forces from entering the city. Instead, the UN negotiated the Stockholm Agreement between the government and the Houthi that stipulated the creation of an account in the al-Hudayda branch of the Central Bank for revenues from the port to fund public sector salaries—a mainstay of the pre war economy—rather than the Houthi war effort. But the

¹⁹ UNVIM. 2022. “Operational Analysis.”

Houthi ignored the agreement and used the money for their own purposes, which angered the Saudis.

The Saudi restriction of oil imports to the main Houthi port did not stop the Houthi military, however, who launched a major offensive in the east unhindered by shortage of oil. The Houthi simply increased oil imports through licit and illicit trade routes overland from the southern and eastern portions of Yemen that are controlled by the government.²⁰ The oil trade moved south to Aden and the other oil ports along the southern coast, then overland where militias from the government side taxed commodities at various points along the road to Houthi territory.²¹ In effect, the blockade rerouted fuel imports from al-Hudayda to Aden and Mukalla in the south, which added revenue to Houthi opponents because fuel imports passed through Aden then through territory controlled by anti-Houthi militias before reaching Houthi territory.²² In April when the Saudis allowed tankers cleared by the UNVIM to dock in al-Hudayda, fuel imports dropped dramatically in Aden because the fuel trade diverted back to al-Hudayda.²³

While the Saudi blockade of oil did not prevent oil from reaching the Houthi, it did give the Houthi a golden propaganda opportunity and enriched them at the same time. Houthi media blamed the Saudis for the humanitarian crisis in Yemen though the Houthi themselves profited from the control of oil distribution in their territory and the manipulation of the distribution of humanitarian aid. The Houthi monopolize the sale of refined fuel products through their control of both the official Yemen Petroleum Company and black markets in their territory. The Houthi

²⁰ ACAPS Thematic Report. 2022. "Al Hodeida fuel import and fuel price modeling." 4 April 2022 <https://www.acaps.org/country/yemen/special-reports>.

²¹ United Nations 2022. "Letter dated 25 January 2022 from the Panel of Experts on Yemen addressed to the President of the Security Council." S/2022/50. "<https://daccess-ods.un.org/tmp/1062072.58999348.html>.

²² ACAPS Thematic Report. 2022b. "Yemen: Impact of the truce on fuel supply dynamics and fuel price structures using satellite imagery and price modeling." 12 September 2022. <https://www.acaps.org/country/yemen/special-reports>.

²³ ACAPS Thematic Report. 2022b.

declare that the YPC has no oil, force people to buy fuel from the black market at exorbitant prices but allow very public demonstrations against the shortages while suffering no shortage fuel for their military offensive in Marib, a situation one analyst termed “managed shortage”.²⁴ Similarly, the Houthi manipulate humanitarian aid in their territory, diverting aid to supporters and denying aid to those that resist the Houthi in any way.

Iran and the Houthi

The UN inspection regime does not prevent Iran from sending military and economic support to the Houthi. The UN Panel of Experts found that revenue from illicit sales of Iranian oil was used to support the Houthi war effort.²⁵ The US Navy has intercepted small boats with weapons headed for the southern coast of Yemen where they transfer to overland smuggling networks.²⁶ Boats were intercepted on the Red Sea coast as well. The Iranians even smuggled an ambassador, Hasan Irlu, to Yemen who later died of complications from the coronavirus he contracted in Yemen. Houthi missiles have become more capable during the course of the war as have Houthi drones.²⁷ Iran and allies have helped the Houthi despite the UN inspection regime.

In as much as Houthi drone capability puts Saudi Arabia and the Emirates on the defensive, Iranian aid to the Houthi is important. However, Iranian aid did little to change the balance of forces in Yemen. Without Iran, the Houthi would be in much the same position. Strategic use of existing military capabilities gave the Houthi the advantage on the ground in Yemen, not drones or missiles. The conflict in Yemen is neither a proxy war between Saudi

²⁴ Sana'a Center Economic Unit. 2020. “Yemen Economic Bulletin: Another Stage-Managed Fuel Crisis.” *Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies*. 11 July 2020. <https://sanaacenter.org/publications/analysis/10323>.

²⁵ United Nations Security Council. 2019. “Letter dated 25 January 2019 from the Panel of Experts on Yemen addressed to the President of the United Nations Security Council.” 25 Jan 2019 S/2019/83.

²⁶ NAVCENT Public Affairs. 2021. “US Navy Seizes 1,400 Assault Rifles During Illicit Weapons Interdiction.” U.S. Naval Forces Central Command / U.S Fifth Fleet. <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/411792/us-navy-seizes-1400-assault-rifles-during-illicit-weapons-interdiction>

²⁷ Hanna, Andrew. 2021. “Iran's Drone Transfers to Proxies.” United States Institute of Peace. 30 June 2021. <https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2021/jun/30/iran%E2%80%99s-drone-transfers-proxies>

Arabia and Iran because Iran does little and the Saudis are directly involved in the war, nor a Saudi war on Yemen because the fighting is principally between the Houthi and Yemeni opponents.

De Facto Partition of Yemen

The Houthi are determined to rule Yemen alone, they do not recognize their Yemeni opponents, and would only allow their opponents to participate in the political process that the Houthi dominate. Houthi opponents are split. The Republicans cite UNSC 2216 that demands the Houthi withdraw, give up their weapons, and become a political party in the Republican political system. The southern secessionists want a state of their own devoid of northerners, Houthi or Republican. None of these positions are currently negotiable.

The Saudis and the Houthi may reach a temporary understanding, along with the Emirates, separate from the Yemeni anti-Houthi forces that the Saudis support, but the divisions among Yemenis appear irreparable for the time being.

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Figure 1

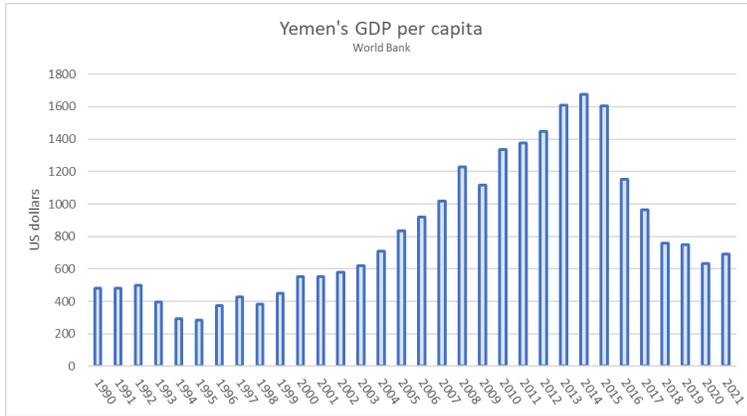
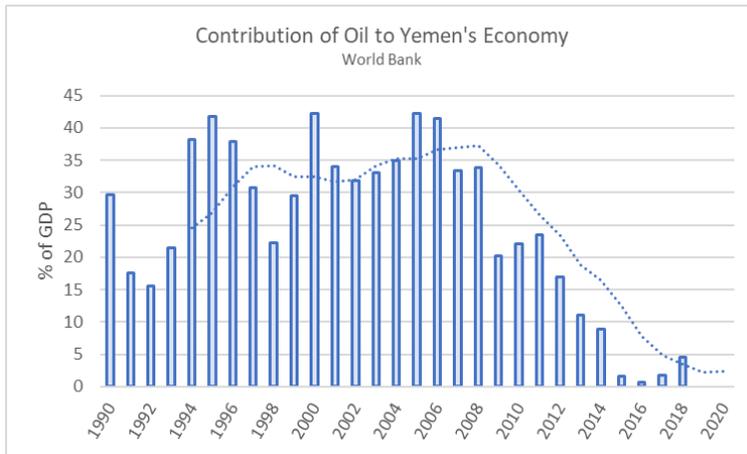


Figure 2



Trauma-Informed and Restorative Justice-Informed Approach to the Global Rise of Far-Right Extremism: A Case Study on the United States

Lindsey Parnas*

***Abstract:** Americans and citizens of ineffective countries have increasingly felt abandoned by their governments, turning to extremist groups for a sense of community, power, and dignity. This article will draw from global deradicalization and reintegration case studies as well as restorative justice practices, to develop an in-depth case study examining the rise of Far-Right extremism in the United States and argue for the need for a trauma-informed and restorative-justice informed approach. This article argues that we should not assume that the United States is immune from the problems that have affected communities abroad and encourages a whole-of-society approach to (trauma-informed) deradicalization of American Far-Right extremists willing to achieve their goals through violence or non-democratic means. Additionally, this article recommends prioritizing a restorative/ rehabilitative approach instead of a punitive approach to extremists both in the United States and worldwide because imprisonment does not heal societies or deal with extremism's root causes. A restorative justice approach through local reconciliation commissions can begin the process of national and individual healing. While this article focuses specifically on American Far-Right extremists, many of the strategies have been used for Far-Right extremists and white supremacists globally and can continue to apply to other global contexts.*

***Keywords:** Far-Right Extremism, Deradicalization, Disengagement, Rehabilitation, Reintegration, Trauma-Informed Care, Reconciliation, Restorative Justice*

1. Introduction

In 2021, Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) Director Christopher Wray pointed out that the number of Far-Right extremists' have tripled since 2017, alongside the growth of the Make America Great Again (MAGA) cause. The number of Far-Right extremists has also grown exponentially globally.¹ The shift in political identity manifesting in the growth of the National

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Rally in France and the Sweden Democrats, the January 6th coup, and the election of the Brothers of Italy political party, results from many grievances based on real or perceived societal trends. Many White Americans and Europeans feel increasingly abandoned by the government, view job opportunities as dwindling for their identity group, and fear losing racial and social status.² Simultaneously, the wide dissemination of extremist content on the Internet, and its consequent echo chambers, have resulted in an increase in numbers of Far-Right extremists.³ Far-Right extremist groups, like other radical political movements, provide a sense of community, power, and a comprehensive counter-culture in the face of perceived exclusion.⁴ When people feel excluded and feel like their dignity is not being recognized, they often feel more connected to their in-group and what anthropologist Scott Atran and political scientist Robert Axelrod call “sacred values.”⁵ These are core values that inspire high willingness to die in their defense when violated.⁶

The importance of sacred values shows that the lenses of trauma and psychology prove useful to help understand the ‘us-vs-them’ worldview that characterizes extremism. For example, studies show that many Far-Right extremists exhibit signs of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).⁷ Thus, trauma-informed care is critical to confronting Far-Right extremism and bridging

¹ Anne Speckhard and Molly Ellenberg, “White Supremacists Speak: Recruitment, Radicalization & Experiences of Engaging and Disengaging from Hate Groups,” *International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism* (2021): 2.

² Dalibor Rohac, Liz Kennedy, and Vikram Singh, “Drivers of Authoritarian Populism in the United States,” *Center for American Progress and American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research* (2018): 4-13.

³ Marc Sageman, “How People Become Terrorists,” New America Foundation, March 1, 2017, YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AsFolJd-n08&t=3875s>.

⁴ Speckhard and Ellenberg, 21.

⁵ Nafees Hamid, “I Studied the Brains of Potential Terrorists. Here's What I Learned. | NYT Opinion,” New York Times, March 3, 2020, YouTube video, 5:34, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDAQ69OEP44>.

⁶ Scott Atran, “Sacred Values,” Fuuse, June 29, 2018, YouTube video, 6:26, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWLUbHPggKI&t=220s>; Clara Pretus et al., “Neural and Behavioral Correlates of Sacred Values and Vulnerability to Violent Extremism,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 9 (2018): 1. These values even operate on different neural networks from standard cognition, resulting in inhibited logic on these issues which can even lead to extremism

⁷ “Trainings 1 and 2,” *International Center for Religion and Diplomacy* (2021): 28.

the gaps between divergent elements of polarized societies. Widespread training in trauma-informed care principles, including for government and non-profit workers, mental health professionals, and family and friends of extremists, can potentially create a trauma-informed society where everyone is aware of how trauma and exclusion can lead to extremism if left untreated.

The main argument of this policy paper is that the United States needs to draw from global counterterrorism, trauma-informed care, and restorative justice practices to decrease Far-Right extremism. We should not assume that the United States is immune from the problems that have affected communities abroad. The habitual temptation of most governments is to deal with crimes, such as extremism, through retributive justice by imprisoning extremists and not dealing with extremism's underlying grievances. However, societies with a large Far-Right presence, including the United States, should not focus on imprisoning everyone with different views because, as political scientist Dr. Kelebogile Zvobgo states: "this process doesn't transform societies."⁸ We know from experiences countering Islamist terrorism, for instance, that recidivism rates are lowest for jihadists and inmates who return home with employment, housing, and family connections; thus, we should be willing to recognize those same needs for Far-Right extremists through social and economic reintegration instead of opt for incarceration.⁹ To transform societies and their grievances, we should engage with this community based on good faith, especially because the recidivism rate among extremists is incredibly low.¹⁰ For

⁸ Sarah Souli, "Does America Need a Truth and Reconciliation Commission?" Politico, August 16, 2020, <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/08/16/does-america-need-a-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-395332>.

⁹ Ryan Shanahan and Sandra Villalobos Agudelo, "The family and recidivism," American Jails, American Jail Association, September-October 2012, <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/vera/the-family-and-recidivism.pdf>.

¹⁰ "Trainings 1 and 2," 11.

example, this article recommends implementing local reconciliation commissions based on previous international restorative justice dialogues.

This article will apply global lessons from deradicalization, trauma-informed care, and restorative justice to inform a case study on Far-Right extremists willing to engage in violence or non-democratic means in the United States. It will encourage a whole-of-society approach to (trauma-informed) deradicalization of American Far-Right extremists willing to achieve their goals through violence or non-democratic means. The research subjects will be those deemed to be Far-Right terrorists (those who have moved through the phases of radicalization, from fence-sitters to supporters, and have used or are likely to use violence or other non-democratic means).¹¹ While this article focuses specifically on American Far-Right extremists, it has larger implications for moderating white supremacists and the Far-Right globally. Additionally, these lessons could also be applied to Far-Left extremism worldwide, but this article focuses on the Far-Right extremism due to its' growing relevance in recent years in the United States.

This policy paper builds on our understanding of the relationship between trauma-informed care, deradicalization and reintegration. Each section will begin with global lessons in global literature and practices while contextualizing to the United States. The sources range from the realm of (political) psychology and sociology, to peacebuilding, to violent extremism literature, as well as global and American case studies. Two of the primary sources will also be trauma-informed care training manuals and workshops developed by myself and Dr. Juncal Fernandez-Garayzabal among other team members while working at the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD). Interviews have been conducted with experts such as Dr. Fernandez-Garayzabal from ICRD, Executive Director of the non-governmental organization

¹¹ Ibid, 10.

(NGO) Parallel Networks (PN), and Program Manager at the Counter Extremism Project (CEP); Chris Bosley, Director of the United States Institute of Peace Violent Extremism Team; Emma Jouenne, Director of Parents for Peace, and two disengaged Far-Right extremists: Ryan LoRee and Matt Heimbach.

2. Far-Right Extremism and the (de-)Radicalization Process

a. Defining Far-Right Extremism globally and in the United States

One global definition of extremism is an outlet or reflection of anger and resentment, which can have the psychosocial pull of addiction.¹² The Southern Poverty Law Center defines the Far-Right as:

A set of far-right ideologies, groups and individuals whose core belief is that ‘white identity’ is under attack by ‘multicultural forces’ using ‘political correctness’ and ‘social justice’ to undermine white people and their civilization. Characterized by a heavy use of social media and online memes, Alt-Righters eschew ‘establishment conservatives,’ skew young and embrace white ethnonationalism as a ‘fundamental value.’¹³

While nearly all Far-Right extremists believe white culture is under threat from immigrants, religious, and racial diversity, sacred values differ slightly between Far-Right groups.

In the American context, the sacred values driving Far-Right extremism, “that ‘white identity’ is under attack by ‘multicultural forces’ using ‘political correctness’ and ‘social justice’ to undermine white people and their civilization,” have gained some saliency among mainstream American conservatism.¹⁴ However, the Far-Right is not a monolith, and there are subtle nuances that need to be understood before any practitioner engages in deradicalization work. Being fiscally or socially conservative is not the same as being Far-Right. Far-Right *non*-extremists also still believe in changing the status quo to recognize white grievances through elections and

¹² Ibid, 18.

¹³ Jesse Morton, “Two Sides of the Same Coin: Far Right and Jihadist Extremism,” Light Upon Light, accessed February 3, 2022, <http://www.lightuponlight.online/two-sides-of-the-same-coin/>.

¹⁴ Interview with Dr. Juncal Fernandez-Garayzabal (CVE practitioner), in discussion with the author, March 2022.

politics. Far-Right extremists pose a different problem; they believe non-democratic means or violence are the only paths toward systemic change.¹⁵ Yet, just how after 9/11 all Muslims were deemed to be jihadists, there is a general tendency to deem all conservatives or all Trump supporters as extremists. That only risks radicalizing people further and pushing people further down the "extremist continuum" - thus increasing the risks of radicalization and violence.¹⁶

b. The Radicalization Process

Radicalization can be described as “a process of personal change that involves not just a change in worldview but also a change in emotions.”¹⁷ Individuals who search for belonging, affiliation, self-esteem, dignity, meaning, and/or purpose become exposed to initial influencers such as friends, family, recruiters, and extremist material.¹⁸ Extremist material that seems to provide answers to all of an individuals’ questions and grievances results in an epiphany, causing individuals to reassess their identity.¹⁹ This epiphany, often called a “cognitive opening,” results in first perceptive changes, then behavioral adjustments, culminating into a total identity transformation.²⁰ Upon total identity transformation, Far-Right networks demand complete behavioral and ideological loyalty from their members, isolating them from the out-group and any dissenting opinions, developing a resentment echo chamber.²¹

Radicalization is a highly social phenomenon.²² Hence, confronting radicalization requires analyzing both individual factors and community grievances because, as mentioned

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ “Trainings 1 and 2,” 6.

¹⁸ Ibid, 10-12.

¹⁹ Ibid, 11.

²⁰ Pete Simi et al., “Addicted to Hate: Identity Residual among Former White Supremacists.” *American Sociological Review* 82, no. 6 (2017): 1175.

²¹ Speckhard and Ellenberg, 4.

²² Michael Jensen and Gary LaFree, “Empirical Assessment of Domestic Radicalization (EADR),” National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, Dec. 2016, <https://www.start.umd.edu/research-projects/empirical-assessment-domestic-radicalization->

Community grievances leading to extremism include numerous political, economic, and social factors which Far-Right propagandists, including politicians, have translated into “chosen traumas” that are used to rally Far-Right extremists against minority groups.³¹ A chosen trauma refers to perceived or real injustices experienced by an identity group (ranging from genocide to socioeconomic and political disenfranchisement of a minority by a government) that are often manipulated or politicized by government or extremist actors.³² Chosen traumas for American Far-Right extremists include the Confederacy’s loss of the Civil War as well as the ongoing struggles of the outsourcing of jobs, fear of losing status, the opioid epidemic, and increasing polarized rhetoric which entails that white people and Republicans are villains for the legacy of American slavery and institutional racism. This rhetoric results in an “entitlement ideology” that white people are being unfairly prosecuted.³³ To decrease chosen traumas’ impacts and reverse the radicalization process, it is necessary for Far-Right extremists to undergo disengagement and deradicalization.

c. Definitions of Disengagement and Deradicalization

The disengagement and deradicalization process depends on the individual, but these definitions are generally consistent worldwide. Disengagement can be defined as behavioral changes, such as cutting ties with a group but not necessarily abandoning the ideology.³⁴ There are many reasons why individuals disengage, such as unmet expectations, disillusionment with terrorist groups’ strategy, actions, or personnel, the inability to cope with the physiological/psychological effects of violence, burnout, positive interactions with moderates, desire to marry,

³¹ Vamik Volkan, “Large-Group Identity, Who Are We Now? Leader-Follower Relationships and Societal-Political Divisions,” *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis* 79 (2019): 143.

³² *Ibid*, 143.

³³ I am not referring to chosen trauma in the same sense as Volkan who would see these events as distinguished between chosen traumas and undiagnosed traumas.

³⁴ Speckhard and Ellenberg, 9.

amnesty, etc.³⁵ These factors should be taken into account in disengagement and deradicalization efforts.

Leaving extremist groups has also been equated to quitting drugs because, like with substance abuse, people who fail to find a new sense of purpose and a new community to adhere to return to anti-democratic options.³⁶ Preventing a “relapse” requires looking at the numerous push factors out of prosocial democratic engagement and pull factors into radicalization. The push factors include poverty, poor civic engagement, unemployment, historical injustices, lack of critical thinking skills, and police profiling.³⁷ In contrast, radicalization’s pull factors include hero worship of extremist leaders, ideological manipulation by recruiters, and, most importantly, promises of belonging and family.³⁸ Failing to address individual and community needs for those leaving extremist groups, such as unemployment or feelings of loneliness and isolation puts the extremist in a situation similar to the one that caused their radicalization in the first place. For disengagement to be effective and long-term, extremists need to deradicalize (experience cognitive change). Thus, programming must ideally mirror extremist tactics and recreate the conditions that provide the same meaning, significance, and purpose - which is what ultimately causes people to deradicalize.³⁹ To substitute the previous social networks of extremist groups, effective reintegration and rehabilitation into a community are essential.

d. Definitions of Rehabilitation and Reintegration

Rehabilitation can be defined as a purposeful, planned intervention, which aims to recreate meaning, significance, and purpose in the lives of extremists to allow individuals to exist

³⁵ “Trainings 1 and 2,” 19.

³⁶ Beth Collinson and David Best, “Promoting Recovery from Substance Misuse through Engagement with Community Assets: Asset Based Community Engagement,” *Substance Abuse: Research and Treatment* 13 (2019): 1; Pete Simi, Kathleen Blee, et al, 1167.

³⁷ “Trainings 1 and 2,” 8.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 8.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 10.

in society socially, psychologically, and economically without resorting to non-democratic means.⁴⁰ Meaning, significance, and purpose are also often culturally contextual and may differ based on the country. Rehabilitation is often combined with reintegration, which is defined “as a safe transition to the community, by which the individual proceeds to live a law-abiding life following his or her release.”⁴¹ While most projects focus disproportionately on disengagement and deradicalization, it is necessary to spend significant time on reintegration and rehabilitation.⁴² Also, as mentioned earlier, rehabilitation is a critical component of this article’s approach because it moves away from the punitive focus of terrorism. Because radicalization is a social phenomenon, the social components of reverting the engagement and radicalization process through reintegration and rehabilitation often requires several years to complete.⁴³ Reintegration and rehabilitation often takes longer as well in countries with low social capital, such as the United States, so planning for the disengagement to rehabilitation process should take this into account.⁴⁴

The process to reintegration and rehabilitation is multi-layered, so the following section will discuss how psychosocial support, social reintegration, and economic reintegration all track well with creating new prosocial forms of meaning and identity. Furthermore, disengagement, deradicalization, reintegration, and rehabilitation will henceforth be referred to as DDRR.

3. The Nexus of Trauma-Informed Care and DDRR

a. Definitions of Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care

⁴⁰ Ibid, 18-19.

⁴¹ Ibid, 19.

⁴² Altier.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ “Trainings 1 and 2,” 10.

Trauma can be defined as a conscious or unconscious membrane to view the past or a significant response to an emotional event experienced.⁴⁵ A trauma-informed approach shifts the perspective away from “what’s wrong with you” to “what happened to you.”⁴⁶ It is a lens that tracks well with the current understanding of the complexities of (de)radicalization, as it seeks to include structural, and inter, and intra-personal factors.⁴⁷ Trauma-informed approaches to extremism have been used worldwide from the Maldives to Central Asia, and this section will continue to follow the model established in the last section to contextualize these concepts for American Far-Right extremists.

b. A Trauma-Informed Approach to DDRR

i. Establishing the Conditions for Reintegration

The first step of understanding the complexities of (de)radicalization through a trauma-informed approach is taking into consideration *who* is reintegrating into *what* and *where*. Who meaning: what individual? The ‘what’ being their circumstances and the situations that led them to engage in extremism in the first place. It also considers why they are leaving.⁴⁸ In the case of the Far-Right, the answers to who and why are above. However, the question of where individuals are reintegrating into is often more complicated. When possible, trauma-informed practitioners recommend establishing National Reintegration Centers to offer a transitional space before reentering society, such as the National Reintegration Center in the Maldives.⁴⁹ In contrast, the United States has neither formal, in-prison recidivism reduction programs, nor a fully-realized post-release initiative for re-entry and reintegration of terrorism-related

⁴⁵ Oliver Mains, “Psychology and Politics of Trauma and Victimhood,” *INAF 631: Politics of Resentment* (Georgetown University Lecture, January 26, 2022).

⁴⁶ “Trainings 1 and 2,” 31.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 24.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 20.

⁴⁹ Interview with Dr. Juncal Fernandez-Garayzabal.

offenders.⁵⁰ Therefore, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) suggested adopting a whole-of-society approach in the United States in 2019 by working with domestic and foreign governments, communities, mental health professionals, and NGOs to reduce extremist recidivism both in prisons and in communities.⁵¹ DHS subsequently funded the non-profits PN and CEP to develop Alternative Pathways, a training program that guarantees every actor tasked with supervising extremist offenders in-prison in the United States has evidence-based knowledge to support their work.⁵² DHS also funded PN and CEP's Radicalization, Rehabilitation, Reintegration, and Recidivism (4R) Network to facilitate a whole-of-society approach for extremism-related offenders coming back to the community to have post-release support.⁵³ However, because Alternative Pathways and 4R exist only in certain prisons and communities, this policy paper will suggest expanding the training throughout the United States, especially those communities prone to extremism which are not being reached.

ii. Physical, Mental, and Psychosocial Support

Trauma-informed care also requires developing psychosocial support mechanisms for extremists to ensure continued trust and decrease the isolation that was key in the radicalization process.⁵⁴ The ICRD intervention Dr. Fernandez-Garayzabal and I worked on with Islamic State Maldivian foreign fighters focused heavily on physical, mental, and psychological levels of trauma. For example, we encouraged government employees and social workers in the Maldives

⁵⁰ Jesse Morton and Mitchell D. Silber, "When Terrorists Come Home: The Need for Rehabilitating and Reintegrating America's Convicted Jihadists," Counter Extremism Project, Counter Extremism Project, December 6, 2018, https://www.counterextremism.com/sites/default/files/CEP%20Report_When%20Terrorists%20Come%20Home_120618.pdf.

⁵¹ Department of Homeland Security, "Department of Homeland Security Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence," *U.S. Department of Homeland Security*, September 2019, 1, 6, https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/19_0920_plcy_strategic-framework-countering-terrorism-targeted-violence.pdf.

⁵² Interview with Dr. Juncal Fernandez-Garayzabal.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ "Trainings 1 and 2," 7.

to look at the impact of trauma on the cognitive level (memory, concentration, learning, and focus), the physical level (possible heart disease, obesity, diabetes, addiction, etc.), the emotional level (ability to self-soothe), the worldview, and trauma impacts the traumatized person's relationship with their friends, family, and their community. Through a train the trainer model, the first people who received these trainings in the Maldives would receive the training documents and pass on the principles of trauma-informed care to anyone interacting with extremists, especially families, policymakers, and service providers.

The physical, mental, and psychosocial effects of trauma should be considered in every intervention with traumatized populations, especially extremists, and there is some existing work on this topic already with NGOs and American Far-Right extremists. Currently, organizations like PN and Parents for Peace offer psychosocial support by operating a hotline for extremists whom they refer, as well as their families, to clinician experts on deradicalization and trauma-informed therapy. These clinician experts provide them a toolbox of resources and activities to deal with their trauma.⁵⁵ As applied in the Maldives above, it is further recommended that PN, CEP, and Parents for Peace, use their transdisciplinary team of mental health and countering violent extremism (CVE) practitioners to administer training on trauma-informed care to anyone interacting with extremists, especially families, policymakers, and service providers who are currently not beneficiaries of the 4R network. This would help these individuals to better understand how trauma can result in radicalization, how their roles can inhibit or promote deradicalization, how can and why should they promote a rehabilitative approach rather than a

⁵⁵ Interview with Emma Jouenne (Program Director at Parents for Peace), in discussion with the author, April 2022.

retributive approach, and the impact of deep societal distrust towards Far-Right extremist groups including their own.⁵⁶

After recognizing their own biases, PN, CEP, and Beyond Conflict should carry out narrative therapies or story-editing techniques and utilize asset-based interventions to return ownership and empowerment to extremists. Beyond Conflict, an NGO that focuses on psychosocial and scientific approaches to extremism and in the humanitarian sphere, has significant experience in narrative therapy globally using their Field Guide for Barefoot Psychology,⁵⁷ as do PN and CEP, so they could lead the effort on narrative therapies for Far-Right extremists. Asset-based interventions also help promote ownership by focusing on former extremists' strengths rather than their deficits, recognizing underlying individual risk factors for potential re-mobilization or recidivism and diminishing societal stigmatization.⁵⁸

To deal with the shortage of psychologists, psychotherapists, and social workers with expertise in this milieu, and the prevalence of stigma even among mental health staff, PN and CEP's 4R network, Parents for Peace, Beyond Conflict, and their social worker and government partners will ensure that former extremists receive individualized one-on-one mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services that deal with individual needs.⁵⁹ Although there may not be sufficient staff, even across the many organizations mentioned in this article, a vital principle of trauma-informed care is that one doesn't need to be a therapist to be therapeutic.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ However, choosing non-American practitioners may help to improve the neutrality of the project as they are not personally impacted by American societal divisions.

⁵⁷ "The Field Guide for Barefoot Psychology," Beyond Conflict, Beyond Conflict, accessed March 29, 2021, <https://beyondconflictint.org/what-we-do/curent-intitatives/migrant-and-refugee-crisis/the-field-guide-for-barefoot-psychologists/>.

⁵⁸ "Comparison Between Asset and Deficit Based Approaches," University of Memphis, University of Memphis, accessed March 4, 2022, <https://www.memphis.edu/ess/module4/page3.php>.

⁵⁹ "TOC Final PowerPoint," *International Center for Religion and Diplomacy* (2021).

⁶⁰ "Trainings 1 and 2," 55.

Therefore, training those working with extremists, and ultimately the larger society, can result in healing conversations in social, professional, and administrative interactions.

Recommendations for psychosocial support include:

- **Provide individual, culturally sensitive services for one-on-one care, tailored to specific needs, interests, and risk and protective factors, that tackle physical health concerns and facilitate trauma-informed mental health care.**

Cultural sensitivity helps programs move past stereotypes and biases by recognizing how people's specific needs are influenced by their gender, cultural background, or both, and ensures equal access to services.⁶¹ Furthermore, because extremist groups already tailor themselves to people's individual needs to provide a holistic counter-cultural worldview, deradicalization efforts need to do the same. PN, CEP, and Parents for Peace can tailor the interventions to the needs and radicalization cycle of each individual based on their context and existing resources. These individual services should be based on empowerment and asset-based approaches to avoid disempowerment and the retraumatization that could result in recidivism.

- **Educate Far-Right extremists and families, as well as policymakers, social workers, parole officers, and others who work with extremists, on trauma-informed care.** To ensure a societal impact broadening the understanding of trauma and radicalization nationally, local, state, and national governments, as well as civil society groups, should hire groups like PN, CEP, and Parents for Peace to train their workers who engage with extremists. This would allow their

⁶¹ Ibid, 34.

workers to prevent the increased spread of extremism and retraumatization and work towards a whole-of-society approach.

- **Offer narrative therapies for Far-Right extremists and focus on prosocial counter-narratives as alternatives to extremism.** Retelling life stories within a therapeutic community treatment environment can help Far-Right extremists reconstruct their identities outside of an extremist paradigm, develop a new sense of self by reinterpreting past actions and provide credible reasons for deradicalization.⁶² Narrative therapies can help create feelings of ownership and control over lives outside of the totalization of extremism. Beyond Conflict and PN can integrate Far-Right extremists into their existing humanitarian projects with the consent of other members.
- **Assess experiences of discrimination, or perceived or internalized stigma, and of extremists' attitudes and/or practices towards citizenry.** During the initial stages of risk and needs assessments, Parents for Peace's and PN's local social workers and psychologists should assess the level of discrimination to establish the potential challenges that may be associated with social reintegration.

iii. Social Reintegration

Improving Far-Right extremists' feelings of meaning, dignity, purpose, and empowerment is contingent upon social reintegration, defined as a local open-ended process to seek acceptance by family, peers, and neighbors.⁶³ Global trauma-informed studies show that the

⁶² A. D. Irving, "Life story narratives of recovery from dependent drug and alcohol use: a tool for identity reconstruction within a therapeutic community," *Therapeutic Communities: The International Journal of Therapeutic Communities* 32, no. 3 (2011): 185.

⁶³ Walt Kilroy and Helen SA Basini, "Social Capital Made Explicit: The Role of Norms, Networks, and Trust in Reintegrating Ex-Combatants and Peacebuilding in Liberia," *International Peacekeeping* 25, no. 3 (2018): 367.

effective processing and transitioning of traumatic circumstances is highly dependent on whether those traumatized, especially extremists and inmates at-large, held strong social bonds to family, friends, or community organizations as these individuals are often the most likely to help deal with their most immediate concerns, including housing, financial assistance and/or securing employment, transportation needs, and child-rearing responsibilities.⁶⁴ Although there have not previously been comprehensive social reintegration studies for Far-Right extremists, it is expected that Far-Right extremists also would rely on these bonds. When talking about social reintegration, however, it is also essential to talk about stigma. Creating an awareness of stigma and working to transform this stigma plays a necessary role in creating a rehabilitative daily environment. Practitioners need to take into consideration the acceptance that Far-Right extremists may or may not have from friends, families, and their communities because that will impact the success of their rehabilitation. Furthermore, because they have even more stigma than other inmates, extremists may not even be able to rely on their family and friends.

Social reintegration for Far-Right extremists should ensure family inclusion, following an expansive definition of the family to recognize the importance of informal social attachments and controls such as extended family, peer, and interrelated community influences. These informal relationships provide the best opportunities for pro-social and democratic engagement.⁶⁵ For example, the German Institute of Radicalization and De-Radicalization

⁶⁴ Rebecca L. Naser and Christy A. Visher, "Family Members' Experiences with Incarceration and Reentry," *Western Criminology Review* 7, no. 2 (2006): 21.

⁶⁵ Hirschi's social control theory describes how social norms promoted by a definition of family that also includes the community, and society in general, inhibit youth from engaging in violence and can buffer the increased risk for violence that is associated with trauma and severe adversity. When an individual's family and social bonds are strong, so is their motivation to abide by social norms and eschew violence. See: B. Heidi Ellis et al., "Trauma and Openness to Legal and Illegal Activism among Somali Refugees," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 27, No. 05, (2014): 857-883, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2013.867849>.

Studies has offered phonline programs for the families of both neo-Nazi groups and Islamist groups to learn how to help their children deradicalize and reintegrate.⁶⁶

The United States can also learn from the example of Pakistan's Sabaoon Center for Rehabilitation and the Monitoring Centre (SWaT), which provided a safe space and social support to reintegrate males from the extremist group Tehrik-e-Taliban from 2009-2017.⁶⁷ During this period, 192 out of 200 reintegrations were successful, meaning that SWaT supported former violent extremists in rebuilding their identities and helped them reintegrate into society.⁶⁸ Thus, state partners and funders such as DHS or the Department of Defense (DoD) should offer funding, so the United States can aim in the long-term to offer a transitional space for Far-Right extremists to provide psychosocial support before extremists reintegrate into society.

In the United States, there are already a few groups involved in social reintegration, some which include formal family networks but rarely informal networks. Many of these programs also build off phone applications like those of the German Institute on Radicalized and De-Radicalization Studies. As mentioned above, PN is very involved in reintegration and has supported the development of a 12-step program phone application at Boston University for people deradicalizing from extremism based off of the alcohol addiction model, connecting deradicalizing extremists and their families with sponsors.⁶⁹ PN also has a 24/7 hotline, called the SHIFT-Hate Helpline, for extremists of all types to reach out to former extremists and interventionists to provide a sense of meaning, purpose, and control in vulnerable moments when

⁶⁶ Audie Cornish and Daniel Koehler, "German Programs Helps Families De-Radicalize Members Prone to Extremism," All Things Considered, NPR, March 13, 2015, <https://www.npr.org/2015/03/13/392845800/german-program-helps-families-de-radicalize-members-prone-to-extremism>.

⁶⁷ Raafia Rafees Khan and Ferha Peracha, "Deradicalizing, Rehabilitating, and Reintegrating Violent Extremists," *United States Institute of Peace Brief* 238 (2017): 4.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶⁹ Interview with Ryan LoRee.

people are considering recidivism.⁷⁰ Outside of PN, Life After Hate is an NGO committed to helping people leave the Far-Right that also provides resources for their (formal) family members.⁷¹ Life After Hate uses a multidisciplinary team model combining former Far-Right extremists and mental health practitioners.⁷² Since their founding, they have helped more than 500 individuals and families, including more than 220 in the past year.⁷³ They also help individuals find a sense of belonging outside of the movement through engaging with identity in positive settings and activities.⁷⁴

Recommendations for social reintegration include:

- **Evaluate each program participant for family counseling appropriateness and engage in family counseling where viable. Formulate awareness of a healthy role for extended family members and how they might provide support or serve as a hindrance to the reintegration process.** When conducting initial risks and needs assessments, include family members, and assess their roles as well. PN can train all formal and informal family members in trauma-informed care, so they may also understand if they played a role in passing down trauma intergenerationally⁷⁵ and help to empower their family members going forwards to best prepare for the future.
- **Establish safe and trusted locations with access to MHPSS for Far-Right extremists who cannot enter formal education or employment centers in**

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ “Our Impact,” Life After Hate, Life After Hate, accessed April 1, 2022, <https://www.lifeafterhate.org/our-impact>.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ “2021 Impact Report,” *Life After Hate* (2021): 2.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 4.

⁷⁵ Intergenerational trauma is the passing down of traumatic memories across generations, either through genetics or socialization of family members. Intergenerational trauma can result in tasks to avenge a past also being passed down among descendants. See: Vamik Volkan, “Trauma, Identity and Search for a Solution in Cyprus,” *Insight Turkey* 10, no. 4 (2008): 102.

communities where people exiting violent extremist conflict are concentrated.

With funding from the DoD or DHS, PN can work with halfway houses for formerly incarcerated individuals as these create the pre-conditions to create safe and trusted locations for former Far-Right extremists. PN can also establish connections with members of trauma-informed communities who offer housing as well for people who are not able to return to their previous homes because of high concentration of extremist belief or if they have no family relations, among other reasons. These trusted locations or pre-release centers can also serve as locations for people to receive documentation for work and a photo ID, job assistance, help applying for Medicaid, mental health assessment and connections with clinics, connections to representatives from community-based programs, and help involving their family, thus also collaborating to achieve economic reintegration.⁷⁶

- **Implement community-based projects to engage Far-Right extremists with their community.** Community-based projects promote personal investment on behalf of or from extremists, which can foster the creation of a sense of meaning, significance, and purpose that fills the gap offered by radical engagement. Community projects also build positive connections with other community members.⁷⁷ These projects can also tie into the reconciliation projects in Section 3.

iv. Economic Reintegration

⁷⁶Marta Nelson, Perry Deess, et al., "The First Month Out: Post-incarceration Experiences in New York City," *Federal Sentencing Reporter* 24, no. 1 (2011): 35.

⁷⁷ "Trainings 1 and 2," 21.

Another way of creating meaning and purpose is through economic reintegration of Far-Right extremists. One of the driving factors for recidivism among global extremists, which includes political militants, is the lack of viable alternative sources of income.⁷⁸ In the Maldives, the whole-of-society approach built relationships with possible government, private sector, and civil society partners who could potentially offer employment or training in the future. PN and CEP should also pull from the whole-of-society approach implemented in the 4R Network to reach out to their private and public sector partners who can help provide vocational and employment services. Offering economic alternatives to extremism with trusted partners who work through their stigma also offers a chance to re-engage meaningfully within society and organizations, encouraging rehabilitation rather than punishing them by preventing them from ever getting a job again.

Recommendations for economic reintegration include:

- **Coordinate with colleges, universities, government agencies, hospitals, small businesses, vocational & educational programs, the private sector, etc. to establish the market needs and opportunities for vocational training. Then provide skill building based on individualized plans for the market and based on available skills of extremists.** Through the media plan detailed below, PN and CEP should use their connections with companies and organizations listed above and establish where organizations' greatest needs are and what types of qualifications are necessary for these positions. Individualized plans for the market should include, where appropriate, offering remedial education programs and schools to enable those extremists who require it to enter the education

⁷⁸ "TOC Final PowerPoint."

system. PN and CEP, with their partners, should also assess the possibility for scholarships to attend schools.

- **Build a database of potential educational & employment opportunities.** PN and CEP should use the companies in their 4R Network to create a database of jobs. The companies can then connect with probation officers within the network to learn about opportunities for employment or training open to Far-Right extremists working to disengage and reintegrate.
- **Develop realistic vocational plans (for both extremists and/or adult family members) with career counselors.** PN and CEP should allocate some of their funding to paying career counselors involved in the 4R network to help create individualized employment plans for Far-Right extremists. Thus, extremists can see the economic alternatives to disengagement despite societal stigma.

Furthermore, trauma-informed care, especially social and economic reintegration, relies on the coordination with, and healing of, the community, so reconciliation is also necessary.

4. Reconciliation and Political Reintegration

As many grievances causing extremism and feelings of social and economic exclusion relate to state dysfunction, it is essential to prioritize national-driven reconciliation and extremist political reintegration.⁷⁹ Reconciliation processes, which have occurred worldwide since the 1980s, require acknowledging and atoning for wrongs, asking for victims' forgiveness while

⁷⁹ "A Trauma-Informed Approach to Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism," Parallel Network, February 3, 2020, YouTube video, 2:03:47, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jN9wKZe588Q&t=2s>.

resolving never to repeat the wrongs, and working to restore their victims to full humanity as fellow citizens.⁸⁰

Hence, this article recommends setting up local reconciliation commissions to begin this process in America. In the case of the United States, wrongs refer to those of the politicians who perpetuate polarization and of Far-Right extremists. Politicians' wrongs range from propping up the bank industry in 2008-2009 instead of supporting lower-income individuals, outsourcing and automating traditionally working-class white jobs, not working to solve the opioid crisis or worsening political unresponsiveness. These commissions will likely focus on the individual politicians' roles in the grievances brought up by Far-Right extremist participants. Far-Right extremist wrongs include participating in the January 6th attacks, murders, lynching, hate speech, perpetuating structural systems of oppression for queer people, Jews, people of color, and more. These commissions cannot overcome all wrongs, as these programs exist on a scale larger than just a few individuals, but reconciliation can open the space for dialogue and past political unresponsiveness and violence to begin making change. Reconciliation can help to expose the different sides of each story and possibly vow nonrecurrence or nonjudicial retribution across all parties, serving as well as a measure of accountability and the foundation for rule of law.⁸¹ Hence, reconciliation can also expose the stories beyond the binary of just Far-Right extremists as perpetrators and people of color as victims, but it also needs to recognize there are legitimate Far-Right grievances that deserve societal and political attention and that politicians have also been perpetrators.

⁸⁰ Olufemi Taiwo, "The Best Way to Respond to Our History of Racism? A Truth and Reconciliation Commission." *The Washington Post*, June 30, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/06/30/best-way-respond-our-history-racism-truth-reconciliation-commission/>.

⁸¹ Robert M. Sapolsky, *Behave: The biology of humans at our best and worst* (New York: Penguin, 2017): 639.

However, reconciliation is admittedly hard because of the lack of political will, incentives, and buy-in from politicians at the national level. This section will analyze both how to empower moderate voices within radicalized communities (building ‘minority influence’) and trust, and how to engage in reconciliation. Although there are no comprehensive solutions, there are principles that can make political reintegration and reconciliation between Far-Right extremists, moderate communities, including victims of extremism, and politicians who have perpetrated Far-Right grievances more likely.⁸²

a) Media Strategy to Create Political Reintegration and Political Will

To implement political reintegration and reconciliation, the crucial ingredients necessary are political will and funding to ensure that the project will be carried to fruition, which can best be acquired through a media strategy. First, building political will requires establishing a ripe moment for action where parties perceive themselves to be in a mutually hurting stalemate, which forces them to engage the resources to adopt a trauma and reconciliation-informed approach to Far-Right extremism.⁸³ A media strategy can portray the January 6th attack (wherein hundreds of Far-Right extremists who supported Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol to prevent the transfer of power to President Biden through democratic means) and the results of the January 6th commission as a ripe moment where both Democrats and Republicans are hurting, and the country is turning to violence and other non-democratic means, including against the government, to spark inspiration for this project.⁸⁴ Strong political leadership which goes beyond the political polarization and gridlock is necessary to defeat this societal emergency. The media

⁸² Ezra Klein, *Why We're Polarized* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2020) 250.

⁸³ Valerie Barbara Rosoux, "National identity in France and Germany: From mutual exclusion to negotiation," *International Negotiation* 6, no. 2 (2001): 189.

⁸⁴ Participants in the January 6th attack would be considered under the category of Far-Right extremists because they are resorting to non-democratic means to deal with their grievances.

strategy could be run by PN which already runs a counter-narrative social media campaign called *Ctrl+Alt+Del-Hate* to recognize extremist grievances and that everyone has a role to play in tackling hate (*Del*).⁸⁵ PN can posts throughout traditional media, social media, as well as media utilized most by extremists such as Telegram to bring awareness to the need for reconciliation to the general population as well as possible Far-Right extremist and political participants.

To build political buy-in and funding, the media strategy should also adopt Moscovici's theory of minority influence. The minority influence technique relies on consistent and confident messaging, opportunities to question superficial thinking in discussions, featuring supporters that match our target audience, and celebrating smaller wins.⁸⁶ Minority influence theory has influenced the success of many global movements, such as the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. This theory can help to get mainstream conservatives- the larger identity community where the Far-Right is situated, to recognize and respond to Far-Right extremism as a threat to society as a whole and dedicate political and economic resources to the cause.⁸⁷ To implement the first principle of consistency, the media strategy should deliver a clear and consistent messaged focused most specifically on how extremism derives from a lack of belonging and purpose associated with trauma as well as feelings of economic and social abandonment to gain support for trauma and reconciliation-informed care rather than a sole imprisonment strategy.⁸⁸

As mentioned above, the second principle of Moscovici's theory is the creation of opportunities to question superficial thinking, and the third principle involves having speakers and supporters from target groups demonstrate the desirability of engagement. In the case of the

⁸⁵ "Ctrl+Alt+Del-Hate," Light Upon Light, Light Upon Light, accessed November 1, 2021, <https://www.lightuponlight.online/ctrl-alt-del-hate>.

⁸⁶ "Minority Influence: Four Things Required for Change," Practical Psychology, April 3, 2021, YouTube Video, 7:53, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfUk2gQYIY>.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

United States, PN would occasionally bring on conservative politicians as well as former extremists to discuss the benefits of restorative justice dialogues targeting other local and national politicians, the general public, and Far-Right extremists.⁸⁹ Especially given the polarization of American society with many believing Far-Right (albeit not extremist) values, calling for the healing of the Far-Right will no doubt be very divisive, many will need to engage in discussions. These discussions could take the form of local panels in the areas most targeted by Far-Right extremist plots where reconciliation commissions will later take place. 146 Congressional representatives already support House Concurrent Resolution 19, which urges the establishment of a United States Commission on Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation as well as the 7 Democrats and 2 Republicans on the January 6th commission. These members could be potential speakers or repost messages of the media strategy.⁹⁰ Although the House Concurrent Resolution 19 suggests a racial healing Truth and Reconciliation Commission which goes beyond the focus on Far-Right extremists proposed in this article, representatives would likely be a willing audience to support healing Far-Right extremism as well. These Congressional representatives as well as local representatives from within the conservative community and other moderate supportive voices could also hold community roundtables for their constituencies to explore the type of issues that are important on more local or regional levels, and experts on trauma-informed care and reconciliation could attend as well to lend their expertise.

In addition, the social media posts could argue that since extremism is caused by a failure of governance to represent all citizens, it is necessary that Far-Right extremists find representative channels to enter politics beyond extremist groups. Additionally, PN could post

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Souli.

about the need to avoid blaming all Far-Right extremists rather than the actions of a few, punishing extremist language, or using egregious aggression against Far-Right members because it fuels resentment by treating them all as the same.⁹¹ Politicians who support this program could also model this behavior by not blaming whole groups in their own political speech or advocating for imprisonment instead of reconciliation as well. Instead, they could stress the importance of engaging Far-Right challengers in the political arena and listening to grievances to prevent the escalation of the feeling of exclusion. PN can also make posts offering additional information about the importance of psychosocial care and economic, social, and political reintegration without further stigmatizing conservatives of the Far-Right extremist community. This would help people see alternatives to extremist groups within mainstream society who share significant beliefs and can offer an alternative political community. Additionally, local community groups and grassroots organizations advocating with their existing members for the need for reconciliation to tackle extremism could help increase the legitimacy of these types of processes. Although a potential concern could be that portraying Far-Right extremism as a trauma response may seem to dismiss political motivations for non-democratic actions, PN can also host Facebook Lives or other question and answer sessions about how this larger strategy recognizes political grievances and works to solve them. A trauma-focused lens will also be more likely to appeal to skeptical conservatives who are worried that any reconciliation initiative will characterize them as criminals or terrorists.

The fourth and final principle of accepting small wins can be accomplished by starting with small local forums educating on a trauma and reconciliation-informed approach as wins, which may help this approach gain traction within skeptical communities.⁹² There have been

⁹¹ Hamid.

⁹² Ibid.

notable small wins through the numerous local Truth and Reconciliation Commissions such as the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Oakland Restorative Justice for Youth (RJOY), and the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission.⁹³ For example, through restorative justice programming, RJOY eliminated violence and expulsions and reduced suspension rates by 87% in West Oakland Middle School, and expanded into three other school sites.⁹⁴ The Maryland Truth and Reconciliation Commission has also successfully brought together descendants of slaves and descendants of slaveowners to collect oral histories and confront Maryland's 42 lynchings of Black people by Far-Right extremists since 2020, although the long-term impact between communities has not yet been studied.⁹⁵ A media strategy could promote the work of these different organizations and recognize their successes, bringing together the perpetrators and victims of Far-Right extremism to promote additional local commissions as well as a larger-scale nationwide commission.

Recommendations for building political will and trust include:

- **Generate community buy-in and reduce social stigma by engaging community leaders, public dialogue institutions, and media outlets to socialize the need for rehabilitation and reintegration programs to minimize risks.** PN, with guest appearances and reposting from the 146 Congressional representatives who support House Concurrent Resolution 19 and the 9 Congressional representatives on the January 6th committee, could run a media strategy through email and social media to spread the key tenets of a trauma-

⁹³ Souli.

⁹⁴ Although this is not an example of restorative justice between Far-Right extremists, it shows how restorative justice has proven results in the United States as well. Source: "Our History," RJOY, RJOY, accessed August 1, 2022, <https://rjoyoakland.org/about-us/>.

⁹⁵ Ovetta Wiggins, "Landmark Commission Begins Tackling 'Uncomfortable Truth' of Racially Motivated Lynchings In Maryland," Washington Post, September 18, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/md-politics/maryland-lynching-report/2020/09/18/ba8655e8-f8fa-11ea-a275-1a2c2d36e1f1_story.html.

informed approach consistently and clearly. The media strategy can also function to seek out additional social and economic partners as well, to widen the whole-of-society network.

b) Reconciliation (The Tree Model)

Reconciliation commissions will include moderate, democracy-respecting citizens, politicians, and Far-Right extremists. Because of the deep societal divisions between Far-Right extremists, politicians, and moderate, democracy-respecting citizens, societal healing is also necessary beyond purely individual healing. The moderate, democracy-respecting citizens should be chosen based on a broad representation of society, including key victims of Far-Right extremists. Additionally, further Truth and Reconciliation commissions outside of the scope of this paper should likely occur to specifically address racism and the history of slavery in the United States while this article focuses on reconciliation to heal non-democratic and democratic communities mentioned above. There are several limitations to reconciliation programs, such as there are no clear qualifications for what constitutes a successful dialogue, it can be difficult to attract long-term donors, and working at the grassroots level is not and cannot be a substitute for working at the national decision-making level.⁹⁶

That said, involving Far-Right extremists as well as policymakers in reconciliation processes based on psychoanalyst Vamik Volkan's "Tree Model" can help build accountability, create local ownership, deal with the harm created from radicalization, and start a new process of positive identity formation rather than imprison extremists without challenging the root causes of their extremism.⁹⁷ The Tree Model suggests conducting workshops of four-day meetings three

⁹⁶ Margaret LaPre, "Scaling Up Community-Level Dialogue," *Capstone Paper, INAF 631-02: Diplomacy & the Politics of Resentment*, April 3, 2022.

⁹⁷ "Trainings 1 and 2," 53.

times per year over periods of at least two to three years with the same (30-40) participants each time in a neutral site as short-term reconciliation projects often lack a long-lasting impact such as the transformation of community relations.⁹⁸ The participants should be individuals influential within their respective circles and willing to participate in an unofficial capacity.⁹⁹ The Tree Model builds an ecosystem of actors by developing an interdisciplinary facilitator team of neutral psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, former diplomats, historians, and other social and behavioral scientists that can investigate both conscious and unconscious factors resulting in conflict.¹⁰⁰ This model is also based on the same foundation that group identity issues are involved in every aspect of psychological, political, economic, and social, etc. relationships between large groups, so responses must consider all these elements and all types of practitioners must be involved.¹⁰¹

The United States can draw from the successful example of the Tree Model implemented in Estonia. Volkan and the Center for the Study of Mind and Human Interaction (CSHMI) implemented the Tree Model between ethnic Estonian nationals and Russian Estonians from 1999-2001 to reduce ethnic tensions. During this period, most of the Estonian nationals could not openly express their angry feelings towards the Russians, still feeling targeted by ethnic Russians as if they were a symbol of the Soviet regime.¹⁰² The CSHMI then proceeded to collect data of Estonian nationals and Russian Estonians through open-ended psychological interviews, formulating a psychopolitical diagnosis, compiling a list of all the conscious and unconscious tensions for each group, and breaking down the tensions through practical projects. Through this

⁹⁸ Vamik Volkan, "The Tree Model: A Comprehensive Psychopolitical Approach to Unofficial Diplomacy and The Reduction of Ethnic Tension," *Mind and Human Interaction* 10 (1999): 22.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 24.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 13.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 13.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 67.

process, and especially implementing grassroots community-building models between ethnic Estonians and Russians, Estonians, Russians, and Russian-speakers living in Estonia were able to speak with each other freely, and Estonian Russians turned more towards the Estonian government than the Russian government.¹⁰³ These projects also demonstrated sustainability by continuing after CSHMI's involvement ended.¹⁰⁴

To conduct the Tree Model with American Far-Right extremists, facilitators will have to follow the several steps listed above in the Estonian case with the partners mentioned subsequently. In the case of Far-Right extremism in the United States, PN alongside the International Dialogue Initiative (IDI) and the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) should provide examples of the most credible, politically independent actors to engage in an interdisciplinary manner with reconciliation. Furthermore, ICTJ is the leading world actor in transitional justice, having already supported local reconciliation efforts in the United States, as well as in 60 cases abroad. PN, IDI and Parents for Peace would be useful as they already engage individuals who work in countering violent extremism and psychology, including previously engaged extremists and survivors of extremism. Therefore, these actors already have credibility, neutrality, and the intersectional background to apply as facilitators to the Tree Model.

First, Parents for Peace, IDI, and a selected group of neutral historians should study the history of both Far-Right extremism through opt-in open-ended psychological interviews with Far-Right extremists, politicians, moderate communities, and victims of extremism, especially in conflict-ridden locations, such as places where extremism is higher. For example, the Southern Poverty Law Center designated Montana, Tennessee, Nebraska, Arkansas, New Hampshire, Alabama, Virginia, South Carolina, Idaho, and Nevada as the states with the most Far-Right

¹⁰³ Ibid, 67- 68.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 67.

extremist groups per capita.¹⁰⁵ After the collection and review of assessment data, Parents for Peace and IDI should formulate an overall psychopolitical diagnosis and compile a list of all the conscious and unspoken tensions for each group.¹⁰⁶ Finally, PN and ICTJ should develop practical projects and sustainable institutions for beyond the program length to continue the reconciliation progress which potentially can promote economic and social reintegration for Far-Right extremists.¹⁰⁷ These projects can also include reparations to atone for past injuries, such as rebuilding locations destroyed by extremism, or these projects can revolve around creating a new shared American identity.

Adapting the Tree Model to the United States, with reconciliation taking place between Far-Right extremists, moderate communities, and politicians that incite violence and polarization on all sides will be admittedly very difficult due to the intergenerational violence between groups. Stanford neurologist Robert Sapolsky provides numerous mechanisms to lessen the hostility of group conversations about topics like intergenerational group violence. His ideas suggest that when establishing a commission for reconciliation, facilitators should choose an equal number of people per group so that all experience equal treatment, work towards the shared goal of truth-telling or sharing about their experiences to create a more cohesive American national community, and select locations for the reconciliation commission(s) should be in a place where there has not been significant violent history between groups.¹⁰⁸

Recommendations for Reconciliation:

¹⁰⁵ Christian Spencer, "The 10 US States With the Most Hate Groups," The Hill, October 26, 2021, <https://thehill.com/changing-america/respect/578513-the-10-us-states-with-the-most-hate-groups>.

¹⁰⁶ Volkan, "The Tree Model," 20.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 14.

¹⁰⁸ Sapolsky, 627.

- **Conduct local and regional community reconciliation forums to explore the potential for community acceptance of extremists and families.** When implementing the initial investigations of both the conscious and unconscious factors resulting in conflict, PN, IDI, and Parents for Peace should also assess the opinions on reconciliation of extremists on the local and national level, likely through polls or semi-structured interviews.
- **Apply the Tree Model of reconciliation to the U.S. context.** Work with PN, IDI, and Parents for Peace to create an interdisciplinary facilitating team of neutral psychologists, psychiatrists, former diplomats, historians, and other social scientists that can investigate both conscious and unconscious factors resulting in conflict. These experts should be allocated based on their varying credibilities to conduct open-ended psychological interviews with equal numbers of Far-Right extremists, moderate citizens consisting of key victim communities, and extreme politicians. Then have the equal members of communities in yearly workshops in a neutral setting establish the best means for forgiveness and accountability such as reparations. These workshops can also serve as opportunities for Far-Right extremists to perform community service projects and internships to repent for what they have done in the past and help rebuild the community. Admittedly, there is an enormous amount of Far-Right extremism that has happened across U.S. history, so choosing the best people to represent the whole weight of history will be daunting. Therefore, celebrating small wins and local sessions, as mentioned in the political will session, can help first deal with more local wrongs. The Tree Model can also be an important tool for recognizing the fraught histories

of these groups and work towards more constructive national and group identity formation.

i) Identity Formation

A significant part of sustainable reconciliation is also transforming identities engaging in identity-based conflict in a durable and gradual manner.¹⁰⁹ Identity transformation is especially pivotal among extremists who begin to see their group identity as greater than themselves, making it difficult to reconcile with society. According to international relations professor Valerie-Barbara Rosoux, identities (such as those of former extremists) should evolve to no longer be based on hatred towards an out-group and view the out-group as individuals.¹¹⁰ To establish a new identity, Rosoux suggests a “work of memory” or “a process of combining conflicting positions into a common position, under a decision rule of unanimity.” A work of memory enables all parties to accept comprehensive views of the past without exaggeration or underestimation.¹¹¹ For example, France and Germany, the inspiration behind the idea of a work of memory, met through informal encounters among representatives of the various parties, discussed interpretation of events, and merged interpretations of the past. France and Germany successfully transformed their national identities from mutual enmity and difference to create a common representation of the past based on similar collective sufferings.¹¹²

The steps of identity transformation exemplified by the French-German example also coincide well with the Tree Model perspective listed above. The workshops of the Tree Model approach can also occur as meetings with the facilitator team, as well as the 1619 project, where

¹⁰⁹ Rosoux, 175.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 175.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 187.

¹¹² Ibid, 181, 190-193, 195.

each party can be called on to describe their interpretation of events of the past.¹¹³ The 1619 project, led by historians and journalists such as Nikole Hannah-Jones, rewrites the American understanding of history through its focus on the legacy of slavery.¹¹⁴ As the workshops persist, the 1619 project can aim to help Far-Right extremists, moderate democracy respecting citizens, and other U.S. groups who have been victims of identity-based conflict to go beyond the opposing interpretations of events and their descriptions. Transforming the identities of the Far-Right and other identity groups, such as politicians, requires interaction between all parties, common interests, and an objective of a mutually acceptable solution to reconcile their competing versions of the past to decrease violence and identity divisions.¹¹⁵ They can then work towards recognizing the plurality of views in the past, also encouraging listening and emphasizing with the others' experience.¹¹⁶ At the end of the two to three years of workshops, the parties will hopefully agree upon a common language and representation of American history, including elements from all groups about how extremism arose.¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, the effectiveness of this new memory narrative may vary based on whether Americans, especially Far-Right Americans, can recognize themselves in the official narration of the past.¹¹⁸

Incorporating a sacred values lens, in a recent experiment by Dr. Michael Pasek at the New School and Dr. Samantha Moore-Berg at the University of Pennsylvania, Americans of all different political groups and races agree upon norms, such as fraud-free elections, equal rights, abuse of power by government officials, and protections from political interference in law

¹¹³ Ibid, 191.

¹¹⁴ "1619 books," 1619 Books, 1619 Books, accessed April 20, 2022, <https://1619books.com/>.

¹¹⁵ Rosoux, 188.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 191.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 193.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 196.

enforcement investigation.¹¹⁹ These kinds of sacred values should hold the core of any new identity transformation. By consolidating identity around these shared values, Far-Right Americans may be able to feel represented in the political process which has been reframed around identity issues without recognizing Far-Right grievances in either party. A shared sacred values lens that includes Far-Right Americans can help create an alternative political community for Far-Right extremists.

Recommendation for Identity Formation:

- **Incorporate a lens about the history of identity formation within the Tree Model.** The 1619 project and IDI can ensure individuals within the workshops share their competing versions of American history, so the stories of all groups are told and healing can begin. With all stories on the table, all the groups can collaborate to decide what a new American history and identity that encompasses all past injustices would look like.
- **Integrate a shared sacred value lens to create a new American identity.** In workshops, continue to explore what other shared sacred values exist between communities and adapt these into the media strategy to support new American national identity formation.

5. Conclusion

Preventing the deepening of Far-Right extremism in the United States requires both the healing of individual Far-Right extremists and the restructuring of American society, which will

¹¹⁹ “Healing U.S. Democracy Starts with Understanding Our Values, Norms, and Narratives,” Alliance for Peacebuilding, May 10, 2021, <https://afpeacebuilding.medium.com/healing-u-s-democracy-starts-with-understanding-our-values-norms-and-narratives-8bdcfb631da2>.

deter the type of societal divisions that reignite identity-based conflict. To heal Far-Right extremists on an individual level on a global scale as well, countries must work to embed extremists in a community receiving psychosocial support as well as opportunities for social and economic reintegration. Because trauma is the root of much extremism, criminalizing or excluding extremists, or responding with retributive justice will merely aggravate their grievances; instead, trauma-informed reconciliation processes can help to heal the divisions without imprisonment. This approach would make Far-Right extremists less likely to revert to non-democratic means or re-engage in extremist groups.

However, Far-Right extremists do not exist in a vacuum, so recognizing how Far-Right extremists have historically created injustices against other groups such as people of African descent, other people of color, Muslims, Jewish people, and LGBTQ+ people, among others, will be essential for future projects moving forward. By discussing the histories of structural, cultural, and direct violence which have happened across groups worldwide using the Tree Model of reconciliation and Moscovici's theory of minority influence, a New American identity can hopefully be constructed, in which Far-Right extremists along with other marginalized groups can feel represented.