

Political Science Magazine | *Politologisch Magazine*

DEBAT

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VOLUME
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Elections, SPIL activities, and Dutch holidays

May 1st

International Labour Day

May 26

Ascension Day

June 19

Colombian Presidential elections

June 26

Liechtenstein referendum

July 30

Islamic New Year

August 9

Kenyan Presidential elections

August 12

International Youth Day

September 5

Start of the academic year

September 25

Italian political elections

De facto and failed states

Every political scientist knows that the Montevideo Convention establishes what a state is. States have a specific territory, a fixed population, a government, and the ability to interact with other states. Since 1933 these criteria have been a benchmark to discuss issues like statehood, independence, and legitimacy. But what about political actors with blurry borders? What about states so unstable that they are left with a skeleton of a government?

We want to challenge the traditional idea of state, so we are proud to announce this edition's theme: de facto and failed states.

DEBAT strives to represent each writer's style and curiosity. This is why our magazine has a wide range of articles catering to all interests. In this edition we will write about micronations, the instability of Syria and Somalia, and insights on Russia's expansionist history. As always, we hope to show you today's world through the eyes of a political science student.

Martina Scloverano and Ada Haliloğlu
DEBAT's editors-in-chief

De facto en mislukte staten

Elke politicoloog weet dat de Conventie van Montevideo bepaalt wat een staat is. Staten hebben een specifiek grondgebied, een vaste bevolking, een regering en de mogelijkheid om met andere staten te communiceren. Sinds 1933 zijn deze criteria een maatstaf om zaken als soevereiniteit, onafhankelijkheid en legitimiteit te bespreken. Maar hoe zit het met politieke actoren met vage grenzen? Hoe zit het met staten die zo instabiel zijn dat ze een skelet van een regering overhouden? We willen het traditionele idee van staat uitdagen, dus we zijn trots om het thema van deze editie aan te kondigen: de facto en mislukte staten.

DEBAT streeft ernaar om de stijl en nieuwsgierigheid van elke schrijver te vertegenwoordigen. Daarom heeft ons tijdschrift een breed scala aan artikelen voor alle interesses. In deze editie gaan we schrijven over micronaties, de instabiliteit van Syrië en Somalië en inzichten in de expansionistische geschiedenis van Rusland.

Zoals altijd hopen we je de wereld van vandaag te laten zien door de ogen van een student politicologie.

Martina Scloverano and Ada Haliloğlu
Hoofdredacteuren DEBAT



COLOPHON | COLOFON

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RETROSPECT

In this column, we cover the most impactful news stories in the past months.

by **Martina Sclaverano**

US ABOLISHED THE RIGHT TO ABORTION

In 1973, the historic court decision *Roe v. Wade* established that the United States' constitution prescribes the right to abortion. Up until this year, this ruling certainly sparked a hot debate across supporters and opposers of abortion, and was used as a benchmark for federal and state laws concerning abortion. *Roe v. Wade* was overruled on June 24th, when the Supreme Court concluded that abortion is not a right inherent to American history and that is not part of the Constitution. As a result, 14 states introduced criminal penalties for having and providing abortions.

THE AFRICAN UNION ENDS ITS MISSION IN SOMALIA

Due to the instability and violence in Somalia, the African Union created in 2007 the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). This project aimed at supporting the Somali government in the fight against Al-Shabaab's terrorism. AMISOM provided troops and especially training to strengthen the Somali national defence sector. This April the African Union initiated the following step of the mission, turning AMISOM into a Transition Mission. This will allow Somalia to reach enough institutional stability before African Union troops leave the country. These efforts are expected to last until December 2024, when the country will resume the control of its security sector.

NATO COUNTRIES MEET TO DISCUSS RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

The heads of state and government of NATO member states held a summit in Madrid. With a historically busy agenda, one of the summit's main points was the response that NATO should adopt regarding Russia's invasion of Ukraine starting in February. World leaders agreed on the blueprint for the next 10 years, reiterating the effort to maintain peace in the Euro-Atlantic area. They also discussed pressing topics like Finland and Sweden's membership applications.

FORMER JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER SHINZO ABE IS ASSASSINATED

Shinzo Abe, Japan's former Prime Minister and member of the House of the Representatives, was assassinated on July 8th. He was taking part in his party's political campaign in Nara City and delivering a speech when he was shot from the back. The perpetrator of the attack was caught by security guards almost instantly as he tried to flee, and it was discovered that the weapon used was a homemade gun. A few hours after the attack Abe died in the hospital, triggering the crisis management protocols throughout Japan to protect other possible targets and honour the late Prime Minister.

ISRAEL AND TURKEY RETURN TO PEACEFUL RELATIONS

The diplomatic relations between Israel and Turkey have a turbulent

history. The escalation of the conflict between Israel and Palestine further worsened the ties with Turkey, as Erdogan publicly attacked Israel's conduct. As Turkey is a Muslim-majority country, Erdogan made strong statements about the treatment of fellow Muslims in Palestine. However, in 2022 the two Middle Eastern powers showed a willingness to restore their diplomatic relations, starting with the Israeli president Herzog visiting Turkey. In August 2022 Israel and Turkey formally returned to peaceful relations.

MONKEYPOX BECOMES AN INTERNATIONAL CONCERN

After the 2020 outbreak of COVID-19, a new disease seems to be spreading fast throughout the world. Monkeypox is transmitted through skin-to-skin contact and first raised concerns in May, when it was identified in the United Kingdom. By July, the World Health Organisation declared monkeypox a "public health emergency of international concern", as cases seem to increase in several countries. Contrarily to COVID-19, the vaccine against monkeypox was quickly available and many states have already started the vaccination process. As cautionary measures, countries like the United States are vaccinating citizens with lower doses to buy time and be able to cover as much population as possible with the existing doses.

WHAT MAKES A STATE?

The phenomenon of micronations

by *Johanna Welk*

Micronations are small entities that are self-declared sovereign states. Their claim to sovereignty does not rest on any legal basis. Whether they are virtual or physical there are about 135 micronations in the world with Australia housing a large amount of them. Among the most well-known micronations are the Principality of Sealand, the Empire of Atlantium, and the Principality of Hutt River.

There are various reasons for the existence of micronations. Many were founded due to disputes with national or local governments or to try evading laws. Others were established to question the concept of statehood like the Empire of Atlantium. The micronation Ladonia was created to protect sculptures that had been created by the artist Lars Vilks and were threatened to be removed.

Another notable example is the Empire of Atlantium. Founded in Sydney by George Cruickshank who drew a line in his backyard with his friends and declared it an independent nation in 1981. Emperor George II., as Cruickshank is called, founded the micronation to challenge the concept of the state. In addition to his backyard, he bought a property in Sydney to house the administrative capital. George II. has established diplomatic relationships with other micronations and used other measures to assert sovereignty. Nevertheless, he has publicly called the Empire of Atlantium a

“sustained performance art project“. Micronations try to assert their sovereignty in many ways. They issue passports, print stamps, create their own anthems and even flags. Others try to establish diplomatic relations with sovereign states. Micronations argue for their sovereignty based on the Montevideo Convention, which says that states need a government, a permanent population, defined territory, and the capacity to enter into diplomatic relations. Several micronations claim to fulfil these criteria.

“Still no micronation has ever been recognised as a state. The micronation that has come closest to recognition is the Principality of Sealand.“

Sealand is amongst the most notable micronations. It is housed on a former navy platform off of the coast of England. Sealand is amongst the smallest micronations with an area of only 4,000 m². In 1965 Paddy Roy Bates founded an illegal radio station on another platform on the sea. Fearing to be banned he moved to a new platform with his family and declared the Principality of Sealand in 1967. During the seventies around fifty peo-

ple inhabited the principality. Paddy Roy Bates' son Prince Michael later took over as the leader of Sealand. Currently, the only permanent residents are staff keeping the platform running. However, Sealand officially has issued around 500 passports.

The Principality of Sealand claims to have come close to sovereignty after a group of German and Dutch citizens tried to raid the platform in 1978. The inhabitants could stop the raid and took the invaders as hostages. This led to the sending of German diplomats to negotiate. Sealand claims to have been recognised as a de-facto state through this interaction.

While some micronations have lasted for a long time, there are also many failed attempts. The Principality of Hutt River being a prominent one. Founded by Leonard Casley in 1970 due to a dispute with the Australian government over wheat quotas. The micronation has attracted many tourists over the year. In 2017 the founder's son Prince Graeme took over as the ruler. In 2020 the principality had to be sold to finance a government tax bill of US \$ 2.2 million. While micronations might not achieve sovereignty, they prominently keep emerging whether as a form of protest or escapism.

TAIWAN

Issue of sovereignty and membership in INTERPOL

by *Lyuba Nicheva*

INTERPOL is an intergovernmental organization that connects police around the world. The number of members that are part of INTERPOL is 195. Palestine is a member even though not officially recognized by the UN. However, Taiwan, also not part of the UN, is not a member of the organization. This distinction is important because the fight against crime worldwide should include each and every police department to ensure the biggest results.

According to the People's Republic of China statement, “Taiwan as a province of China is completely not qualified and has no right to participate in it“. To this date, only 14 states continue to recognize Taiwan as a country. However, that wasn't the case until 1971. One of the problems is that China pressured the world into de-recognizing Taiwan. Back in 1945, Taiwan was known as the Republic of China and had membership in the UN. The issue of the so-called China question wasn't 'resolved' until 1971. At that point, the UN recognized solely the People's Republic of China.

Today, however, Taiwan is a country with a hi-tech crime investigation unit and professional cybercrime investigators and could therefore be a helpful ally in locating fugitives around the world. It also fulfills the criteria for a country to be considered a sovereign state, such as having permanent citizenship, defined territory,

government, and the capacity to enter into relations with other sovereign states. Therefore, China's push-back is putting a halt to the important work of the international organization by opposing Taiwan's membership due to their status as a “quasi-state“.

Moreover, the absence of Taiwan in the international organization makes it more vulnerable to the newly obtained position of Hu Binchen in 2021. Beforehand he was in the role of deputy general in China's Ministry of Public Security. Now he is one of the two new delegates from Asia to INTERPOL. His role entails supervision of the execution of decisions made by the General Assembly and the work of the General Secretariat. The issue with his election was the highly abused action of handing Red Notices. A Red Notice is “a request to law enforcement worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition, surrender, or similar legal action“.

However, it is not to be confused with an arrest warrant. The difference comes from the fact that the notice merely notifies the other members of the organization of a certain person that has a warrant issued in their name from another member. So the newly obtained position of China gives the police departments and essentially the government a free pass to continue their alleged abuse of the system of giving out

Red Notices. The abuse comes from the fact that the dissidents are usually politically targeted. Moreover, it puts critics of the Chinese regime at greater risk. With no overlooking authority working with the international organization in Taiwan, China can proceed as it finds necessary to search for dissidents in Taiwan.

Ideally, if INTERPOL wanted to have a better grip on any mission, they would consider including Taiwan as a member despite China's opinion. The issue of Taiwan's independence has long been in the talks. Just recently, President Biden addressed the tension between China and Taiwan. Even though the US has recognized the People's Republic of China as the legitimate leader of the country since 1979 under the so-called “One China” policy, the US has never accepted the People's Republic of China's claim over the land where Taiwan is. The US continues to stay close with Taiwan through a de-facto embassy in Taipei.

It is not an embassy because there are no official diplomatic relations between the two countries, but only unofficial relations. The strong relationship between the two countries could serve as an example to other states so that, in the long run, Taiwan could be part of the international fight against crime. Overall, the fight towards justice can only succeed with the inclusion of all people and close work with all police units in the world.

PEACEKEEPING IN SOMALIA

A fresh start to one of the world's most unstable countries?

by *Philip Hilén*

Since its independence from the United Kingdom in 1960, Somalia has been rife with civil and political instability. It has served as a prime example of failed statehood. However in recent years, progress has been made to stabilize the East African country. After the 2006 US-backed Ethiopian intervention, most of the insurgent groups had lost most of their territory allowing for more permanent political institutions to be established starting in 2012.

As part of the intervention, the African Union (AU), with approval from the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), established a peace-keeping mission in 2007 in order to combat "systemic and institutional dysfunction and security collapses in Somalia" according to its mandate.

In the 15 years since its establishment, 80% of Al-Shabaab's territory, the largest insurgent group in Somalia, has been reclaimed by the government. Furthermore, a constitution was implemented in 2012 allowing for a permanent government to be declared. This has also allowed for the slow removal of warlordism based on clan affiliation.

After a decade under the management of a transitional government and the year-long delay of an election, a parliament was sworn in on April 16 bringing in a new era for Somalia.

These factors have led to the African Union deciding to end the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) at the end of March this year and replace it with the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). In addition, the UNSC voted unanimously to support the mission, instructing it to combat Al-Shabaab (who has seen a resurgence in activities), al-Qaeda and ISIS-affiliated groups with the eventual goal of handing over security responsibilities to the Somali government according to Aljazeera.

The new ATMIS will consist of up to 19,262 uniformed personnel from all over Africa who are to remain until December 31 of this year where the number will be decreased down to 2,000 and eventually zero personnel by the end of 2024. The resolution has also authorized these troops to be used for the protection of the political process. These recent developments underscore a critical moment in the war against terrorism. The US has helped tremendously in the past decade to build up Somalia so it may continue the fight against al-Shabaab. However, this also underlines the fatigue that surrounds funding efforts from the US and EU who are increasingly in favor of pulling out of the country which is expected to occur at the end of 2024.

Since 2007, the Western partners of Somalia pledged to fund the missions of the African Union including

an initial \$40 million from the US and €15 million from the EU in addition to training Somali troops. Furthermore, President Biden is reversing the Trump administration's troop withdrawal and is sending hundreds of operatives to help maintain stability while also aiming to target a dozen suspected leaders of Al-Shabaab. Somalia has fought a long and hard road in order to get to this position though now it seems to be on the right course to moving past its days as a "failed state."

However, concerns persist. The electoral crisis that plagued the country in 2020 and the attempt by parliament to extend the mandate of President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed threatened to throw the country back into instability. Furthermore, the legitimacy of the election has been questioned with regular fallout between the president and Prime Minister Mohamed Roble. Somalia's security forces are also divided between local, regional and foreign trained troops with a lack of unity in strategy and tactics. The government will have trouble reforming the sector in under three years.

While the situation is still dangerous in the East African country, there does seem genuine hope on the part of fatigued donors, the AU and Somalia for a strengthening of socio-political institutions and legitimacy.

THE BATTLE FOR KOSOVO AND THE RELIGION OF NATIONALISM

by *Aleksandar Kaslyovski*

In the past, humanity worshipped families of gods. Largely based on existing familial structures of people, the gods were useful tools for an uneducated populace to rationalize the world around them. There was a god for everything: thunder, sea, death itself and even for less grand subjects such as wine. The peasantry told stories of the exploits of the Gods, their great powers and why these divine beings deserved their worship. Good things and bad things, bountiful harvest, and devastating drought, were all subject to the whims of the Gods.

As society progressed, the many gods became one God, who became more concerned with the way people were spending their time. Gone were the days of wine gods. In many places even monotheism started to lose its grip. But when people stopped believing in God, they started to believe in themselves. Nationalism shares many elements with religions of all eras. It tries to explain why we, the nation, are where we are and how we should behave. It is extremely flexible as it can coexist with religion, capitalism and even communism which it was once thought to be replaced by. But nationalism is not beholden to facts, so what happens when the myths of a nation's past do not match its present?

Every year, on 28th of June, the Republic of Serbia celebrates a holiday known as Vidovdan. It is a Christian holiday meant to celebrate Saint

Vitus, but to the people of Serbia it bears special significance. That is because on this day, all the way back in 1389, the Battle of Kosovo took place. This conflict was between the Ottoman empire and what remained of the medieval Serbian state. The clash took place on the Kosovo field and ended with both sides taking heavy losses, and both the Serbian Prince Lazar and the Ottoman Sultan Murad lost their lives.

In the decades after the battle, the remainder of the Serbian kingdoms as well as most of the Balkans would be conquered after the Ottomans regroup. But the battle would become one of the most important events in the Serbian national consciousness. Oral tradition would keep the battle alive in the minds of Serbs living under the Ottoman and Austrian empires for centuries. Tales of the Saint-King Lazar, who was visited on the eve of the battle by the Holy Prophet Elijah. Of Miloš Obilić, a Serbian noble thought to have assassinated the Ottoman Sultan to prove himself to Lazar. Or of Vuk Branković, a Judas-like figure who is thought to have betrayed the Serbian forces. Because of the significance of the battle, many churches were built in Kosovo, leading it to be known as "Serbian Jerusalem".

These stories do not match reality, Murad's assassin is unknown and there is no evidence that Branković betrayed Serbia, but the myth lives

on. Many other important events coincide with Vidovdan, such as the approval of the first Yugoslavian constitution and the assassination of Franz Ferdinand adding on to the weight of this day. Kosovo's demographics have also shifted, with the region having a significant Albanian majority since the times of the Ottoman empire.

Slobodan Milošević would later use to myth of Kosovo to present himself as the protector of Serbs in Kosovo, securing his rise to power and eventually plunging Yugoslavia into a civil war. Ever since 2008, Serbia has refused to budge about Kosovo.

"And this is the weakness of nationalism. Any policy that contradicts the myths of a nation, no matter if that policy is in the self-interest of the people or if the myths are based on untruths, is faced with backlash."

Saying that Kosovo is the cradle of Serbia, is a disrespect to the parts of Serbia that have contributed the most to its continued existence.

THE END OF SYRIA

The Syrian Civil War has been in an endgame for years. When will it actually end?

by *Elliot Underhill*

Bashar Al-Assad has triumphed. It took a decade of some of the bloodiest fighting seen in recent history, the destruction of ancient cities, the departure of 6.7 million of his countrymen, and the deaths of hundreds of thousands more, but Assad has won the Syrian Civil War.

But it isn't truly over. In reality, Syria is a rump state of sorts, with some small areas under the control of the now-devastated rebel force, incredibly small pieces of desert where the Islamic State rules, and a large swath of territory formally under the control of the Kurdish-led Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, also known as Rojava.

In 2019, facing an invasion from Turkish forces designed to ethnically cleanse portions of its borderlands, Rojava made a deal with Assad's government to allow government forces into parts of its territory. Turkey's recent pledge to renew its invasion of Rojava has thrown further uncertainty into a situation that seems near intractable, and Erdogan's support for the rebels in the northern province of Idlib seems to be the largest obstacle

towards a formal end to the war. The only true holdouts are now the small pockets of rebel-controlled areas along the Turkish border (and a portion along the border with Jordan and Iraq) and the incredibly small areas where ISIS claims to still hold territory.

“The largest foreign backer of Assad’s government, Russia, currently has bigger things to worry about than resolving this stalemate, and a large-scale offensive to take Idlib seems incredibly unlikely.”

The rebels are similarly unable to launch any attacks themselves. Rebel forces are disjointed, many belonging to different groups with fundamentally different agendas, and they struggle to govern the areas they control, much less take territory from their much stronger opponent.

The rebels' largest backer, the Turkish government, is not inclined to involve itself much more in attacking Assad, especially when such an action could bring it into conflict with Russia, although its actions against Rojava may lead to a bigger shift in the conflict if it goes through with its proposed invasion.

Other foreign actors are similarly uninterested in ending what has now become a protracted stalemate, either by military means or by negotiations. The United States, after pulling out of some areas of Rojava in 2019 to facilitate Erdogan's attack, has partially redeployed its forces, but given its pivot to East Asia and its focus on the war in Ukraine, is not in a position to increase its involvement, especially considering the dangers of sparking a larger conflict or risking an internal rift in NATO.

Israel has involved itself rather minimally in the conflict, despite having long ago occupied and annexed the Golan Heights, a portion of what is de jure Syrian territory. Its involvement has been largely limited to funding of groups opposing ISIS in



Syria's southeast, although its desire to restrict further Iranian influence in the Levant has led it to take occasional direct action against the positions of Iranian proxy forces.

Beyond this, Israel has no interest or ability to broker a larger solution or change the military stalemate. The existing borders between the factions controlling Syria are hardening, and a solution seems farther away by the day. But this cruel and possibly unending stalemate is not the worst of recent developments.

“Amid a renewed economic crisis in the region, Assad’s government has taken a strange and worrisome development: the production of narcotics.”

The Syrian government has been funding and supporting the production of Captagon, also

known as “poor man’s cocaine.” This has led several journalists have begun to describe modern-day Syria as a narco-state, and the production of Captagon is no small operation by the Syrian government: the amount of Syrian-produced captagon seized in 2020 worldwide was worth 3.5 billion USD, four times greater than the value of all of Syria's other exports. The Middle East Institute estimates that the actual value of Syria's drug exports are 22 times the value of Syria's other exports, at a total of 17.5 billion USD.

Foreign actors do not want to end the war even if they could. Syria's own government is more interested in producing drugs than making peace. The remaining rebel holdouts are often radicalized and non-cooperative even with each other. The war has ended without being over. In such an environment, real, lasting peace seems a distant dream for the people of Syria.

POLITICAL SCIENCE WORLDWIDE

by **Luiza de Lacerda Toledo**

An Analysis of Economic and Political Resilience Strategies Adopted by The Bahamas as a Small Island Development State

Diving into the current challenges faced by small island states, Sophia Rolle (2022) explores how external shocks, have affected their economical and sustainable development. She takes the Bahamas as a case study and provides an insightful analysis of the political mood and governmental changes that were impacted by externalities. The level of resilience of the country in times of crisis, as well as the strategies taken by the government, makes this article an interesting piece for those curious about the politics and governance of island states.

Pandemics, Disasters, Sustainability, Tourism

Development as an Intellectual Process- The Role and Significance of African Intellectuals in Rethinking African Politics

The role of the epistemic community in innovation and development has been crucial for countries' development in recent years. Ngaka S. Makgetlaneng (2022) explores how the African continent has developed as an intellectual process, where resources are gathered and strategized for "human needs". By taking a human-centered approach, the author provides a compelling overview of how focusing on improving the livelihoods of individuals is crucial for Africa's development.

African Journal of Political Science

Who governs Europe? A new historical dataset on governments and party systems since 1848

Are you interested in Europe's long-term governmental and political changes over almost two centuries? The latest dataset by Bértoa & Enyedi (2022) provides insights into how partisans played a different role in the composition of European governments. They explore existing biases in the literature and provide a comprehensive description of variables and a set of tools that can be replicated in further studies. Most interestingly, an overview of the expected applications of the dataset is provided, further strengthening the applicability of their database.

European Political Science

Regional integration and business interest: understanding the role of the ASEAN business advisory council

The growing importance of South Asian countries in business relations is not unknown. But thoroughly understanding the role of ASEAN's business advisory council is something yet to be better understood by the academic community. Moch F. Karim & Tania Q. Heryanto have analyzed the role of the council, by diving into several official documents and conducting interviews with members of the organization. Their main finding is that ASEAN still suffers from a conflict of interest which undermines its members' cohesiveness. Thus, this attempt at regionalisation of economic processes remains fragmented and constrained in its powers.

Asian Journal of Political Science

LIMITARIANISM

Wealth is morally unjustifiable

by *Jelle F. Kooij*

Wealth, crave it or despise it, is the driving force behind why people get up each and every morning. There is no way of getting around money in modern-day society. If you would like to buy food at the market or pay rent for your apartment then you are going to need money.

But what about when someone wants to buy a yacht or plane? Sure, to pay rent for an apartment and to buy a plane use the same currency, but the type of good that you are buying is different. Without a roof over your head, your standard of living significantly decreases. You are considered homeless as if having a home is central to the human condition. But is someone without a plane a person who has failed to meet society's expectations? These are just some of the fundamental questions that are possessed by limitarianism's most outspoken advocate, Ingrid Robeyns of the University of Utrecht.

There are 2,755 billionaires as of 2021 with an estimated combined net worth of \$13.1 trillion. To put that in a larger perspective the 52,000 or so adults that belong to the 0.001% own 6.4% of the global wealth. All the while the bottom 2.6 billion adults who belong to the bottom 50% own just 2%. So there are two poles of wealth: on the one side there are the rich and megarich, on the other, are the poor.

For the new generation coming of age during the pandemic (gen-z), the stark reality of wealth inequality has brought some to question if the way the current system operates is detrimental to us all. It is from this environment that limitarianism arose.



What is it?

Limitarianism is a philosophical concept that in many ways is an argument of social justice. It holds that people do not need to amass large amounts of resources, whether that be money or other resources. In fact, limitarianism views such accumulation as an injustice. Yet, to some people, billionaires are needed because they represent the incentive of hard work paying off. One could make the argument that without the incentive of billions in profits, Jeff Bezos might have never started Amazon. But this is not the argument that limitarianist seek to oppose. The accumulation of wealth in

terms of money is only one element that highlights the widening gap between people at the top and bottom.

Viewed from the perspective of climate change limitarianism may have a more convincing argument. The wealthiest 1% of people produce double the carbon emissions than the bottom 50%. From this perspective, the accumulation of resources in this case carbon emissions carries more moral weight than the pure accumulation of wealth. The accumulation of carbon emissions cannot be separated from the accumulation of wealth. So when the deaths of 5 million people have been linked to climate change over the last 20 years, does limitarianism have a valid argument as to its importance for social justice?

The Fair Limits project is an interesting project to philosophically test limitarianism. In truth, only time will be able to tell if limitarianism will be applied to our societies. But economic theory has changed before and not even long ago. From laissez-faire to state-planned economies, the economic structures of society are not static. Each time arriving at the junction of global crisis and social upheaval, economic change tends to have large impacts on the lives of all of us. Maybe the global climate crisis and the social upheaval it causes is the junction needed for limitarianism to take hold.

DIDN'T MAKE IT TO THAILAND THIS YEAR?

Keep an eye out for next year's SPIL trips!



HOW FRANCE VOTED AND WHY

The patterns and reasons behind election results

by **Daria Aron**

It is not uncommon for candidates to win more votes in certain parts of a country than in others. However, in the recent French Presidential Election there were some interesting patterns and details. With the most debated topics proving the most influential when it came to winning voters over, the results entailed some disappointments and surprises.

Looking at the capital first, Emmanuel Macron won all 20 arrondissements of Paris. Although this was an uncontested stronghold for Macron, even the capital voted in a smaller margin for the incumbent as in some arrondissements he lost more than 10% of votes.

“Voter turnout had one of the biggest effects in this region and combined with complaints about rising prices and cost of living, many voters decided to either abstain from

voting or put their faith in the hands of the alternate choice.”



Despite this, Macron still received 73% of the vote in the Ile-de-France region (which contains Paris and its suburbs) and does not signal to be a great area of concern for him, when looking at the rest of the country. Areas such as the Loire and Brittany were still strongly held by him, with his share being over 65% in both regions.

Even with Macron winning a significant share of votes across the country of 58%, and enough for critics to not start fear about election fraud, the change between his results in 2017 and in 2022 is drastic.

Marine Le Pen was only able to win 2 election districts in her 2017 run. In the last election, 26 districts and 2 overseas territories were turned to be on her side. Additionally, Macron's vote share in the territories he held on to also decreased, besides New Caledonia. The majority of her votes in mainland France were concentrated around the Alpes-Cote D'Azur region and the Northeastern corner of the country, one which Macron specifically tried campaigning in due to it being a Le Pen stronghold but to no significant avail as Le Pen was able to win it by 5 percentages.

An area in which Le Pen did significantly well and did not draw great attention was France's West Indies territories where the National Rassemblement candidate won more than 60% of the votes. What was specifically interesting was that this share of votes tripled her 2017 re-



sults. The West Indies and particularly Martinique are known to be avid voters against far-right candidates, voting majorly for the far-left candidate Jean-Luc Melanchon in the first round of the election. So what happened here to make people vote for the opposite end of the political spectrum?

“People voted against the person who they claim has done nothing for them, with the biggest concerns being about low pensions and employment rates.”

Both Le Pen and Melanchon made campaign promises to work on both of these issues, which people see as having been caused by Ma-

cron. Whereas other regions voted for Le Pen, this overseas portion of France did so for the chief reason of not voting for Macron. In a tumultuous campaign with some candidates starting to campaign nearly a year before and others, namely the President, announcing he's running only 5 weeks before, results were destined to be intriguing and surprising.

The idea of choosing the lesser evil (in this case Macron) was seen throughout the country, where the President was able to maintain a majority. However, this was not representative of the entire electorate, with people voting drastically against Macron, as well. The 2022 President Election has established an incumbency that will be watched attentively from all corners of French territory.

RUSSIAN COLONIALISM

Russia has a colonial past too

by *Ana Dadu*

Oftentimes, imperialism and colonialism are conflated with each other. Whilst both include the territorial, political and economic domination of an entire people, many scholars have argued that they have distinct definitions.

Robert Young writes that imperialism operates from a centre, is a state policy and is developed by ideological and financial reasons. Its latin root, imperium, means command, and thus implies an exertion of power, regardless of whether it is exercised directly or indirectly. Colonialism on the other hand, includes the invasion of a foreign territory. In the modern usage of the term, colonialism implies a significant geographic separation between the colony and occupying power.

Hence, when we think of colonial powers specifically, we tend to think of the sea-faring Western empires. Doesn't the invasion of one people also inherently imply an exertion of force upon them? Aren't colonialism and imperialism heavily interrelated?

Edward Said explained that imperialism is "the practice, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory. To him, colonialism is a "consequence"

of imperialism, it is the "implanting of settlements on a distant territory". As such, despite the subtle differences in their definition, imperialism and colonialism are greatly interlinked.

"Whilst imperialism can exist on its own, without the pursuit of colonisation, the same thing cannot be said the other way around.

Colonialism is rooted in the ideology of imperialism."

When looking at the Western imperial powers, all of them had settler colonies. The list is too long to mention them all here, but it nevertheless supports that imperialism inherently involved colonialism too.

Contiguous land empires, like the Russian empire, have mostly been excluded from discussions on colonialism. Russia also never took to the sea the same way the western empires did, and thus you don't hear Russian imperial territories referred to as "colonies". It is

also thought that Russia did not subjugate the people from the territories it engulfed to the same racial and religious discrimination that the British and the French did in their colonies.

Mikhail Veniukov, wrote in 1877: "We are not Englishmen, who in India strive to by no means mingle with the native races. ... Our strength, by contrast, up until now has consisted in that we assimilated the defeated peoples, blending with them peacefully'. Yet nothing about Russian assimilation was peaceful. Russia did not invade all these lands by politely asking the people it stumbled upon to give up their sovereignty. Russia's invasions were violent and subsequent colonial rule was nothing but discriminatory. Russia has a colonial past too.

The Russian colonisation of Siberia and conquest over its indigenous populations has been compared to the European colonisation and its natives. Russia viewed the central Asian people it conquered as inferior, and nowhere was this inferior status more clearly demonstrated than on the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz which had less statutory right to the soil they farmed and pastured their animals on than incoming settlers from European Russia.

This prejudiced policy also existed west-ward in Ukraine. Ukrainian cultural and political icons were arrested, imprisoned, or killed, whilst vast numbers of Russians continued to migrate into Ukraine, diluting the majority Ukrainian population and replacing it with a Russian one. Morrison states that "overt biological racism certainly was less common in Russia than in the British or French empires, but there was still a clear division between their own European culture and Christianity, and that of their Asiatic, Muslim subjects".

With the Bolsheviks defeating Russia's imperial dynasty, and with the anti-imperial Soviet Union being established, one would have thought it was over for Russian colonialism. Well, not quite. It morphed into what Albert Szymanski and the Maoist school call socialist imperialism. There was no essential difference between either the causes, or the effects of the Soviet Union's international economic, political and military relations, and those of the leading capitalist countries of the West.

Paradoxically, Lenin's ideas on monopoly capitalism were present in the Soviet Union too. And as such, Russia's imperialist and colonial legacy continued. At the end of the second world war, most Central and Eastern European countries were occupied by the Soviets. Until the breakup of the Soviet Union, these "satellite" states were controlled in their economic, political and cultural aspects. Mentioning it all here would require a lot more space. I will focus on Stalin's era and shortly run through other leaders of the Soviet Union.

During Stalin's era, Lenin's internationalism policy was re-

placed by one of Russification - official and unofficial policies of the Soviet Union with respect to their national constituents and to national minorities in Russia, aimed at Russian domination and hegemony. The liquidation of kulaks was ordered.

The kulaks were peasants who owned more than 8 acres of land and thus considered "rich" peasants - the enemy of the state. Most were ethnic to the republics occupied by the Russians. They were targeted through a political campaign of repression, including arrests, deportation to labour camps, executions, and a man made famine.

As the state took control over all existing enterprises and enforced collectivisation of farm lands, the Soviet Famine from 1930-1933 followed. Major grain producing republics such as Ukraine and Kazakhstan lost an estimated of 5.7 to 8.7 lives. Most of them were the ethnic populations of those lands. Both Kazakh and Ukrainian scholars refer to the famines as attempts at genocide.

The republics saw a significant amount of their ethnic population perish and replaced with a Russian speaking one. Kazakhstan lost more than half of its ethnic population. 1.5 million people died, of which 1.3 million were ethnic Kazakhs. Many fled to neighbouring countries. A year after the Kazakh famine, the Ukrainian one followed. It impacted the Moldovan Autonomous SSR republic too - today's Transnistrian region of Moldova. Like in Kazakhstan, the majority of the lives of the ethnic population in those republics were taken by the famine, and replaced by Russian ones. 3.5 to 5 million people died.

The eradication of ethnic populations and replacement by Russian ones did not stop there. Russification policies contin-

ued until the USSR fell in 1991. During Krushchev's era, school curriculums were changed to be taught primarily in Russian. Most ethnic populations ended up speaking Russian as a second language yet Russian immigrants did not try to learn local languages. Usage of local languages diminished. During the Brezhnev era, any threat to socialist rule in any state of the Soviet bloc in Central and Eastern Europe was a threat to them all, justifying the invasion of Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

Afraid of liberalisation efforts, these interventions were meant to put an end to the uprisings that had the potential to compromise Soviet hegemony inside the Eastern Bloc. This meant no country could leave the Warsaw pact or disturb a ruling communist party's monopoly of power. It was not until Gorbachev, and his refusal to intervene in the republics, that many of these policies were dismantled.

Regardless, Russia's imperialism and colonialism has impacted these countries to this day. Ukraine is only the most recent and perhaps most extreme example. With Russia's continued tendency to control, invade and annex, in part or wholly, former Soviet states, mainstream media and academia are trying to decipher Putin's historical claims to Ukraine as justification. Inevitably, discussions on colonialism are starting to include Russia too.

RAISING THE VOICES OF THE AMAZON

Nemonte Nenquimo

by *Luiza de Lacerda Toledo*

The Ecuadorian activist Nemonte Nenquimo has become a prominent figure in advocating for the protection of indigenous rights and the preservation of the Amazon fauna and flora.

Born part of the Waorani Nation in the province of Pastaza in the Amazonian region of Ecuador, protecting the forest and the communities dependent on it gained importance from an early stage in Nemonte's life. The legacy of colonization marked the history of her Nation, and put their land and territory at risk from an early stage. Consequently, Nemonte has dedicated her life to protecting indigenous rights and the forest, being recognized as one of the 100 most influential individuals in 2020 by Time Magazine.

As the first female president of the Coordinating Council of the Waorani Nationality of Ecuador-Pastaza, she has made remarkable achievements for her community, while inspiring and empowering indigenous and environmental activists elsewhere. In 2019, she led her community to the victory of a lawsuit, in which about 500,000 acres of rainforest and Waorani territory were protected from oil extraction.

The repercussion of this brought the importance of indigenous and environmental advocacy to light and sparked further actions and move-



ments by tribes in different parts of the world to protect their environment. The activist was internationally recognized for her efforts, being awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2020 and the United Nations Environmental Programme "Champions of the Earth" award. She now continues her mission to protect the Waorani Nation's land and Amazonian forest as one of the founders of Ceibo Alliance, a non-profit organization dedicated to these goals.

Her actions are an example of how a leader can mobilize a community and spark change towards a more sustainable future, where indigenous rights are evidently recognized as they should.

"So, I am here now as a Waorani woman and as a mother.

To tell you that our fight is not just a fight about oil. This is a fight about different ways of living.

One that protects life and one that destroys life."

- Nemonte Nenquimo

DIAGNOSIS

Review

by *Martina Sclaverano*

The Netflix-original docuseries *Diagnosis* sheds light on the struggle to live with a rare illness. Dr. Lisa Sanders, whom the series revolves around, devised a plan to help people reach diagnosis after years of unsuccessful tries. Her philosophy puts the wisdom of the crowd in the spotlight, allowing people from all sorts of scientific and life backgrounds to give their opinion on what certain symptoms might mean.

Thanks to her column in the *New York Times Magazine*, Dr. Sanders posts stories of citizens who suffer from debilitating and yet mysterious diseases, which multiple doctors were unable to identify. Each post is met with thousands of video responses by people from all walks of life: doctors, vets, diagnosed patients, veterans, but also regular people whose friends or family have similar symptoms. According to the diagnoses suggested by the responders, Dr. Sander then helps the patient take the necessary tests and rule out each option until a diagnosis, and most importantly, a treatment is found.

This series, together with being approachable even for those without a medical background, is a prime example of the good aspects of social media. Being able to reach thousands of people in a click and to hear their experiences becomes the key to solving a mystery which often developed for years and



on the series is money, since especially in the United States specialist visits can easily become a heavy expense. When tests come back inconclusive, it is even more discouraging to invest large sums of money without seeing concrete results.

Dr. Sander's experiment might be the start of a new use of the internet, creating a platform to help each other and pooling resources and knowledge together. Saving time and money on the diagnosis can already be a major step to guarantee the families' peace of mind.

drastically limited the patient's life. This method particularly exploits the main perk of social media, which is the speed at which information circulates. In many cases portrayed, time is a fundamental factor as many patients suffer multiple seizures and other attacks every day, and finding a solution fast is often the best way to save their life.

The column in the *New York Times* also raises questions about the legitimacy of medical advice and the importance of exploring alternative options. Indeed, it might be puzzling to hear that when several specialists failed to identify the root problem, a veterinary student instantly recognized the symptoms because they just had an exam on that disease.

A big obstacle to many interviewees

While we cannot realistically expect medical professionals to know about every existing syndrome, *Diagnosis* certainly shows that life is just as great of a teacher. And that any anecdote and personal story that we share could potentially turn around someone's life.

