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**India's Approach to Strategy
and International Relations**
DR NAMRATA GOSWAM

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Food at Virupaksha Temple, Hampi, Karnataka, India. Photograph Mark Ulyseas



India's Approach to Strategy and International Relations **Dr Namrata Goswami**

Dr. Namrata Goswami is one of the foremost Indian thinkers on long-term global trends, emerging security challenges, and scenario building. She is currently an Independent Senior Analyst. Dr Goswami was formerly Research Fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi where she specialized on ethnic conflicts, insurgency, counter-insurgency and conflict resolution. She was a Jennings Randolph Senior Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace, Washington, D.C., a Visiting Fellow at the Peace Research Institute, Oslo, Norway, La Trobe University Melbourne, Australia as well as Heidelberg University, Germany. She is a recipient of the Fulbright-Nehru Senior Fellowship.



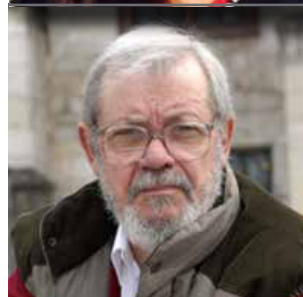
Sign this petition - Brazilian Democracy is Seriously Threatened **Mariana Prandini Assis**

Mariana is currently a PhD candidate in Politics at the New School for Social Research, in New York. She received her Bachelor of Laws and Master's in Political Science from the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil. In her doctoral research, Mariana offers a map of women's rights discourse production and circulation in the trans-national legal sphere. Her research has been supported by various institutions, such as the Brazilian Ministry of Education (CAPES), Fulbright, and the American Association for University Women (AAUW).



Online Radicalisation and the Specter of Extremist Violence in India **Dr Shanthie Mariet D'Souza**

Dr. D'Souza is researcher, analyst, writer, editor, consultant and subject matter expert with specialisation in International Relations (IR), Afghanistan and South Asia. She is Associate Editor, Journal of Asian Security & International Affairs (Sage Publications); Expert and Contributor to the Middle East-Asia Project (MAP) at the Middle East Institute, Washington DC; Senior Analyst, South Asia desk, Wikistrat Analytic Community, New York; Advisor, Independent Conflict Research & Analysis (ICRA), London; Fulbright Fellow at South Asia Studies, The Paul H Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington DC and more.



Events **Tom Kilcourse**

Kilcourse spent his career in management development and was widely published in management and academic journals. He appeared in several educational videos produced for the BBC, and has spoken on management in the USA, Europe and the UK. Tom began working life as a manual worker in his native Manchester, before winning a scholarship to study at Ruskin College, Oxford. He later won a State Scholarship to read economics at Hull University. He is now retired. www.amazon.com



Pakistani-Afghan relations after Karzai **Safdar Sial**

Safdar Sial has been working with the Islamabad-based research and policy advocacy organisation Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) as a research analyst since March 2007. His work focuses on conflict, insecurity, and violence in Pakistan and Afghanistan; regional political, strategic and security issues; and media and governance. He has published extensively in national and international journals; is a co-author of *Dynamics of Taliban Insurgency in FATA and Radicalization in Pakistan*; is the editor of *Critical Ideologies: A Debate on Takfeer and Khurooj*; and is an associate editor of the PIPS research journal *Conflict and Peace Studies*.



Humility and the Ego **Dr. Ivo Coelho**

Coelho earned his PhD in philosophy from the Gregorian University, Rome. He is Reader in Gnosology and Metaphysics at Divyadaan: Salesian Institute of Philosophy, Nashik, India; editor of *Divyadaan - Journal of Philosophy and Education*. He has been director of the Institutum Theologicum Salesianum, Ratisbonne Monastery, Jerusalem, and currently a member of the governing body of the Salesians of Don Bosco in Rome. He is the author of *Hermeneutics and Method: The 'Universal Viewpoint'* in Bernard Lonergan. www.ivophil.blogspot.com



Andromache for psychologists: What can we learn from antiquity? **Dr Greta Sykes**

The poet, writer and artist Greta Sykes has published her work in many anthologies. She is a member of the London Voices Poetry Group and also produces art work for them. One of her own volumes entitled *The Intimacy of the Universe* focuses on the environment. She is a member of the Exiled Writers Ink group. She is a leading member of the Socialist History Society and organises joint poetry events for them at the Poetry Café. Greta is a trained child psychologist and has taught at University College London, where she is now an associate researcher. The present focus of her research is women's emancipation and antiquity.



Self-organisation amongst refugees in Indonesia **Thomas Brown**

Brown is an economics and social science researcher from the University of Adelaide. He has been conducting field research on asylum seekers and refugees in Indonesia for 10 months while based at the Universitas Katolik Parahyangan in Bandung. He is a member of Swiss NGO Same Skies, co-founded the Australia Indonesia Youth Association (AIYA) West Java Chapter, and is involved in the startups OrientAbroad, Neliti and AsiaOptions. He has exhibited photography in Europe and Australia and founded the award winning performance arts company Cadence.



The Living Dead — An Independence Framework **Shane Chalmers**

Chalmers is a PhD scholar at the Regulatory Institutions Network, ANU. He studied law and international studies as an undergraduate at The University of Adelaide between 2004 and 2010, with a year visit at the University of California, Los Angeles. During this period, he interned with the Centre for International Environmental Law in Washington, DC, and later with the United Nations Development Programme's Regional Centre in Bangkok in the area of indigenous peoples rights and development in Asia and the Pacific. Since 2011, Shane moved to Montreal to undertake graduate studies in comparative law and cross-cultural jurisprudence at McGill University.



The Black & White of Bhutan **Mark I Chaves**

Mark is a freelance writer and photographer based in Bali, Indonesia. He is an active contributor for [diaforlife](http://diaforlife.com), InBali.org, and [Balipedia](http://Balipedia.com). Follow Mark's photography portfolio on [tumblr](http://tumblr.com/marklchaves) and [eyeem](http://eyeem.com/marklchaves). <http://marklchaves.com>



Home Style Iskender Kebab in Tomato Sauce, Pita Bread and Yoghurt **Ozlem Warren**

International cooking teacher and Turkish culinary expert Ozlem Warren is a native of Turkey, lived there and extensively travelled for 30 years. She has been teaching wholesome, delicious Turkish cookery in the US, Jordan, Istanbul and England. Her recipes have been published in the local media in England, Hurriyet and Sabah national daily newspapers in Turkey. Ozlem also took part at the *"Turkish Chefs of the World"*, *"Dunyanin Turk Seferi"* TV program aired at TRT, National Turkish TV channel and in 37 countries. www.ozlemturkishtable.com



Before the Cloud **Mark Ulyseas**

Ulyseas has served time in advertising as copywriter and creative director selling people things they didn't need, a ghost writer for some years, columnist of a newspaper, a free lance journalist and photographer. All this took up nearly three decades. End 2009 he created Live Encounters for the free sharing of knowledge hoping that the 'humane' in humanity still remained albeit scattered around the globe. He hasn't been disappointed. Poets, writers, journalists, students, painters, activists, doctors etc. from across continents have continued to contribute to Live Encounters. This has become a celebration of Life by people of village earth.



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INDIA'S APPROACH TO STRATEGY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Dr Namrata Goswami Independent Senior Analyst, Author and one of the foremost Indian thinkers on long-term global trends, emerging security challenges, and scenario building.

India is emerging as one of the foremost economic powers in the world. Pricewaterhouse Coopers predicts that by 2028, while China will overtake the U.S. both in GDP purchasing power parity (PPP) and market exchange rate (MER), India will follow suit as the second largest economy in GDP (PPP) terms by 2050¹. This brings us to the question which is asked by most on how India conducts itself in its external relations. This question is critical due to the growing power and influence of India on the Asian and world stage. This article offers a perspective on India's approach to strategy and international relations.

Opposite: LVM 3 is a heavy launch capability launcher being developed by ISRO. It will allow India to achieve complete self reliance in launching satellites as it will be capable of placing 4 tonne class Geosynchronous satellites into orbit. The LVM3 will have an India built cryogenic stage with higher capacity than GSLV. Credit: ISRO [LINK](#)

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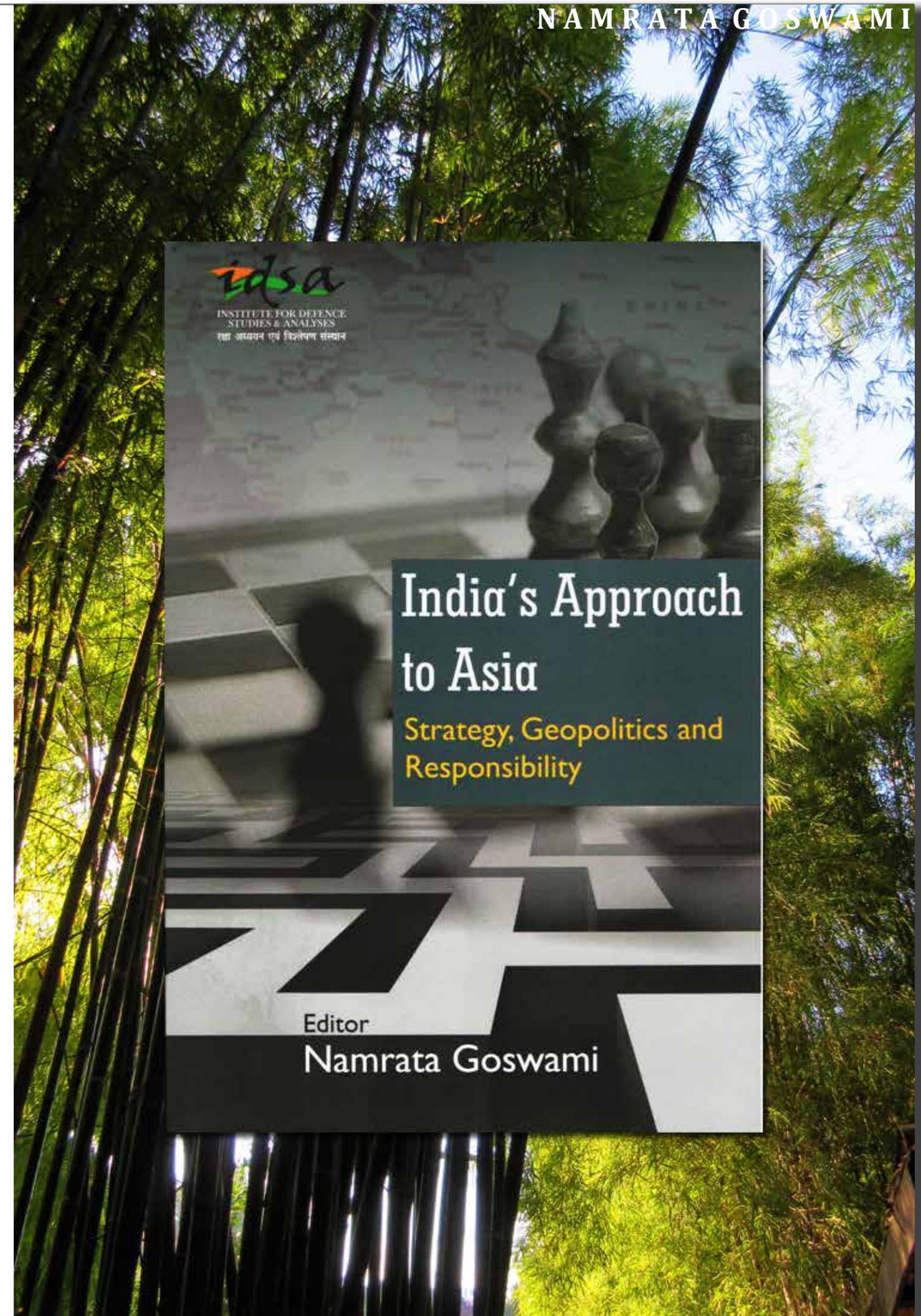
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The Indian Approach

India's approach to foreign policy and international relations has evolved over the years, tracing its roots to ideas of non-alignment, strategic autonomy to strategic engagement. From being sceptical of forming any kind of close partnership with global super powers like the U.S. during the cold war, in 2015, India and the U.S. signed the 'India-U.S. Delhi Declaration of Friendship' committing to a long term close relationship². In 2014, in a joint op-ed for *The Washington Post*, President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Narendra Modi outlined their vision for the world³. This was followed by the "U.S.-India Joint Strategic Vision for Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean Region"⁴, which pledged to promote peace and prosperity, economic development and connectivity including freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, and address poverty⁵.

Yet, many strategic analysts, both in India and abroad, accuse India of lacking a strategic culture or strategic thinking. Key questions continue to remain unanswered on India's approach to international politics/relations and foreign policy primarily due to the lack of a written and widely disseminated official 'National Security Strategy' paper or "White paper" with regard to long term foreign policy goals. This quest for clarity in Indian strategic thought while throughout present, was perhaps propelled to limelight by George Tanham's off cited essay on "Indian Strategic Thought: An Interpretative Essay" published by RAND in 1992⁶. Tanham argued that Indians lacked a strategic sense. In fact he believed then that a coherent set of ideas and systemic thinking on Indian national strategy was remarkably hard to find⁷. Tanham claimed that India's geography made it inward looking as the sub-continent's unity was itself a task of priority given several regional separatist tendencies, its size and its resources. This inward looking propensity was based on history where India's past had little to show for political unity with several kingdoms competing with each other for influence, with some ending up helping foreign invaders against adversarial kingdoms⁸. Tanham contends that Indians discovered their history since the late 1850s motivated and influenced by a growing sense of Indian nationalism vis-à-vis British colonial rule. Tanham however recognized that Indian culture represented by Hinduism and its ability to absorb and assimilate other religions provided the continuing thread through centuries. He credits the British for creating a unified Indian political entity, with clear strategic policy of defence and offence, maritime security and land defence. Thereby, the British envisaged that securing the Indian Ocean from foreign powers was vital in order to limit their ability to challenge the British Empire in India. This insight was drawn of course by their own easy arrival in India by sea due to the complete absence of Mughal capability to defend India's maritime borders.



Contrary to these opinions, I underscore that a deep foray into Indian foreign policy behavior reveals that India does have a strategic culture where it closely monitors the external environment and debates on the efficacy of the use of military power in addressing external threats. That India tends to give priority to dialogue over the use of military power in foreign policy does not mean that it does not have a strategic culture; it just means that the strategic preferences are different from the normal understanding of how Great Powers behave¹¹.

The Indian Approach *contd...*

The British developed strategic plans to safeguard the Northwest of India, and the Northeast, by establishing buffers to thwart foreign powers. There is a recurring belief that independent India adopted the British style of strategy and defence.

Following in the tradition of Tanham, *The Economist*, in two lead articles in 2013 titled “India as a Great Power Know Your Own Strength” and “Can India become a Great Power?” severely faulted India for its striking lack of a strategic culture⁹. Both articles strongly argued that India’s aspirations towards becoming a “Great Power” are undermined by its sheer lack of strategic thinking on future goals and ambitions supported by capability. The articles caution that with Pakistan in a dangerous internal web of jihadist violence, radicalization of its military and possession of nuclear weapons; China, an ever increasing threat from across the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean, harboring covert plans of arming Pakistan with nukes, coupled with jihadi terrorism and Maoist insurgency, India has a rough road to walk. The biggest blind spot, the articles indicate, is India’s lack of understanding on how to utilize its hard power (read military) for power and political influence. Indian leaders, *The Economist* allege “show little interest in military or strategic issues. Strategic defence reviews like those that take place in America, Britain and France, informed by serving officers and civil servants but led by politicians, are unknown in India. The armed forces regard the Ministry of Defence as woefully ignorant on military matters, with few of the skills needed to provide support in areas such as logistics and procurement (they also resent its control over senior promotions)”¹⁰. The capacity of Ministries like those dealing with external affairs is limited. The articles view this as a pity as India has so much to offer to the world *via* its democratic institutions, rule of law, human rights, etc.

Contrary to these opinions, I underscore that a deep foray into Indian foreign policy behavior reveals that India does have a strategic culture where it closely monitors the external environment and debates on the efficacy of the use of military power in addressing external threats. That India tends to give priority to dialogue over the use of military power in foreign policy does not mean that it does not have a strategic culture; it just means that the strategic preferences are different from the normal understanding of how Great Powers behave¹¹. Needless to say but critical to understand is the fact that when India emerged as an independent nation in 1947, its economy was weak and it did not possess the military capability (hard power) to influence world events like some other countries possessed at that time (Read the US, Soviet Union, etc). Hence, it was rather visionary of its founding

There are broadly two major interpretations of Indian strategic culture. One is what I call “hardcore realism” for which the projection of military power beyond India’s borders will improve India’s international influence and secure its borders vis-a-vis China and Pakistan. Realists view the instability in Pakistan, the rising power of China and the unresolved border issue, as serious external threats mitigated by broadcasting efficient and effective military power at the border with Pakistan and China, and projecting Indian naval power in the Indian Ocean. Realists support increased defense spending, which by *The Economist’s* own admission poises India to become the fourth largest military power in the world by 2020.

leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru to use ideas to launch India onto the world stage. And in this, Nehru succeeded. Even when one explores the idea of non-alignment which Nehru championed, it was novel of him to think of an alternate concept of existence for a new state besides locating oneself within the limiting structures of the cold war; either with U.S or USSR syndrome. Nehru recognized that non-alignment in such a context would serve India well, by avoiding entangling alignments. Vital to realize that non-alignment was neither neutral nor passive, but had its own set of ideas and for Nehru it was an “India centric” strategy, at best. We see a continuation of that now with the “India first” policy of Prime Minister Modi.

Coming back to the assertions made in *The Economist* articles that India has no strategic culture to boost, to my mind, strategic culture is just how elites perceive threats and opportunities, and both *The Economist* authors more or less perceive what that fundamental Indian strategic culture is: they appear just not to like it - and hence the recommendation in one of the articles that India should join Western-backed security alliances in order to realize its Great Power ambitions. To be even more precise, what I understand by strategic culture is an ideational milieu by which the members of the national strategic community form their strategic preferences with regard to the use and efficacy of military power in response to the threat environment. Each country has its own way to interpret, analyse and react to external opportunities and challenges. India may lack a plan explicit enough to satisfy these observers ... or complain that its strategy is not what they want - the reality is that India has in fact already shed its non-alignment - but the new alignments are contingent and based on shared interests, and can never be total alignments of the cold war variety. What the authors of *The Economist* articles are more likely saying is not that India lacks a strategic culture, but rather that it lacks a culture of strategic planning: of identifying desirable future goals, and plotting a series of sequential steps to reach them versus just pursuing an opportunistic policy of what appears preferable in the moment without a clearly defined end in mind.

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Aligning with other states for the purpose of a common broadcasting of military strength is not supported by Nehruvians; hence their commitment to non-alignment and expressed aversion to militarized western security groupings. Given the overlap of these two ideational influences on India's strategic culture, a complex structure is thereby superimposed on Indian strategic preferences, influenced by realist aspirations for Great Power status based on military power projection but tempered by Nehruvian ethos of dialogue and international cooperation, with a growing inward looking focus on building the Indian economy.

The Indian Approach *contd...*

The other ideational base of Indian strategic culture is the Nehruvian commitment to use military power only as a last resort, not until the last diplomatic note has been written. Nehruvians firmly believe that dialogue rather than military force is the best way to resolve conflicts with either Pakistan or China. They have faith in the ability of international organizations to mitigate international conflict and are wary of security alliances outside of the UN. Nehruvians are against India joining security alliances of any nature that could potentially create conflicts and undermine world peace. Military power projection, for them, is purely an act of self defense as under Article 51 of the UN Charter. Aligning with other states for the purpose of a common broadcasting of military strength is not supported by Nehruvians; hence their commitment to non-alignment and expressed aversion to militarized western security groupings. Given the overlap of these two ideational influences on India's strategic culture, a complex structure is thereby superimposed on Indian strategic preferences, influenced by realist aspirations for Great Power status based on military power projection but tempered by Nehruvian ethos of dialogue and international cooperation, with a growing inward looking focus on building the Indian economy. India could move closer to some of the other recommendations made in *The Economist* articles of what India should do to become a Great Power but on its way it will also disappoint as it will appropriately give preference to tackle internal poverty and development, a greater concern to Indian citizens and politicians, which will be the true springboard for its enduring greatness.

It is however pertinent that India should resist the temptation to be opaque and non-committal in matters of foreign policy. India must showcase its leadership role; broadcast its capabilities and ambitions; issue directions on what are its foreign policy priorities through the publication of official policy 'white papers' on defense, economy, strategy, etc.; and take a stand on issues of global concern, including the health of the world's environment, conflicts in Africa and the Middle East, and transnational crime. This is in tune with its first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru who asserted India's presence and role in the world; as a champion of de-colonization and peaceful world order. The scripting of policy papers is critical for India so that countries are not left to second guess its foreign policy parameters as has been the case earlier but benefit from a clear picture of what India's priorities are, and what are the means that it would adopt to establish a peaceful world order.

It is however not enough to react to world events and global ideas of another's making and agenda; the time has now come for India to take a lead in shaping world events, and work towards establishing

It is however pertinent that India should resist the temptation to be opaque and non-committal in matters of foreign policy. India must showcase its leadership role; broadcast its capabilities and ambitions; issue directions on what are its foreign policy priorities through the publication of official policy 'white papers' on defense, economy, strategy, etc.; and take a stand on issues of global concern, including the health of the world's environment, conflicts in Africa and the Middle East, and transnational crime. This is in tune with its first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru who asserted India's presence and role in the world; as a champion of de-colonization and peaceful world order.

an international order which is inclusive and representative of different values and cultures. Moreover, India should not shy away from utilizing opportune moments to strategically place its own agendas and interests on the world stage and identify countries that are willing to partner and support Indian foreign policy goals which are motivated to strengthen global peace. Taking thoughtless risk is not a good thing, but taking well planned out strategic risks is an art, much elaborated upon and discussed threadbare in the first Indian treatise on statecraft and strategy: Kautilya's *Arthasashtra*.

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11. Namrata Goswami, "India has a strategic culture which is plain to see", Asia Times, April 06, 2013 at http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/SOU-01-050413.html (Accessed on September 23, 2015). Also see James R. Holmes, "India has a Strategic Culture", The Diplomat, April 19, 2013 at <http://thediplomat.com/2013/04/india-has-a-strategic-culture/> (Accessed on September 23, 2015).



Dear friends, professors and colleagues,

As you might be following on the news, Brazil is currently undergoing a serious political crisis. The democratically elected president, Dilma Rousseff, is facing impeachment proceedings which clearly violate various constitutional guarantees (<http://www.publicseminar.org/2015/09/friends-of-brazil-foes-of-democracy/>). Though there are many corruption scandals involving her party members as well as many MPs of the opposition parties, the impeachment in the current situation is, in fact, a coup d'état, for which members of the Judiciary are contributing in an orchestrated manner.

While all of us on the Brazilian left believe that the investigation of corruption is fundamental in the fight against social inequality, this cannot be done at the expense of our (already minimal and young) democratic procedures. It is worthy remembering, at times like this, that in 1964 democracy was disrupted in Brazil by a military coup also in the name of morality and higher values.

If you agree with the analysis above, and are as concerned as we are here, please consider signing this petition, organized by **James Green** (Brown University): <https://community.avaaz.org/petitions/brazilian-democracy-is-seriously-threatened>.

All best,

Mariana Prandini Assis, The New School for Social Research, New York.



Online Radicalisation and the Specter of Extremist Violence in India

Dr Shanthie Mariet D'Souza

Abstract

The Islamic State (IS) has demonstrated its capacity to efficiently use the internet for a variety of purposes including radicalisation. Instances of youths being bombarded online with radical ideologies is gaining ground not only in the West but also in India. While officials in India put a figure of 80-100 of its citizens affiliated with IS, the number of those getting influenced and indoctrinated through online content remains a blind spot and could be much higher.

As the incidences of online radicalisation is on the rise, it requires a sustained, systematic and innovative approach to meet the challenge.

In developing collaborative and comprehensive counter radicalisation measures on a regional and global level, the government needs to look beyond its own known levels of competence to involve professionals and experts in the non-governmental sectors.

While these are seen as isolated cases in India, the trend is on the rise. On a global platform, the number of foreigners that have joined the IS continues to rise exponentially. According to London based International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR)'s latest estimate, the total now exceeds 20,000 – of which nearly a fifth were residents or nationals of Western European Western European countries. According to the Munich Security Report, around 1200 fighters from France and 500-600 from Germany have found their way to Syria and Iraq.

The arrest of Mehdi Masroor Biswas is indeed a curious case. For several months, the 24-year-old engineer working as a manufacturing executive with a multinational firm in Bengaluru was handling the pro-jihad tweeter account “@ShamiWitness” that supposedly had become a source of incitement and information for the new recruits of the Islamic State (IS). Biswas, who had never been to Syria, shrouded his identity as a Libyan living in the United Kingdom to his followers and IS members following him on Twitter, retweeted many Arabic posts translated into English, with an intent of being a ‘strategist’ for the IS. The Twitter handle, now closed, had 17,700 followers. The story was broken first by London's Channel 4, leading to Mehdi's arrest in December 2014.

In May 2014, four young men identified as Aarif Majid, Fahad Shaikh, Amaan Tandel and Saheem Tanki hailing from Maharashtra's Kalyan district went missing and were believed to have joined the IS. All in their twenties, these youths left for pilgrimage to Haj before disappearing. Majeed, who returned to the country after several months, was arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA). He reportedly told the investigators that he and his friends were indoctrinated through internet chat rooms. It was through an intermediary on Facebook that Arif was first introduced to a contact in Mosul in Iraq who served as a local point person for guiding these youths to join the IS camps.

While Arif and his friends sought to travel to Iraq, the case of Anees Ansari, a resident of Kurla in Central Mumbai is an account of a radicalized youth who decided to wage a war at home. Ansari, a software engineer, was arrested by the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) in Maharashtra for allegedly planning to bomb the American School at Bandra-Kurla Complex. He reportedly was also indoctrinating an American youth Omar Elhajj to carry out a lone wolf attack in the US.

While these are seen as isolated cases in India, the trend is on the rise. On a global platform, the number of foreigners that have joined the IS continues to rise exponentially. According to London based International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR)'s latest estimate, the total now exceeds 20,000 – of which nearly a fifth were residents or nationals of Western European countries. According to the Munich Security Report, around 1200 fighters from France and 500-600 from Germany have found their way to Syria and Iraq. The number of fighters from Central Asia, has also risen significantly. The conflict in Syria and Iraq has emerged as a theatre attracting the largest mobilisation of foreigner fighters in Muslim majority countries since 1945, surpassing the numbers of Afghanistan conflict in the 1980s, which is estimated to have attracted up to 20,000 foreigners.

While officials in India put a figure of 80-100 of its citizens affiliated with IS, the number of those getting influenced and indoctrinated through online content remains a blind spot and could be much higher. In January 2015, a family of seven from Chennai along with two other persons, were deported from Turkey after they were caught attempting to enter Syria. Jihad in Syria is attracting loners as well as whole families into that conflict theatre. ISIS is indeed becoming a melting pot of sorts for diverse motivations – people who simply want to live in that “ideal” land for Muslims as well those who wish to attain martyrdom fighting for the religion.

In an age of greater connectivity, extremist groups use the Internet for myriad reasons- to disseminate propaganda to a large geographically dispersed audience; solicit funding; collect data from open sources; plan and coordinate attacks; emulate and communicate with members and other similar groups; provide lessons on manufacturing explosives; indoctrinate, recruit, train and showcase their acts of violence to attract attention. Information campaigns are crucial to radicalisation, and extremists groups use the internet as a tool of social dissemination to achieve this goal. The IS has demonstrated its capacity to efficiently use the cyberspace for a variety of purposes including radicalisation. In addition to its own cadres, a large number of sympathisers continue to proliferate on the web and act as volunteers for a systematic programme of accentuating the existing levels of alienation among the Muslim youth in different countries.

Instances of youths being bombarded online with radical ideologies, including that of IS, is gaining ground not only in the West but also in India. While officials in India put a figure of 80-100 of its citizens affiliated with IS, the number of those getting influenced and indoctrinated through online content remains a blind spot and could be much higher. In January 2015, a family of seven from Chennai along with two other persons, were deported from Turkey after they were caught attempting to enter Syria. Jihad in Syria is attracting loners as well as whole families into that conflict theatre. The ISIS is indeed becoming a melting pot of sorts for diverse motivations – people who simply want to live in that “ideal” land for Muslims as well those who wish to attain martyrdom fighting for the religion.

Diversity, however, has not been a method for authorities attempting to deal with this sudden trend of Indians joining jihad, both at home and abroad. In the absence of clear legal framework, Biswas, the Twitter account handler, with no established direct connection with the ISIS, has been charged under the Indian Penal Code Section 125, which deals with waging war against a country or alliance friendly to India. He has also been charged with conspiracy and cyber-terrorism. Initially authorities appeared to take a lenient view of Majid's escapades in Syria and labeled him a misguided youth. Eventually, he too was charged under IPC section 125. Ansari, who was acting as a source of indoctrination for another youth and himself was planning an attack too has been charged under the Information Technology Act and sections 120B (criminal conspiracy), 302 (murder) and 115 (abetment of offence punishable with death or imprisonment for life) of the IPC. There is little evidence that a uniform method of arrest, with an intention of subjecting these identified individuals for long periods of incarceration would help addressing the issues of radicalisation or would prevent others from taking recourse to the same path in future.

De-radicalisation, in spite of its decade long existence in countries like Saudi Arabia has a suspect history of success. Similar programmes in Denmark, Holland, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and Yemen has attained only marginal results. Since radicalization is a complex process involving religious motivation, individual psychology as well as enabling contexts, a free-size fit-all approach can never be enough to address the issue. However, with all the challenges, one approach that has the potential of having a positive impact is to combine community-based outreach programmes with educational and counselling services to the youth.

Another counter-radicalization approach being employed by security conscious countries is to prevent the people who have joined the IS from returning home. Australia has banned its nationals from going to Raqqa, the headquarters of the IS. Malaysia is proposing to invalidate the passports of its citizens to join the IS. However, history is witness to the fact that these short term measures do not eventually protect individual countries from the scourge of terrorism. Following the end of jihad in the 1980s with the declaration of victory against Soviet Union in Afghanistan, Arab-Afghan fighters were restrained from returning their home countries and even threatened with long prison sentences. Instead, they regrouped in Sudan from which al-Qaeda emerged.

Mehdi's episode threw some light on how quickly the web can replace a fallen soldier. Not only that the police officials in Bangalore received online threats of retribution, a number of similarly structured handles emerged within no time to continue Mehdi's work. In the past, steps taken by countries either to shut down web sites or blocking access to them have proved to be futile. In this networked world, censorship cannot be an effective tool of stopping the spread of ideologies, violent or otherwise.

It needs to be acknowledged that radicalisation is a systematic process shaped by the happenings domestically as well as on soils of other countries. Coercive or repressive actions by the state accentuate the existing alienation and provide a fillip to mindsets that see violence as the only answer to correct the anomaly. Thus, blanket imprisonment to deal with the indoctrinated returnees will never be a sufficient remedy. On the other hand, it can lead to hardening of mindsets and elevate those arrested as role models for the fence sitters.

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India has been a slow starter in this regard. Recently, Maharashtra's ATS initiated programmes in schools and colleges to explain the negative impact of radicalisation. However, mostly consisting of routine condemnations of violence, which has no religious sanction, such methods are limited in

There is a need for greater inter agency coordination and targeted approach to intelligence-gathering rather than reliance on mass surveillance techniques, imprisonment or blocking of online content. Steps to trace the jihadis online footprint and penetrating the complex jihadist networks would call for setting up cells that regularly monitor the online content, particularly of the social media. In providing credible counter narratives and alternative dialogue forums, web sites, web sites, blogs, chat rooms, online forums, need to be developed. In this regard, government needs to look beyond its own known levels of competence to involve professionals and experts in the non-governmental sectors.

their utility and are no match for the online radicalisation tutorial available on the Internet. British government has been following the strategy of prevention by approaching schools since 2008. In the UK's Channel Project, more than 1000 people deemed to be at risk of violent extremism have been engaged through this programme. And yet, estimated 400 British Muslims have joined the ISIS.

As the incidences of online radicalisation are on the rise, it requires a sustained, systematic and innovative approach to meet the challenge. There is a need for greater global information sharing and effective legal framework to deal with the nature of transnational issue. On a national level, there is a need for greater inter agency coordination and targeted approach to intelligence-gathering rather than reliance on mass surveillance techniques, imprisonment or blocking of online content. Steps to trace the jihadis online footprint and penetrating the complex jihadist networks would call for setting up cells that regularly monitor the online content, particularly of the social media. In providing credible counter narratives and alternative dialogue forums, web sites, blogs, chat rooms, online forums, need to be developed. In this regard, government needs to look beyond its own known levels of competence to involve professionals and experts in the non-governmental sectors.

In developing collaborative and preventive measures on a regional and global level, the government's programmes must involve psychologists, religious and community leaders, civil society groups and development planners. There is a critical need for judicial sector reforms to speed up long-pending terror cases and release of suspects against whom no charges have been filed even after years. And in a country like India, a comprehensive project of this nature must take cognisance of the pluralistic and democratic ethos, to prevent alienation and marginalisation, which would otherwise feed into the extremist narrative and expand the web of recruitment.



Photograph by Mark Ulyseas
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TOM KILCOURSE

EVENTS

I think it was Harold Macmillan, 'Super Mac', who suggested 'events, dear boy' as the reason why so many plans go awry. The truth of that claim is self-evident, but events occur in the context of processes. They don't simply happen out of the blue, irrespectively of that context. As steps in a process, whether or not intended, the probability of their occurrence can be assessed by those who are aware of process and its direction. Such awareness leads to prescience, though at the time of prediction it is more likely to be called lunacy by those who believe the prediction to be far-fetched.

The process known as globalisation, intended to have beneficial economic effects, has had profound effects on society and politics that are far from beneficial. A process that some claim to have lifted millions of people out of poverty, has impoverished others, fragmented societies, left millions uncertain of their future, and actually threatens the continuation of democratic government. As I write, I can hear voices raised against such 'nonsense' by those who judge matters by events rather than the direction the process is taking. By its very nature a prediction describes events that have yet to happen so making it difficult to confront the scepticism of those who consider only recorded events. As Wolfgang Streek points out in his book, 'Buying Time', those academics who based their conclusions on "...empirical observations of the time, concluded that the opening of frontiers between national economies was not likely to have negative effects on the welfare state."

I have personal experience of such scepticism in academics and other 'experts'. Well into the 1990s the Institute of Personnel Management and numerous well-known academics argued the case for the 'empowerment' of employees, warning us that employers who failed to empower their workers would not prosper, and might go out of business. For instance, John Adair, a well-known British writer and consultant believed that leaders of the future should demonstrate a 'greater empathy and concern for people', and claimed that 'the contemplative Eastern approach would supersede the aggressive Western philosophy'. Subsequent events have demonstrated that Adair and the many who thought likewise were wrong.

I pointed out that “Capital is now free to seek out the cheapest sources of labour anywhere in the world and to move to where poverty and authoritarian government combine to ensure a compliant labour force.” In truth, there was little excuse for those ‘experts’ taking a rosier view despite the evidence of the falling share of wages in the economic ‘cake’. I was driven to the gloomy conclusion that “As long as Western governments remain committed to free trade and the unfettered movement of capital, the scales appear to me to be tipped against the human resource being valued and nurtured in the way we have been led to expect.”

These claims, which were purportedly based on empirical observation, rested on little more than wishful thinking and the inertia of established human resource and motivational theory. They were made in the face of evidence that the process of globalisation was already making those theories redundant. My own observations led me to conclude that my contemporaries were in error. Writing in the ‘Management Decision’ journal in 1994 I remarked that “Compassion, trust and humility are out, while greed, selfishness and cynicism are definitely in.” Such pessimism earned me few plaudits, but much criticism. I recall someone calling me disloyal to the Institute (IPM), of which I was not a member, for criticising those of greater faith.

Though I had retired by 1996, apart from a little consultancy work, I continued to write sceptically about the process of globalisation and its effects. Writing in the Journal of European Industrial Training that year I remarked that “Those who choose to put a positive spin on the future imply that the need to cultivate and educate people has general application. It does not. Although probably true for a shrinking elite, the notion of general development for all employees has been eroded by a combination of deregulation and technology. For the masses, the unskilled and many of the skilled, the future looks extremely bleak.” Later, in the same essay, I pointed out that “Capital is now free to seek out the cheapest sources of labour anywhere in the world and to move to where poverty and authoritarian government combine to ensure a compliant labour force.” In truth, there was little excuse for those ‘experts’ taking a rosier view despite the evidence of the falling share of wages in the economic ‘cake’. I was driven to the gloomy conclusion that “As long as Western governments remain committed to free trade and the unfettered movement of capital, the scales appear to me to be tipped against the human resource being valued and nurtured in the way we have been led to expect.”

Again in 1996 I attacked the ‘myth of empowerment’ in which some still believed. Writing in ‘The Leadership & Organisation Development Journal’ I predicted that “Their employer, if they have one, will probably be a labour only contractor offering them short-term contracts.” And again, “It is possible that they will not have a contract of any kind. We could see the white-collar equivalent of the old tally system used on the docks whereby workers reported for duty in the morning with no guarantee of work that day.” I foresaw real earnings being driven down because “Labour is already a buyers-market in the West in which the onus for learning and development lies with the individual trying to build up marketable attributes.”

I present these snippets from past writings for the sole purpose of establishing my ‘track-record’ with those readers who are prone to judge my present predictions as groundless pessimism. I have been criticised for some of my recent essays as alarmist, anti-capitalist and unjustifiably gloomy. Nevertheless, in my view, the process continues to destroy the world we have come to take for granted. Just as power shifted from labour to capital, so it is now shifting from elected politician to appointed

It is no coincidence that many working class Americans are for the first time in their lives supporting a Republican in his bid to become the President. Nor is the rise of nationalism and support for non-establishment parties across Europe coincidental. If weakened beyond what the general mass of people see as tolerable the state’s authority will be replaced by other ‘defenders of their rights’. It is worth remembering that Adolph Hitler was elected and that Lenin came to power on the back of mass dissatisfaction with the established government. Globalisation is not simply an economic arrangement, but a process that threatens to render elected government powerless. A bloody ending can be expected.

corporate management. Western politicians appear convinced that virtually any restraint on corporate ambition is economically and politically risky. They appear to see an identity of interest between the people they are supposed to represent and business corporations, despite evidence that a large proportion of the electorate is being damaged.

The present widespread dissatisfaction with the political establishment which is readily attributed to a variety of events is, in truth, a result of the ongoing process of globalisation, a term wrongly confined to the field of economics. Globalisation has infected our mind-set in politics, social awareness, and even individual identity. It has created a psychological environment in which John Kerry, the US Secretary of State, speaks of mankind’s universal values. There is overwhelming evidence that our values are not universally held. Mankind is prone to be parochial, identifying with a class, tribe, or nation rather than with some amorphous global ethic. It is a great irony that the globalisation process has in many emphasised the importance of our parochial identity. Economic globalisation has created many winners, but at least as many losers. A very large number of those losers share a class identity, particularly with the manual working class that has been decimated by the process, and continues to be so. More recently we see the negative effects in the middle-classes whose young people have prospects for the future far inferior to those enjoyed by their parents. Our parochialism is also manifest in the attitude to migrants, with even those who support the free movement of capital prepared to resist the free movement of labour.

Throughout the Western world we see a fragmentation of society with people feeling betrayed by their political leaders who generally favour the globalisation process and appear prepared to sell-out to corporate interests. In Europe they see their elected representatives negotiating in great secrecy with corporate interests to bring the Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership (TTIP) into being which will unquestionably shift power from the state to the corporation. To many of those promoting this global process the state is an anachronistic concept, an entity that should step aside, leaving progress to corporate interests. The problem with that idea is that the state is for many the only protection against unprincipled exploitation.

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Safdar Sial

Research Analyst, Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS)

Pakistani-Afghan relations after Karzai

Executive Summary

Unlike his predecessor, Hamid Karzai, Afghan president Ashraf Ghani has adopted a policy of rapprochement towards Pakistan. To that end he delayed the implementation of the strategic partnership agreement with India, sought close ties with Pakistan's security establishment, and instituted specific initiatives to alleviate Pakistani concerns over cross-border terrorism. Pakistan, in turn, managed to bring Taliban representatives to the negotiation table in Murree on July 7th 2015. The fledgling Afghan government-Taliban peace process derailed after the announcement of the death of Mullah Omar.

Apparently, to dispel the impression of weakness and appease dissident commanders, the new Taliban leader, Mullah Akhtar Mansoor, opted for increased offensives inside Afghanistan. Prospects for political reconciliation in Afghanistan looked murky until the Heart of Asia Conference was held in Islamabad on December 6th 2015. Currently Pakistan and Afghanistan can engage bilaterally and through the Quadrilateral Monitoring Committee, which includes China and the U.S., to increase efforts to resume the Murree talks. They should use the emerging regional geoeconomics to enhance bilateral economic cooperation and work towards establishing a joint border security and coordination mechanism. Pakistan and India should see their ties with Afghanistan more realistically in terms of the emerging bilateral and multilateral engagements in the region.





Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, right, and former President Hamid Karzai. Credit: www.usnews.com

After a controversial run-off presidential election in June 2014, a National Unity Government was formed in Afghanistan in September, facilitated by the U.S. and United Nations. Ashraf Ghani was sworn in as president on September 29th 2014, while his election rival, Abdullah Abdullah, was given the newly created position of chief executive. The new political administration in Afghanistan faced multiple challenges, mainly in terms of governance related reforms, intra-Afghan political reconciliation, and engagement with neighbours and the international community to seek their cooperation in achieving peace and stability in the country. Many thought that because it was broad-based and representative of various ethnic political groups and parties, the new Afghan government had the opportunity to address these and other challenges facing the country. Others deemed it to be internally weak and prone to factionalism, because it was a compromise created out of compulsion in order to achieve a workable power-sharing arrangement (Khaama Press, 2014).

President Ghani considered peace as the foremost prerequisite to bringing political and economic stability to his country, which he thought was not possible without establishing good relations with Pakistan. This assumption was based on the perception that Pakistan held considerable influence among the Afghan Taliban's Quetta Shura and Haqqani network and could convince or force them to participate in peace talks with the Afghan government.

Therefore, unlike his predecessor, Hamid Karzai, the new Afghan president adopted a policy of rapprochement towards Pakistan, although amid severe criticism at home. Pakistan's political and military leaderships responded positively to the Afghan president's friendly overtures. Firstly, Ghani's rapprochement towards Pakistan apparently reduced the latter's Indian-centric concerns, which Pakistan thought had remained unaddressed during the Karzai government's tenure in Afghanistan. Secondly, there has been a growing realisation among Pakistani policymakers and strategists that an insecure and unstable Afghanistan is detrimental to counter-militancy and peace building efforts in Pakistan. Not only have Pakistani Taliban militants been carrying out cross-border attacks in Pakistan since they sought shelter in Afghanistan after the Pakistani army's 2009 Swat operation, but Pakistan cannot allow the Afghan Taliban to capture Kabul, because this could embolden their Pakistani counterparts and other militants, thus increasing the risk of violence in Pakistan. Thirdly, many in Pakistan believe that due to its increasing economic and trade engagements in the region, China wants to play an active role in restoring peace in Afghanistan and is encouraging Pakistan to do the same. In general, there was a very positive environment of mutual trust-building and friendly overtures between the two countries until the announcement of the death of the Afghan Taliban supreme leader, Mullah Omar, in July 2015, which not only derailed the fledgling peace process between the Afghan government and the Taliban, but also prompted the latter to increase their attacks inside Afghanistan to dispel the impression that their leader's death had made them weak and divided.

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However, after the fifth Heart of Asia Conference, which was held in Islamabad on December 6th 2015, there is renewed hope that the two countries will soon start working on reducing the mutual lack of trust and resume the peace process with the Taliban. At the conference Pakistan, Afghanistan, the U.S., and China also formed the Quadrilateral Monitoring Committee with the purpose of facilitating and supporting the Afghan reconciliation process. The formation of the committee indicated a form of agreement among these countries on the roadmap for peace talks. The first meeting of the committee was held in Islamabad on January 11th 2016, during which representatives of the four member nations stressed the need for an immediate resumption of peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

Ghani's rapprochement towards Pakistan: implications and challenges

Soon after taking office, Ghani tried to address some of Pakistan's main concerns, including those linked to Indian influence in Afghanistan. Firstly, he delayed the implementation of the strategic partnership agreement with India and also decided against the purchase of heavy weapons from India, which was requested by former president Hamid Karzai during his final months in office. Many in Afghanistan saw this as part of Ghani's efforts to improve relations with Islamabad (Amini, 2015).

Secondly, Ghani sought close ties with Pakistan's security establishment, unlike his predecessor, who preferred to establish warm military and defence ties with India. As a first step, a high-level Afghan delegation led by Ghani visited the general headquarters of the Pakistani army in Rawalpindi in November 2014 (The News, 2014) and also laid a wreath at the Shuhada Monument (Monument of the Martyred). According to Khalid Aziz, an expert on Afghan-Pakistani affairs, Ghani's gesture showed that he "understood the Pakistan military's paramountcy in the oversight of its country's foreign policy with Afghanistan" and wanted it to help Afghanistan achieve political reconciliation with the Afghan Taliban (Aziz, 2015). In January 2015 Ghani also sent six Afghan army cadets to study for 18 months at the military academy in Abbottabad (Assad, 2015). Similarly, amid strong resistance in Afghanistan, a memorandum of understanding was signed between Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and the Afghan National Directorate of Security (NDS) for cooperation in intelligence sharing and coordinated intelligence operations on both sides of the border (Syed, 2015). These measures triggered a strong outcry in Afghanistan that entailed severe criticism of the Ghani government from parliamentarians, civil society groups, and Hamid Karzai, who publicly accused the Ghani administration of treason for signing the intelligence-sharing agreement with Pakistan (Assad, 2015).

Thirdly, Ghani took some specific initiatives to alleviate Pakistani concerns over cross-border terrorism that included increasing pressure on the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants sheltering in

Since his takeover as Afghanistan's president in September 2014, Ghani and his team had been reaching out to the Taliban and Pakistan, as well as China and Saudi Arabia, to achieve political reconciliation in Afghanistan. During his visit to Beijing in October 2014 to attend the Fourth Heart of Asia Conference he stated that peace was his highest priority and proposed to set up a "peace and reconciliation forum" that included representatives from Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the Taliban leadership to discuss how to end the Afghan war



Muree Talks. Credit: www.pakistankakhudahafiz.com

Ghani's rapprochement towards Pakistan: implications and challenges *contd...*

Afghanistan, providing access to ISI officials to investigate anti-Pakistan elements in Afghan jails, and coordinating border patrols (Assad, 2015). Afghan security forces also conducted some operations in Pakistani-Afghan border areas where reportedly Pakistani Taliban militants allegedly involved in the Peshawar army public school attack (December 2014) were hiding.

Fourthly, Ghani struck trade deals with Pakistan soon after coming to power that were anticipated to boost bilateral trade between the two countries from the current \$1.6 billion to \$5 billion by 2017. The agreements included reducing tariffs and granting each other preferential trade status (Dawn, 2015). Ghani also offered Pakistani investors generous access to Afghanistan, including to free industrial zones. A review of news and analyses that appeared in Afghan media in the early days of the National Unity Government suggested that most of Afghanistan's political and security elites and the people in general were not happy about Ghani's pro-Pakistan policy overtures. However, they accepted them as a matter of expediency, hoping that Pakistan could contribute to bringing peace and stability to Afghanistan by influencing the Afghan Taliban to engage in talks with the Afghan government. However, Ghani remained under constant internal pressure because he needed to deliver results quickly. Bilateral pledges made by the two countries, including of non-interference in each other's affairs, and improving border security and counter-terrorism coordination, could not be fully realised. There were two main reasons for this: firstly, Ghani's high-level decisions vis-à-vis Pakistan did not enjoy across-the-board and top-down acceptance in Afghanistan; and, secondly, increasing Taliban attacks after the announcement of Mullah Omar's death increased political and security opposition to Ghani's pro-Pakistan overtures. Currently there appears to be a growing consensus in Afghanistan that Pakistan is largely responsible for the growing insecurity and Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan and that Ghani's policy of reconciliation with Pakistan and the Taliban has failed. Ghani's political popularity and influence have also declined in recent months, particularly after the talks with the Taliban stalled and terrorist attacks increased in the country.

Pakistan's response: facilitation of the Afghan peace process

Since his takeover as Afghanistan's president in September 2014, Ghani and his team had been reaching out to the Taliban and Pakistan, as well as China and Saudi Arabia, to achieve political reconciliation in Afghanistan. During his visit to Beijing in October 2014 to attend the Fourth Heart of Asia Conference he stated that peace was his highest priority and proposed to set up a "peace and reconciliation forum" that included representatives from Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the Taliban leadership to discuss how to end the Afghan war (Ruting, 2015). Many in Afghanistan also saw his visits to Saudi Arabia, particularly the third one in March 2015, as part of the process of advancing peace talks with the Taliban.

Some Afghan parliamentarians believed that Saudi Arabia could use its influence in Pakistan to bring Taliban leaders to the negotiation table (Amiry, 2015). Several weeks before it managed to host the first round of the Murree talks on July 7th 2015, Pakistan had started an attempt to influence the Afghan Taliban leaders to support political reconciliation in Afghanistan. During a joint press conference with the Afghan president in Kabul in May 2015, the Pakistani prime minister condemned the Taliban's summer offensive as an act of terrorism and vowed to eliminate their sanctuaries in Pakistan (Haider & Haider, 2015). He also stated that Afghanistan's enemies were Pakistan's enemies. Apart from this, Pakistan had also conveyed a very clear and categorical message to the Afghan Taliban leaders that they should stop creating trouble in Afghanistan and instead engage in talks with the Afghan government. Pakistani efforts, including those by the Pakistani army and the ISI, played a key role in bringing the Taliban leaders to the negotiation table.

Chinese and U.S. representatives were also present as observers at the Murree talks, while the UN secretary general welcomed the talks. Unlike as in past statements, the Taliban also did not deny or denounce the talks. According to media reports, Afghan government officials demanded a ceasefire, while the Taliban asked for the formation of a national government that would include them, with Pakistan and China as guarantors (Yousaf, 2015). A prominent leader of the Afghan Taliban, Agha Motasim Jan, lauded the Murree talks and said they were significant because the main internal and external stakeholders participated. He said that the participation of the Afghan Taliban leaders Abdul Latif Mansoor and Abbas Akhwand, and the representative of the Haqqani network, Ibrahim Haqqani, suggested that the Taliban leadership was directly involved in the peace process (Daily Express, 2015). But not all Taliban leaders endorsed the talks, with the main opposition coming from some field commanders. Rifts among the Taliban became clearer when the death of Mullah Omar was announced two days before the second round of the Murree talks was to be held on July 31st 2015.

The Afghan government had declared the Murree talks successful because both main parties expressed a wish to bring peace to Afghanistan. Afghan deputy foreign minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai said on his arrival in Kabul after participating in the talks that his government was willing to talk with the Taliban on all matters, including a constitution and the release of detainees, with a view to achieving peace and security in the country. Karzai appeared convinced that those who participated on behalf of the Taliban in Murree were nominated by and represented the Taliban's main leadership, including the Haqqani network (BBC Urdu, 2015). There is also a perception in Pakistan that China is supporting Pakistan's efforts to establish friendly ties with Afghanistan and contribute to the process of political reconciliation there. Before the Murree talks a session of back channel talks between representatives of the Afghan government and the Taliban was held in Urumqi, China on May 19th; the talks were attended by some Afghan Taliban leaders based in Pakistan, including Mullah Abdur Jalil and Mullah Hassan (Ali, 2015).



Flag of Turkistan Islamic Party. Credit: www.wikipedia.org

Pakistan's response: facilitation of the Afghan peace process *contd...*

China's growing interest in actively engaging in the Afghan peace process and influencing Pakistan to establish friendly relations with its neighbours is motivated by its rising stakes in South and Central Asia in terms of security, and trade and economic projects. China is also concerned about Chinese Uighur militants' presence and nexuses with militants in Afghanistan and Pakistan, including the anti-China East Turkestan Islamic Movement and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Some in Afghanistan believed that the Urumqi talks were likely a consequence of increasing Pakistani pressure on the Pakistan-based Afghan Taliban (Osman, 2015a). The realisation is growing among Pakistan's political and military leadership that an unstable and chaotic Afghanistan is detrimental to Pakistan's peace and security. Ultimately, Pakistan's emphasis on achieving political reconciliation in Afghanistan is mainly driven by its fear of growing insecurity in that country, which could impact Pakistan. This perception has strengthened after the launch of military operations in the Pakistani tribal areas, which have pushed most local and international Islamist militant groups to the other side of the Pakistani-Afghan border. While these operations have improved internal security, they have at the same time made the border security situation fragile and increased the threat of cross-border terrorism inside Pakistan. Many Pakistani Taliban groups, including the Mullah Fazlullah-led TTP, have found sanctuary in Afghanistan. After the December 2014 terrorist attack on the army public school in Peshawar, which killed more than 130 children, Pakistani investigators said that the attack was conceived and orchestrated from TTP sanctuaries in Afghanistan.

The recent Taliban offensives in some northern Afghan provinces, including Kunduz, Takhar and Badakhshan, have disturbed both Pakistan and China. Badakhshan shares a border with Pakistan's Chitral district and is also separated from China's Xinjiang province by the Wakhan strip. These Chinese and Pakistani regions are starting points for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Islamic State (IS) affiliates or supporters have also shown their presence in Afghanistan's eastern and northern provinces. Many Central Asian and Chinese Uighur militants who fled from the Pakistani tribal areas due to ongoing military operations have also found shelter in northern Afghanistan. Analysts believe that the growing focus of Taliban (both Afghan and Pakistani), IS and Central Asian militants on the provinces of eastern and northern Afghanistan, which share a border with Pakistan, is a serious cause of worry for Islamabad.

For Pakistan, the Taliban are important Afghan political stakeholders and making them hostile would not only undermine Pakistan's interests in Afghanistan, but also add to the former's internal insecurity. Pakistan supports an Afghan-led and -owned reconciliation process that includes the Taliban, and believes that it cannot use military force against the Taliban and simultaneously try to convince them to engage in talks with the Afghan government (Upadhyay, 2015).

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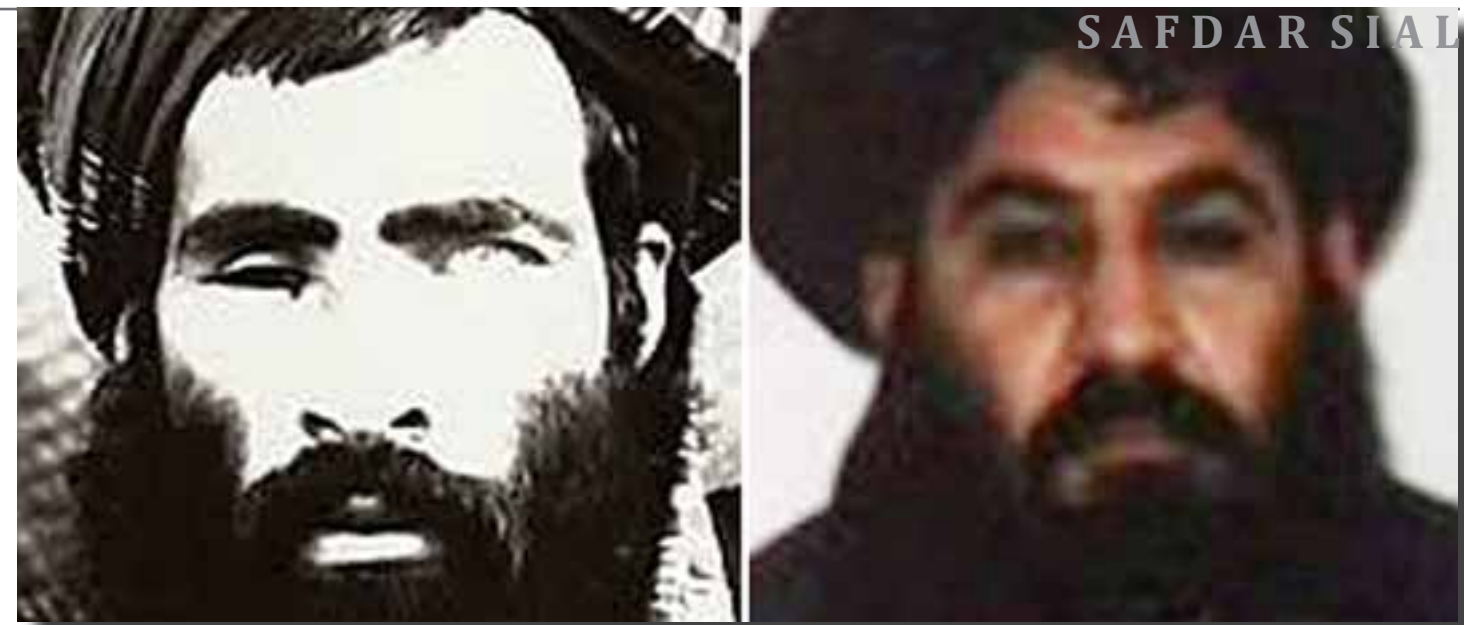
The U.S. and China have also recently declared the Afghan Taliban to be stakeholders in the Afghan political reconciliation process. Pentagon spokesman Jeff Davis said in a news conference in Washington, DC on November 4th 2015 that the U.S. was not conducting counter-terrorism operations against the Taliban and it viewed them as "being an important partner in a peaceful Afghan-led reconciliation process" (Iqbal, 2015). A few days later China's special envoy for Afghanistan, Deng Xijun, was quoted by Pakistani media as describing the Taliban as "one of the main forces in Afghanistan's political arena" (Khan, 2015b). Indeed, since late 2014 China has been manifesting that it is willing to play a key role in the Afghan government's reconciliation with various "political factions, including the Taliban" (Siddique, 2015), thus recognising the latter as one of the main political stakeholders in the country.

The way forward: prospects and challenges

Prospects for achieving political reconciliation in Afghanistan looked very murky until recently, when the Fifth Heart of Asia Conference was held in Islamabad on December 6th 2015. The announcement of Mullah Omar's death in July 2015 had been followed by some negative developments. The Afghan government might have released the news of Omar's death to obtain a form of leverage over the Taliban in the negotiations, but this proved to be counterproductive. Firstly, it derailed the fledgling peace process, exposed and increased internal rifts among the Taliban leaders, and prompted the new Taliban leader, Mullah Akhtar Mansoor, to take a hardline stance to appease the dissident Taliban commanders who did not want to engage in talks with the Afghan government. Consequently, the Taliban reverted to their traditional stance – that they would not hold talks with the government until international forces are completely withdrawn from the country and the Afghan government's agreements in this regard are abrogated – and increased their attacks inside Afghanistan.

Secondly, the announcement of Omar's death took the level of trust between Pakistan and Afghanistan back to that of the pre-Ghani era, when the two countries were caught in the mutual blame game of not doing enough to stop cross-border terrorism and providing sanctuary to the other's militants. Many in Pakistan believed that anti-talks elements within the Afghan government and security agencies that did not want Pakistan to play the main role in the process were behind the announcement. As a consequence, after the derailing of the peace process and increased Taliban attacks, including the one in Kabul on August 7th that killed more than 50 people, even President Ghani started issuing anti-Pakistan statements. A few days after the Kabul attacks the Afghan president said that he no longer wanted Pakistan to bring the Taliban to the negotiation table but instead wanted it to eliminate the Afghan Taliban's sanctuaries on Pakistani soil (Mashal, 2015). First Vice President General Abdul Rashid Dostum, Chief Executive Abdullah and NDS officials followed suit, accusing Pakistan of contributing to insecurity in Afghanistan. Apart from the Taliban attacks, Ghani's growing frustration was also due to the statement issued by the Taliban's new leader, Mullah Mansoor,

After the Taliban's Rahbri Shura (Leadership Council) nominated Omar's deputy, Mullah Akhtar Mansoor, as the new head in late July 2015, many Taliban leaders questioned his legitimacy and credibility, because it was Mansoor's decision to keep the death of Mullah Omar secret for almost two years, which some thought was for his personal interests.



Former Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Omar (left), and a photo released by the group of Mullah Akhtar Mansoor. Photo: EPA

The way forward: prospects and challenges *contd...*

that the Taliban rejected peace talks with the Afghan government and would continue their struggle until the enforcement of sharia in Afghanistan. Ghani also alleged that by allowing the Taliban leaders to hold a gathering outside Quetta to elect their new leader, Pakistan had broken promises made to his government by Pakistani officials (Mashal, 2015).

The Fifth Heart of Asia Conference increased the prospects of the resumption of Afghan talks with the Taliban, as well as of a long-stalled comprehensive dialogue between Pakistan and India, which could also support a constructive engagement between Pakistan and Afghanistan. During the discussions at the conference, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the U.S. and China all called for a renewed effort to open talks with the Afghan Taliban groups willing to reconcile with the government. During his stay in Islamabad for the conference President Ghani also had a meeting with the Pakistani chief of army staff, General Raheel Sharif, who reportedly assured Ghani of Pakistani support for reconciliation with the Taliban. Afghan foreign minister Salahuddin Rabbani expressed the hope after the conference that the peace process would start as soon as possible (Shah & Donati, 2015). However, in a Facebook post on the same day NDS chief Rahmatullah Nabil strongly criticised Pakistan, describing it as an enemy of Afghanistan, and also President Ghani for his rapprochement towards Pakistan. Next day he resigned, citing policy disagreements (Shalizi, 2015). Nabil's resignation came after a Taliban raid on Kandahar airport that claimed 50 lives. A few days later Ghani denied that the NDS chief had been removed from office at Pakistan's request and suggested that peace negotiations with the Taliban might begin within a few weeks. This hope was based on the fact that the U.S. and China had committed to facilitating and supporting an Afghan-led and -owned peace process through the Quadrilateral Monitoring Committee comprising representatives from Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the U.S. The first meeting of the committee was held in Islamabad on January 11th 2016. While acknowledging the roles of their respective countries in the Afghan peace process, the members of the committee emphasised the immediate need for direct talks between representatives of the Afghan government and the Taliban groups in the peace process. Sartaj Aziz, the adviser on foreign affairs to the Pakistani prime minister, underscored the significance of not attaching any preconditions to the peace talks. He also warned that differentiating between reconcilable and irreconcilable Taliban groups at a time when the talks had not even started could be counterproductive (Dawn, 2016).

This suggests that prospects for the resumption of talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban have increased. However, this could take more time than anticipated by the stakeholders, mainly due to growing internal rifts among the Taliban and the prevalent lack of trust between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Also, the Afghan government appears ill-prepared to resume the stalled talks with the Taliban, largely due to increasing Taliban offensives in parts of Afghanistan and growing

internal pressure to carry out operations against the militants, and also because of the lack of political consensus in Afghanistan on this issue. The Taliban still continue to address their internal rifts, which have largely revolved around the issue of leadership after the announcement of Mullah Omar's death. After the Taliban's Rahbri Shura (Leadership Council) nominated Omar's deputy, Mullah Akhtar Mansoor, as the new head in late July 2015, many Taliban leaders questioned his legitimacy and credibility, because it was Mansoor's decision to keep the death of Mullah Omar secret for almost two years, which some thought was for his personal interests. The main opposition to Mansoor's leadership came from Omar's son, Mullah Muhammad Yaqoob, who had been in the camp of Abdul Qayyum Zakir, a senior Taliban military commander who was sacked by Mansoor in April 2014 (Khan, 2015a). Anti-Mansoor Taliban commanders were also not happy over his decision to send a delegation to the peace talks in Murree. However, Yaqoob and his brother, Mullah Abdul Manan, declared allegiance to Mansoor in September 2015, reportedly due to the efforts of religious scholars and clergy who wanted the Taliban to remain united.

A few weeks later dissident Taliban commanders elected Mullah Mohammad Rasool as their leader, thus challenging Mansoor's authority. Abdul Manan Niazi, Mansoor Dadullah and Shir Mohammad Akhundzada were appointed as Rasool's deputies for military affairs and Mullah Baz Mohammad Haris was appointed his deputy for political affairs (BBC News, 2015). According to Taliban sources, Rasool is among the veteran Taliban leaders who spent ten years with Mullah Omar and was one of his trusted supporters (Ahmad, 2015). Soon after its formation the Rasool faction expressed its willingness to engage in the peace process with the Afghan government (Tolo News, 2015), which some thought could raise questions about the faction's credibility among Taliban commanders opposed to the pro-talks Taliban group led by Mansoor. The group also engaged in fierce clashes with pro-Mansoor militants in Zabul province in November 2015, which claimed the lives of over 100 militants from both sides (Hotak, 2015). The clashes between the two groups later spread to Herat province. However, according to a media report, a fatwa (religious decree) signed by about 2,000 religious scholars condemning the infighting and distributed by a prominent Taliban leader, Agha Jan Motasim, has forced the two groups to stop fighting and engage in negotiations (Khan, 2015c).

Afghanistan's militant landscape is becoming quite complex, which could complicate the process of political reconciliation there, besides adding to security threats. Firstly, the Taliban are no longer a monolithic entity, as the Afghan president recently said in an interview with France 24 television in Paris: "There are groups of Taliban and we will engage in talking with some of them and if some of them would like to come through the mediation of Pakistan, that's something that we need to talk about" (The Nation, 2015). Secondly, there is a growing support for IS among local and foreign groups and individuals in Afghanistan. Those in Afghanistan who have pledged allegiance to or supported IS include hardline and dissenting factions/ commanders of the Afghan Taliban who are



The Heart of Asia/Istanbul Process Ministerial Meeting . Credit: www.mfa.gov.af

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inspired by IS's achievements; factions of Hizb-e-Islami Afghanistan; Pakistani Taliban commanders who broke away from the TTP, declared their allegiance to IS and later moved across the border to Afghanistan due to ongoing military operations in the Pakistani tribal areas; factions of Uzbek and other Central Asian militants; and some leaders of the so-called Salafi Taliban based in Afghanistan's Kunar and Nuristan provinces (Sial, 2015). In this context Taliban chief Mansoor's failure to keep the movement united and keep the dissident hardliners in the fold will allow IS and IS-inspired militants in Afghanistan to continue recruiting Taliban militants and commanders. On the other hand, the Taliban's increasing attacks and the capture of Kunduz on September 28th 2015, as well as growing IS influence mainly in Nangarhar, has made the Afghan people suspicious of the incumbent government's and security forces' ability to protect them. After the Kunduz attack President Barack Obama announced a delay in the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan in order to support the Afghan security forces in their fight against the militants. The Taliban are employing urban warfare as a new tactic in their fight and have been able to make significant inroads into several regions, including Kunduz, Khost, Ghazni, Takhar, Faryab, Herat, Farah, Sar-e-Pul, Baghlan, Badakhshan and Helmand. Local experts see the poor performance of the government-supported local tribal militias and Afghan police, lack of coordination among security institutions, and dysfunctional nature of local politics as factors that are providing the Taliban with space to invade these areas (Osman, 2015b).

At the same time the Afghan government, due to its internal weaknesses, is unable to build up its own credibility among the masses and exploit rifts among the Taliban to its advantage. Indeed, the National Unity Government appears to be quite divided internally due to the fragile political system, weak political and security institutions, and the government's reliance on ethnic and tribal warlords. Ghani tried to include intellectuals and technocrats in his government, but finally had to rely on warlords, who when they feel aggrieved tend to work against the government, while some would even like to make secret deals with the Taliban (Safi, 2015). Power-sharing arrangements among key stakeholders further weakened the government instead of strengthening it. Ultimately, an internally weak and irresolute government could not send a strong message to either the Taliban or its own people.

Recommendations

The gaps in Afghanistan's institutional capacity and political preparedness notwithstanding, Pakistan cannot afford to remain indifferent to the security challenges facing Afghanistan because they have a direct bearing on its own security and stability. It is expected that after the Heart of Asia Conference the two countries will start to rebuild the shattered trust between them, and there are some major areas where they can engage to help bring peace and stability to Afghanistan and the region.

India's increased involvement and defence cooperation with Afghanistan could trigger a proxy war in Afghanistan, including on the Pakistani- Afghan border. This will certainly add to Pakistan's India- specific insecurities in Afghanistan. Pakistan should also be mindful that its image among Afghan leaders and the Afghan people as a destabilising factor, as suggested by frequent statements and reports published in the Afghan media, could push Afghanistan and its people further away from Pakistan and closer to India, which in Pakistani eyes could use Afghanistan to create trouble in Pakistan.

Firstly, Pakistan and Afghanistan can engage both bilaterally and through the Quadrilateral Monitoring Committee that was formed at the Heart of Asia Conference to oversee the Afghan peace process in order to step up efforts to resume the Murree peace talks with the Taliban. Mullah Mansoor still leads the main Taliban group and a key leader of the Haqqani network, Sirajuddin Haqqani, is among his deputies. Despite internal rifts in the Afghan Taliban, these two groups still largely control the Taliban movement. As stated earlier, their representatives participated in the first round of talks held in Murree and efforts should be made to bring them back to the negotiation table.

Secondly, the two countries should use the emerging regional geoeconomics to enhance bilateral economic and trade cooperation, which will not only help them improve bilateral ties, but also open a new era of economic development. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is planned to provide links to Afghanistan, India and Iran, and both China and Pakistan believe that Afghanistan should benefit from the multi-billion dollar regional connectivity project. Also, the leaders of these countries inaugurated the construction of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline on December 13th 2015, which is expected to be completed towards the end of 2018 at a cost of \$10 billion (Moosakhail, 2015). Projects like TAPI, which bring together India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, can also open up the way to functionalising Afghan-Indian transit trade through Pakistan.

Thirdly, because Pakistan and Afghanistan face common security threats, they should create some form of joint border security and coordination mechanism. For this to happen they first need to coordinate their threat perceptions and build bilateral trust. Although many believe that Afghan leaders use the issue of the Durand Line as a form of political rhetoric, it still has a bearing on attempts to enhance border security and coordination through such methods as installing biometric systems and fencing, and digging trenches.

Finally, instead of engaging in a zero-sum game vis-à-vis Afghanistan, Pakistan and India should see their respective ties with that country more realistically in the emerging dynamics of bilateral and multilateral geo-economic engagements in the region. India's increased involvement and defence cooperation with Afghanistan could trigger a proxy war in Afghanistan, including on the Pakistani-Afghan border. This will certainly add to Pakistan's India- specific insecurities in Afghanistan. Pakistan should also be mindful that its image among Afghan leaders and the Afghan people as a destabilising factor, as suggested by frequent statements and reports published in the Afghan media, could push Afghanistan and its people further away from Pakistan and closer to India, which in Pakistani eyes could use Afghanistan to create trouble in Pakistan. Apparently, this realisation, along with the internal security implications of a chaotic Afghanistan, makes the case for Pakistan to support intra-Afghan political reconciliation.

The Buddha and the Christ in their time, and Gandhi and Mandela in ours, are far from weak figures. They stand out magnificent in the serenity of their choices and the strength of their gentle compassion. Theirs is not a humility that is pusillanimity. They rejoice in their gifts while also acknowledging the precarity of the human condition.

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Philosopher, Priest, Author
Direzione Generale Opere
Don Bosco, Rome.

DR IVO COELHO

HUMILITY AND THE EGO

In the ancient Greek world, as represented by Plato and Plutarch, humility suggests the condition of someone held in low esteem by self and others. In the Old Testament, the humble are the little people, unfortunate sufferers, discreet, self-effacing, and reserved within their community. Against this background, therefore, it is interesting to find that Thomas Aquinas relates humility to magnanimity on one side and to pride on the other – which is of course, the Aristotelian technique of defining virtue by relating it to its extremes on one side and on the other.

Thus Aquinas is able to say that it is not against humility to aim at high actions worthy of praise, for magnanimity, 'greatness of soul,' is itself a virtue, one that implies a certain aspiration of the spirit to great things. Humility, then, does not mean running away from actions that might win praise and recognition. "People are praiseworthy when they despise recognition by refusing to act meanly to gain it, and when they do not esteem it too highly. But it would be deplorable if they despised recognition by not bothering to perform acts worthy of it. In this way magnanimity is concerned with recognition, in that it is eager to do actions worthy of it, but not so as to overvalue recognition by men." (Summa Theologiae II-II 129, ad 3m) The truly humble person has also largeness of soul: she does not hesitate to undertake acts worthy of praise; the point is that she will not stoop to meanness in obtaining recognition, and will have a healthy moderation in her esteem for human praise.

The magnanimous person of course runs many risks: the risk of ambition, or the excessive search for fame and honour; presumption, or relying on oneself for something beyond one's powers, not seeking God's help; vainglory, or seeking personal glory or display of one's virtues. But there is also the opposite of magnanimity, which is pusillanimity, or falling short of one's capability, refusing to extend oneself to achieve an aim that is commensurate with one's own powers.

True humility, then, is founded on truth: a realistic self-estimate, one that is true and realistic also in this sense, that it gives due recognition to the author and source of one's capacities, God. Humility, then, is deeply allied to prayer.

In the Thomist tradition, however, humility remains a human, not a theological, virtue. It is first in the order of time, in that it clears obstacles to the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. It is these latter that are superior to humility in the order of perfection, because it is they that bring us directly into contact and communion with God.

It would be interesting to ask whether humility understood in this way is equivalent to the absence of ego, *anatta*, selflessness of the Oriental traditions.

A theistic tradition such as that represented in the Bhagavad Gita does distinguish *niskama karma*, disinterested action, from the love bestowed by God on the human being, and the human response to this love.

In a non-theistic tradition such as classical Buddhism, instead, it is *anatta* or selflessness that seems to be the superior and more extensive category: it is the selfless one, the Enlightened One, who is full of *karuna*, compassion. In nirvana, there is no place for self, selfishness, and ego. And this is, with all probability, the great point made by the Buddha: leave aside all metaphysical speculation, and concentrate on suffering, and on the way out of suffering. Marvellously, in his discovery of this way, he discovered also the great virtue, *karuna*. *Anatta* is deeply and wonderfully related to *karuna*. True selflessness leads to deep compassion for those who are still embroiled in the vicissitudes of *I* and *mine*.

In the light of this, what might we make of Nietzsche's attacks on the weakness promoted by Christianity and other religions, on their exaltation of the humble and the defenceless as a sort of revenge of the weak on the strong, in an attempt to give the powerful a bad conscience? One has to make one's choice, I guess. And perhaps Nietzsche was simply reacting against degenerate understandings of humility. The Buddha and the Christ in their time, and Gandhi and Mandela in ours, are far from weak figures. They stand out magnificent in the serenity of their choices and the strength of their gentle compassion. Theirs is not a humility that is pusillanimity. They rejoice in their gifts while also acknowledging the precarity of the human condition. Jesus spends nights in prayer and communion with his Father, from whom he receives all things, and is able to walk tall and free even at the moment of his trial and humiliation. The Buddha teaches us the secret of *vipassana*, and is able to smile serenely at the Brahmin who throws insults at him. Prayer, as Raimundo Panikkar has explained well, is related to our precariousness, our fragility, as becomes so evident in the Italian word for it, *preghiera*. Opposite to it is the inability to bow before the Throne, as reported by Carl Jung in one of his strange dreams. This is the ultimate choice, the ultimate root of true humility and *anatta*: to bow or not. It is a Luciferian choice.

Dr Great Sykes speaks on '*Goddesses, Empresses, Sphinxes: Matriarchy at the Crossroads to Patriarchy*', **Socialist History Society Public Meeting**, Saturday 7th May 2016 2.00pm, MARX MEMORIAL LIBRARY, 37a Clerkenwell Green EC1R 0DU, near tube Farringdon. **Free to attend – All Welcome.**

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ANDROMACHE FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS: WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM ANTIQUITY?



DR GRETA SYKES INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION/UCL, LONDON

The place of women in society is a useful indicator of the extent of equality in that society suggests Wilkinson (2005). Concerns about stagnant (the West) or rising levels of inequality experienced by women globally requires that we look carefully at models of societies in the past and the historical development of male and female power and status differences. The negative impact of low status or lack of power on wellbeing has been sufficiently illustrated by Oliver James in 'Affluenza' (2007). Engels' (1972) essay on 'The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State' brought about a revolution of thinking at the turn of the previous century regarding the place of women in society. Anthropologists, historians, archaeologists and psychologists have since then engaged in debates and research to explore the contribution antiquity made to our understanding of gender roles and a male dominated world by querying the assumption that human societies have always been controlled by men. Goddesses, Angels, witches – which identity do we choose to regain the power and status we deserve?

In this essay I explore some of the key points that are made by researchers of inequality leading to the proposition that the first class struggle in history (Engels) can be won by women through making 'taken for granted knowledge' transparent and developing an epistemology of female power and control. Finally interventions and strategies are suggested that can assist psychologists to use their awareness to guide their clients towards better mental and emotional health through reaching for equality.



Introduction

Nobel Prize winning biologist Tim Hunt described female scientists as lachrymose romantics. After his words, spoken at a conference in Seoul went viral he was asked to resign by the University College London. In a dialogue with Ingrid Tschol (Die Zeit) she criticised this move by saying it did nothing for the rights of women:

‘The gender bias is wide spread – also in the sciences. Tim Hunt is being made a scapegoat. It won’t make any difference to the general malaise (2015)’.

Recent research suggests that the level of underreporting of crimes against women is at 70%. These facts bring to our attention how fragile the rights of girls and women are in spite of the achievements of feminism and anti-discriminatory legislation. Exploring the present nature and extent of equality for women seems therefore to be imperative. Equal pay and equal employment opportunities are vital aspects of equality, however, they do not necessarily translate into equal power and control or, for that matter, a vision of future goals to be aimed for. When we face the reality of women today it does not seem too farfetched to suggest that only a seismic paradigm shift and a reinvigorated epistemology can lead us out of the present impasse which has not changed noticeably during the last thirty years.

In a recent parliamentary debate politicians Jenny Willcott, Elizabeth Truss and Chi Onwurah expressed concern that the ‘pinkification’ of toys for girls was adding to gender inequality in careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Fine, New Scientist (N. S.) 31.3.14). The gendering of toys for profit is easy to spot when you go into a toyshop. Pink is for girls, other colours are for boys. Action toys, construction sets, vehicles and all manner of weapons are presented for boys to choose from, whereas toys signifying domesticity and beautification are in the girls department, polarising children’s interests into stereotypes. While boys’ toys prepare them for action, power and the occupation of space, girls’ toys prepare them for domesticity. As psychologists we are aware of the powerful influence of early learning and should therefore be concerned about any return to inequality through the backdoor of consumerism and toyshops.

Women around the world

Inequality for women is a less visible problem in developed countries where women form half of the workforce and therefore can be economically independent. Yet, low paid workers are mainly female (the latest statistics puts them at 22% lower on average than men). In the corridors of power inequality is unmistakable. In the UK House of Parliament there are only 148 women out of a total of 650 MPs.

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During 2014 the German Parliament passed legislation specifying that 30% of staff in top boardroom positions must be women from 2016. The perceived need for such an initiative is a clear indication that just under a hundred years after women got the vote in Germany gender equality has not been achieved. In an analysis of why so many women have failed to maintain their top position the commentators come to the conclusion that women tend to be hired when major problems such as cuts in staffing have to be executed. Unsurprisingly such work entails much conflict, strain and blame. It was argued that men can hold on to their position because of the male network around them which women tend not to have (Die Zeit, 22.11.14). In other words power and the networks of control remain largely out of women’s reach. This is also visible in our own profession where a low ratio of men to women during initial training nevertheless produces a higher ratio of men in positions of power.

Globally discrimination, inequality and violence towards women are ubiquitous. Women at American universities face the threat of rape on a daily basis. Female genital mutilation takes place even here in the UK. In India every fifth woman becomes a victim of rape. In Nigeria the Islamic group Boko Haram abducted over two hundred and seventy young females. Most of them have not been seen since. Women captured by the IS Islamic state are sold for the equivalent of £27 into prostitution. Continuing practices of misogyny take place in Saudi-Arabia where women are not allowed to move about without the permission of a male member of the family. In February 2015 a conference entitled ‘Women in Society’ at Qassim university (Saudi-Arabia) included not a single female participant. Women are not allowed into Mosques together with men. In Jerusalem women are not allowed to pray at the Wailing Wall. Every day women who attempt to pray at the wall are harassed and arrested by police. In many Islamic countries women have to hide their hair and even their face.

Women in the UK

The widespread use of women to sell consumer goods from chocolate to motorcars goes hand in hand with a stereo-typing of male and female roles, creating subliminal messages about what is expected, in terms of such personal things as body size (size ten), personality (airhead) and preference for macho men. Macleod comments (N. S. 14.2.15):

“Our preferences are personal and flexible, shaped by factors such as our environment, social status and economic prospects. It is time to question the stereo-types and rewrite the rulebook (p42).” Role models act as indicators in a society for the type of prospect a young woman may aspire to as she grows up. The TV screens present men in action roles both in politics and on the football pitches. They occupy large spaces, whereas women are usually portrayed in small spaces, such as the home or the garden.

In the year of 1915 when Albert Einstein developed the theory of relativity a woman called Amalia Noether developed one of the most pertinent theorems about the hidden rules of nature: Symmetries give rise to conservation laws. However, hardly anyone is familiar with her name, although her achievements when described are praised as highly as Einstein's. She worked at Goettingen University but received no financial remuneration for her efforts.

Women in the UK *contd...*

The notorious predominance of young men working in the city of London stock market briefly reached media attention after the market crash in 2008, when it received criticism regarding the testosterone driven risk behaviour that may have added to the collapse of the banking system. The struggle to include women bishops has nearly torn the Church of England apart. Nevertheless, the first woman bishop was appointed in December 2014. The Nobel price given for excellence since 1901 has been awarded to men 94.5 % of the time. This means only 47 women received it. Even in countries that espouse the rights of women to equality the aim to fulfil that demand has yet to be achieved. Neff et al (2007):

"Despite gains made by the women's movement over the last few decades, inequality in the power and status accorded to males and females is still a prevalent part of our cultural and social landscape (p 682)."

Are women different by nature?

Claims that women are different from men and therefore cannot achieve the same roles as men are refuted by girls' educational success. The 2014 GCSE results show that girls have pulled ahead of boys in every subject apart from maths. The poor achievements of gender equality in academic science were highlighted in the Psychologist (December 2014). A new report on women in the sciences indicates that the mathematically intense sciences showed that women were underrepresented in university course and post graduate programmes. In 2011 women received only 25% of GEEMP (geoscience, engineering, economics maths computer science) Bachelor degrees. The results of the report apparently suggest somewhat complex trends of certain movements towards egalitarian experiences. Valian, professor in psychology at Hunters College, CUNY comments:

"(The report) ignores the wealth of experimental data showing that both men and women under-rate women and overrate men in professional settings... the subtle daily examples in real life where women's professional contributions are not recognised – including the failure to invite them as keynote speakers at conferences and data showing that female and male students are sensitive to cues indicating whether they will be welcome in a field (p905)."

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achievements when described are praised as highly as Einstein's. She worked at Goettingen University but received no financial remuneration for her efforts.

Epidemiological studies (Wilkinson, 2005) in the developed countries have revealed the type of factors that determine our lives, once material privation has declined. These include the nature of early childhood experience, the amount of anxiety and worry we suffer, the quality of our social relationships, the amount of control we have over our lives and our social status. Our health and wellbeing is determined by these psychosocial factors which impinge on the way we think, feel and act. Fine (2010) comments:

"...those gender gaps can close or even disappear depending on social context, place and historical period... we are still at the beginning of the journey of understanding how the brain enables the mind... The sheer complexity of the brain, together with our assumptions about gender, lend themselves beautifully to over-interpretation and precipitous conclusions (p 900)."

Rather than speaking of nature we need to study the cultural, psychosocial context in which women live and how the social construction of their relative powerlessness has come to be the dominant paradigm in society, often expressed in their economic status and the lack of space they inhabit. Similar to institutional racism institutional sexism lives on subtly in the minds of people without them necessarily being aware of it. However, when language is used it is likely to contain the unconscious perceptions that determine the continuation of the paradigm of powerlessness.

Economics and culture

Epidemiological studies make the causes of discrimination transparent by showing clear links between poverty and lack of rights.

"Although rich countries have continued to get richer, measures of wellbeing have ceased to rise. Since the seventies there has been no increase in average wellbeing despite rapid increases in wealth" (Wilkinson, 2005 p6).

The differences between the 70s and 2014 are poignantly visible in our high streets. There were no nail studios or hairdressers at every street corner. Shoe shops offered comfortable shoes and very few high heels. In a restless culture of competition women endure pain to have body parts puffed up, tugged, cut off, enlarged or minimised.



Economics and culture *contd...*

Ever higher heels and shorter skirts are offered in shops. At the recent Cannes film festival women without high heels were not allowed to walk on the red carpet.

“Most of the evidence behind this interpretation has to do with the indication that more unequal societies have a more aggressively male culture... “More unequal societies are tougher, more competitive, dog-eats-dog societies” (Wilkinson 2005, p219).

Wilkinson argues that whether a society is more ‘clannish’ with strong family ties leading to honour killings, vendettas and the sacrifice of dishonoured women “or whether they are closer to the social breakdown found in the concrete jungle of modern urban societies it is easy to see why they are unlikely to lead to improvements in the status of women. When competition between men is intensified, women lose out” (Wilkinson, 2005, p219).

Gender, sexuality and economics

One of the cornerstones of discrimination through the ages since antiquity has always focused on women’s reproductive and sexual capabilities. Graves (1955) describes how women ruled in ancient Greece. Men were unaware of their role in reproduction. The fertility of women was seen as akin to the fertility of nature generally, empowered by earth, sun, wind and water. Women’s sexual behaviour was then their own property.

Price (Brunel University) found in a study that a correlation exists between female economic independence and acceptance of promiscuous behaviour:

“As the gender pay gap has decreased in the UK and other Western countries, women have become more financially independent; the relative costs of promiscuity versus pair bonding have gone down...” (Macleod, NS 14.2.15, p45).

Boak (2013) describes how women came under increasing scrutiny during WW1 for perceived sexually immoral activities involving French prisoners of war and prostitution to gain an income.

“The war had, however, challenged bourgeois standards of sexual behaviour, and the hyperinflation further eroded the belief in a woman’s chastity before marriage which would provide for her economically and in which the paternity of any inheriting offspring had to be beyond doubt” (Boak, 2013, p219).

Wilkinson argues that whether a society is more ‘clannish’ with strong family ties leading to honour killings, vendettas and the sacrifice of dishonoured women “or whether they are closer to the social breakdown found in the concrete jungle of modern urban societies it is easy to see why they are unlikely to lead to improvements in the status of women. When competition between men is intensified, women lose out” (Wilkinson, 2005, p219).

At no point in history has male sexuality ever been an issue for debate; however those same entitlements in relation to women run like a destructive current through history and societies from the time of ancient Greece to the attacks on women in many countries today. Currently five women are killed daily in Turkey by mainly male family members. Thus, male dominated society assumes ownership of a woman’s sexuality, a fact that has been interpreted by Marxist researchers as being indicative of the economics of private property, leading in turn to the monetarisation of people, artefacts and values.

The correlation between economic independence and sexual and reproductive freedom for women stands in sharp contrast to the perception of woman as empty vessel for the production of offspring who are to inherit wealth and possessions. To achieve this focus a woman’s sexuality needs to be annulled in favour of her role as mother of her husband’s children. Her sexuality needs to be possessed by a man. The BBC film of Hilary Mantel’s *Wolf Hall* illustrates this situation very well. Henry chases his women on the basis of his perceived need to have a son. If she cannot deliver one, he is found another woman. She does not count as a person, instead she is an empty vessel designed for procreation and his property to dispose of, if not required.

Throughout history speculations and definitions of women’s role and place in society have maintained an ambivalence whereas the role of men as ruler, chief, captain of industry or otherwise person in command with its associated aspects of power, territory and respect have acquired a position of ‘taken for granted knowledge’ (Kelly, 1993). Robertson in his article ‘How power affects the brain’ calls the resultant emotional fallout the ‘winner effect’ (The Psychologist, March 2013):

“Even small induced power levels increase hypocrisy, moral exceptionalism, ego-centricity and lack of empathy for others (p187).”

Not surprisingly we are witnessing such behaviour regularly in the media and politics, as well as at work. Rather than being innate factors the behaviour that arises out of such emotions is socially induced and maintained to the disadvantage of women and ultimately of men as well. A self-perpetuating vicious cycle of corrosive expectations is thus installed. The effect of the current stalemate in achieving the goal of equality can be seen in the global crisis of the environment, the neglect of nature and the catastrophe of families, mainly women and children, having to flee from war zones. The voice of women has been largely silenced. The result is an on-going crisis of morality in which ‘taken for granted knowledge’ guides our governments in day to day decisions, which deny the past as well as the future. In order to envisage the future we need to know the past. It is therefore not enough to ask for equal pay and equal work opportunities women.

“But the male-female conflict subsumes the other two, for while it maintains its own emotive function in the dramatization of human concerns, it provides too the central metaphor which ‘sexualises’ the other issues and attracts them into its magnetic field” (Zeitlin in Wagner-Hasel, 1989, p225). Engels (1972) declared the struggle between matriarchy and patriarchy as the first class struggle in human history.

Gender, sexuality and economics *contd...*

Instead it is necessary to regain a vision of women’s inherent strength. We need to build on an epistemology of power and control and become vigilant about stratagems that attempt to place women in a ‘quiet corner’ in society. We need to learn to occupy large spaces, literally and metaphorically outside the domestic sphere. We need to learn from history and the examples of powerful women it offers. There is no better place to begin this task than by studying the ancient Greek myths. The most famous is the Oresteia which offers insight into how a matriarchic/matristic society changed into a patriarchic/patristic one. So examples from Aeschylus and Homer will need to suffice here.

Matriarchy, myth and classical antiquity

Myths are early human narratives told and retold by later generations changing them in their course and interpreting them to fit their perspective on society. Warburg (2011) declared in his study of Indian mask dances:

“The fairy story-like thinking of these dancers is a step on the way towards our natural science knowledge... It is, if you will, a Darwinism through a mythical relationship (p 35).”

Thus, myths from antiquity can be viewed as early forms of philosophy and sociology that can guide human behaviour. The concept of a matriarchy has been understood by Marxists as synonymous with an egalitarian type society, not a society ruled by women. For the sake of the deliberations in this essay this meaning has been adopted.

“True myth may be defined as the reduction to narrative shorthand of ritual mime performed on public festivals” (Graves, 1955, p12).

From Robert Graves exploration of the Greek myths Jung developed his theory of the archetypes and the collective unconscious. He declares what was myth in Greece began as ritual in Egypt, thus residing his psychology within the Vygotskian social construction of reality. The initiative to an entirely new epistemology of gender relations came from Bachofen in Switzerland in 1861 and Lewis H. Morgan (1877), the founder of American anthropology. Since then the debate over the existence or nonexistence of early matristic societies has raged and enraged successive generations of anthropologists, ethnographer, historians and psychologists. Bachofen contributed a ‘unique creation of a mythology in our time (Wieacker in: Wagner-Hasel, 1992). Johann Jakob Bachofen’s ‘Das Mutterrecht’ showed that in the codes of Roman law vestigial features can be recognised of a matrilineal order of inheritance”



states Campbell in his Foreword to Marija Gimbutas’ ‘The Language of the Goddess, 1989). Morgan, basing his explorations on Bachofen’s extensive work defined the model of family he found as based on consanguinity in which each child has several fathers and mothers. Such early societies had no knowledge of how procreation took place and lived in polygamous and polyandrous groups. Robert Graves described how women were revered for their power to procreate. Ownership of children for the sake of inheritance was unknown for thousands of years. Out of the wealth of studies that exist in the field Aeschylus’ Oresteia stands out as offering a short guide into the spirit of the Greek mind at the cusp of change from matriarchy to patriarchy. For him civilisation is the ultimate product of conflict between opposing forces, such as the Olympian forces over the chthonic, the Greek over the Barbarian and the male over the female. Zeitlin comments:

“But the male-female conflict subsumes the other two, for while it maintains its own emotive function in the dramatization of human concerns, it provides too the central metaphor which ‘sexualises’ the other issues and attracts them into its magnetic field” (Zeitlin in Wagner-Hasel, 1989, p225). Engels (1972) declared the struggle between matriarchy and patriarchy as the first class struggle in human history.

The Oresteia traces the evolution of early Greek civilisation by placing the polis at the centre and endowing it with the power to coordinate human, natural and divine forces. The events follow a straightforward story: Woman rises up against male authority. By slaying her husband and choosing her own sexual partner she shatters the social norms of the patriarchic/patristic culture. Her son slays her in allegiance with father/husband. In turn he is pursued by the Erinyes. After the matricide Orestes’ ritual rebirth takes place at the ‘omphalos’ (womb) in Delphi. At an earlier stage Omphale was queen of Lidia in Asia Minor. She was dressed in lion skin and carried an olive-wood club, as can be seen on a Roman mosaic in Spain from the third century. Over the course of time, the ‘omphalos’ was appropriated by the rising patriarchy, when Apollo received it as a birthday gift. Thus, Orestes is reborn from the male.

“Cross-cultural ethnographical data confirms that one of the most consistent themes of puberty rites is, in fact, the notion that the first birth from the female is superseded by a second birth, this time from the male” (Zeitlin, 1989, p243).

As Aeschylus plays proceed Clytemnestra, the female principle in the first play, rebels against the masculine regime by asserting her sexuality. By the time when the last play is enacted her representatives, the Erinyes become mere archaic, primitive creatures, whereas the male principle is portrayed in the young god Apollo, champion of society, conjugality and progress. The shift from matristic to patristic society has been concluded.

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Matriarchy, myth and classical antiquity cont...

In the story of Andromache the famous departing scene between her and Hector Homer includes Andromache speaking seven verses with advice on military tactics (Ilias, fourth song 433-439):

“Stand your people near the fig tree where it is easy to move up and down to the town and the wall that can be climbed...(Pomeroy, 1975). Later researchers often omit these seven verses on the grounds that a woman could not have given military advice. Andromache (whose name means ‘the one who fights men’) was, nevertheless, in a very good position to give such advice due to the reign of women at the beginning of the Trojan War. Only by keeping those same verses in the text can Hector’s reply of refusing her advice and telling her off be understood.

An example from a society that continues to live along matristic gender relationships are the Minangkabau in Sumatra. Minangkabau women cook and wash up, the surprised visitor found out. However, they are the ones who own the land and the rice fields. Their daughters inherit the wealth from their mothers. When a wedding takes place the bridegroom moves into the family home of the bride and from then on belongs to her family. The men only have caretaker roles. They hold meetings, but the decisions have been previously agreed by the women.

The above offers a brief glimpse of the powerful roles women can hold or have inhabited in antiquity, when they were revered and participated at all levels of society. They are indicative of the postulation that human society and perceptions of gender and sexuality have evolved, similar to nature, through stages and that myths play an important part in informing about our anthropological past. The assumption that Abraham and the patriarchic form of social organisation has reigned since the beginning of human existence needs to be discarded. The ancient myths suggest an affirmation of women as full and equal persons and built into a revitalised epistemology to inform a more assertive and powerful paradigm within which to view the place of women.

What psychologists can learn from antiquity

The current situation concerning gender equality has been stagnating for years and in some parts of the world is arguably deteriorating. Despite gains made by the women’s movement over the last few decades, inequality and low status still dominate the lives of most women. One is tempted to argue that psychology ought to be in the forefront of exposing the ‘frontiers’ in our minds, yet it is not. To quote an example the divisional journal of Educational and Child Psychology last included a paper on gender inequality in 1993.

Liz Kelly’s article ‘What are little girls and little boys made of, the gendering of childhood’ (vol 10(3) p12-21) studied young children and their experience with toys. Kelly declares that there has been a long tradition in psychology to take male behaviour as the norm, as a kind of ‘taken for granted knowledge’ which includes ‘gendered responses to children. Kelly declares that there has been a long tradition in psychology to take male behaviour as the norm, as a kind of ‘taken for granted knowledge’ which includes ‘gendered responses to children.

Girls toys are “small, familial and can be played with quietly in a confined space” (Kelly, 1993, p13).

“When these resources are structured through dichotomous gender stereo-typing it makes play between boys and girls problematic...the outcome of these social processes are gendered psychologies, aptitudes and perceptions...” (Kelly, 1993, p13).

The implication of Kelly’s findings indicate that as psychologists we urgently need awareness training of the gendered psychology in our workplaces, our offices, the classroom we enter, the work and play that is offered to children and the attitudes and perceptions of teaching and support staff. The ‘taken for granted knowledge’ is the invisible frontier in our heads and in our language that continues to make inequality in our society into an accepted and acceptable paradigm. Shifting it will require a constant questioning of ‘taken for granted knowledge’ and substituting it with language and actions that free women from all forms of subjugation, be it verbal, emotional, intellectual or spatial. We have to actively seek to participate in command and decision making domains in society. We will have to work to come out the ‘quiet corner’ ourselves and support girls and female teaching staff in our schools to do the same. Our work should include raising awareness of the need for women to own their bodies, both in terms of reproduction as well as sexuality. Our own perception of ourselves as being powerful, being in control of our inner and outer space, being visible and being heard can then be translated into actions, behaviours and a language that can give hope and confidence to our clients, be they families and children, work colleagues or organisations. The vision of the strong and confident behaviour of Andromache could lead us on the way.

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A special thanks to Dr Antje Missbach



THOMAS BROWN

NEW COLOMBO PLAN SCHOLAR FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE
BASED AT UNIVERSITAS KATOLIK PARAHYANGAN IN BANDUNG.

Resisting limbo - Self-organisation amongst refugees in Indonesia

Even before the school comes into view, I hear the shrieks of delight of children at play. As I enter the gates I see parents chatting with one another while maintaining a watchful eye on their little ones. Teachers brainstorm about lesson plans for the next day, and talk excitedly about their upcoming soccer game on the weekend. Administrators sit outside their humid office looking frayed at the end of another day. These are all the familiar sights and sounds of a school anywhere in the world. Yet this is no ordinary school, it is a learning centre for refugees. What's more, it is not run by a multinational NGO in a dusty refugee camp, but rather a project initiated and operated by refugees themselves in the rolling green hills of West Java in Indonesia.

The Australian government's recent closed border immigration policies have transformed Indonesia's role in global refugee movement. Once largely used as a transit point on a clandestine journey to Australia, the country now hosts upwards of thirteen thousand refugees and asylum seekers. Indonesia is not willing to integrate them, and they face a long and uncertain wait to be resettled to another country by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). As a result of Australian immigration policy and global events such as the Syrian refugee crisis, these waits are increasing in length.

The Indonesian education system is in theory accessible to refugees, but this has only been realised in a handful of cases, even with the support and lobbying of refugee advocacy groups. This leaves the vast majority of the estimated 1221 asylum seeker and refugee children residing in Indonesia without an education. Responding to this, refugees in West Java have taken the initiative to open a number of education hubs that cater for the specific needs of their community.

Self-starting education hubs

West Java hosts an estimated two thousand asylum seekers and refugees, including a large number of families with children. Those living in this area are predominantly ethnic Hazaras from Afghanistan and Pakistan, fleeing conflict and a long history of persecution as a sectarian and ethnic minority. I spent almost a month living in refugee communities last year, conducting field research whilst based at Universitas Katolik Parahyangan in Bandung. I was drawn to the communities after hearing of the Cisarua Refugee Learning Centre [www.cisarualearning.com] (CRLC), an education hub in the hills of West Java. It was only once I reached out and arranged a visit that I realised this centre was established and operated entirely by refugees. Four men initiated the project in August 2014, which quickly attracted the attention of outside supporters and a benefactor group was founded in Australia to support the centre. I soon discovered that this was not the only refugee-led initiative in West Java, with another opening at the beginning of 2015 in the form of the Refugee Learning Nest [<http://www.refugeelearningnest.com/>] (RLN). This project was initiated by the Swiss NGO, Same Skies [<http://www.sameskies.org/>], which financed the establishment of the school and provides ongoing training and capacity-building through site visits. While I was conducting my research in the area a third education hub, the Refugee Learning Centre [www.facebook.com/Refugee-Learning-Center-551015401718651] (RLC), opened and has recently reached a partnership agreement with Same Skies.

Cumulatively, the three centres now serve almost two hundred primary to junior high school aged children. They follow a similar model, with a team of administrators (usually male) and teachers (usually female) sourced from within the local refugee community, and are funded by modest fees charged to parents that are supplemented by their benefactor groups. The curriculum resembles what you might see anywhere in the world, but with a distinct focus on English. Learning English is a priority amongst refugees, who are likely to be eventually resettled in an English-speaking country such as New Zealand, Canada or America. Not only will having good English enable faster integration with a new host community, it is also perceived to strengthen the chances of being accepted for resettlement.



The Refugee Learning Nest Team. Credit: Thomas Brown.

Forming a community

As well as formal classes for children, there are a number of community activities operating through the learning centres. Some offer English and handicraft classes for women, and one even has a weekly Judo class taught by an enthusiastic Iranian woman. However, the most popular activity is soccer, which is adored by students and teachers alike. Each centre has a coach who facilitates training sessions as well as matches. There is a strong focus on gender diversity, and some females have had their first ever opportunity to play soccer in Indonesia. These activities act as community gatherings not only amongst the participants but also spectators, who gather to watch the soccer matches. The benefit of such activities on the mental wellbeing of those involved should not be underestimated. It's evident from the excited cries, applause and the shrill sound of whistles heard at a match that soccer provides a brief but welcome escape from their worries and anxieties.

'Insider' community development

This self-initiated or 'insider' community development is an emerging area of interest amongst refugee literature, and one that challenges the common perception of refugees as powerless victims resigned to a protracted wait in a difficult situation. It is, of course, entirely logical that any community would seek to empower themselves by honing their skills and experiences to improve their quality of life. What is impressive is that refugees are able to do this despite an unclear protection framework and unpredictable treatment by authorities, and with few resources.

Unlike in Malaysia, where there is a long precedent for self-organised refugee groups, and even UNHCR grants available to facilitate them, in Indonesia there had been no such groups prior to the establishment of the refugee schools in West Java. The legal framework for refugees living in Indonesia is unclear, and their treatment by Indonesian authorities is often unpredictable. In the face of these uncertainties, refugees in West Java have banded together in an attempt to develop their community and return their lives to some form of normality. In addition to providing an education to children who would otherwise go without, these initiatives also have a range of additional benefits to the community at large. The schools act as community hubs and a place for socialisation, and give structure and hope to people's lives.



Students attend a class at the Refugee Learning Centre. Credit: RLC

Members of the community are often called upon to lend their skills, whether in cleaning, maintenance or construction activities, and community members are heavily involved in decision making within the schools through regular meetings. The school administrators and teachers are able to put their skills to use and make an impact on their community, whilst gaining experience that may be useful in securing employment once resettled.

Beyond education

Besides the learning centres, another notable refugee-led initiative operates in West Java. The Refugee Women Support Group Indonesia [www.facebook.com/Refugee-Women-Support-Group-Indonesia-718756051526917] is run by a young refugee woman, and has a focus on textiles and jewellery making. The group conducts workshops on women's issues, including health and hygiene, reproductive health, sexual and gender-based violence and family planning. Most recently, they have started Bahasa Indonesia classes for women and children.

All these examples of refugee-led initiatives point to a strengthening of community feeling amongst those living in limbo in Indonesia. In addition to the formal refugee initiatives, a strong culture of mutual support has emerged. Many refugees who have a good standard of English travel to private houses to teach groups of adults or adolescents who are over the age serviced by the refugee schools. Often these students themselves will in turn teach younger or less experienced individuals. Sporting activities are another well-established pastime amongst the community, and most men who typically have little to do otherwise, play soccer or 'work out' together every day. There are a number of indoor soccer facilities and gyms, which are used almost exclusively by refugees and asylum seekers, proving stimulus to the local economy.

Upon entering the lives of people who have endured and continue to face unimaginable hardship, I expected to be weighed down by feelings of anxiety, perhaps even despair. Instead I was inspired by their patience, strength and humour in the face of uncertainty and difficulty. Against the odds, they work to transform their experience and serve their community, in an attempt to carve a normal life out of a difficult situation.



* This post draws on material in Shane's PhD thesis and in a forthcoming article titled, 'Civil Death in the Dominion of Freedom: Liberia and the Logic of Capital'. Article reprinted by special permission of [Regarding Rights](#).

'Untitled, 1960'
(Photograph: Joseph Moise Agbodjélou,
published by [The Guardian](#))



SHANE CHALMERS* CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE & JUSTICE, REGNET, ANU

THE LIVING DEAD - AN INDEPENDENCE FRAMEWORK

This studio portrait was taken in 1960 by the Beninese photographer [Joseph Moise Agbodjélou](#), within months of Benin gaining independence from France. What is remarkable about the photograph is its critical-representational style, that is, its self-conscious use of the representational framework of the art form to create the art work.

The art form is studio photography, which in its traditional mode was developed to create an idealised image. The result is supposed to be a representation, of the family for instance, that one can hang in the entrance of the home as a reminder of its *real nature*; thus the reality of family life is the one on display in the photograph and not the dysfunctional one on display in everyday life.[1] In this way, the traditional mode of studio photography uses the representational framework uncritically to create a fantasy portrayed as reality. This both substitutes for the actual dysfunction and authorises its continuation, by making it present in a way that the contradiction can be overlooked.[2]

By contrast, the representational style used in this photograph is a critique of this traditional mode of studio portraiture performed from within the mode of studio portraiture. The photograph presents a body under a vestment, in keeping with the traditional mode of studio portraiture. By 'vestment' I mean, most broadly, a 'covering', which includes not only the clothing but also the jewellery and drape seen in the photograph. More narrowly, however, I also mean 'clothing' 'worn by the priest or priests at the celebration of the Eucharist'.[3] This points to the double effect of a vestment, covering a body and thereby making it sacred, but in so doing, reinforcing the unsacred quality of the unvested body. This also points to a third meaning of vestment: 'A right or privilege with which a person or body is invested or endowed'.[4] Again, it is the vestment that makes the body a rightful subject; but for the act of vestiture, the body would remain a mere object. Thus the young woman is presented in the fashion of a 'civilised subject', which, in the attempt to dignify her by endowing her in a rightful way, also does the opposite, stripping her body of its own dignity. The result would be the equation of a rightful subject with a rightly invested body.

That is the first or 'initial' effect of the photograph: to present the body as an object that is the play-thing of the representational framework. The young woman might be mistaken for a doll in a doll-house, or a mannequin in a shop-front display. And yet, unlike the traditional studio portrait, which is successful to the extent it effectively overlays the representational framework on its object, this photograph works against a merger of body and vestment and is effective to the extent it calls this unity into question. This is the second or 'other' effect, which becomes the primary effect the more one looks at the photograph: body and vestment, far from merging, appear in stark separation. The contradiction between body and vestment can be seen in the ill-fitting underwear that covers the young woman's body proprietorially. It can be seen in the young woman's eyes, which, instead of looking into the camera, thereby seducing the viewer into the portrait's reality – as is the desired effect of traditional studio portraits – are looking askance, directing the viewer outside the scene, thereby disrupting the illusion that reality is contained within its framework. Above all, the contradiction is seen in the un-cropped framing of the portrait, which shows a faded and torn rendition of European Civilisation draped tackily over a richly-textured place.

Thus in a way that cannot now be overlooked, the photograph shows the fantastical and violent realism of a representational framework that would treat her body as its play-thing. The portrait is concerned with the woman as a living subject – with her dignity as a self-possessed young woman – rendered a mere object through the attempt to dignify her by super-imposing upon her the vestment of Civilised Europe. At the same time, the portrait is allegorical, presenting a critique of the colonial attempt to render Benin 'civilised'. By critically highlighting the separation – indeed the independence – of the young woman's body from its vestment, the photograph also effectively portrays the divestment of French colonialism from the body of Benin. As an art work, the photograph thus establishes the conditions of emancipation by critiquing a framework that sought to subsume the people and country of Benin within its realism. But this is not merely an act of negation. It is also a record of history that is actively making history.

The portrait of the young woman presents the separation of body and vestment in a way that records the moment of independence and authorises that independence as a possible alternative framework – but the independence framework remains *negative*. Created in 1960, its effect is *critique*, presenting the possibility of another future without presenting that future. Fifty years and a generation later, the portrait of the young man provides an answer, presenting a future in which the body is realising its own subjectivity. But it also remains *critical*: the answer is no more the realisation of an authentic subject than it is the presentation of an authentic reality.

After all, the art form is studio portraiture. As a studio portrait, the photograph substitutes in the place of a French-colonial framework a framework of independence, and authorises the independence framework through the critical representation of the colonial one. In the act of critiquing the reality of a representational framework, it is presenting an alternative reality in its place, and using the critique to authorise that alternative.

Fifty years later, [Leonce Raphael Agbodjélou](#) – who inherited his father's photography studio as his generation inherited Benin – created the portrait of a young man reproduced opposite. In the traditional mode of studio portraiture, this photograph also presents a body under a vestment, but like the portrait of the young woman, it also works against a merger of body and vestment. What makes this photograph so different from the photograph of the young woman, however, is how it treats the relation of body and vestment. The portrait of the young woman critiques the treatment of the body as an object that is the play-thing of a representational framework and thereby establishes the body as subject. In a reversal of this, the portrait of the young man establishes the body as subject by presenting the representational framework as its play-thing.

The young man appears dynamic and self-possessed, his gaze seducing the viewer into *his* reality – modern, vibrant, youthful. He smiles coolly as he poses for the photo.



'Untitled, 2010'
(Photograph: Leonce Raphael Agbodjélou,
published by [Jack Bell Gallery](#))

In sum, whereas the portrait of the young woman uses the art form of studio portraiture to critique a colonial framework and thereby record and authorise the possibility of an independence framework, the portrait of the young man uses the same art form to show the critical possibilities of that independence framework. This is what I mean by 'living dead'. Presenting the body as subject playing with its independence, the portrait is both positive and negative: positive in that it presents the body as a character full of life; negative in that it neither allows that identity to dominate the body (the body *plays* with the identity) nor allows the viewer to believe that the portrait is simply real. This is not some pure life free of all mediating frameworks, but a life that plays with the identity that frames it.

With cheeky defiance he leans against the wooden chair that the studio photographer presumably placed there for him to sit on. He holds up in mock appreciation the flowers that the studio photographer also presumably placed on the ground beside the chair (note that this is how the flowers appear in the portrait of the young woman). At the same time, this is not a traditional studio portrait. The effect is not to merge body and vestment in the production of a fantasy that substitutes for and enables the perpetuation of a dysfunctional actuality. Like the portrait of the young woman, this photograph calls such unity into question. The colourfully patterned cloth that covers both body and place, combined with the silver aviator glasses that cover the young man's eyes, highlight the fantastical nature of the representational framework. And like the portrait of the young woman, the effect is to establish the body as subject precisely by emphasising its separation from the representational framework. There is an important difference, however, between this portrait and the one of the young woman. The portrait of the young woman presents the separation of body and vestment in a way that records the moment of independence and authorises that independence as a possible alternative framework – but the independence framework remains *negative*. Created in 1960, its effect is *critique*, presenting the possibility of another future without presenting that future. Fifty years and a generation later, the portrait of the young man provides an answer, presenting a future in which the body is realising its own subjectivity. But it also remains *critical*: the answer is no more the realisation of an authentic subject than it is the presentation of an authentic reality. The photograph neither presents the body as subject in any absolute way – the body is *still* under a vestment – nor does it present a realistic reality – the vestment remains a fantastical representational framework.

In sum, whereas the portrait of the young woman uses the art form of studio portraiture to critique a colonial framework and thereby record and authorise the possibility of an independence framework, the portrait of the young man uses the same art form to show the critical possibilities of that independence framework. This is what I mean by 'living dead'. Presenting the body as subject playing with its independence, the portrait is both positive and negative: positive in that it presents the body as a character full of life; negative in that it neither allows that identity to dominate the body (the body *plays* with the identity) nor allows the viewer to believe that the portrait is simply real. This is not some pure life free of all mediating frameworks, but a life that plays with the identity that frames it.

[1] There is an episode of *The Simpsons* where the Simpson family are having their Christmas photograph taken in a studio at the local mall. At the moment the photograph is taken, Bart is yanked out of the frame by a security guard who had previously caught him shoplifting. Precisely as an accurate portrayal of the dysfunctional Simpson family, this portrait could not be hung on the wall. The episode ends with Bart re-taking his portrait, which is then hung over top of the dysfunctional one. See *The Simpsons*, Series 7, Episode 11, 'Marge be Not Proud' (17 December 1995).

[2] On the effect of representation as both 'substitution' and 'authorisation', see Louis Marin, *Portrait of the King* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 5-6.

[3] See 'vestment, n.1', OED Online, September 2015.

[4] See 'vestment, n.2', OED Online, September 2015.



THE BLACK & WHITE OF BHUTAN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK I CHAVES

Bhutan is romanticised as the last Shangri-La and the happiest country in the world. Most often, typical pictures brought back from Bhutan tend to indulge this view with colourful festivals, breathtaking landscapes, and solemn monks. In the 2015 World Happiness Report, Bhutan was ranked the 79th happiest out of 158 countries surveyed. Switzerland was ranked number one, which suggests an incongruence of perceptions.

The 'Black & White of Bhutan' is a metaphor that attempts to free Bhutan's overlooked imagery from the distractions of tourism and the exaggerations of colour. Instead of showing us the well-trodden tourist path, this essay offers scenes that create a sense of global connection and community rather than isolation and over embellishment.

The black & white imagery symbolises the harmony of yin and yang, emphasising what-is — over manufactured perceptions of beauty, ugliness, and happiness.



Young woman portrait steps, Paro: Daily life at 2,500m above sea level

© Mark I Chaves



Man silhouette monastery: Contemplation in the Himalayas of Bhutan



Two women under architecture detail: Capital city, Thimphu.



Two men walking in main street: Thimphu's main street transformed into a marketplace.



Woman walking : The back streets of Paro.

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I have long wanted to recreate the delicious **Iskender Kebab** at home; thin slices of lamb or beef in tomato based sauce, served over pide bread with yoghurt and grilled vegetables by the side. It is one of the most delicious kebabs you can have in Turkey and it is a joy to be able to recreate at home.

Living abroad, Iskender Kebab is one of the special treats I dearly miss. This delicious kebab is a specialty of Bursa region in Turkey and I remember many foodie trips I made to Bursa to enjoy the genuine Iskender Kebab. Iskender Kebab is made with doner kebab, which requires a vertical rotisserie where layers of thinly sliced lamb, beef, veal – or chicken – stacked together. Traditionally, minced meat is used to stick the slices of the meat.

I don't have a vertical rotisserie but managed to make a very close by Iskender Kebab at home, greatly enjoyed by family and friends. Thin slices of rib eye steak or lamb or beef tenderloin work very well here. Marinating the meat in onion juice, olive oil and spices is really worth the effort to tenderize the meat and add a lot of flavor. With pide bread, pide ekmek as a base, delicious tomato sauce poured over the meat, grilled tomatoes, peppers and yoghurt by the side, home style Iskender Kebab makes a very special meal to share with family and friends. My thanks goes to the brilliant book *Anatolia; Adventures in Turkish Cooking*, for the inspiration to have a go at making Iskender Kebab at home.

I hope you enjoy making **Iskender Kebab** at home with my recipe, it is easier than you think and most delicious.

Afiyet Olsun,

Ozlem





Home Style Iskender Kebab in Tomato Sauce, Pita Bread and Yoghurt

Iskender Kebab is one of the most popular kebabs at home and a specialty of Bursa region.

This recipe serves 4 -6 generously

Ingredients

For the meat marinate:

2 lbs. rib eye steak or lamb or beef tenderloin
2 large onions, grated
45 ml / 3 tbsp. olive oil
10 ml/ 2 tsp. dried oregano
10 ml/ 2 tsp. red pepper flakes
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

For the tomato sauce:

30 ml / 2 tbsp. concentrated tomato paste
15 ml/ 1 tbsp. red pepper paste (optional; you can use extra 1 tbsp. tomato paste and red pepper flakes to your taste instead too)
30 ml/ 2 tbsp. olive oil
16 fl oz. / 2 cups water
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
3 medium tomatoes, cut into wedges
2 green pointy or bell peppers, deseeded and sliced
Thinly sliced pide ekmek or plain pita bread – 6 pieces, to serve
500 gr / 2 cups plain yoghurt to serve



Instructions

Preheat the oven to 180 C / 350 F

Prepare the meat marination a day ahead of time of cooking. Grate the onions or place them in a food processor and process until liquid. Squeeze all the onion juice into a non-metallic bowl and discard any remaining onion pulp.

Slice the meat thinly (you can ask your butcher to this for you too) and then pound each slice with the back of a wooden spoon (or with a meat tenderizer). We aim to achieve the slices about 5 cm (2") x 4 cm (1.5") in size.

Combine the onion juice, oregano, red pepper flakes, olive oil, salt and freshly ground pepper in a large bowl. Stir in the meat slices and coat each piece with this marination. Cover the bowl with a cling film and marinate overnight in the fridge.

To make the tomato sauce, pour in the olive oil in a sauce pan over the medium heat. Stir in the tomato paste, red pepper paste (if using) and red pepper flakes. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper and combine well. Add the water then bring to the boil. Then gently simmer for 10 minutes.

Slice the pide or pita bread in 3 cm x 3 cm (about 1") squares and place on a tray. Warm in the oven for 5 minutes. Drizzle a little olive oil on a skillet and cook the meat slices on high heat; for about 2 minutes each side (take care not to overcook). Also sauté the sliced tomatoes and peppers at the other side of the skillet, until they start to charcoal at edges.

Once everything is cooked, plate your Iskender Kebap. Place the warm pide / pita bread slices on each plate. Spread the cooked slices of the meat over the pide bread and pour over the tomato sauce. Place the sautéed tomatoes and peppers at one side and a dollop of plain yoghurt at the other side. Serve immediately.



Before the Cloud

I grew up in a city which was *then* the cultural capital of India... when the Vietnam War was in its death throes... when daily life mingled with school, Puchkas¹, and 45s (vinyl) of Get off My Cloud, Ballad of the Purple Inn², The Young Ones and Riders on the Storm. The mix was like Jhal Muri³; It was a time - When teenage pregnancies was not a big deal (no one had abortions, they just had children) - When Sundays was for serving mass, reading the gospels and then strolling over to the local Gurdwara for a free meal at the Langar⁴. It was a time when I learned that the terms Hindu and Hinduism were geographical terms...that in truth it was Sanatana Dharma, a perennial philosophy of living, which grew through the eons like a banyan tree, its roots permeating everything it touched... the country being transformed *into* this tree of life. Perhaps this is why the country embraced all those fleeing religious persecution.

We never saw India as a country but a civilisation and accepted that we were living in the era of Kalyug, end of days, and comforted by the thought that it would last thousands of years.

It was at this time that we created our own world with our own rules of engagement. Like me, there were many who were adrift in the cultural soup whose recipe was being constantly changed by the hands of self-appointed gendarmes of society. We were attempting to break out of stifling conventionalism and an insidious form of capitalism disguised as socialism, and other *isms*. Politics was for the puerile. For us it was a time of discarding our own Indianness. We were sandwiched between bell bottoms and dhotis, chillums and Charminar ciggies. We never understood why India, a civilisation, needed a flag and national anthem. The Jesuits worked hard to channel our unbridled energy towards higher learning. To craft our minds into lean mean learning machines. With some they succeeded.

Our group looked like a Benetton advertisement - all colours and sizes. Many among us were refugees - Indians who were refugees in their own country, while others were from Iran, China, East Bengal, Tibet, and Armenia, with Baghdadi Jews and the odd German who had been embraced by India. The one common sutra was India. It was our home where we felt an unparalleled freedom of body and soul.

And when the Indo-Pak war⁵ came to our border we retreated into a world of self-indulgence of reading, theatre and cycling to far flung villages just for the heck of it. We didn't want to be dragged either into the growing refugee crisis or the bloodiness of the Naxal uprising, of taking sides with the State or Charu Mazumdar⁶. It was a pointless exercise. The war came and went and so did the Naxal uprising, which was brutally crushed by the State. Communism was not acceptable but Nehruvian faux socialism⁷ was. Another ruler had taken over the country and it was called the House of Nehru. Indians had swapped a foreign occupier with an indigenously produced one. Perhaps it was in our psyche to be ruled, to be led like a bovine with a rope tied through its nose. Nehruvian faux socialism gave rise to a new caste of Indians who existed on the spoils of corruption fuelled by sycophancy. We called them *pagol kukur* (mad dogs)...they were like jackals hanging around a pride of lions feeding on a kill.

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School and college were stages of self-induced enlightenment. The Elizabethan poets jostled with Kerouac, Wilde and Tagore. It was a heady brew of knowledge that seduced us into a reverie of *Being*. We were never part of the *with it* crowd, which resembled clones. We had cocooned ourselves in the gossamer world of great minds and downright enchanting decadence of *Being*.

Come festivals and it was time to savour the delights of homemade cooking with Old Monk rum and Blue Riband gin. There was never a problem with what was being served: pork, beef, mutton, chicken or Machher Jhol⁸. On *Bakri id*, for those among us who were were grass-eaters, vegetarian food was cooked separately but served along *with non-vegetables* (meats).

There was a joke we shared to the effect that – *God gave us Faith but we made a religion out of it*. Festivals like Durga Puja or Christmas were eagerly awaited for it was a time of endless music, dance and traditional delicacies that were always offered at most homes, homes that welcomed all.

No one owned a religion or held exclusive copyright. Faith, like food, was shared, generously. There appeared to be an underlying agreement that we were one...one tribe called humanity. Perhaps the spirit of Sanatana Dharma possessed us all.

Today the Victoria Memorial [09] stands like a vestal virgin waiting for the day of reckoning. The new wave of humanity has all but swept away the rustic-like manner of *Being*. Now it's about symbols, status and religious, that have become the mantra of a generation that follows the sacred cow of consumerism and proliferates at a frightening pace in the ether on *one cloud*. Reality is the number of likes one can get for an inane FB post and not a cup of chai (tea) that is shared with a friend.

Books, working in the trenches and sharing what little we had was our world. And as time flowed on some of us died young, mowed down by a society rushing to catch up with the rest of the world. Others got married and took on the mantle of nurturing new souls, while many more were swallowed up by a burgeoning India spiralling into another dimension.

Today the Victoria Memorial⁹ stands like a vestal virgin waiting for the day of reckoning. The new wave of humanity has all but swept away the rustic-like manner of *Being*. Now it's about symbols, status and religious, that have become the mantra of a generation that follows the sacred cow of consumerism and proliferates at a frightening pace in the ether on *one cloud*. Reality is the number of likes one can get for an inane FB post and not a cup of chai (tea) that is shared with a friend.

Our world is not lost. It lies nestled in the cracks and crevices of a fragmented society, waiting to sprout when another tribe like *ours* is born, to carry the baton and begin the relay again. Time has not changed for *Yusef, Ashkenazi, Chen, Helmut, Nina, Radhika, Framjee, Joshua, Clare, Ayesha, Krishna, Ramdas* and me. We revel in a time of our own making - good, bad and surreal. We haven't forgotten where we come from...from One Universal Thought.

Not too long ago I revisited some old haunts. Perhaps the feeling I came away with can best be described in the words of Indian Nobel Laureate, Rabindranath Tagore.¹⁰

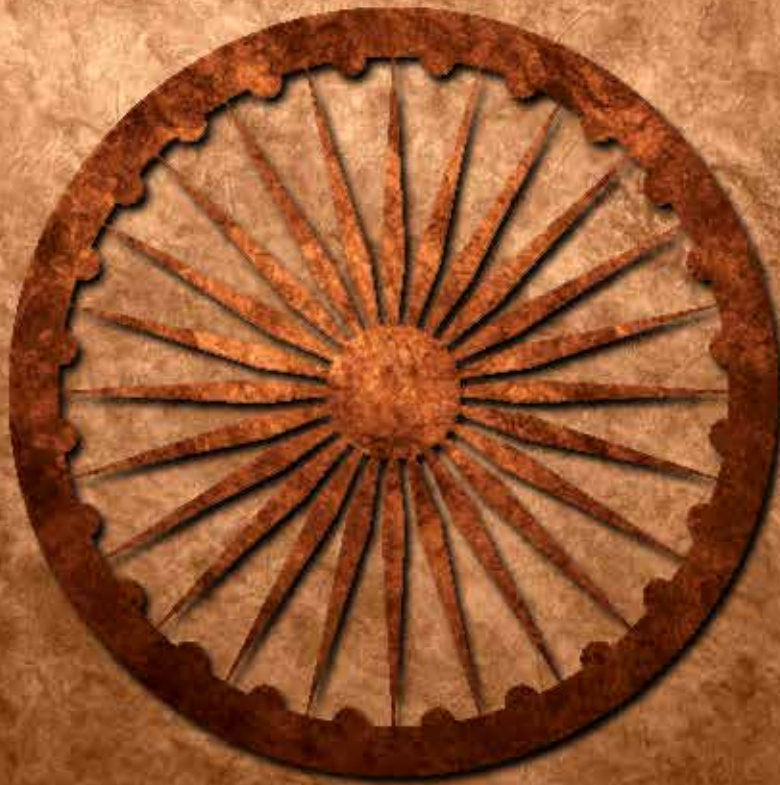
“Patriotism cannot be our final spiritual shelter; my refuge is humanity. I will not buy glass for the price of diamonds, and I will never allow patriotism to triumph over humanity as long as I live.”

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

01. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panipuri>
02. <https://www.facebook.com/India-Sixties-and-Beyond-Music-147952891964475/>
03. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puffed_rice
04. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Langar_\(Sikhism\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Langar_(Sikhism))
05. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-Pakistani_War_of_1971
06. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charu_Majumdar
07. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Licence_Raj#History
08. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Machher_Jhol
09. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_Memorial_\(India\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_Memorial_(India))
10. <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/asi/tagore-at-home-in-the-world/book240617> - He says this as early as 1908, and puts his position about nationalism succinctly in a letter replying to the criticism of Abala Bose, the wife of a great Indian scientist, Jagdish Chandra Bose, quoted by Amartya Sen in his article, Tagore and His India (1986).

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