

DEVELOPMENT: THE NEW DECADE

EXCLUSIVE CONTENT

Analysis with Ann Linde
The Dilemma of Reconstructing Syria

Op-Ed by Carin Jämtin
General Director of SIDA on Development

People of a Revolution
Reporting from Lebanon

Rwanda
A Future after Genocide

China & Coronavirus
A Global Health Emergency



PRESIDENTS' ADDRESS

IN DECEMBER, THE United Nations declared 2020 to be the International Year of Plant Health, as a manner of prioritizing actions against climate change. Besides this, there are several thoughts on the assassination of General Soleimani, the prosecution of President Aung San Suu Kyi in the International Court of Justice and Britain's future outside of the EU. It is 2020 – in fact, it is 85 years since UPF was established. More than ever, it seems like now is the time to get involved in foreign affairs.

ALTHOUGH UPF HAS been operating for almost a century, it is not as static as one might think. The experience of commanding this organization is that, when you have a clear idea and a great commitment, the space for creativity is unexpectedly wide. As a board, we have, this year, created this a unique opportunity for the members of our association: the Foreign Correspondent Fund. In addition, the newly-elected Chief Recruiters will investigate methods of recruiting members from other faculties and ages because we truly believe that, in a year like this, foreign affairs are in the interest of everybody.

ON THAT TOPIC, we would like to encourage you to apply for the board of 2020/2021. Apart from a strong commitment to foreign affairs, there are no certain requirements and the application period opens in March. On a personal note, it was indeed impossible to understand what a huge experience engagement with UPF has been. I especially value that this knowledge would have never would come from studies or work. As a student, there are few other ways to host a lecture for over two hundred participants, to broadcast radio on the biggest student radio station in Sweden, to publish highly recognized articles online as well as on paper and to meet diplomats in New York City. Apart from that, involvement is also a profound education in leadership and management of resources.

NEVERTHELESS, ENGAGEMENT IS defined by the social aspect. What was most surprising for me when entering the board is that you get over twenty new great friends. UPF is a community for socializing, whether it is done through traveling, hiking or partying. I hope to see you all at the UPF ball in April.



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FREDRIK FAHLMAN
MORITZ NEUBAUER
MAGAZINE@UPFLUND.SE

THE PERSPECTIVE WEBZINE:

EMILY HSIANG
NASRA MAHAT
WEBZINE@UPFLUND.SE

THE PERSPECTIVE RADIO/PODCAST:

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UFS REPRESENTATIVE:

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LUND@UFSVERIGE.ORG

HEAD OF IT:

OLLE TOLKE
IT@UPFLUND.SE

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SIGNE DAVIDSON

CONTRIBUTIONS:

ALEJANDRO GUZMAN
SOFIA GJERTSSON

ILLUSTRATIONS:

SIGNE DAVIDSON

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FREDRIK FAHLMAN

CONTACT:

UTRIKESPOLITISKA FÖRENINGEN
SANDGATAN 2
223 50 LUND
MAGAZINE@UPFLUND.SE

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UPCOMING UPF EVENTS



LECTURE

Stefan Ingves - Governor of the National Bank of Sweden

On 12 March, Stefan Ingves – the Governor of the National Bank of Sweden – will deliver an insightful lecture on how Sweden, and other small, open economies, compete and economically project themselves onto the world stage in this globalised era. Mr Ingves will talk about the challenges facing Sweden and other similar economies and how these can be met and overcome. He will also reflect on Sweden's historic role in international cooperation – and whether or not this was successful.

12th of March 2020 at 18:00

Auditorium, Main University Building, Paradisgatan 2
Follow the facebook event for the latest information.



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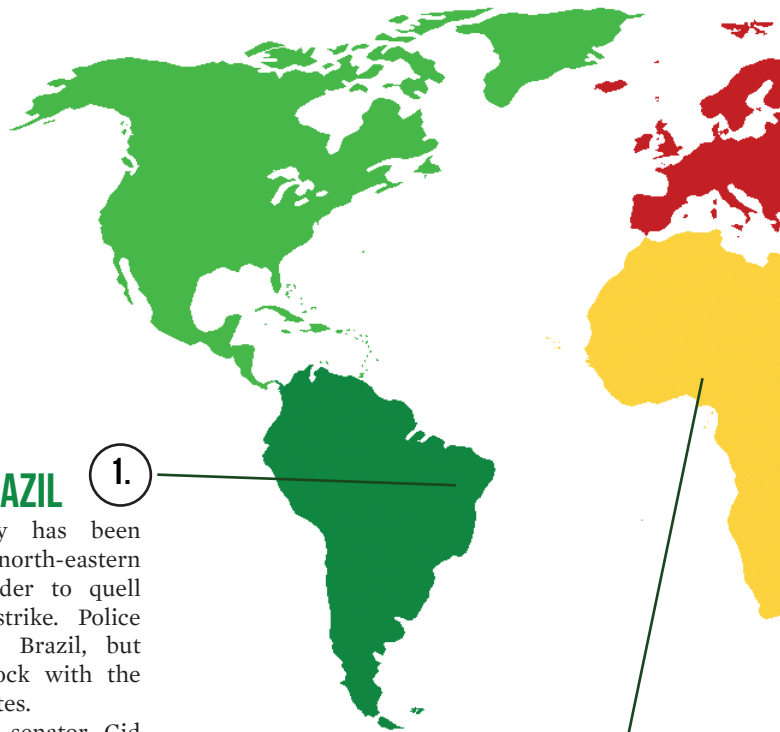
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ENGLISH-SPEAKING





1. AN UGLY STANDOFF – BRAZIL

The Brazilian military has been dispatched to the north-eastern state of Ceará in order to quell a disruptive police strike. Police strikes are illegal in Brazil, but officers in Ceará are at a deadlock with the regional government over pay disputes.

The strikes escalated after local senator Cid Gomes was shot. In light of the shooting, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro warned protesters that “it’s going to get ugly” if they do not back down. Strikes often turn bloody in Brazil. In 2017, more than two-hundred people were killed during a three-week police strike. In Ceará, fifty-one people had already been killed by the time that Senator Gomes was shot. Now that the military is involved, there are concerns that Ceará could become a battleground between the local police and the national government.

Luke Sandford

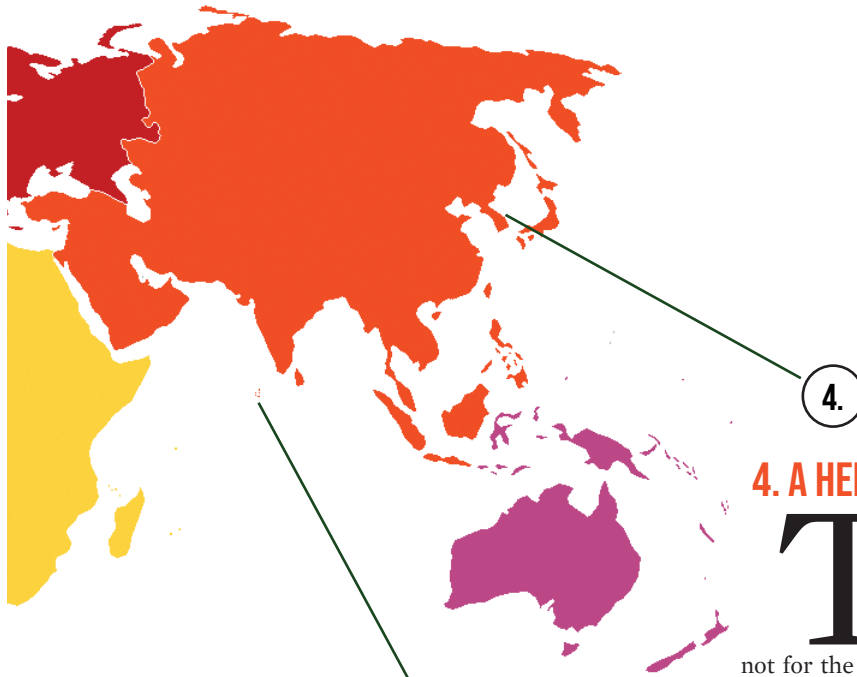
2. SHARING THE MOMENT

On Valentine’s Day, Nigerian man Dan Yomi posted a photo on social media of him and his boyfriend sharing a kiss. The photo sparked a huge reaction on social media in Nigeria. According to a 2019 survey conducted by The Initiative for Equal Rights, three-quarters of Nigerians support the country’s draconian anti-LGBT laws.

Gay sex – both male and female – is still a criminal offence in the country and is even punishable by death in some areas. Despite this, for Yomi, who lives in the UK with his boyfriend and only recently came out to his family, posting the photo was a natural course of action.

Speaking to No Strings NG, a platform for LGBT Nigerians, Yomi said that “I thought I’d share how far we’ve come as two gay Nigerian men in love... [we hope that we can inspire] some queer kid reading from Africa...to live freely someday”.

Fredrik Fahlman



3. FIGHTING THE TIDE

On 12 February, the Maldivian parliament unanimously backed a motion declaring a climate emergency in the country. The motion calls for an urgent global reduction in emissions output and encourages the UN to sanction countries that are found to have violated the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement.

The Maldives is a cluster of atolls that are home to a little over half a million people. It is a country with a low elevation, meaning that rising sea levels pose a particularly strong threat there. The country has long since taken a strong stance against climate change, having undertaken great steps to get its own carbon emissions down to net-zero.

However, despite this motion and prior efforts, Maldivian MP Mohamed Waheed told The Edition that “as a small nation, there is not much we can do [to halt climate change]”. *Moritz Neubauer*

4.

4. A HERALD OF PEACE

Thae Yong-ho is running for election to the South Korean parliament. This would not be so remarkable were it not for the fact that Yong-ho is a North Korean defector. Prior to his defection to the South in 2016, Yong-ho was the North’s deputy ambassador to Britain.

Should Yong-ho be elected on 15 April, he will be the most high-profile defector from the North to be elected to the parliament of the South. Speaking to The Guardian, Yong-ho’s prospective party, Liberty Korea, has said that his candidacy will “give hope to North Korean refugees and South and North Korean people who want genuine reunification”. Win or lose, Yong-ho’s candidacy, in of itself, marks a significant moment in relations on the peninsula.

Luke Sandford



Destroyed buildings in the Syrian city of Raqqa. Photo: Amnesty International

ANALYSIS: THE DILEMMA OF RECONSTRUCTING SYRIA

War has ravaged Syria for the past nine years. Both the US and Russia have carried out devastating bombing campaigns. No part of the country has remained untouched by the conflict. For the EU, funds are available for the quarter-trillion dollar reconstruction effort - but the actual price may be much higher.

THE PEOPLE I know in Idlib think that they will die at any moment. Massive bombs are being dropped. Russia, Syria, Iran, Hezbollah and Turkey are all responsible for the destruction.”

THE WORDS COME from a Syrian refugee, now settled in Lund. He is native to the northwestern city of Idlib - right now the last rebel stronghold in the country’s war. He left his country in July 2015. Many of his friends and relatives are still living in active conflict zones, being unable to leave, and bearing witness to further annihilation.

HOW DESTROYED IS SYRIA?

ALMOST NO REGION of the country has been spared by the war. Staffan De Mistura, former UN Special Envoy to Syria, said in 2018 that the reconstruction effort could cost at least 250 billion dollars - fifty times as much as Syria’s current national budget of 4.3 billion dollars. At the same time, President Bashar al-Assad suggested that a full infrastructure restoration could take up to fifteen years.

ACCORDING TO DATA compiled by the World Bank in 2017, the destruction is widespread.



In Idlib, a quarter of the buildings had been partially destroyed, and six percent fully ruined - even before the start of the current government offensive on the enclave. The eastern city of Deir ez-Zor, with a pre-war population of over two-hundred thousand, took the worst toll in the war - a tenth of the city has been completely destroyed. Aleppo used to be the country's most populous city at 4.6 million inhabitants - now estimated to have gone down to less than two million. Close to fifty thousand buildings have been levelled due to the fighting.

AMER SAKKAL, a young Syrian man in his early twenties, has lived in Aleppo his whole life. He lives in an area that remained controlled by the government during the siege of the city, not far away from where the frontline was. Over the instant messaging service Telegram, Sakkal tells The Perspective about his experience of when the war reached his district.

"I SUDDENLY HEARD a loud noise, then several more after. I ran to an apartment and a family there let me in, but some of my friends were injured. More than forty people were killed in the attack", he says.

WHILE PREVIOUSLY BEING supportive of the revolution, Sakkal has now changed stance and is fully backing the government's side in the war. He says that the opposing forces are targeting civilian areas intentionally, while the government only attacks areas with rebel fighters in them - but admits that both sides do inflict civilian casualties.

"THERE MAY BE civilians where the terrorists are, and then there is unfortunately no other solution to it", he says.

SAKKAL SAYS THAT the reconstruction of the city is already underway, and that it is happening throughout the city.

"THE DESTRUCTION IS disastrous. It will take years to completely finish", he says.

SYRIA'S MAIN ALLIES in the war, Iran and Russia, are already invested in the country. Moscow's spending has so far amounted to between 2.5 and 4.5 billion dollars, while the US State Department estimated in 2018 that Tehran has spent over 16 billion dollars in Syria since 2012. However, most of these investments are not directed at rebuilding Syria - and both countries are experiencing economic crises. Instead, Moscow has suggested that the international community - and the European Union in particular - should bear the cost.

WHY WOULD THE EU PAY?

FOR BRUSSELS, FOOTING the bill may not be as illogical as it sounds. According to Orwa Ajjoub, affiliated researcher at Lund University with a specific focus on Salafi-Jihadist groups, a country left in ruins is prone to instability and can easily become a hotbed of extremism.

"WITHOUT RECONSTRUCTION PLANS it is highly likely that ISIS will find fertile soil to operate and work", Ajjoub says, arguing that the extremist group is far from defeated, and merely regrouping. To him, failed infrastructure creates a power vacuum that could easily be exploited.

"IMAGINE THAT THERE are numerous unemployed people that are not experiencing any political governance. They see the attraction in these

groups because they addressed their grievances. For some parts of the country's sunni population, this is appealing - ISIS was the only revolutionary group that offered a way to topple the repressive government", he says.

THE SITUATION POSES a dilemma for both European donors and UN initiatives. While it is in their interest to reduce suffering in Syria and rebuild normal structures, funding reconstruction would strengthen the Assad regime - contradictory to their strategic objectives.

ACCORDING TO OLOF Skoog, the European Union's Ambassador to the UN, funds are available - but will only be made accessible to reconstruction projects if serious political concessions are given from President al-Assad.

"WHILE THERE IS a strong plea from Europe for a political process, it has to be inclusive - EU countries are not ready to put money forward for reconstruction of the areas that are controlled by the government", he tells The Perspective team during his visit to Lund, adding that the union believes that the government had completely lost its legitimacy to its people.

HIS POSITION IS reinforced by that of Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde, who stresses that an engagement in reconstruction would signal to its citizens that the country is safe to live in - and worth returning to.

"THE EU SHOULD take a more political role in all conflicts, stressing our main values. The Syrian regime, however, has so far shown no interest in taking part in a UN-led process", she told The Perspective during her visit to Lund.

WHAT CONCESSIONS ARE REQUIRED?

ACCORDING TO FOREIGN Minister Linde and Ambassador Skoog, substantial concessions from the Syrian regime would be required to enable international reconstruction efforts. For Minister Linde, the efforts by the UN Special Envoy Geir Pedersen to establish a UN-led constitutional committee are difficult to realise but the only way forward. There could not be a military solution, only a politically-agreed one. Therefore, the



Swedish Foreign Minister Linde at Lund University in 2020. Photo: Studentafton

committee has to start working but the syrian regime has lately redrawn its engagement from it. To get the regime engaged again would be the first step.

BESIDES FUTURE RECONSTRUCTION support, Sweden already pays some humanitarian aid to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people. According to Foreign Minister Linde, Sweden has contributed 360 million dollars in humanitarian aid since the war began in 2011 and is preparing another 184 million dollar package aimed at increasing resilience in Syria and neighboring countries until 2025.

AMBASSADOR SKOOG AGREES that there has to be both reconstruction and humanitarian aid and that Sweden is already playing an important part in the latter. While he argues that the detailed conditions for EU funds would be negotiated in some European capitals, a key part of any policy would have to differ from the situation before the war. As an authoritarian regime, Syria ignores basic civil liberties, rights of minorities and basic

democratic standards. In any EU-supported scenario there would need to be inclusion of voices from all sides which means that Syrians who fought for the opposition would be included politically and economically. If it were to meet these criteria, reconstruction for Syria could start.

PETER WALLENSTEEN, SENIOR Professor at Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University, says that from the perspective of peace, any government would have to meet certain criteria.

“WE KNOW THAT if a victory is followed by openness and minority rights the chances increase for a stable peace. After that, aid can be received, jobs created, and cities reconstructed - all which will create hope for the future”, Wallensteen says, highlighting that multiple entities need to be present at the post-war negotiations.

“WITHOUT ANY DEMANDS at all, any reconstruction package will instead look like ot’s strengthening the regime. Tensions are still high”, he tells The Perspective.

IF NOT THE EU - WHO MIGHT LEAD RECONSTRUCTION?

RUSSIA AND IRAN - President al-Assad’s main backers - will have a hard time funding a reconstruction on their own. Both countries are currently experiencing economic crises, and Moscow has explicitly stated that a rebuilding effort should be international. Some progress seems to have been made - Foreign Minister Linde confirmed lengthy talks were held with her Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov regarding Syria, without specifying any details.

INSTEAD, PETER WALLENSTEEN sees historical precedent in one country getting involved in the post-war national rebuilding - China. This solution may be more appealing for President al-Assad, as China will not ask for political concessions.

“THIS POSES ANOTHER question for the EU - Should they strictly stick to their demands, or let go of some in order to block other countries from getting involved? For the sake of long-term stability I hope that the demands will be kept”, he says.

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ROLE IN THOSE
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OUR MAIN VALUES.**

- Ann Linde, Swedish Foreign Minister

CHATHAM HOUSE, A not-for-profit and non-governmental organisation based in London, also considers it likely for Beijing to get involved. They expect China to play a major role in the Syrian reconstruction effort due to its earlier engagements in post-conflict Angola, Congo and South Sudan. It is worth noting, however, that Chinese reconstruction efforts after 2002 left Angola in heavy debts - a condition that the country is still suffering from.

RUSSIA AND IRAN, the most engaged foreign actors in Syria, interact very differently with the regime, albeit with a common interest in preventing a military and political collapse of Syrian statehood. According to Chatham House, it is Russia’s objective to institutionalise its influence by re-strengthening the government’s security monopoly. Tehran’s approach differs in as so far as reaching out to new local partners from a wide diversity - Syrian nationals in favour of Iran’s interests - while maintaining strong influence over Assad.

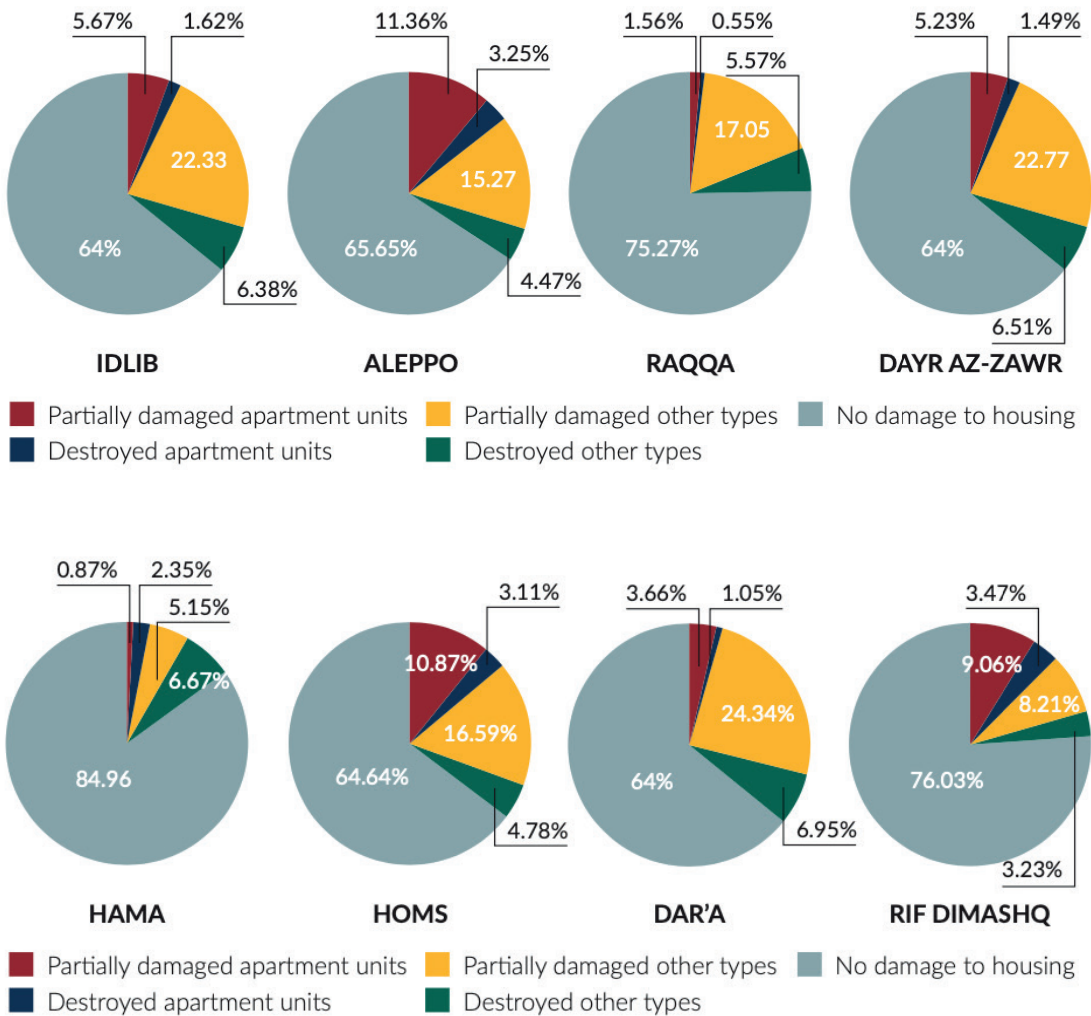
RUSSIA’S INFLUENCE IS much behind and it seems unable to disentangle the complex network of Iranian influence in Syria. Therefore, Russia is much more dependent on decisions by the regime, one reason for Russia’s call for international monetary support for the government’s reconstruction plans.

FOR SYRIA, a ground for future deal-making could be Property Law No. 10. passed in 2018, it allows for creating development zones that will be designated for reconstruction. If owners cannot provide proof of ownership within 30 days, then the property will revert to the province or town without compensation. This is de facto equivalent to the forced expropriation of hundreds of

thousands of refugees - especially opposition members.

UNTIL NOW, SYRIA has been a military battleground with international dimensions. The fighting will likely soon come to an end. The next war will not be fought with guns, but with contracts - and the conflict lines will not be reduced.

Infobox: destruction of housing units in Syria due to the war



Source: The World Bank. To read the full report 'The Toll of War', scan the QR-Code.





DEVELOPMENT: THE NEW DECADE

The year 2020 marks a new decade for international development efforts. From post-war reconstruction to sustainable sanitation and health care challenges following the outbreak of the corona virus, the challenges of the future will be more global.

This Op-Ed does not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of UPF Lund.

WANTED: MORE PARTNERS FOR A DECADE OF ACTION AND DELIVERY

2015 seems far away. Only five years ago – perhaps more optimistic and less polarized – all United Nations Member States agreed on a groundbreaking global partnership, Agenda 2030. 17 Global Goals to end poverty, improve health, reduce inequality, spur economic development, while tackling climate change and protecting our oceans, forests and biodiversity. A tall order and the clock is ticking fast. We are now merely 10 years away from when the ambitious agenda should be met. This is, and must be, the decade of action and delivery.

THE WORLD IS a troubled place. And many are worried about what the future may hold. Across the world, people and very often young people, are expressing their frustration around issues such as inequality, the climate crisis, corruption, and violence against women. We see democracy being challenged in too many countries. We have 165 million people around the world in need of humanitarian assistance. Conflicts are many and last for years and years. Achieving the Global Goals is more urgent than ever.

AGENDA 2030 is still severely underfinanced. Sufficient financing is key and Sida has taken several initiatives to partner up with business to inspire and push for investments into sustainable development. In 2019 the UN Secretary General, António Guterres, launched the Global Investors for Sustainable Development initiative, based on the Sida-model called *Swedish Investors for Sustainable Development*. Guterres said the group of heavy-weight global investors “are committing to cooperate across borders, across financial sectors and even with their competitors, because it is both ethical and good business sense to invest in sustainable development for all people on a healthy planet”.

SIDA’S CONVICTION is that partnerships that align behind the Global Goals and put resources to back up the talk can make transformative things happen. Creating sustainable development is a complex task that requires different partners joining hands. At Sida we acknowledge that our role is much broader than investing into poverty eradication. We can use our expertise, resources and innovative ideas to inspire others. Global Investors for Sustainable Development is but one example.

WE ALSO STRONGLY believe in working closely with different stakeholders in our partner countries. In Zambia 70 percent of the population have no access to modern energy. The Sida-funded and award-winning programme *Beyond the Grid Fund Zambia* aims to bring electricity to one million Zambians by 2021, while supporting the long-term growth of sustainable energy markets in the country. The programme is already exceeding its targets, not least due to its innovative and partner-driven set-up. This is a partnership between public and private partners, and we will roll it out to more countries in Africa. It is not acceptable that 600 million people in Africa live without access to modern electricity.

WHILE WE HAVE seen tremendous progress in terms of people and countries moving out of poverty around the world, Africa is the continent lagging behind. Of the world's 11 poorest countries, eight are found in Africa. By 2030 the projection is that the number has risen to 10. It is a young continent and jobs must be created for young adults entering the job market. But there are also great opportunities. With digitalization, innovation and courage to try new ways of working together it is possible to speed up development. We therefore also work closely with academia and researchers, home and abroad. The world needs more students and scientists entering their respective fields with a focus on contributing to sustainable development.

SWEDEN IS AT the forefront and a real champion of Agenda 2030. We believe in multilateralism and this year we celebrate the UN's 75th birthday. Much will happen this year, not least when it comes to highlighting the work on gender equality. 25 years have passed since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a milestone for the advancement of women's rights and empowerment. We all know that the work is far from done, in fact we now see somewhat of a backlash on gender equality. That is simply not tolerable. In Sweden we know that to develop a society and make it prosper you cannot leave 50 percent of the population behind. It makes no sense. It is not right. Not here, not anywhere. Our work on sexual and reproductive health and rights is often challenged, but Sweden stays firm and we continue to support girls' and women's rights as well as LGBT rights. These rights are human rights.

SIDA IS OFTEN asked if the Swedish taxpayers' money really end up where they should. Corruption is a central obstacle to development. It keeps people in poverty, undermines democracy and the sustainable use of natural resources and works against the respect for human rights. Can we safeguard our investments against corruption? Let me start by saying that we work with our eyes wide open. We are instructed by our Government to work in some of the world's most corrupt countries – because that is where we find the poorest and most vulnerable people. It's complicated work but we have many tools at our disposal. We design smart and strategic

programmes. We work with systematic audits, controls, evaluations and dialogue. We scrutinize plans, budgets and reports. We have experienced staff in the field monitoring progress, and we work with patience and judgement. Is there a full guarantee? No, of course not. But we know that we are much better today at detecting corruption, and we live by our principles: Always prevent; never accept; always inform and always act.

SIDA WAS ACKNOWLEDGED by the OECD last year as one of the world's best development agencies. We are very proud of that. But we have more to learn and we need more partners on board to realise Agenda 2030. Students, in Lund and all over the world, are critical in this work. Whatever career you choose – there are always opportunities to work for a better world. And we have no time to spare.

Carin Jämtin

Director General of the Swedish International Development Agency and former Minister for International Development Cooperation



OLD FAITH, NEW CHALLENGES: THE FUTURE OF JEWS IN MALMÖ

Seventy-five years after the liberation of Auschwitz, Europe has vowed “never again”. But can the turbulent Europe of today continue to keep its promises? As the Jewish community in Malmö faces an uprising of antisemitism, a young voice from within calls for a solution.



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY in Malmö has been a small yet vibrant part of the city for about a hundred years. An impressive symbol of the Jewish history in Malmö is the synagogue in its center which has been there since 1903. However, in the past twenty years, members of the Jewish community in Malmö are facing major changes and challenges: a significant number of Jews are moving out of Malmö to Stockholm or abroad, to Israel, as they no longer feel safe in their own hometown.

IN RECENT YEARS, politicians and certain alternative media agencies put their focus on the refugee crisis in Europe and pointed their fingers at Malmö which received a significant number of refugees. It has been nicknamed “The Rape Capital of Europe” and became synonymous with antisemitism. Indeed, one cannot ignore the fact that many of these refugees grew up in antisemitic environments. Sweden’s Prime Minister, Stefan Löfven, said himself that antisemitism “can be found in far-right and far-left groups, in conspiracy theories on the internet and in fundamentalist Islamic environments”.

THE LATEST REPORT of the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention on antisemitism concludes that antisemitic attacks come from various backgrounds. For example, the Gothenburg Synagogue attack in 2017 was carried out by two Palestinian asylum seekers and one Syrian refugee. Probably, the background for this sort of antisemitism is based on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which European Jews are often associated with, even when they have no connection to the state of Israel.



HOWEVER, SWEDISH JEWS also reported that they experience an everyday kind of antisemitism, regardless of the perpetrators’ backgrounds. Mira Malm-Kelber, a young Malmö resident, has pointed out that in her case most antisemitic incidents came from Swedes with a lack of knowledge on Jewish history and Judaism.

“FOR ME, WE have a lack of understanding of the Holocaust and thus we normalize the antisemitic jokes, which really have a racist meaning”, Mira

“WE WANT TO STRENGTHEN YOUNG PEOPLE’S
IDENTITY AND PROMOTE OUR JEWISH AFFINITY

says. She refers to her childhood experiences in school where her classmates frequently joked about the Holocaust or even worse.

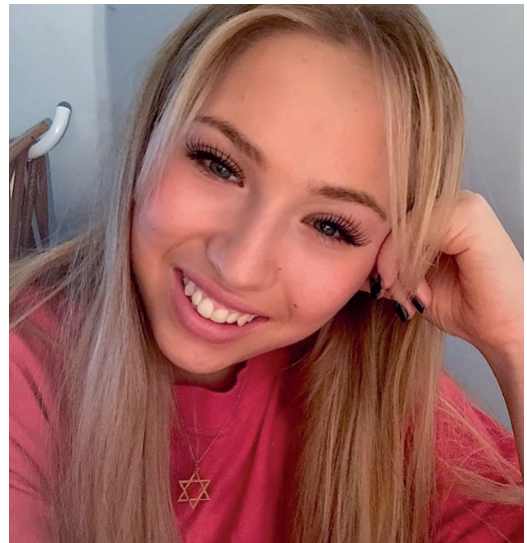
“WHEN I TURNED 14 and started the 8th grade, a guy who had previously attended my class started writing antisemitic messages to me. He wrote ‘it is enough that I know you and your sister, to be sure that Hitler made the right decision in trying to exterminate all Jews’. I still remember how good he thought that the gas chambers were and how disgusting he thought Jews are”, she says.

BUT MIRA AND other young Jews in Malmö are not without hope. The Swedish government and Malmö’s municipality are committed in the fight against antisemitism in the city and throughout the country. Most of the budget to fight antisemitism will be allocated to education on the Holocaust and on Judaism, training school personnel and policemen, and even funding trips to Holocaust memorial sites in Europe.

THIS IS NOT the only reason Mira is hopeful though. She took an initiative and created JUM, a Jewish youth organization in Malmö. JUM offers a space for young Jews to meet and celebrate their identity. “We want to strengthen young people’s identities and promote our Jewish affinity - I would like to think that we are fighting for our right to our religious freedom”, she says. Fortunately, this initiative is seeing success by facilitating a close-knit young Jewish community in Malmö.

JEWISH PEOPLE AROUND Europe are at the heart of its culture and history, as well as of its future. Bringing to light the intolerable reality of the Jewish community in today’s Europe is crucial in order to fight antisemitism. But it is not enough. Often, European Jews become a pawn for certain political

parties, ideologies and governments. Their daily lives are painted by dichotomies, blaming different groups as the source of this ancient and undying phenomena. Important voices are being forgotten and so are real solutions to protect the Jewish minority in Europe. Antisemitism is unbearable and must be unacceptable - so is the thought of a possible future without Jewish communities in Europe. Or as Mira illustrated, “By moving away you can’t escape the problem. I will never take away my Star of David or hide my identity. I will wear it in every context and show that this is what I am, and that I live in Malmö”.



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REBUILDING A NATION

2020 will mark the sixth year of armed conflict in Ukraine, and although military confrontations are on the decline, about 5.2 million people are still caught in perilous conditions in the conflict-affected areas. The country is split in two, but could the flaws of the government be the solution to bridge the divide between western and eastern Ukraine?

THE WARRING PARTIES in Ukraine have found themselves at a deadlock. The number of casualties is on the decline, but there is little progress in terms of a peace treaty, and the day-to-day life for the civilians of eastern Ukraine remains severely impaired. There is a widespread lack of basic commodities, such as medicine and electricity, the mines and industries of Donbass lie in ruins and the “Republics” exercise total control over the civilian population.

THE DIVIDE BETWEEN eastern and western Ukraine is, of course, not helped by the conflict. Inaction from the government does not help either - both in terms of economic and social development. Western Ukraine is currently undergoing a massive cultural and economic shift as the government is trying to make Ukraine more ‘EU-friendly’ and attractive for foreign investors. But

eastern Ukraine is largely left out of the nation rebuilding project, which will inevitably make reintegration of Donetsk and Luhansk oblast even more difficult.

THE PERSPECTIVE REACHED out to Katharine Quinn-Judge, Internal Crisis Group’s senior analyst in Ukraine. The Perspective sought clarity regarding the differences between western and eastern Ukraine, and how the country should move forward to avoid an even greater split.

ACCORDING TO QUINN-JUDGE, it is not so much the deep-rooted socio-economic disparity between the east and west that poses a barrier to reconciliation. It is more that certain popular narratives about how eastern and western Ukraine differ in their socio-economic structure could be an impediment.

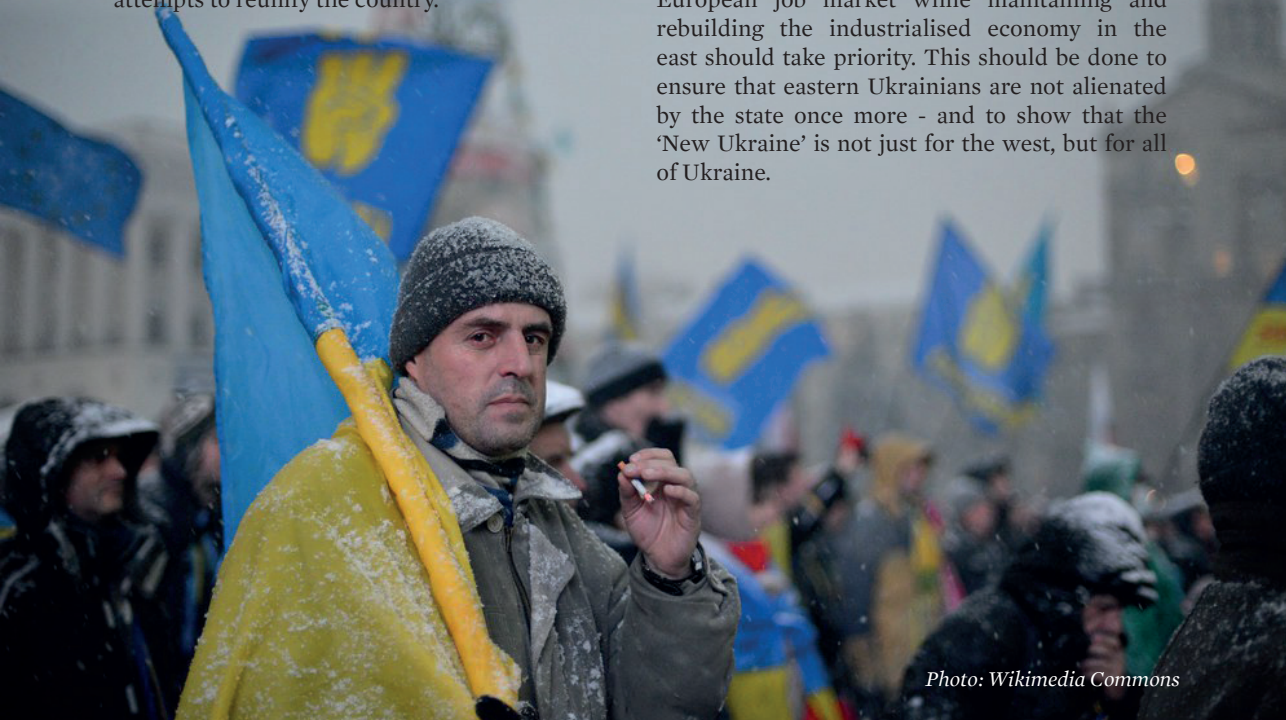
“A LINE OF discourse that is particularly common now among young, pro-Western Ukrainians is that people in Donbas had long been brainwashed into seeing themselves as the country’s most industrious people, and into looking down on the supposedly poor rural folk in the west”, she says.

QUINN-JUDGE CONTINUES BY explaining how the western narrative stands at odds with the wishes of the citizens of eastern Ukraine. “The particular pro-Western/liberal narrative mentioned above often concludes with comments to the effect that the war had to happen – to shake Donbass out of its arrogant stupor – and that the Donbass of the past should never return. This is directly at odds with what a lot of the middle-aged/older people in the region hope for: the return of the thriving industries they remember from the Soviet days, when people worked full hours and took pride in what they produced.”

WHILST THIS NARRATIVE does paint a picture of two sides with incompatible wills in terms of economic development, the reality is that both sides are not so different to one another. Both western and eastern Ukraine have had the same issues with state authorities and oligarchs exploiting the population. While the western and eastern views on socio-economic systems differ, both are pursuing the same goal: the possibility to escape economic hardship. Quinn- Judge argues that this shared feeling of being mistreated by authorities could, and should, be a part of the government’s attempts to reunify the country.

“THEIR NARRATIVE ELIDES the fact that many people in the region knew they were being screwed by their employers and harbored no illusions about being the cream of Ukrainian society. In this regard, these people were not dissimilar from the rural western Ukrainians mentioned, who have in many cases given up on the idea of finding decent work in Ukraine. Reconciliation efforts should seek to draw out these similarities, and challenge the narrative that Donbass’s industrial economy produced a local mentality that precludes common ground with Ukrainians elsewhere. This is a bit of a funny thing to recommend – uniting people through focusing on their common resentment towards the state. But what was Zelenskyy’s 73% win, if not uniting Ukrainians around their anger at the state? I’d say his administration is well placed to extend this approach to national reconciliation if they put their mind to it.” With this in mind, could the resentment towards state authorities be a vessel for reunifying Ukraine?

ACCORDING TO QUINN-JUDGE, it certainly could. The shift in Ukraine from the Russian sphere of influence towards the EU was, after all, fuelled by anti-government sentiment. The current government owes their support to the public’s wish for change. Capitalising on the common denominator, however, distrust and the wish for something new, requires that the government keep the wishes of the citizens of eastern Ukraine in mind when moving Ukraine forward. Striking a balance between the western reliance on the European job market while maintaining and rebuilding the industrialised economy in the east should take priority. This should be done to ensure that eastern Ukrainians are not alienated by the state once more - and to show that the ‘New Ukraine’ is not just for the west, but for all of Ukraine.



GREEN IS THE NEW BLACK: THE POLARISING EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

The European Union is buzzing about a 'green turn' with its European Green Deal, which sets the goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2050. It seems as if Europe has finally taken the lead into a greener future - but these economic and social transformations might have their costs.

THE INTENSIFYING EFFORT and increasing political will of the European Union to tackle climate change is a considerable development in of itself. Ursula von der Leyen has promised to lead a 'geopolitical commission' with prominence on a number of priority areas, among them a European Green Deal.

THE GREEN DEAL sets the ambitious goal of making Europe the world's first climate neutral continent. Such a commitment has, for years, been pushed by climate activists, scientists and millions of young people raising their voice for a sustainable future.

NOW IN 2020, there it is - an action plan, four years after the Paris Agreement was drafted, promising to transform technology, business, industry and our lifestyle. But change does not always come without a price. The question is: what are we willing to give up for that?

THE PERSPECTIVE PUT the same question to Pär Holmgren, Member of the Greens/European Free Alliance in the European Parliament from the Swedish Green Party, and to Professor Lennart Olsson, founder of the Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies.



THE DEAL'S FOCUS on economic development is criticised by many as it represents the idea of endless growth. However, according to Olsson, "the plan needs to argue that it is able to create a better life without fossil fuels, whilst being larger than just a climate change program, or it will likely not succeed."

"ACCORDING TO OLSSON, the European Union needs to be ambitious regarding its climate neutrality goals, not only for the sake of the planet, but also to demonstrate its global influence.

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO say whether the deal will be sufficient without looking at the rest of the world, particularly China - it has the world's future in its hands", he says.

HOLMGREN ALSO ARGUES for much tougher goals. "Talking about climate neutrality by 2050 is far too late", he adds "it is sort of a proof that maintaining economic growth and lifestyle is still more prioritised by the commission. At the moment there is no sufficient political solution that would save the climate."

AS OLSSON EXPLAINS, when talking about political will, it is important to distinguish it from political capability. The political economy we have, often creates limited opportunities for constructive politics. The New Deal in the US in the 1930s is often seen as an exemplary legislative initiative, which could serve as a great example for the EU. Establishing trust and building upon short-term supporting instruments that equip individuals for the change could ensure long-term developments in politics.

“ I THINK WE WILL
SEE A MORE GREEN
VERSUS BROWN
POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

HOLMGREN EMPHASISES THAT the transition needs to be done with a strong stance on climate justice and a gender perspective. He sees the role of the Greens in scrutinising statements of the commission regarding a 'just transition' during the upcoming period.



THE NEXT FEW months and years are most likely to be critical in terms of social polarisation. “I think we will see a more green versus brown political landscape in this decade”, Holmgren says, reflecting on some of the narratives adopted by other political parties. “The Greens want to see a transition in a just way within the planetary boundaries, on the other hand there is a more populist, nationalist, short-term agenda.”

ON THE QUESTION of whether or not the EU’s climate policy has the risk of not delivering on an equal transition, Olsson expresses his ambivalent thoughts. “Changing our lifestyles on an individual level seems to be a critical step to take but it is wrong to put it as a burden only on individuals”, he says.

FAIRNESS IS CRUCIAL in this process but, according to Olsson, is often forgotten in politics. “People are willing to accept a number of changes as long as they are fair.” Growing inequalities are part of a social systemic crisis which seems to be the direction in which we are headed.

THE POLICY OF agriculture in the EU is a great example of this politico-economic problem. “The seeds and crops industry is largely controlled by producers of agrichemicals”, says Olsson, and it is “the farmers who struggle so hard to make a living but only the political system should be blamed.” Issues like this need to be confronted more and more politically and the EU must be able to safeguard its democratic institutions from opaque lobbying activities.

THE SUCCESS OF the European Green Deal seems to be heavily reliant on the fairness of the transition when it comes to the narrative of the people versus the environment. To put it another way, the question is what politicians and industries are willing to give up for a socially, economically and ecologically more sustainable future. As Olsson concludes, “it will most probably depend on the arguments used towards the society, whether it will invoke resistance or create a floor for collaboration.”



Photo: Pixabay



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA - COMING OUT OF THE CLOSET?

Photo: pixabay/ Carina Chen

Serbia, Albania, North Macedonia and now Bosnia and Herzegovina: the conservative and divided country hosted its first BiH Pride March. While colorful flags were waving, some others flew half-mast. The Perspective asks: how is the Bosnian gay-scene developing and, most importantly, what awaits us underneath the rainbow of Sarajevo?

IMA IZAC!' ("COME OUT!") – that exclamation adorned the banners of the BiH Pride March on September 8th in Sarajevo. The country is the last post-Yugoslav region to host its first gay pride parade. Bosnian society is still characterised by deeply conservative conventions. Homosexual partnerships are largely rejected. For many, the event marked a turning point. The Perspective has spoken to both supporters and critics of the opening of the gay scene in Bosnia.

A DEVASTATING CIVIL war divided Yugoslavia, but even now Bosnia is far from united. A narrow majority of the population practises Islam, while

a third adheres to Orthodox Christianity and around fifteen percent of Bosnians belongs to the Roman Catholic Church. According to historian Sanimir Resić, from Lund University, religion – unlike politicians – embodies an influential and incontestable "continuum". When it comes to rejecting homosexuality, the religions have each others' back.

ACCORDING TO THE Pink Report 2019, an annual report on the state of human rights of LGBTIQ people, published by the civil society organization Sarajevo Open Centre, 69,4% of gay people hide their sexual orientation and around 55% avoid some places due to safety risks.

LEJLA HUREMOVIĆ from the information platform of LGBTI.ba and member of the Organising Committee of the BiH Pride March laments that there is no political will to act when it comes to drafting a law that allows same-sex partnerships. On the other hand, she explains that openness and acceptance is increasing across the Bosnian society: "That's because of the visibility, education and LGBTIQ people who come out more often."

ACCORDING TO DUNJA Jezeraškić, a young woman from a small town in central Bosnia, being a gay or bi female in the Balkans is much more accepted and not as frowned upon as it is for gay or bi men - who are still regularly confronted by homophobes. "They are the ones who still very much need to pick and choose what they do and with whom in public places", she says.

WHEN IT COMES to the pride parade, there are many reasons why Bosnia needed more time than its neighbors. "LGBTIQ activism in BiH is one of the youngest in the region and probably that's because of the war and post-war time when a lot of other human rights issues were in focus", explains Huremović. Additionally, the activist stresses that Bosnia is a country with a very complicated political system.

THE MARCH WAS secured by over a thousand policemen, as well as anti-sniper units placed on rooftops. Despite the fear of possible riots, there was no rain on the rainbow parade. Around two thousand people - from Bosnia and neighbouring countries - marched from the Eternal Flame in Sarajevo down Tito Street.

"BEING A PART of that historic day was absolutely incredible, liberating and uniting - the joy, love and pride was palpable", reports Dunja, who joined the parade in the fall. Among the participants were also the openly gay Bosnian sevdah-musician Božo Vrećo, as well as the gay American ambassador to Bosnia, Eric Nelson.

TO ACTIVIST HUREMOVIĆ, it is now more important than ever to remain visible, especially, when taking into consideration the homophobia that still exists in public institutions, schools and on the street. For Dunja, it was particularly joyful to see such a huge turnout. She says "it just proves how far we have come as a society and that we are finally able

to slowly but surely break away from all of those debilitating ties that serve to divide our society even further".

HOWEVER, THE EVENT gave rise to a wave of concern and criticism from different parts of the Bosnian society. Shortly after the announcement of the parade, a banner saying "Ima zabranit!" ("It should be banned!") was raised, alongside the flag of the Kingdom of Brunei, a country notorious for being hostile towards gay people.

"WHEN IT COMES to public reaction from politicians on this kinds of homophobic statements, they usually stay silent", Huremovic says, adding that policymakers do not even make statements when it comes to violence. "Pride March finally forced some of them to start speaking in public about LGBTIQ rights, but still that's not enough. We need reactions and engagement in everyday politics", she demands.

IT NEEDS TO be stressed that criticism of the parade and skepticism on homosexual partnerships does not inevitably mean violence and homophobic slurs. Weeks before the event in Sarajevo, as well as shortly before the parade, hundreds of opponents held peaceful rallies. Critics include the Muslim initiative Inicijativa Iskorak, the portal Svjetlo Dunjaluka as well as Stranka demokratske akcije, SDA, a conservative Bosniak nationalist political party.



Photo: Samra Čosović-Hajdarević



Photo: Dunja Ježeraškić

THE PERSPECTIVE TALKED to Samra Ćosović-Hajdarević, an MP for the SDA in the Sarajevo Canton Assembly. In an interview with our magazine underlines that her stance on LGBTIQ-rights is not that of hatred: “I do not come from a homophobic environment, and I certainly do not come from a homophobic family. I have been fighting homophobia my whole life, and that is one of the main reasons why I am the member of the SDA party - the only party that invites all factions of society to move to a better future in the spirit of the sociopolitical times we belong to, from the beginning.”

ĆOSOVIĆ-HAJDAREVIĆ SUPPORTS the stance that one does choose their sexual orientation. “Hence, we must carry the burden of responsibility for the choices we make, as well as behavior we reflect, and the burden of responsibility the LGBTIQ behavior carries is rooted in immorality.” She adds: “However, we, as human beings, should not carry the burden of being judged, isolated and hated for what we do”, explains the politician.

INSTEAD, BEHAVIOR HAS to be judged, not the person: “Conclusively, my stance on LGBTIQ rights is that

of love, not hatred, as my proposal for cultivation of that love is through dialogue, strong bonding, and not through force and antagonism that hurts everyone”.

AT THE SAME time, she calls for a stronger dialogue, instead of a polarised debate: “Everyone’s hurting and both or all sides tend to become irritated due to a lack of understanding. Objectivity is the merit that all of us should tend to.” According to Ćosović-Hajdarević, the answer lies within bonding and conversation.

IT IS FAIR to say that, given the cultural conditions of Bosnia, hosting a peaceful Pride March does mark a new start. The road to full acceptance of gay partnerships is longer than a colorful Tito Street. Yet, for now, it could be concluded that the progress of the country lies within peaceful engagement on such a sensitive topic, which the parade has demonstrated. Time will show us which path Bosnians will take, in what direction the flags will wave, and if there is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.



RWANDA: SHAPING A FUTURE AFTER GENOCIDE

The genocide memorial in Rwanda. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

2019 marked twenty-five years since the horrific genocide, which claimed the lives of nearly one million people during a period of only one hundred days. Rwanda's economic resurgence has been exceptional. Perhaps even more remarkable is the process of reconciliation among the ethnic groups involved in the genocide.

THE TWO LARGEST ethnic groups in Rwanda, the Hutu and the Tutsi, have historically lived together rather peacefully. However, the dynamic changed with the arrival of European colonizers in the late nineteenth century. Influenced by the contemporary trend of race biology, the Belgians decided to officially classify every citizen as either Hutu or Tutsi. The process was very arbitrary,

though. Rwandans with physical features such as a narrow nose and a slim build were classified as Tutsi while a broader nose made you Hutu.

THE BELGIANS FAVORED the Tutsi at the expense of the Hutu. Consequently, tension and conflict among the two groups were prevalent during the twentieth century. The culmination of this

political turmoil was reached in April 1994 when Hutu-president Juvénal Habyarimana's airplane was shot down over the capital city Kigali. Habyarimana was in the process of negotiating a peace treaty with the militant Tutsi group Rwandan Patriotic Front, RPF and it is still, to this day, unclear whether the perpetrators of the attack were Tutsi- or Hutu extremists.

DESPITE THE LACK of clear evidence, the assassination of President Habyarimana was blamed on the Tutsi and served as the catalyst for the subsequent genocide. Hutu militias instigated a mass slaughter of Tutsis, using machetes and rifles, with the aim of eradicating them completely. The genocide was ultimately ended by the RPF a military group made up of mostly Tutsi refugees, after one hundred days of mass killings.

RWANDA WAS IN ruins. Nearly one million people had been killed; approximately 70 percent of the Tutsi population, and over two million Rwandans had fled to neighboring countries. Additionally, the country's GDP had been halved.

IN THE AFTERMATH of the genocide, envisioning a future Rwanda with social cohesion and a shared national identity seemed nearly impossible. The social fabric of the country had completely broken down. Neighbors and relatives had killed each other, with friends and colleagues becoming collaborators and informants. It seemed reasonable to fear a future plagued by violent revenge and score settling.

DESPITE THIS, RWANDA has maintained peace over the past two decades. The stability has facilitated an economic resurgence, with a lot of investment into infrastructure and diversifying the country's economy beyond agriculture. During the recovery, bringing the overwhelming amount of accused perpetrators to justice proved difficult. Small scale community courts, called gacaca, with layman judges were therefore established in many villages. Albeit not an optimal solution, it helped the population's efforts towards reconciliation.

FINN NORGREN is a journalist and former Secretary General of the Swedish aid organization "Radiohjälp". He has extensive experience with humanitarian assistance and has spent several years working and living in Rwanda.

"RWANDA'S HEALING HAS been incredible. The process of reconciliation is especially unique", he says. "I worked in Bosnia after the war in the nineties which was similar to Rwanda in the way that fear, more than hate, was the catalyst of the conflict. However, Bosnia's reconciliation has not been nearly as successful as Rwanda's"

“ RWANDA HAS MAINTAINED PEACE OVER THE PAST TWO DECADES

PRESIDENT PAUL KAGAME, himself a Tutsi, is the leader of the Rwandan Patriotic Front which ended the genocide in July 1994, and has been in power ever since. He has been accused of authoritarianism as well as, among other things, silencing political opposition. However, his efforts to reunite Rwanda and resolving the Hutu-Tutsi conflict are admirable according to Finn Norgen:

"SAY WHAT YOU will about Kagame but you have to give him credit here. After the genocide, he was resolute in stopping any attempts of organized revenge and has continuously preached reconciliation as the way forward."

"THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS what happened is very wise. Instead of fixating on former Hutu-Tutsi conflicts, their emphasis is on remembering and honoring the victims. The yearly week of memorial in April is very important. Schools also visit memorial sites and the children learn about the genocide, the mantra is 'Never again'", Finn continues.

NATHAN KARUHANGA, PhD in Business Administration at the University of Rwanda, has studied the country's development closely. He thinks that the Hutu-Tutsi tensions are coming to an end in Rwanda.

THE TERMS ‘HUTU’ and ‘Tutsi’ are no longer in use here. The government has established a program called ‘Ndi Umunyarwanda’, meaning ‘I am Rwandan’ to ensure this. Today, if you ask a child which tribe or group they are from, they will not know what you are trying to ask. The Hutu-Tutsi divide will be considered a part of history and we are seeing signs of a better future.” he says.

INDEED, THE PROGRAM Ndi Umunyarwanda and the policy of “Never again” have been influential. The Perspective spoke with Gatete Chris, a 25-year old student in Kigali, who lost family members in the genocide.

“I THINK ABOUT the Hutu-Tutsi divide as a thing of the past. You can still find some people from the older generations who, in private, might disparage Hutus or Tutsis but the younger generation is actively working to end this.”

“IT’S A PROCESS,” he continues. “People still have wounds, it’s not easy for orphans and survivors to forget but the younger generation is building a foundation to prevent any violent ideology.”

JOURNALIST FINN NORGREN shares similar thoughts regarding the future:

“We now have a generation of Rwandans who are aware of the genocide but didn’t experience it themselves. The genocide was still very present in 2002 when me and my wife lived in Rwanda. Hutus and Tutsis chose to sit separately, for example. This was no longer the case ten years later.”

HE ADDS: “I believe that, for every year that passes, the risk of another ethnic conflict ever springing up is decreasing.”

“ I THINK ABOUT THE
HUTU-TUTSI DIVIDE AS
A THING OF THE PAST
—Nathan Karuhanga



President Nathan Kagame of Rwanda. Photo: Kremlin

To read more about international reconciliation efforts in Rwanda, scan the QR-code.





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PEOPLE OF A REVOLUTION

Since mid-October, people in Lebanon from various religious and social backgrounds have taken to the streets, protesting the government's handling of the ongoing economic crisis. The Perspective's former chief-editor Sofia Gjertsson reports from Beirut.

Since its inception, the protests have been centered around Martyr's Square in central Beirut. The text on the raised fist reads "Thawra" - Revolution in Arabic. Photo: Sofia Gjertsson.

WHILE BEIRUT IS an amazing city - offering anything one could imagine, from ancient history in Badaro and Sodeco to the techno dance floors of Mar Mikhael - the protests have put the entire city and country on hold. In the beginning, the protests were peaceful and thousands gathered in the streets to speak up for their rights and against the economic crisis. However, things have now taken an ugly turn - with Hezbollah followers attacking the protestors, riot police and military brutality, and the government sealing off certain areas with concrete walls. The situation is becoming more and more aggressive. Many protesters have been taken into custody and many more have been injured, but the protests show no signs of stopping.

THE DISTRUST in the government and the current political and economic situation is an ongoing conversation in the daily life of Beirut. In an interview in the eastern district of Gemmayzeh, a young man named Mahmoud told The Perspective of his experiences in both the revolution and his life.

Did you participate in any of the protests?

Mahmoud: "I did, however, my parents did not want me to and they have constantly been trying

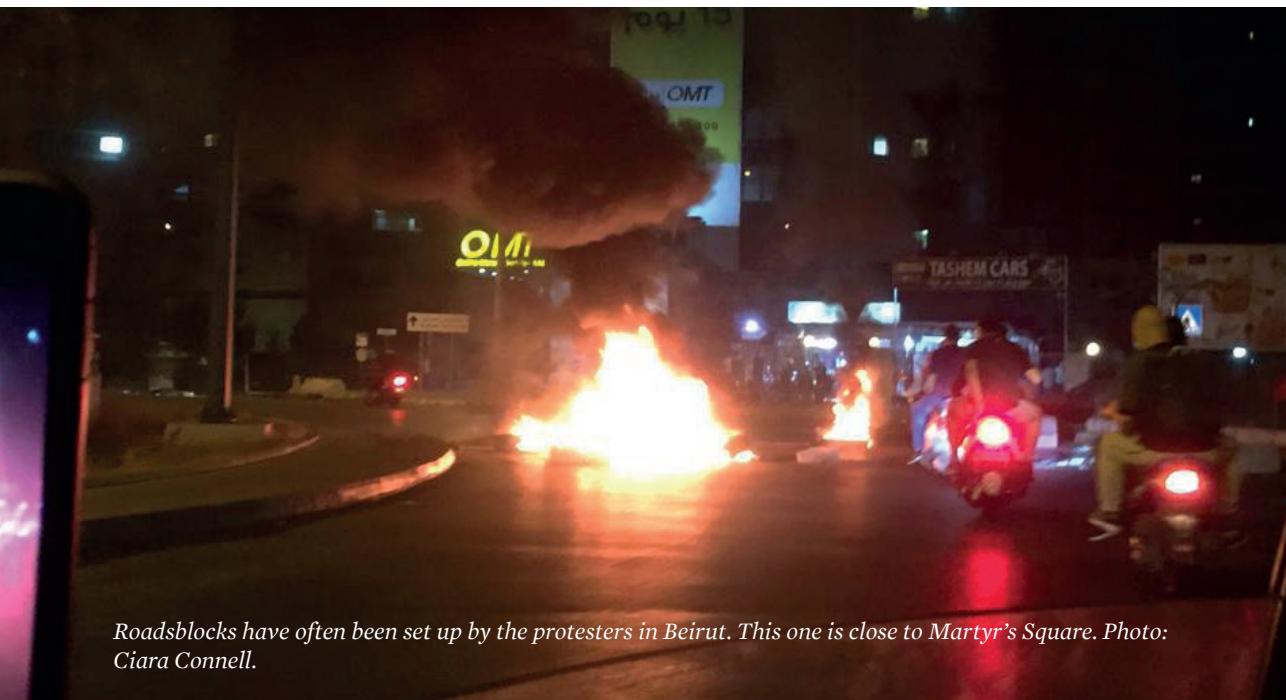
to get me to stay home. But I feel that they chose wrongly when they were young. They voted for corrupt leaders and I, among other youth, feel that they are in some ways to blame for the current situation. They had issues in their generation, experiencing and fighting in the civil war, but the issue is that nothing has ever become better after the war. Even though they do not want me to protest, I will always fight for my country. As I am the one who must live in this country, even though I do not want to right now."

Where would you want to go?

"I would like to go to France, as I have previously done one year on exchange there and I learned French in school here in Lebanon. Many of my friends are still there. I want to go there to have a better life for me and my family. I am planning to pursue my master's degree in France and hopefully after that I can get a residency or working permit so that I can continue living there. I do not want to raise a family here in this country."

Are you still participating in the protests?

"No, it is too dangerous now and I would risk my job. I was just recently employed and I have not even moved away from home yet."



Roadblocks have often been set up by the protesters in Beirut. This one is close to Martyr's Square. Photo: Ciara Connell.



Street art has been a large part of the Beirut protests, drawing international media attention. The Arabic text inside the heart reads "It is revolution". Photo: Sofia Gjerdtsson.

The economic crisis here is so bad that even though I have a university degree and a fulltime job, I cannot move out of my parent's house. It is simply too expensive compared to our salaries.

MANY OF MY friends with whom I graduated are still unemployed, despite graduating from good universities and speaking Arabic, English, and French. If I were to lose my job, it would not only affect me, but also my family. They put a lot of resources into my going to school. If I were to lose my job, all their efforts would have been for nothing. I could also risk going to jail if I protest and then my dream of going to France could never happen."

RECENTLY, THE ORGANISERS of many of the protests have been lobbying for people to donate money and blood due to the many injuries from the protests. The organisers recently wrote a letter to the Embassy of Switzerland asking them to freeze the millions of dollars the government transferred in a matter of days from Lebanon and the state into private accounts in Switzerland. They have started a petition, which over 70,000 people have now signed. While the prime minister did resign earlier in the fall due to the protests and a new government has been installed, the discontent is as great as ever.

US DOLLARS ARE increasingly hard to access in Lebanon as a way for the government to try and minimise the chances of people going abroad. Military checkpoints have increased, limiting social mobility for not only Lebanese but also Syrian nationals. The government recently voted through a new budget, which set the protests on fire again.

What do you think about the new government?

Mahmoud: "Politicians say it is a new government, but this is a lie. Yes, it is different people, but they are all the same. Nothing has changed because, the people here only vote for the leaders of the sect they belong to, not for an actual leader based on politics. The "new" government is still as corrupt, and nothing has changed. The new budget that was recently passed is supposedly designed to help with Lebanon's large state-debt, however, the politicians have only moved the debt from the state to the central bank, how does this solve any problems? These politicians are just greedy and are more interested in lining their own pockets than providing their citizens with rights. This is why we protest; this is why we yell "Thawra" - Thawra means revolution in Arabic - in the streets. The money should go to the people - not the politicians. We are not only protesting but calling for an actual revolution, we will not stop until there is a big political change in all of Lebanon."

Why did you first want to protest?

"I wanted to protest because I love my country. I protest for my country and for my rights, mine and all others in Lebanon. We have no opportunities here - we can barely even get a job. This is not a life we are living. The politicians just want to take our money. I want to fight for a country that I want to live in, not survive in. Currently, nothing is getting better, there is no way to improve your situation that is why we protest, why I protest. I do not seek wealth or a perfect life, but I want more than to just survive."

What do you think about the violence in the protests now?

"I think the peaceful revolution has done what it can. I wish I could participate, but as I told you, I love my family and if I were to lose my job it is not only me that is affected, it is also them. I need to think about them. And I am afraid of going to prison. I could die. I do not want to die. For now, I can only support the cause and the protests, but I cannot go there myself. I think the protests need to be violent because the government did not listen to us when we were asking them nicely. Now, we need to force them."

Mahmoud is joined by his friend Ahmed. He, like Mahmoud, has also participated in the protests.

Ahmed: This is just the beginning you know.

The beginning of what?

"The brutality and violence. Now the riot police and army are shooting rubber bullets and throwing teargas at us, but it will get worse. But the people will not give in this time. Look at me. I am from a good family. I can speak three languages and I have a degree in engineering. But I still do not have a job. The system is so fucking corrupt and nobody does anything. But now we are."

Where do you think it will all end?

"I don't know. Maybe there will be a new civil war. Maybe the protesters will get tired of being abused, assaulted and even killed and give up."

Mahmoud: "I think we will make a difference, but it won't happen in the coming years, it will be

long term. I dream of the day when Lebanon will be a good place to live. But for now, we just want to leave."

ON 11 FEBRUARY, the government held a vote of confidence which brought new life to the protests. Both Mahmoud and Ahmed went out to protest. The Perspective has contacted both men for comments but has not received any response. On 11 February, the brutality took to new heights with protesters being sprayed with water cannons by the army. Beatings were a common occurrence during the day and people came flooding in from all over Lebanon to take part. Many politicians' cars were vandalised in an attempt to stop the meeting and the vote of confidence from happening. The protesters have, as a way of fighting back against the riot police and military, used tennis rackets to hit the tear gas canisters back towards the police. For Lebanon, the situation is indeed serious, and the future for the eastern Mediterranean country remains unclear.

For confidentiality, all names have been changed in this article.



CHINA & CORONAVIRUS: A GLOBAL HEALTH EMERGENCY

Coronavirus declared a global health emergency by the World Health Organisation as the outbreaks double, quadruple and continue to infect individuals beyond Chinese borders. The Perspective spoke to Jane Liu, a nurse working in China, and Gloria Sheng, a Clinical Medicine student at Fudan University.

JUMPING INTO A taxi at Shanghai Pudong International Airport in China, the taxi driver begins to small-talk about the upcoming Lunar New Year while driving by traditional buildings and opposing modern skyscrapers, towering over villages like giants. The taxi driver asks, "What is the population of Sweden?" I respond, "About 10 million". With a frog-like laughter, he cries, "10 million people are leaving Shanghai to travel for the Lunar New Year, the whole Sweden is gone! Out! Away! Leaving Shanghai!"

ON JANUARY 30TH, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared coronavirus to be a global health emergency. The coronavirus, officially known as covid-19, was first leaked from Hubei province into other surrounding provinces. It is a zoonotic virus which has been transmitted from an unknown animal to a human, reportedly spread from the Huanan Wholesale Seafood Market in Wuhan. The common signs of coronavirus infection include respiratory symptoms such as dyspnea (difficulty breathing), dry cough, fever and in the most severe cases, pneumonia. In the case of pneumonia, death could occur due to kidney failure. Nevertheless, most people do not suffer from the extreme cases of coronavirus and do not end up in hospital. The people who are high targets of severe coronavirus

are individuals with low immune systems, usually over the age of forty. Those who have passed away have had pre-existing underlying health conditions. Since their immune systems are not very robust it is more difficult for these individuals to fight a virus.

SIMULTANEOUSLY, THE LARGEST migration event, Chinese New Year, also known as the Spring Festival or the Lunar New Year, occurred as the Chinese welcome the year of the rat. To welcome the Year of the Rat, millions of Chinese people were expected to migrate across borders into their respective family provinces in order to visit family in their hometowns for celebrations and reunions. The travel season in China usually begins fifteen days before Lunar New Year's Day and can last up to 40 days. Famous for being the largest annual human migration event in the world, around 3 billion trips were expected to be made during the 40 day travel rush. Due to the coronavirus outbreak, the city of Wuhan forced a rapid emergency transport suspension. The Chinese government quarantined Wuhan in order to contain the outbreak of the coronavirus but an estimated 5 million people left the city, sparking a domino effect of infections, spreading not only nationally but globally.

THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, met Chinese President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China to discuss global and national prevention methods. The meeting led to the focus on three large operations; the rapid establishment of international coordination and operational support, the upscaling of country readiness and response operations and lastly, the accelerating priority of research and innovation. The Chinese government and state council ordered a national extension of the Chinese New Year public holiday, from January 23rd to February 10th, discouraging civilians from going outside. Fear and stress have drowned the streets of China, as families lock themselves into their homes to avoid any contact with other citizens, knowing there is some potential for coronavirus to get to them.

WHEN ARRIVING IN Xujiahui, a commercial district known for its large malls, I am welcomed by Jane, a respectable Chinese nurse with her face covered in a bright blue surgical face mask. Before we sit down in the welcoming but empty cafe on a quiet Monday morning, our temperatures are taken by two security guards. As we sit down, I take out a bottle of handsanitizer, rub the disinfectant thoroughly through my hands and offer her some. She accepts and proceeds to ask me if I have an extra bottle of hand-sanitizer for me to give her, adding, "The hospital I work at across the road has soon run out of hand sanitiser and face masks. We have to cautiously utilise the resources, we cannot be greedy." She looks down, staring blankly at the ground and continues, "We have a heavy burden

and I worry a lot at the moment, especially about the situations which may be more uncontrollable. I never imagined China would suffer from such a strong flu. The Chinese government can only control its people to a certain extent. It is our own responsibility to maintain personal hygiene, therefore, it is vital that everyone pays attention to the current advice; to wear a mask, wash your hands often, do not interact with too many people and try to stay at home. People have been encouraged to work from home. Schools and universities are going digital, gyms are posting exercise videos online, encouraging people to do home workouts."

I CONTINUE TO ask her, "Do you have any hope, considering the large ongoing epidemic?" Jane looks at me and begins to update me on the latest local news, "Many of Shanghai's famous hospitals have sent their most professional doctors and nurses to Wuhan to help at the local hospitals there. A hospital was built in just 10 days. The doctors, nurses and volunteer workers are doing all they can to help, I have so much respect for them all."

HUOSHENSHAN HOSPITAL IN Wuhan was built beyond ones imagination. The hospital was built at "China speed", under a span of only ten days. The design plan, along with finalized drawings for construction, was completed within 60 hours. Then over 260 construction workers were put to work. Materials and professional equipment, including 2000 computers, 2000 thermometers, 700 finger pulse oximeters and a batch of medical robots, were put into place following the completion of the hospital. With all these efforts, the hospital in Wuhan was able to take in patients suffering from coronavirus immediately. One twitter user commented, "God made the universe in seven days. I think God was Chinese."

JANE CONTINUES, "I do have hope but I think we have to be very careful and cautious - the results on how the virus proceeds are up to the combination of a million people that are responsible for their own personal hygiene." She flicks up a CBN data map on her smartphone and points out, "Here you can keep track of who is affected by the virus in your proximity. It is smart to stay updated on how many individuals are affected in your district. Where are you living?" I press in my address and a bunch of

“THE CITY IS A
GHOSTTOWN, NOBODY
IS OUTSIDE.



Photo: Unsplash, Macau Photo Agency

red dots pop up. Jane clears the air, “See here, the closest person affected by the coronavirus is about 4.5 kilometres away from you. You should be fine, just be careful when you are outside.”

THE PERSPECTIVE ASKED Gloria Sheng, a clinical medicine student at Fudan University in Shanghai, the same question. “All my professors have gone to Wuhan to help with the ongoing epidemic. Most of them are doctors and nurses in the hospital affiliated with Fudan University. They are treating hundreds of coronavirus patients in Wuhan’s newly built hospital. The nurses and doctors protect themselves in the infectious disease wards by wearing face masks, goggles, gloves and protective clothing. You can even see the deep imprints that are left on their noses and cheeks from all the protective gear. Knowledge and expertise from all over China have been gathered and large efforts are being made to collectively overcome the virus. I am very scared, but also proud to see

my professors on the battlefield of this epidemic. These doctors, nurses and volunteer workers are putting their lives on the line to help the greater masses.” Around 1500 Shanghai doctors and nurses specializing in different disciplines, from critical medicine to infectious disease, have taken off to Wuhan to provide medical support.

THE SOCIAL UNREST within China continues, many are too scared to go outside. The lockdown of China is social, economic and political. The Chinese stocks have slipped, the global superpower struggles to restart their economy. The economic cost has mounted as businesses in China try to decide whether to re-open and global supply chains are disrupted. Mothers and fathers remain at home and scold their children for leaving the residence area. The thin layer of dust begins to grow thicker within restaurants, bars, schools, sport centers, libraries, offices and other public settings.

LEAPFROGGING DEVELOPMENT: CONNECTING ISOLATED COMMUNITIES



Photo: flickr/ Rodney Harvey

Financial inclusion as a catalyst for inclusive development in underserved and isolated communities

GIVE A MAN a fish he will eat for a day, teach a man to fish he will eat for a lifetime -- the same principle can be brought into development and financial inclusion. Simply providing aid creates dependency, whilst giving individuals the means to take their own initiative creates self-reliance and the potential for sustained growth. Developing countries and poorer communities often lag in development and have limited access to financial services, which limits their financial opportunities. Financial inclusion opens up possibilities for low income households to engage in the financial market, make payments, borrow, save and invest, which over time enables them to generate income and move out of poverty.

FINANCIAL INCLUSION in combination with innovative technologies not only enables increased financial opportunities for low-income households but creates a faster and more cost-effective way of reaching low-income households. Using innovative technology in isolated communities where there is low internet, mobile phone and electricity penetration is essential in creating the means for the poorest low-income earners to gain access to financial services. This creates the possibility to leapfrog development -- skipping non-essential and expensive steps that are no longer necessary in the development process.

A GREAT EXAMPLE of a tool that has enabled countries to leapfrog financial inclusion using

“ GIVE A MAN A FISH HE WILL EAT FOR A DAY, TEACH A MAN TO FISH HE WILL EAT FOR A LIFETIME - THE SAME PRINCIPLE CAN BE BROUGHT INTO DEVELOPMENT

technology is M-Pesa (M for mobile, pesa is Swahili for money). M-Pesa was launched in 2007 in Kenya and Tanzania and has since expanded to Afghanistan, South Africa, India, Romania and Albania. M-Pesa was initially developed as a tool to improve access to financial services; however, after its launch it became clear that customers were using M-Pesa for more than just microfinance. M-Pesa is for example used to send remittances by overseas workers and used by businesses to avoid robberies as it allows them to digitally deposit money rather than keeping it in a safe.

TODAY, M-PESA is a branchless banking service that allows users to deposit money into an account that is stored on their mobile phones, to send money to other users through SMS text messages - including sellers of goods and services - and to redeem deposits for regular money.

BUT EVEN MORE fundamental to M-Pesa is providing people with a legal means to prove who they are. There are an estimated 1.1 billion people in the world who have no legal forms of identification and are excluded from social and financial services. That is one in every seven individuals. The majority live in Africa and Asia, more than a third are under the age of



M-Pesa has been successful in several African countries. Can it replicate this success on Papua New Guinea? Photo: flickr/ VodafoneGroup

eighteen. They are, in many ways, invisible and are typically the most vulnerable people in the poorest countries.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA (PNG) is learning from these countries, as a digital access tool is being explored to provide poor people without bank accounts in remote areas of the country with access to financial services. PNG is an example of a developing country that has faced, and continues to face, several socio-economic developmental hurdles. PNG is geographically very isolated from the rest of the world, meaning that, while it is endowed with natural resources, very little of it reaches the global economy.

SECONDLY, PNG has a long history of war and colonisation which has left it with high levels of poverty and poor and inadequate infrastructure. Current statistics from the Asian Development Bank, ADB, show that mobile penetration is now at 54%. However, internet penetration remains low at 12%, which has contributed to the fact that 85% of low-income earners do not have, or have very limited access, to formal financial services. ADB and the World Bank have described PNG as among the world's least-connected countries. These are major challenges PNG needs to overcome in order



a certain level of social and political stability in order progress. The developed world has the prerequisites for continued development whereas many developing countries do not have the social security, economic resources or political stability for inclusive development.

A CERTAIN LEVEL infrastructure is necessary for communities to evolve as it enables an easier flow of goods, people and

to reach the global market and engage their population in the global economy.

INTRODUCING FINANCIAL TECHNOLOGIES, like M-Pesa that do not require extensive physical and technological infrastructure is a way to expand financial inclusion to the most excluded segments of the population in a quicker and more cost-effective way. This way, countries like PNG can leapfrog development – they can skip unnecessary and expensive traditional development strategies, which expedites the development process.

ADB HAS BEEN working to create a digital access tool aimed at increasing financial inclusion by enabling participating financial institutions in PNG to provide financial services to low-income and financially-underserved people in remote areas, bringing them into the formal sector. The digital access tool includes a smart card with near field communication (NFC) that will be used to verify personal details, such as name, gender and biometrics, so that financial services can be accessed. The digital access tool works both offline and online and the users themselves do not even need a phone. Only personnel at banks will need a smartphone - which overcomes the low network and mobile penetration rates.

WHILE ACCESS TO financial services and the internet is paramount in our modern world which revolves around the premise that there is access to a well functioning financial system and high speed internet, development requires

information. But leapfrogging does allow for a form of transition period. It gives less developed areas extra time to develop infrastructure for the long-run by providing the means to increase their financial capacity, human capital and productivity. Political stability and political will are other prerequisites for inclusive development. A country needs a government that wants all of its citizens to be included in development, which is not always the case. In far too many countries, a person's religion, race, gender or sexuality leads to some sort of exclusion from society which makes it difficult for them to move out of poverty.

THE EXCLUSIONARY EFFECTS of a lack of development and of certain political parties or leaders make tech-based financial strategies more attractive as they do not require a strong infrastructural base and often add a positive image to the government – which leaders seldom refuse.

ALL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES have their pitfalls and are dependent on a number of social, political and economic factors working together in order to create the opportunity for progress. The main take away from tech-based financial inclusion is that it aims at increasing independence by giving people the means to lift themselves out of poverty instead of having to rely on unpredictable and unstable political relations.



BREAKING THE FAILURE TABOO IN THE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

As a movement to accept failure as a learning experience grows across the private sector, is the development world lagging behind?

AT SPECIAL NETWORKING events, especially in the start-up field, boasting about success is no longer what is expected from professionals, entrepreneurs and investors: during FailCons, or Fuck-Up Nights, it's stories of failure which are being narrated instead. These events are part of a flourishing movement that aims to shift the way we look at failure. Yet, in the development sector, the word 'failure' is still taboo. The websites of development NGOs display shiny success stories, but almost never report on what went wrong. But there are some exceptions: Engineers without Borders Canada, for instance, makes publicly available a Failure Report every year. The Perspective spoke to Ashley Good, who led the first of those Failure Reports and is now the CEO and founder of Fail Forward - the world's first failure consultancy.

As someone who has experience in both fields, do you believe that the international development sector is less open to failure compared to the private sector?

"Across the whole non-profit sphere, speaking openly about failure is difficult because of the inherent power dynamic that comes with the relationship between funders and organisations. Non-profits obviously fear that admitting failure will result in donors cutting back on funds. But in the business sector there are different reasons that make it hard to admit failure: a fear of losing face, of not being trusted with interesting work anymore, a competition for resources within the organisation. So, is the business sector more open to failure? Maybe a little bit, but I think the

problems are very similar.

In the start-up scene there are obviously a lot more conversations and events about failure. But, for instance, an event called Fail Festival has been gathering the international development community in Washington, D.C. for years. Even my clients at Fail Forward are very diverse: a third come from the private sector, a third from the government sector and a third from the non-profit sector. They all share a desire to create spaces for sharing stories about failure."

Back to the problem of funding, is admitting failure particularly difficult for NGOs relying on grants from governmental agencies or international organisations?

"The application process for these grants is very impersonal. There's a list of criteria, and organisations have to check all the boxes. This leaves little room for a nuanced conversation about learning, adapting and becoming more agile. Not many funders enable non-profit organisations to pilot a bunch of different ideas. Although there are some projects that at least have processes for pilots built into them, they don't necessarily operate as pilots. It still feels as though these projects can't fail."

Who defines what failure actually means in the context of a development project?

"It comes back to the power dynamics inherent to the sector. In an ideal world, it would be the beneficiaries who would decide if a project failed or succeeded. But unfortunately, those who



are allocating the resources are ultimately the decision-makers. The interesting thing is that the “who defines failure” question isn’t unique to the non-profit space either. Every time a project fails, all the people who have worked on it have different perspectives on what didn’t work and why, and on whether the project actually failed or not. It is important to hear all perspectives and have these conversations in a productive way.”

How do you help your clients have these conversations and embrace failure?

“First of all, failure has consequences - so to suggest that it should be embraced or celebrated is a shallow understanding of the issue. I like to talk about how to fail intelligently instead. Every client I’ve ever worked with already knows what that entails: detect failure early, analyse it, maximise and apply the learning, and continue to take smart risks and experiment your way forward. Yet few of us do it: failing intelligently requires being our strongest selves in our worst moments - and that’s very hard. Moreover, organisations are not set up to support us in this process.

So, I see my job as helping people overcome

the barriers that prevent them from failing intelligently. The first barrier is the mindset of looking away from failure instead of recognising that failure is inevitable: it’s just an event to which we get to decide how to respond. Secondly, I help my clients recognise that failing well is a skill that can be practiced. And finally, I support organisations in building the norms that make failing intelligently just the way things are done.

So, what is worth embracing is not failure, but the ability to build the skills and practices that enable us to learn from the “small f” failures so that we never get to the “big F” failures.”

In the development sector, is there a tendency to sweep failures under the rug instead?

“There is a tendency for non-profits to pretend to have all the answers and for funders to pretend to believe them. But this situation is changing: a number of funders are genuinely striving to create an environment where conversations about what didn’t work are welcome. Yet, as any project evaluator could tell you, asking these questions doesn’t mean that you’ll get a sincere and complete answer. It’s important that funders themselves role-model this behavior.



What's truly needed is an even more fundamental shift: when we're addressing complex problems, learning has to be seen as inherently valuable, as much as success is. Development NGOs are trying to tackle challenging situations, so they should be honest with themselves: whatever change they're trying to achieve, if it was easy, would have already been done. They should then expect failure, strive to learn what works and what doesn't, and be truly open to adapting. And they should keep learning, because the world changes, situations change, problems change, and we can't always do the same thing, expecting it to have the same results."

Is sharing stories of failure important to bring about this fundamental shift?

"I believe it is, but not for the reasons that people generally think. People believe that if we're open and honest about our failures, then those mistakes won't ever be repeated. And I will tell you: the same mistakes will continue to be repeated, no matter how much you share them. Why I think it's still important to share those stories is for cultural reasons: sharing stories of failure in an event or a report can help create a culture where talking about failure is the norm. Especially when

leaders are open about their failures, they create a psychologically safe environment that allows people to be honest and open."

Do you think sharing these stories publicly could also increase donor confidence in an organisation?

"Yes, I really do, and I saw it when I was leading the Failure Report at Engineers without Borders. The first question anyone would ask me about the report was: did you lose donors? The honest truth is that, to my knowledge, no one stopped funding Engineers without Borders because of what was written in that report. Instead, it definitely attracted new funding sources because donors were excited about an organisation that was dedicated to learning.

When we show failure openly, we think it makes us look weak and opens us up for judgment. So, we tend to blame or implicate others, and end up looking petty and unwilling to learn. But if we share our mistakes in a blameless way, with a focus on what we learned, we actually demonstrate strength."

THE POLITICS OF BILLIONAIRES: NEW OPTIMISM AND THE CONDITIONALITY OF INEQUALITY

Today, billionaires occupy a conspicuous place on the map of recently politicised subjects. As a new economic superclass, this elite has managed to come out as the breadwinners of liberalisation, globalisation and modern industrialisation. However, the discontent is growing towards what many perceive as a rigged economic system driving global inequality.

DESPITE THERE BEING only 2,153 of them in 2019, the billionaires of the world share more wealth between them than 4.6 billion people altogether. To further illustrate the global disparities within this distribution of wealth, the 22 richest men in the world currently hold more wealth than all of the women in Africa combined.

OXFAM PRESENTED THESE numbers through their annual report on global inequality released in conjunction with the yearly Davos meeting. Gradually, Oxfam has been successful in bringing to light the astounding disparities of wealth distribution around the world and contributing to creating a discussion on global inequality and its relationship to development.

ON THE OTHER side of the Atlantic, Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders is pushing his agenda to

put more taxes on the ultra-wealthy. The campaign has so far proved largely successful, especially in comparison with 2016. With the US being home to more billionaires than China, Germany and Russia combined, and with a steady decline in social mobility within the country, people are rallying to this seemingly new politics of dissatisfaction.

THERE ARE TRAITS in this anger truly defining for an age characterised by consumerism. Many of the economic elites targeted are also the ones providing the most sought-after goods and services, lots of which today are quite unimaginable to live without.

IT IS THEREFORE fair to question what role these global corporations occupy. Not just as companies, but as political actors as a lot of them are outsourcing work overseas to run exploitative sweatshops instead, all the while polluting the environment.

THE QUESTION POSED then, is if billionaires are obstacles or enablers of bringing forth a more just, equal and prosperous world. We have so far explored the side claiming the first, but many others would argue the latter.

IT HAS NOW been three years since Hans Rosling passed away. With his savvy graphs and energetic presentation technique, his passion for statistics pointing towards the betterment of the world took many by storm. In a newsfeed crammed with negative stories and grim predictions, Rosling emerged as a figure of hope and optimism.

2018, THE SAME year Rosling's book *Factfulness* was released, Steven Pinker also published his work titled *Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism and Progress*. The book can be read as a treatise empirically trying to manifest just how far humanity has progressed, warranting reasons to believe in the even better things to come.

LUMPED TOGETHER, THESE figures have contributed in creating a discourse sometimes referred to as 'New Optimism'. New Optimism is, however, more than the celebration of progress. The core argument raised here is that we also have capitalism and the free market to thank for this progress.

NATURALLY, THIS NARRATIVE has had a major attraction from well-heeled funders, such as Bill Gates. Gapminder, the foundation of captivating statistics founded by Rosling, as well as Our World in Data are both funded or receive generous donations from the Gates Foundation.

WHY HAS THIS narrative received such a hearing and popularity at this given time? Martin Andersson, senior lecturer and associate professor of Economic History with a special focus on issues such as inequality, poverty and growth, shares his thoughts on this matter.

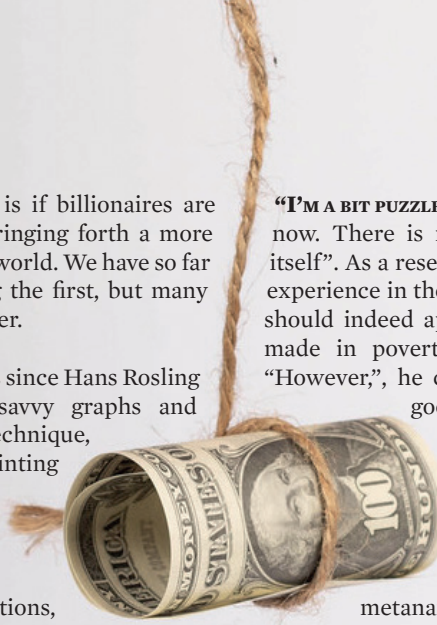
"I'M A BIT PUZZLED over as to why this is appearing now. There is nothing new with the trend in itself". As a researcher with over twenty years of experience in the field, Andersson agrees that we should indeed appreciate the immense progress made in poverty reduction and development. "However;", he continues, "being an optimist is good, but being a realist better".

A BIG ISSUE with both New Optimism and the claim that billionaires are worsening inequality is that they are not just narratives; they are also metanarratives. They both try to give a totalising, comprehensive account to various historical events, experiences and social, cultural phenomenon based upon claims to universal truths or values.

MUCH IS LOST in these grand narratives, and although comforting they also tend to distort our view on a given issue. New Optimism oversimplifies poverty reduction. If one operationalises more newly suggested measures, then poverty reduction has actually stagnated in later years. All the while, the richest keep capturing the lion's share of the wealth created through the global market.

**“ N E I T H E R
NATIONAL NOR GLOBAL
DEVELOPMENT SHOULD
BE INSTRUCTED BY THE
WEALTHY FEW.**

– Martin Andersson, Associate Professor, Lund



FOR EXAMPLE, BRINGING everyone in the world over a new poverty line of 740 dollars per day, as suggested by British economist Peter Edwards, would require shifting about six trillion dollars existing global income to the poor. For measure, that's about seven percent of the income of the world's richest ten percent.

HOWEVER, THERE ARE also issues with the counter-narrative represented by Oxfam. Andersson finds it problematic that Oxfam's annual report on global inequality seems to rely on an assumption of the economy as a zero-sum game. The prosperity of the few does not necessarily have to rely on the poverty of others.

ONE ISSUE HE does stress, however, is the unequal access to political power. Within this, billionaires are indeed part of a problem. "With wealth comes power and even if philanthropy occasionally can be considered virtuous, neither national nor global development should be instructed by the wealthy few".

ECONOMICS AND POLITICS today seem so intertwined that it can be hard to differentiate between the two. It is partly in this boundary work more discussions should be directed. The global debate on fairly

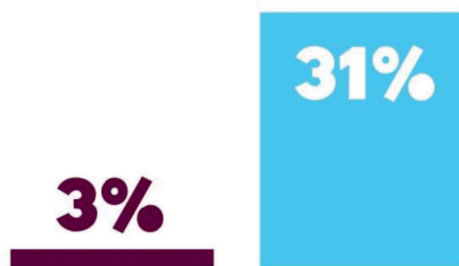
distributing the fruits of economic growth is, therefore, conducive as to foster international cooperation on tackling issues such as tax-evasion and creating stronger impartial democratic institutions.

LIKE A DRAGON sitting upon its treasury of riches, not having any use of it more than for the pleasure of possession, the wealth accumulated should not be an end in of itself. Instead, we should ask ourselves where are the poor today, and how can they best be targeted? And who prospers from the growth created by, for example, foreign investments?

WHILE BOTH ARE raising important points worthy of taking into consideration, the metanarratives here presented shares a limit in explanatory power. To move forward, we must, therefore, be ready to reject the comforts of generalisations and move towards the disorder of details to find common grounds.

GROWTH BETWEEN 2011 AND 2017

- Average wages in G7 countries
- Dividends to wealthy shareholders



Source: Oxfam, *Time to Care*. To read the full report visit <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/time-care> or scan this QR-Code.



POOP FOR CHANGE

Every day, we waste litres of clean water to flush away a resource with enormous potential. Instead, we could provide safe and affordable sanitation, a no-cost fertiliser, and use our poop to restore and preserve soils without the risk of contaminating groundwater with faeces.

ON AVERAGE, JUST by flushing the toilet, we use around fifteen thousand litres of water per person per year. This provides a suitable environment for pathogens - infectious microorganisms - that naturally occur in our excrements and thrive in oxygen-free conditions. The resulting black water is extremely difficult and expensive to clean and sanitise.

GLOBALLY, SIX IN ten people still lack access to safely managed sanitation facilities and almost two billion people drink water contaminated with faeces. The resulting diseases and infections particularly affect children under the age of five, and every day, nearly a thousand children die due to preventable water and sanitation-related diseases. The statistics are staggering, yet it is an issue that still receives very little media attention.

IN ADDITION, EVEN though we produce almost all of our food on land, certain practices, including agriculture, degrade the soil and thereby restrict our ability to grow food, but also aggravate climate change as

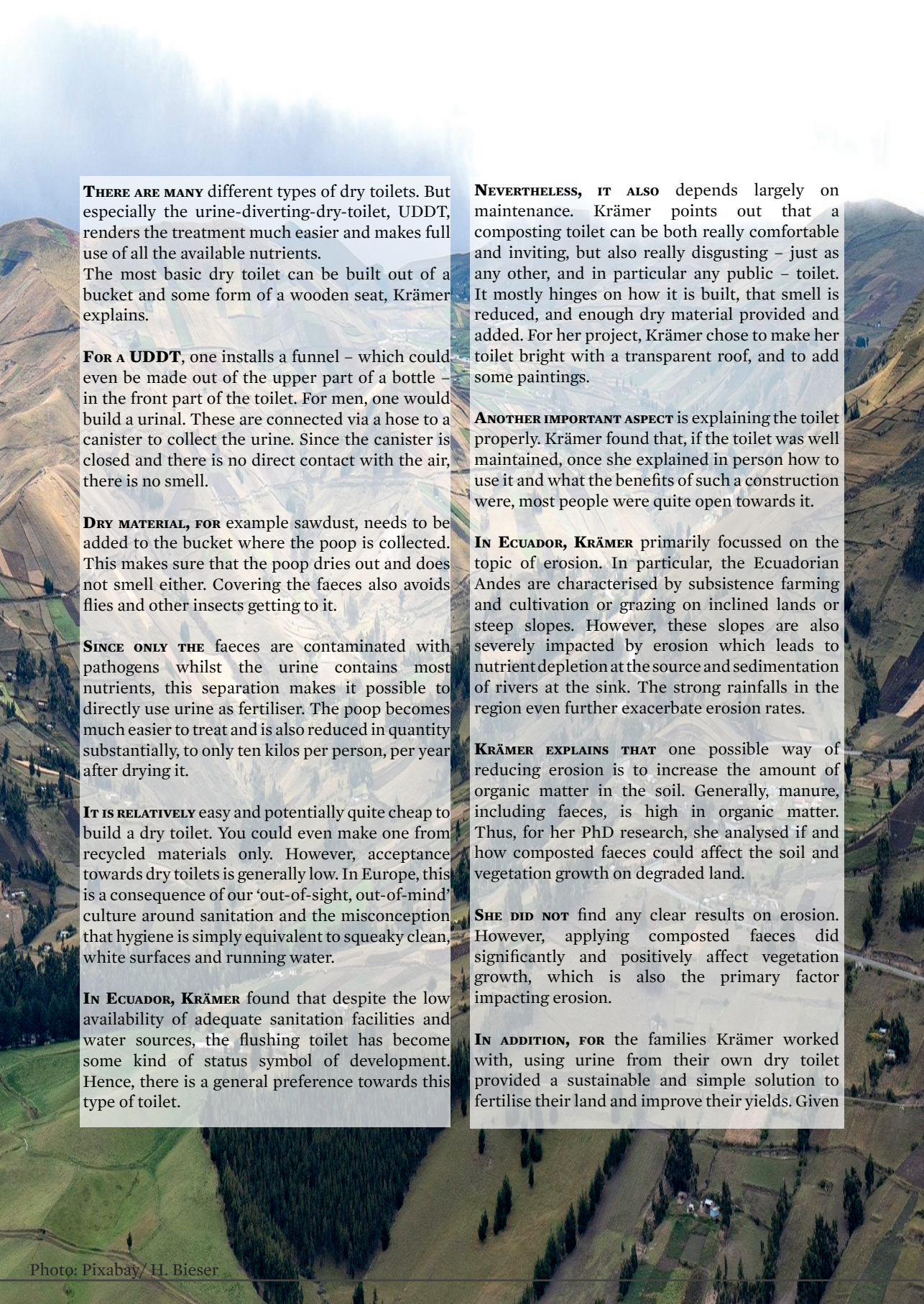
the soil loses its ability to store carbon.

INSTEAD, WE COULD save water and prevent its contamination, provide better sanitation, reduce child mortality and use faeces to restore the fertility of the soil and increase biodiversity. This is the aim of ecological sanitation, that is, composting or dry toilets.

Nadine Krämer has conducted her PhD research in this area in Ecuador, with a particular focus on erosion and the possibilities for soil conservation. In some of the areas she worked in, up to one quarter of the households had no access to sanitation.

ACCORDING TO KRÄMER, what adds to the problem with flushing toilets is that the nutrient cycle remains open. "We extract minerals like phosphorus from mines, we put them into the land as fertilisers, we consume them through our food and then we excrete them and we flush them to the sea where they take millions of years to be recovered", she says.





THERE ARE MANY different types of dry toilets. But especially the urine-diverting-dry-toilet, UDDT, renders the treatment much easier and makes full use of all the available nutrients.

The most basic dry toilet can be built out of a bucket and some form of a wooden seat, Krämer explains.

FOR A UDDT, one installs a funnel – which could even be made out of the upper part of a bottle – in the front part of the toilet. For men, one would build a urinal. These are connected via a hose to a canister to collect the urine. Since the canister is closed and there is no direct contact with the air, there is no smell.

DRY MATERIAL, for example sawdust, needs to be added to the bucket where the poop is collected. This makes sure that the poop dries out and does not smell either. Covering the faeces also avoids flies and other insects getting to it.

SINCE ONLY THE faeces are contaminated with pathogens whilst the urine contains most nutrients, this separation makes it possible to directly use urine as fertiliser. The poop becomes much easier to treat and is also reduced in quantity substantially, to only ten kilos per person, per year after drying it.

IT IS RELATIVELY easy and potentially quite cheap to build a dry toilet. You could even make one from recycled materials only. However, acceptance towards dry toilets is generally low. In Europe, this is a consequence of our ‘out-of-sight, out-of-mind’ culture around sanitation and the misconception that hygiene is simply equivalent to squeaky clean, white surfaces and running water.

IN ECUADOR, KRÄMER found that despite the low availability of adequate sanitation facilities and water sources, the flushing toilet has become some kind of status symbol of development. Hence, there is a general preference towards this type of toilet.

NEVERTHELESS, IT ALSO depends largely on maintenance. Krämer points out that a composting toilet can be both really comfortable and inviting, but also really disgusting – just as any other, and in particular any public – toilet. It mostly hinges on how it is built, that smell is reduced, and enough dry material provided and added. For her project, Krämer chose to make her toilet bright with a transparent roof, and to add some paintings.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT ASPECT is explaining the toilet properly. Krämer found that, if the toilet was well maintained, once she explained in person how to use it and what the benefits of such a construction were, most people were quite open towards it.

IN ECUADOR, KRÄMER primarily focussed on the topic of erosion. In particular, the Ecuadorian Andes are characterised by subsistence farming and cultivation or grazing on inclined lands or steep slopes. However, these slopes are also severely impacted by erosion which leads to nutrient depletion at the source and sedimentation of rivers at the sink. The strong rainfalls in the region even further exacerbate erosion rates.

KRÄMER EXPLAINS THAT one possible way of reducing erosion is to increase the amount of organic matter in the soil. Generally, manure, including faeces, is high in organic matter. Thus, for her PhD research, she analysed if and how composted faeces could affect the soil and vegetation growth on degraded land.

SHE DID NOT find any clear results on erosion. However, applying composted faeces did significantly and positively affect vegetation growth, which is also the primary factor impacting erosion.

IN ADDITION, FOR the families Krämer worked with, using urine from their own dry toilet provided a sustainable and simple solution to fertilise their land and improve their yields. Given

“ YOU HAVE VERY GOOD AND VERY CHEAP SANITATION AND, AT THE SAME TIME, YOU IMPROVE THE GROWTH OF THE THINGS THAT YOU GROW IN YOUR GARDEN.

the continuously rising prices of farming inputs, this option also makes fertilising much more affordable. And it is a way of closing the nutrient cycle as much as possible on the farm.

“It’s really a win-win situation. You have very good and very cheap sanitation and, at the same time, you improve the growth of the things that you grow in your garden”, Krämer says.

In developed countries as well, using urine as a natural fertiliser is increasingly taken into consideration and researched. In part, this is due to its high concentration of phosphorus - a non-renewable resource we currently extract from phosphorus mines.

For the future of composting toilets, Krämer points out that much more work needs to be done, especially with regard to incentives to encourage the use of dry toilets. The potential and the implications of composting toilets are ample, and we should take full advantage of them.



Manure collected from dry toilets. Photo: flickr/ Romain Villiers

Infobox

The WHO has published research and recommendations for the use of urine and faeces in agriculture.

In general, to use urine as a fertiliser, they distinguish between a closed unit, e.g. within a family, and cases where urine is mixed from several different people or the vegetables and fruits are to be sold.

Just within the family and for their own consumption, the urine does not have to be treated at all and can be used directly as a fertiliser. Otherwise, depending on the temperature, it needs to be stored in a closed canister for up to six months. This way, the PH rises, and potential pathogens are eliminated.

There are several methods to treat faeces. Hot composting is preferable for the quality of the compost. However, it requires that a certain temperature is achieved homogeneously within the entire compost hive, e.g. 50°C for minimum a week. Otherwise, it is possible to dry the faeces for around two years.

Source: WHO

IS AMLO THE NEW PASTOR IN TOWN?

On July 1, 2018, Andrés Manuel López Obrador was elected as President of Mexico in a landslide election, winning over 53% of votes. His victory has proven to be a win for the Mexican left that have been in the shadow of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), the party which ruled the country for most of the past century.

AT THE BEGINNING OF each year, either on the 5th or 6th January, Mexican families gather together and “partir rosca”, a tradition that originates from the Spaniards, where you break a certain round sweetbread. As I went across the Atlantic to visit my family during the holidays, I was there when we were to part the bread.

ON THE WAY to the bakery in the car to buy the rosca with my “tía”, the Spanish word for aunt that can include basically everyone from your actual aunt to your grandmother’s cousin, the topic of the current leftist president came up. As the first radical left-wing president in Mexico, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, commonly referred to as AMLO, is known to create headlines not least through his public press conferences every weekday morning.

DURING THE CONVERSATION, some of the most pressing political issues in Mexico arose. We discuss the great segregation between societal classes, in which people either live very well, well or not, which shapes Mexico today. We

discuss the farmers that cultivate drugs in order to get a higher income so that they can live better lives and get paid well as suppliers since the demand on the other side of the northern border is strong and has a great impact on the political landscape. The US demand leads to a high rate of drugs circulating, which, in turn, is leading to criminality and gang violence that results in murders and crime. We discuss the high risks that come with working in the press because gangs do not want journalists to report their actions. This has resulted in Mexico being the deadliest country for journalists in 2019 according to the World Press Freedom Index. We discuss the refugees that hope to cross the US-Mexican border who travel from South and Central America but often end up not being able to cross, being detained or being displaced in the northern parts of Mexico without any means of traveling back home or entering the US. Lastly, we discuss political corruption.

WITH MEXICO’S TROUBLED institutions, the country is not easy to govern, though AMLO is hardly a newcomer to the political landscape of Mexico. Oil, wealth, poverty and corruption are



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

all central to Mexican politics. Growing up in the state of Tabasco, with a middle class background, presented him with one sole option: the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). Where he grew up, no industry was present, neither were there any institutions other than those the PRI controlled, nor was there a real bourgeoisie. His background has given him a nationalistic viewpoint as well as an understanding of the situation of the lower classes. In the 1970s, he studied political science at university. His political career began locally in Tabasco and later developed. He ran for president two times before he succeeded on his third try. Before that, AMLO served PRI as a mayor in a federal district. In 2014, he founded the Movimiento Regeneración Nacional, shortened MORENA, with which he won the presidential election in 2018.

AMLO DESCRIBES HIS presidency as the fourth transformation of Mexico - the first being independence from the Spaniards, the second being the reformation and the third being the Mexican revolution. He wishes to end the war on drugs, end corruption, create better

prerequisites for groups in need, such as unemployed youths and the elderly, reverse Mexico's economically-planned oil decline and fight social and racial inequality. Although he wishes to make vast changes to Mexico, AMLO has claimed that he will not raise taxes.

WITH BIG PROMISES to live up to, AMLO has a lot to prove. Under AMLO, the first ever Mexican cabinet with the same amount of females and males has been appointed. He has declared Mexico a humanitarian state that will welcome refugees from the south that cannot enter the US. On the other hand, he has set up a special police force by the southern border to prevent refugees from crossing the border between Guatemala and Mexico. He has further granted political asylum to Bolivian left-wing president Evo Morales in breach of the leading foreign policy doctrine "doctrina estrada" from the 1930 Treaty on Non-Intervention.

“ AS MEXICO'S SELF-PROCLAIMED ROBIN HOOD, HE ALSO TRIED TO SELL A LUXURIOUS DREAMLINER BOUGHT BY THE PREVIOUS PRESIDENT ENRIQUE PEÑA NIETO AND PUT THE MONEY INTO ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMS.

AS MEXICO'S SELF-PROCLAIMED Robin Hood, he also tried to sell a luxurious Dreamliner bought by the previous president Enrique Peña Nieto and put the money into anti-poverty programs. The sale of the plane has been unsuccessful and maintenance costs have resulted in a \$1.5m bill. Regarding further airfare, AMLO has prohibited his cabinet from flying in government-owned jets resulting in the sales of thirty-nine helicopters and thirty-three smaller jets. He is leading his cabinet by his own example, as he flies tourist class on regular commercial flights. AMLO has been criticised for not showing enough results but this does not seem to share this view when it comes to social reforms.

THROUGH THE WINDOW, I observe the surroundings. We drive past several taquerias, selling tacos al pastor, Mexican shawarma, large chunks of meat on rotating metal bars with a piece of pineapple at the bottom. The dish was originally introduced by the large

Lebanese colony in Mexico that has since been 'Mexicanised'. The scent of tacos seeps through the open windows of the car and mixes with the heat and exhaust gases from the heavy Mexican traffic. In the taquerias, people of all societal classes sit on plastic chairs by tables with waxed tablecloths covered with floral patterns. The taco unites the people. Everyone pays the same. Everyone gets the same. Everyone leaves satisfied. Is AMLO trying to do the same and be the political symbol of the accessible taco al pastor in each Mexican household? Let us hope that AMLO will not be for Mexico what Hugo Chávez was for Venezuela.

SPECTRES OF A MILITANT PAST: STRONG-ARMING SECURITY IN EL SALVADOR

ON SUNDAY 16TH February, the recently-elected president of El Salvador Nayib Bukele, in an unexpected and extremely unpopular move, marched military troops into the national parliament with the intent to force the parliament to approve a \$109 million loan to provide law enforcement with security equipment. In an attempt to fulfill his campaign promise to tackle corruption and gang violence nationwide, the former 38-year-old mayor of the nation's capital, San Salvador, Bukele hit the nation with reminders of its most painful memory in recent history: over a decade of civil war that plagued El Salvador from the late 1970s until 1992.

THIS CIVIL WAR raged on throughout the country against the backdrop of US support for dictatorships in Central and South America during the 1980s, when fears of leftist insurgencies supported by the Soviet Union dominated foreign policy in Latin America. It came as a shock to many when Bukele, the first president raised in the new Salvadoran republic following the end of the civil war, used the traditional instrument of the previous generation of El Salvador's leaders: the threat of military force to enact policy.

PRESIDENT BUKELE HAS received massive backlash and scorn from both his constituents within the country, as well as from the international community. While some analysts argue that the president may have done this to antagonize two of the least popular institutions in the country's

political system, the parliamentary assembly and the traditional political parties, others fear that Bukele's prior image of the savvy, charismatic public servant during his tenure as mayor was just a veneer obscuring an authoritarian leader.

THE PERSPECTIVE WAS able to contact a journalist from El Salvador, who chose to remain anonymous, to obtain a clearer picture of what the president's actions mean for the average citizen. He notes that "The president called for an insurrection [against the parliament] but the people do not want that. The people are sick and tired of war." However, he also mentions that the ubiquity of social media complicates the reality of the situation in the country. He points out, "On social media, many people still publicly support [Bukele]. There are also many Salvadorans who acquiesce and stay silent, and others become infuriated if anybody says something negative about the president."

REGARDLESS, IT IS too soon to denounce the president as yet another authoritarian head of state on the world stage. As our journalist contact reminds us, "The Salvadoran people need to wait and see first, we must be vigilant. We must remain calm and not put [Bukele] on a pedestal yet, when he has not accomplished anything significant yet."



A PIPELINE TO THE PAST

INDIGENOUS RESISTANCE HEIGHTENS OVER PIPELINE CONSTRUCTION

The construction of the Coastal GasLink pipeline on Wet'suwet'en land has sparked nationwide protests in Canada, bringing the country's colonial past to the forefront.



Photo: Jason Hargrove



Photo: Jason Hargrove

“HI EVERYONE, I hope you’re doing well. I’m going to interrupt today’s class to talk about what’s currently happening here in Vancouver.” My professor in global indigenous histories opens his lecture slides. “What is happening right now is an excellent example of what I’m trying to teach in this class – that history is not an isolated event, and that structures of colonialism and indigenous resistance live on.”

I’M IN VANCOUVER, Canada for the spring term. What my professor is referring to is the Wet’suwet’en protests and resistance against a pipeline being built through their unceded territory in central British Columbia. In my case, as a born-and-raised Scandinavian, the violence, displacement and discrimination against Indigenous peoples in the Americas is something you learn about, but don’t actively engage in. Being situated near the epicentre for Indigenous resistance, however, forces you to actively consider the underlying questions of ‘why, how and when did this all occur?’

THE WET’SUWET’EN FIRST Nation are indigenous to the lands of Canada’s westernmost state, British Columbia. Most evidence points to people first settling in this area after the last glaciations, around 9000 years ago. These Indigenous peoples of British Columbia lived on the land when first contact with the Europeans was made in the 17th century. Unlike in many other Canadian states, where treaties were drawn up, however hidden the full context of those treaties were to the signing peoples, Indigenous land in British Columbia has remained unceded. This means their traditional land has never been surrendered to colonial powers.

TODAY, THE WET’SUWET’EN are protesting the construction of the Coastal GasLink pipeline through their traditional land. These peoples

are still fighting colonial structures. This is part of a \$6.6-billion project to bring natural gas from north-eastern British Columbia to Kitimat on the coast. The clearing for construction started over a year ago, but resistance from the Wet’suwet’en hereditary chiefs and communities, both through talks and physical blockades, halted the progress. Now, a year later, agreements and talks have broken down. As with so many similar confrontations between Indigenous resistance and governmental and private forces, multiple arrests of Wet’suwet’en protesters are commonplace.

THESE ARRESTS SPARKED a national outcry from Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Since, protests and blockades have been set up nationwide, blocking important junctions in Vancouver and Victoria, the railroad between Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal, and the justice minister’s office. At the time of writing, these protests are still ongoing, and the Wet’suwet’en resistance has reached international media outlets. In Canada, and in Vancouver, whose history is inseparably tangled with colonial history, the consequences are both felt and seen. Posters with the text “Reconciliation is dead” have been mounted in central places across the country, and even at the reconciliation pole here at my exchange university, UBC. The pole was installed as late as in 2017, symbolizing both the university and Canada’s efforts at reconciliation.

EXPERTS CLAIM THAT the failure to respect the decision of the Wet’suwet’en hereditary chiefs represents a broader statement from Canada: that it is not willing to bear the political costs of reconciliation, but it is willing to incur more decades of political estrangement between Canadian government and Indigenous nations. What they’re building, it appears, is a pipeline to the past.



Trump's core voters are often as loyal and emphatic as this man. Image: Wikimedia Commons

TOWARDS A NEW NORMAL

In 2015, Donald Trump threw his hat into the presidential ring for the Republican Party – and was widely derided as a joke. Five years on, the Trump presidency has divided America along deeply partisan fault lines. As America’s hyper-partisanship reaches a fever pitch in election year, The Perspective looks at how America got here – and what might lay ahead for its new battle lines.

AT THE BEGINNING of his presidential campaign, Trump bragged at a rally in Iowa that “I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody and I wouldn’t lose any voters.” The comment shocked the Republican establishment and, when the 2016 primaries began a few weeks later, led to Texan senator Ted Cruz to style himself as the ‘Stop Trump’ candidate. Cruz did win the 2016 Iowa Caucuses, but Trump left him trailing in his wake as he energised his own self-made Republican grassroots in a way not seen since the golden days of Reaganism.

THAT ENERGISED BASE took Donald Trump all the way to the White House. In the 2016 election, Trump flipped deep-blue states like Wisconsin and Michigan and ran his Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton close in other strongholds like Maine and Minnesota. Trump’s divisive and controversial campaign sharply divided the traditional Republican voter base, but pulled many minority voters and voters who had twice-

backed Barack Obama towards him. Trump also mopped up many swing voters as he built his own voter base, one far different to any other that had carried a Republican to victory. Some anecdotal evidence from polling aggregator FiveThirtyEight suggests that Trump’s base has shrunk slightly since 2016, but that his core base is still fundamentally strong, especially in larger swing states like Pennsylvania and Florida. Current polling suggests that his base, particularly in swing states, may well win him a second term come November.

TO UNDERSTAND HOW a political outsider cemented his grip on, not only power, but also the Republican Party, one must look to the Supreme Court. On 27 June 2018, Justice Anthony Kennedy, one of the nine justices of the Supreme Court – the institution in charge of interpreting the American constitution –, announced his intention to retire. Soon afterwards, Trump announced his nominee to be Kennedy’s replacement: Brett Kavanaugh – a judge from a circuit court.

THAT SEPTEMBER, AS the Senate prepared to vote on Kavanaugh's appointment, two women came forward to accuse Kavanaugh of having sexually assaulted them. One of the women, Christine Blasey Ford, grabbed the attention of the world's media with her compelling testimony of her alleged assault before the chamber. Nevertheless, the Senate voted Kavanaugh on to the Supreme Court by a 50-48 plurality. One of the abstainers was Lisa Murkowski - an Alaskan senator.



*Lisa Murkowski - the Alaskan senator whom Trump threatened to have disowned.
Image: Wikimedia Commons*

“ I COULD STAND IN THE
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ANY VOTERS

MURKOWSKI HAD BEEN critical of Kavanaugh's nomination – although she had stopped short of openly criticising Trump for his choice. In the days leading up to the final confirmatory vote, Murkowski declared herself to be undecided. In response, Trump publically told the Senator that, should she vote against Kavanaugh's appointment, she would be removed as a Republican candidate upon her re-election bid, she would lose all connections to the central party and Trump would openly campaign against her by endorsing a “candidate who really wants to make America great

again.” It cannot be known what effect Trump's threats had on Murkowski, but, in the end, she abstained rather than voted against Kavanaugh's accession. In ramming through his pick for the Supreme Court, and crushing all red opposition in the process, Donald Trump completed his rather supine takeover of the Republican Party.

CUE AMERICA'S HYPER-PARTISANSHIP. Since Brett Kavanaugh's accession, Democratic politicians and candidates have become increasingly vocal in their dislike of Trump. In the summer of 2019, allegations arose that Trump had withheld foreign aid to Ukraine until they agreed to investigate his Democratic rival Joe Biden. Unsurprisingly, Democrats immediately moved to impeach the President. The Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi laid out the grounds for impeachment, but this failed to sate Republican politicians and Trump's voter base, who termed the impeachment process a “partisan witch-hunt”. Even Republicans who still held doubts about Trump fell into line- they might well have remembered Trump's open attacks on Lisa Murkowski. The Republicans

have a majority in the Senate – 53 Republicans to 47 Democrats –, the chamber that tried Donald Trump. A supermajority of two-thirds is required in order to remove a sitting president. Trump's acquittal was a foregone conclusion before the trial had even begun.

BEFORE THE TRIAL had even got underway, there was already chatter of the Republicans using the outcome of the trial to accuse the Democrats of “playing politics” and “wasting time”. Enter Mitt Romney – the Utahan Senator who was the defeated 2012 Republican presidential candidate and a critic of Donald Trump. On 5 February 2020, the day that the Senate voted to acquit Trump on both charges of impeachment, Romney announced that he would to convict Trump on the charge of abuse of power. In an impassioned speech delivered just before the vote, Romney stated that “as a senator judge, I swore an oath before God to exercise impartial judgement...the President's insistence that they [the Bidens] be investigated by the Ukrainians is hard to explain than other as a political pursuit...the President's

purpose [in withholding aid to Ukraine] was personal and political. Accordingly, the President is guilty of an appalling abuse of public trust.” Romney encouraged other moderate Republicans to vote with him, but, in the end, he was the only dissident.

ROMNEY'S VOTE, MORE than any other part of the trial, caused shockwaves – and unleashed Trump's Twitter wrath. Conservative commentator Ann Coulter called Romney a “feckless old lady” in a scathing attack delivered on social media, while Trump's firmest supporters have called for Romney to be “drawn and quartered” because of his vote. Trump himself took to Twitter to decry Romney as someone who had “bent over backwards for the media” in order to “stab [him] in the back”. In voting to convict, Romney had “hurt some very good Republican senators”. By breaking rank in this era of hyper-partisanship, Mitt Romney has put himself in the firing line - with another four years of his six-year term still to go. Romney represents deeply-red Utah. In the time of Trump's unquestioningly loyal, almost cult-like voter base, Utahan voters and the Republican Party heart – the GOP (Grand Old Party) – could make the remainder of Romney's term difficult for him, should Trump wish it.



Mitt Romney - the Utahan senator was the sole Republican who voted to convict Trump. Image: Wikimedia Commons/Gage Skidmore

AT THE TIME that he attacked Lisa Murkowski, Trump was still consolidating his grip on the Republican Party. By the time he began firing both barrels at Mitt Romney, Trump had become its unquestioned master. If Trump is to keep his status as ‘master’, then he has to win a second term. That is likely to mean greater alienation of non-supportive voters and groups as Trump bids to shore up his strange, sometimes contradictory coalition of voters.

SHOULD TRUMP WIN a second term this year, the Constitution bars him from serving beyond that. In 2024, a new president will have to be elected. But what will happen to Trump's hotchpotch coalition of voters? His successor as Republican nominee will need to hold it together. If it were to fragment, America could enter a dangerous era in which those who previously felt ignored and forgotten begin to feel snubbed. Trump is widely perceived as being anti-establishment – both by his supporters and his detractors. The next Republican nominee will probably have to go to even greater lengths in order to be perceived as also being anti-establishment.

SHOULD TRUMP'S COALITION hold together, but not quite be strong enough to return him to the White House, then the forty-sixth president will find his or herself at a crossroads. They will have to

deliver on their own, more mainstream mandate whilst listening to and coming to understand the concerns, fears, politics and views of the wider Trump base.

WHETHER IT COMES this year or in 2024, the post-Trump era of American politics will be marked in an arguably more powerful and long-term way than that of post-Reagan politics. In the 1980s, Ronald Reagan redefined American economic and social politics with his strongly neo-liberal and conservative policies. Since 2016, Donald Trump has shattered and rebuilt the norms of American politics all together, bringing in hyper-partisanship in a way never before seen. Until his presidency ends, it cannot be known what the effects of this will be - or whether this is the new normal for America.

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- BOTH BY HIS
SUPPORTERS AND HIS
DETRACTORS



Trump holds a Keep America Great rally in Fayetteville, North Carolina in September 2019.

Image: Wikimedia Commons

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