



**ASSOCIATION OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

LUND EST. 1935

THE PERSPECTIVE

MAGAZINE No 2/2020 & YEARBOOK

TURNING PAGES

EXCLUSIVE CONTENT

Op-Eds: The Future of Foreign Policy

Official Opinions from all Swedish Parties

Covid-19: Inside the Lockdown

Global Pandemic and Local Impact

Digital Shutdown in Iran

Giving Peace a Chance

Colombia after the Civil War

MEP Damian Boeselager

Interview on European Challenges and Opportunities

2019
2020
YEARBOOK

EIGHT COMMITTEES

MORE THAN 100 ACTIVE MEMBERS

OUR MEMORIES



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PRESIDENTS' ADDRESS

THIS LAST **PRESIDENTS'** Address from us was meant to be a celebration of all the good things UPF has accomplished this year. All of your efforts to put together another great year of writing, recording, travel, activities, lectures, career events and PR have been outstanding. In addition to this, we have all of the new things like our wonderful recruiters, the inception of a foreign correspondent's fund, us moving into an awesome new office, the work to update our by-laws and much more. This last period was meant to be only smooth sailing towards the finish line of another year for UPF: then the coronavirus happened.

AS WE WRITE, thousands are dying each day around the world, the university has suspended all physical teaching, many are losing their jobs, and we are all asked to distance ourselves from the people we love. The pandemic has deeply affected UPF as well: all lectures and career events have moved into digital platforms, the ball has been cancelled, and most committees are holding their meetings online. This will be a challenging time for us all, filled with anxiety and change. Times like these are often riddled with conflict, which is why it is more important than ever for us not to close ranks. We must stand up for international collaboration, since this is the only way for the world to be better prepared and coordinated for future diseases that will inevitably come.

WE DO NOT mean to idealize a problematic political movement, but want to highlight an illuminatory tale from the 1900s on how international movements can be challenged in times of crisis. Ahead of WW1, the international socialist movement was stern in its conviction that the labourers of the world were united by far more than that which divided them. Their message was simple: there would be no war, since the labouring class in each country would go on strike, effectively crippling all states ability to wage industrial "total war". This solidarity could have essentially ended that gruesome war before it even began. Yet, when push came to shove, the international solidarity fell apart. When the anxiety of war set in, the labouring people of European states fell for the nationalist calling and enlisted in armies and industries, to destroy one another.

WHILE BEING POLITICALLY and religiously

unaffiliated, UPF does have foundational values: among them, a profound belief in human rights. The simple but beautiful idea that all humans, no matter where they are born, are equally valuable. We are guided not by nationalist notions of "our" supremacy, but by the idea that everyone should be judged by the contents of their character. In these times of crisis, it is easy to fall into the sins of scapegoating, and the false certainty of particularism: blaming China for the virus by pointing to poor sanitary standards in open air markets, blaming the West for lax measures allowing further spread, blaming Denmark for being populist and refusing to listen to advice from their own experts and blaming Sweden for not taking enough measures. Most governments will have plenty to learn from this mounting catastrophe, but pointing fingers will not help in saving lives and livelihoods.

FACED WITH FEAR, anxiety, and uncertainty history suggests that we will resort to our worst tendencies. Yet we can choose a different path. If anything, this pandemic has highlighted the need for international collaboration and coordination. No country or person is an island and what happens somewhere has a ripple effect elsewhere. It is a matter of life and death: both in terms of infections today, but also into the future as health issues will be tied to the unemployment that awaits many in the coming year.

IT HAS BEEN said that we do not choose our times, but that we choose our response. For we will be judged by how we respond to this moment. Was our talk of human rights and international solidarity a superficial marker of how "illuminated" and "woke" we all were, or was it a profound belief in our foundational values? Through all of this we must stand together as one, united, not by our origins, but by our humanity. We must be united by the enemy that we all share: the coronavirus.

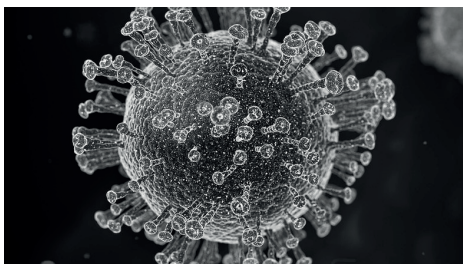


JESPER OLSSON & JONATAN KLEFBOM
PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

SWEDEN AND THE REST OF EUROPE – WHICH STRATEGY WILL SUCCEED IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19?

Daniel Bergdal & Lorenzo Lombardi

The European continent is, in this moment, experiencing a tremendous lockdown. Public spaces, meeting areas and shops have been provisionally shut down across Europe. Despite the stricter or looser approaches undertaken in order to contain the spread of Covid-19, different parts of Europe have all answered in a similar manner to the crisis. Also the UK, which at first opted for a different strategy based on the attainment of herd immunity, made a blatant U-turn in the past two weeks, due to a tragic and unmanageable rise in the infection rate. In such a general situation, Sweden stands out as an exception. What are the reasons for pursuing a path against the general approach?



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THE PERSPECTIVE RADIO/PODCAST

POLITICAL PRISONERS OF CRIMEA AND DONBAS

Anna Hageskog and Sofus Rønberg

In the aftermath of the 2014 Ukrainian Maidan revolution, Russia occupied the Crimean Peninsula and waged war in Eastern Ukraine. However, the coverage of the war is often portrayed on the geopolitical issues rather than its major human rights implications. Ukrainian citizens are held as political prisoners in Russian-controlled prisons. But who are the prisoners? Who gets released and who are still detained? Listen in to the interview with Ukrainian Human Rights activist Olexandra Matviychuk on the issue.



SINCE 2020 THE PODCASTS ARE AVAILABLE VIA SPOTIFY, APPLE PODCAST AS WELL AS THE WEBSITE

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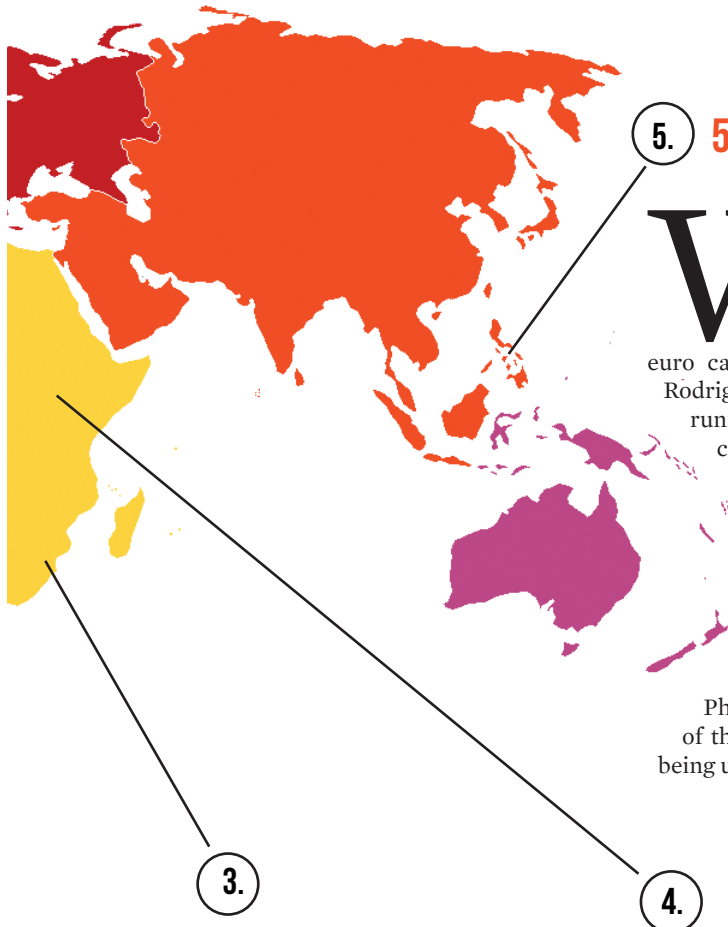
1. A POINT OF CONTENTION

On 19 April 2020, nineteen people were killed by a gunman in Nova Scotia, Canada. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is moving to tighten Canada's gun laws in light of the killings – this will probably include a ban on assault-style weapons. This might well strain US-Canada relations as gun violence is one of the biggest social issues in America today. Relations are already more tense than usual after the US stopped exporting surgical masks to Canada, as the world continues to battle the Covid-19 pandemic. Trudeau and American President Donald Trump have already publicly stood at odds on issues such as abortion, healthcare and refugee resettlement – and the new, sudden debate on guns in Canada may well only heighten this disconnect further.

2. POWER AND CONTROL

Twenty days after declaring state of emergency in the country due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Hungarian government was granted the power to rule by special decrees. The legislation was accepted by 137 votes out of 199 MPs, which indicates the importance of the 2/3 majority of the governing coalition. The legislation, mentioned as the “Coronavirus Law” in Hungarian media, does not specify the end of this period, being evaluated as a serious deficiency by many European governments, legal experts and opposition parties. Although the authority of the government is limited to the liquidation of the health emergency, the act also introduced an up to five years imprisonment for spreading false facts to the public that could potentially diminish the effect of the government's action. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has for years been leading the country towards an “illiberal

democracy” as defined by him in a speech in 2017. Amid an ongoing negotiation regarding the rule of law in Hungary, defined by Article 7 of the Treaty on the European Union, the latest decision, for many, symbolised another move against democracy. Through online messages published on the official Covid-19 response webpage of the government, representatives of the country deny the accusations. “There is a political witch-hunt against Hungary” said Zoltán Kovács, Secretary of State for International Communication and Relations. As Viktor Orbán mentioned in a radio interview to Kossuth Rádió on 3 April 2020, “against critiques by the network of George Soros, whose people are sitting in Brussels, Hungary should not give up its independence”.



3.

3. THE BODY POLITIC

International mediators have managed to negotiate a “dignified retirement” for Lesotho’s embattled Prime Minister Tom Thabane. Thabane and his current wife, Maesaiah, are accused of having his first wife, Lipolelo, assassinated by gunmen back in 2017.

Lesotho - a small kingdom surrounded entirely by South Africa - has been rocked by the murder case - and Thabane’s refusal to resign has led to societal tensions. Amid fears that violence could soon break out in Lesotho, South Africa and other southern African nations dispatched a team tasked with ending the crisis. This came to pass on 21 April with the announcement of Thabane’s departure. The investigation into the murder of Lipolelo Thabane is still ongoing.

5.

5. PHILIPPINES SELLING ASSETS

With the country in full lockdown, the Philippine economy is taking a hard hit. The parliament recently allowed for a seven billion euro care package, but according to President Rodrigo Duterte, those funds are already running low. “Most of the lower middle class work on a “no work, no pay” basis and are not receiving any hazard pay at all”, Adrienne Campos, a native to Philippines second city Cebu, told *The Perspective*. The President suggested that if the care package or borrowed money would not suffice for the economy, they would resort to selling state assets. According to CNN Philippines, specifically the Cultural Center of the Philippines was mentioned as possibly being up for sale.

4.

4. THE BEGINNING OF PEACE

After six brutal years, the civil war in South Sudan - the world’s newest declared state - has been brought to an end. Since December 2013, the country’s two largest ethnic groups - the Dinka and the Nuer - have been fighting for control. The conflict has killed hundreds of thousands of people and caused scores of others to seek refuge in other countries. A peace deal was first struck in 2018, but, due to the widespread violence across the country, could not be fully implemented until 22 February 2020, when the leaders of the government and opposition forces - Salva Kiir and Riek Mahcar - were reaffirmed as President and Vice-President of South Sudan respectively.

THE FUTURE OF SWEDISH FOREIGN POLICY

As the official magazine of the Association of Foreign Affairs Lund, we see it as our responsibility to shed light on both current political events and their background. In doing so, it plays a central role in initiating fair debates and disputes between different political views and providing a space for them.

For this issue of *The Perspective Magazine* we reached out to all political parties in the Swedish Parliament with the same questions and the same conditions of publication.

What direction would your party like to take Swedish foreign policy in the coming decade?

We are delighted to be able to present to you below the written answers of the eight Swedish parliamentary parties.

These Op-Eds do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of UPF Lund.

*Fredrik Fahlman & Moritz Neubauer
Editors-in-chief of The Perspective Magazine*

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

IS THE NEXT GREAT WAR AVOIDABLE?

MORE AND MORE often I meet American analysts and policy advisers in the United States of America that claim that the next great war, World War III, will be between the US and China and that it is unavoidable.

AFTER DECADES OF economic growth, or rather, recovery, China today is also seeking a new and more active role in global security policy. That, combined with a significant military armament, exceptional technological research and development in the Artificial Intelligence field, prepares the ground for China to establish itself as a new authoritarian military superpower. At a first glance it may appear to be a replacement of the Soviet Union and a return of a bipolar security hegemony. But this will be a totally new situation, China is in possession of something that the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact never achieved, wealth and economic strength.

MORE AND MORE of the foreign policy and security discussion is focusing on the Chinese development. The United States are shifting their military attention from Western Europe to Asia. Often this is something pictured in Sweden and Europe as a result of Donald J. Trump being the President and Commander in Chief. But this development would have taken place also with Hillary R. Clinton as President, most likely with kinder and more polite wordings, but still the policy would essentially have been the same. The outcome of the American election this fall will not change that either.

WITH THE PROSPECT of an unavoidable war a growing number of analysts and policy advisers in the US that I meet are contemplating the possibility of initiating the war sooner rather than later. Their basic thinking is that there will be a war and that it is better to have it while the United States still has the greater military capacity, which it probably will not have for much longer.

A THIRD GREAT war or even a third world war is indeed a terrifying prospect. This must be avoided and the best way to do that is to support and strengthen democracy globally. During the course of numerous years of populism, mostly but not always right-wing, beliefs in strong leaders and reductions of democracy and rule of law has been growing and spreading all over the world. Now it is time for democratic countries and movements to join forces and cooperate in a global strengthening of democracy, free speech and rule of law.

TO ME AS a social democrat and a progressive it is vital to connect democratic countries, and developing countries with an ambition to become full-fledged democracies, to each other. We should seek to prioritise more trade with each other, have more exchange among ourselves in higher education and research, jointly act internationally in multilateral organisations to stand up for and strengthen democracy in the world and in numerous other ways join forces to strengthen each other and democratic values.

MY VISION FOR the coming ten years in foreign and security policy is a battle to strengthen democracy and by that create the foundation of a free, prosperous and peaceful world. A world that chooses not to have a next great war now or later, but to never have it.

Kenneth G Forslund,
Chairman of the
Parliament Foreign
Affairs committee



THE MODERATE PARTY AND THE FUTURE OF FOREIGN POLICY

THERE WILL be a time after the pandemic. And then Sweden will continue to navigate in somewhat difficult waters. Therefore, it is important to act together with others. Vital to us is European cooperation. The natural step would be to become a NATO member.

RUSSIA POSES A military threat in our immediate area. Since the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, a war has been going on in eastern Ukraine. So far with around 13,000 dead, over 30,000 injured, and one million internally displaced.

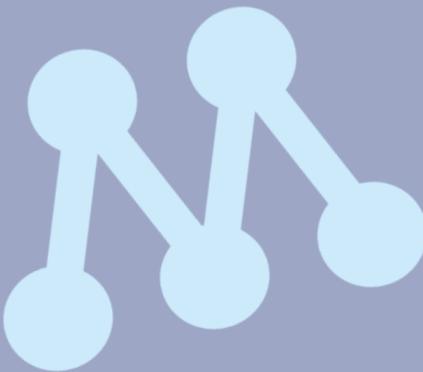
RUSSIA HAS SHOWN that the boundary for using force, interfering with and exerting pressure on others is repeatedly violated. We are not only hearing soldiers marching with guns, but also disinformation, propaganda and sheer involvement in various countries' election campaigns can also be observed.

AT THE SAME time, it is important to see China's growing ambitions. It is an economic and technological threat against Europe - not least in telecommunications, 5G and the high-tech surveillance community that the Communist state created.

THE CRUELTY HAS been made obvious with the imprisoned publisher Gui Minhai and the diplomatic outcomes that are being made against Swedish rights, such as freedom of information and demonstration.

TO CONTINUE COORDINATED sanctions against Russia, uniting the EU behind a common China stance and continuously strengthening Swedish security through defense efforts are the best ways to deal with our uncertain world.

Hans Wallmark,
Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Spokesperson



THE SWEDEN DEMOCRATS

A PERFORMANCE-BASED FOREIGN POLICY

AS THE WORLD has become increasingly globalized, foreign policy has become more important than ever. We see this not least now when we are facing an alarming pandemic, but in recent times this has also been evident when it comes to issues such as irregular migration, international conflicts and growing climate and environmental problems. International partnerships are the single most important tools for tackling several of the absolute greatest challenges of our time.

THE SWEDISH DEMOCRATS' foreign policy is performance-based. By clearly following the entire course of events for each issue, we wish to focus on directing our efforts where the needs are the greatest. With both long-term and short-term solutions, the aim of our policy should always be to go to the bottom to solve the root cause of any problem.

FOR US, it is more important to shape our foreign policy based on facts rather than to choose an ideologically distinct line that lacks a basis in reality. In this way, we not only relieve the symptoms of the problems but also help to solve them in a pragmatic way in the best possible way.

IN VIEW OF the fact that the whole world is interconnected in various ways, it is of great importance that Sweden has a principled and clear foreign policy voice and that we address ourselves in various international forums. This is not least important from a signal-policy perspective. At the same time, we must be aware that Sweden is a small country - our negotiating position is limited. This means that we must nurture our international relations. Sweden should be a country to count on within various international bodies. Diplomacy with every country in the world should be highly valued. Sweden as a nation benefits enormously by participating in conversations and by being a global player.

STABILITY AND SECURITY are a priority area, but

also the promotion of free trade, education and entrepreneurship. These areas are key pillars for succeeding with other goals such as strengthening global democracy, combating corruption, defending basic human rights and combating poverty.

ALONGSIDE THIS, we see international aid as an important complement to helping people in need and lifting less fortunate communities. However, we believe that greater transparency in aid policy is required with a clear result account of various projects.

IN TIMES LIKE these, as we see more and more conflicts around the world with increased tensions and elements of political and religious extremism, it is important to have a principled policy. Unlike the current government, the Swedish Democrats want to be the guarantor of such a policy.

IF WE CAN decide on Sweden's foreign policy, we will actively strive for increased international cooperation, where we are highlighted as a stable player in the international arena. We will withdraw support for Islamist and / or misogynist activities and set a clear performance requirement for narrower but sharper assistance.

Our foreign policy is solution-oriented. With us there is no room for poster policy.

Markus Wiechel,
Foreign Affairs
Spokesperson



THE CENTRE PARTY

AND THE FUTURE OF FOREIGN POLICY

THE LIBERAL VALUES are threatened from many directions in today's politics. We have to stand strong in our opinions and fight against those who oppose the liberal democracy. Swedish foreign affairs should stand up for the liberal values that have created our well-being: all people's equal values and rights, independent judiciary, free enterprise, free trade and international cooperation based on international law. Our foreign politics should not only secure the lives and health of the population but also protect the democratic foundation of our society. We cannot forget that in many ways the world has become a better place to live in. The extreme poverty is decreasing, more women survives pregnancies and childbirth, children are in school longer, free trade increases and elevates countries out of poverty and so we become more dependent on each other. But we cannot take the liberal values for granted as we have learned during the last couple of years only by looking at other European countries.

ABIR AL-SAHLANI: The international work for me involves social affairs, civil liberties, human rights and justice. I want to make sure that all people have the liberty to make their own choices when it comes to whom they love and who they want to be, and have the law on their side in doing so. Without having to experience racism and discrimination. This may look like fundamental basic human rights, but we must never take it for granted. We are currently witnessing how many countries not even that far from us are taking actions that are dangerously jeopardizing human rights. We need to continue the fight against discrimination, racism and sexism, make democracy accessible to everyone and get an international migration policy in place that is humane. The right-wing nationalist party's all over Europe are spreading hate and it's time that the European Union put their foot down and show that solidarity among us is the only way forward. Everybody has the right to be part of a future where we all are valued and have the right to express opinions without being harassed or silenced.

FREDRICK FEDERLEY: Issues regarding the environment, agriculture, animal welfare and public health will always be my top priority in foreign politics. Climate change is in fact one of our times greatest challenges and one of the biggest threats to our societies. It is crucial that we act now; that we invest in renewable energy and support countries and sectors that are lagging behind in green transformation with the common aim to have a European Union that is climate neutral by 2050. Important tools in reaching that goal is the green deal and the upcoming European climate law, where we will see a number of legislative actions spanning over a number of sectors such as transport, energy, construction and industry. The green economy will in turn make Europe prosperous while boosting new technology, new sectors and new jobs. It is my firm belief that we, step by step, will get there.

WHAT WE ARE fighting for and will always fight for are the liberal values that has shaped today's foreign policy; to stand up for civil and human rights. Human rights, equality, environmental issues and public health are all interconnected in our societies and need to be high up on the agenda for the future to come in foreign policy.

Fredrick Federley & Abir Al-Sahlani, Members of the European Parliament



THE LEFT PARTY

AND THE FUTURE OF FOREIGN POLICY

IN THESE TROUBLING times I believe a central question is: will democratic ideas beat authoritarian ideas in the coming years, or will this be the decade of the alpha-male? Looking back at the 2010s a lot of conservative, reactionary, right-wing politicians have been elected on every continent around the world. We see such alpha-males leading dictatorships, but recently more and more of them have taken power through elections in democratic countries. At the current moment and as a response to the coronavirus they have turned to repressive measures against their own people.

AS A DEMOCRATIC country Sweden has an obligation to stand up for democracy, human rights and international law, even in troubling times. Our foreign policy needs to be outspoken and clear. This includes not letting the EU to hold us back from expressing our values.

THE LEFT PARTY struggles to create a more equal and fairer society. To achieve this, we need to tackle the staggeringly unequal distribution of wealth globally. Today twenty-two men own more than all the women in Africa, according to Oxfam. It is the capitalist system which makes the rich grow richer by the minute, while the almost eight hundred million people can hardly put food on their tables.

IN RESPONSE TO the coronavirus, but also to reach the sustainable goals of Agenda 2030 (Sustainable Development Goals, SDG) Sweden needs to advocate for more aid to the developing world. Our goal to give one percent of GNI should not be seen as a roof, rather as a floor. An increase in aid enables us to help the least developed countries to stop hunger and promote humanitarian needs, so that they can reach the SDG.

TEN YEARS FROM now the world needs to be more peaceful. Today Sweden is the largest arms exporter per capita in the world. This is part of a pattern where the West has poured even more weapons into the Middle East and other conflict-ridden regions, fuelling death and destruction. We need to immediately halt all arms export to dictatorships, as well as to countries that are currently involved in conflicts.

THE EFFECTS OF climate change can already be felt, but in the coming ten years it will affect us more and more. All politicians have an obligation to cooperate to stop this development, but also to reduce the negative effects, such as an increase in conflicts. All humans need to cooperate to stop climate change. If we don't, it will have a huge impact not only on the environment but on our ability to build a peaceful and just world overall.

Håkan Svenneling,
Foreign Affairs Spokesperson



THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS

THE WESTERN WORLD SHOULD STAND STRONG TOGETHER

SWEDEN MUST PURSUE a value-based foreign policy that respects human dignity and human rights first and foremost. The Christian Democrats' ethos is that human dignity is universal. All people deserve a worthy existence and our moral responsibility to help others also includes fellow human beings in our world.

A FOREIGN POLICY aimed at free and fair trade still needs to be combined with generous and effective assistance to those suffering from poverty or oppression. 2.1 billion people still lack access to clean water. Religious persecution is increasing and more people than in decades are now refugees. Sweden needs to get more countries to increase their aid so that more people have the opportunity to get out of poverty rather than having to flee but aid also needs to be redistributed to a greater extent in order to help those who have already fled.

IN ADDITION, THE Christian Democrats are prepared to participate in more international efforts that can counter war, conflict and Islamist terror. Peace, security and stability are essential to effective long-term reconstruction and development work in both Africa and the Middle East. We believe that a Marshall Plan for the Middle East would be needed for people in the region to feel hope for the future again - but then security must also be guaranteed.

GENEROUS SWEDISH AID must not be without conditions. Tougher demands for democratisation and respect for human rights need to be central components of all future trade and assistance agreements. Regimes that ignore the requirements must be dealt tangible consequences. Sweden should already withdraw assistance to the Palestinian Authority via UNRWA. The same applies to aid to Iraq - unless the Baghdad government immediately stops the ethnic cleansing of Christians in the Nineveh Plains.

THUS, IN BOTH words and deeds, Sweden must

be prepared to defend freedom, democracy and human rights, and it becomes no less important as the world order changes. The influence from great powers - like the communist dictatorship in China - will continue to increase. At the same time, tensions are rising between countries as more and more states with authoritarian leaders show regional or global power ambitions. Examples of this are Russia's expansion and the resultant violent war in Ukraine and Chinese aggressions. Iran's state-funded terror, threats to Israel and proxy wars are other examples.

CLEARLY, AS THE US and Europe retreat, others quickly fill the void. Russia, China, Iran and Turkey have all advanced positions over the last ten years. The Christian Democrats believe that in the coming decade, the western world needs to step back and take up this leadership role again.

THE TRANSATLANTIC LINK needs to be strengthened both politically, economically and militarily. Sweden needs to apply for full membership of NATO, and we must ensure that the EU can speak as one strong and common voice in foreign policy. This is not so that the EU can counterbalance the US or NATO - but in order for it and the US to jointly meet future challenges.

THE WESTERN WORLD should stand strong together.

SWEDEN IS AT its safest when the West is strongest. Only when the West is at its strongest on its good values - freedom, democracy and human rights - do we have the greatest chance to succeed in the world.

Lars Adaktusson,
Foreign Affairs
Spokesperson



THE LIBERALS

A LIBERAL FOREIGN POLICY

LIBERAL FOREIGN POLICIES aim to strengthen the liberal democracy in the world. In a broad sense, this means that Sweden will work for reforms to strengthen democracy, protect human rights and build sustainable democratic institutions. Specifically, this means that the Liberals want to see increased support for democrats running in authoritarian and totalitarian states, we want to see increased support for countries that are at the crossroads to choose the democratic path and we strongly protest against populists trying to dismantle the rule of law in free states. In a liberal foreign policy, the protection of vulnerable individuals and groups is also central, for example, LGBTQ people, women and girls in patriarchal societies, religious minorities threatened by - for example - IS/Daesh or the military in Burma.

THERE ARE TWO strong reasons for advocating for a liberal foreign policy. The first is that countries that choose liberal democracy as a social model succeed better than the alternatives. The combination of individual freedom, private ownership and a progressive outlook on social issues creates societies that are both growing economically and are better able to cope with difficult crises. Sweden is a good example of this. The second is that it is impossible to build a democratic society if there are no democrats. The fact that individuals stand for democratic and liberal values is the very raw material for building a democratic society. This is precisely why investment in education is so important, as well as promoting increased tolerance between people of different backgrounds, ethnicity and religion.

FOR THE LIBERAL Party's foreign policy, these principles mean a number of concrete positions. We want to strengthen and deepen EU cooperation, which is the most important arena for Swedish foreign policy. We want to strengthen cooperation with countries in Eastern Europe and the Balkans so that more countries can join the EU in the future. We want Sweden to apply for membership

in NATO. We want to see clearer regulations to prevent resource-heavy dictatorships from buying critical infrastructure in Europe. We want to sharpen the international sanction systems and introduce a so-called Magnitsky act (law aimed at punishing human rights abusers, Editor's Note) in Sweden and the EU. We want to strengthen democratic forces in Latin America and strongly condemn both the Communist Alba project and reactionary right-wing forces. We give our resolute support and solidarity to the democracy of Taiwan and the protests in Hong Kong.

LIBERALS LOOK WITH great concern at developments in the Middle East where religious dictatorships such as Iran and Saudi Arabia are trying to create hegemony and push the entire region towards ruin. Sweden and Europe must build collaborations with individuals, political parties and organisations working for democracy, women's rights and a secular society.

LAST, BUT NOT least: With leaders in the world like Trump, Xi Jinping, Putin, Erdogan, Duterte, Maduro, Khamenei and Kim Jong-Un, the strong tide of liberal values and democratic reforms is ebbing. Therefore, it is especially important to protect liberal parties and their values in the time through which we are now living.

Fredrik Malm,
Foreign Affairs
Spokesperson



THE GREEN PARTY

AND THE FUTURE OF FOREIGN POLICY

WHAT WILL THE world look like in ten years? What will power relations, alliances, technology and democracy look like and what will the state of the climate and biodiversity be? After spring's sudden pandemic outbreak, we know one thing for sure - nothing can be taken for granted in today's extremely globalised world. Crises such as the coronavirus can lead to major changes in how societies are organised, the view on global value chains and the tolerance for extensive surveillance of citizens can be radically changed. Countries are turning inwards. The United States has turned its back on the international community, and has left the playing field free for China and Russia to advance their positions.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN? The answer is that the question is open. We decide the future ourselves through our decisions here and now. The insight into it, and my desire to take responsibility for the future, is the very reason why I became a Green Party politician. It is also the reason why the Green Party was formed - the realisation that a policy of solidarity is needed, and that the deep gaps between rich and poor and the pointless consumption of Earth's resources must cease. We must stop living as if we are the last generation on our planet.

FORTUNATELY, THERE IS already a clear, jointly-adopted agenda for the world for the coming decade. Together we will eradicate poverty and hunger, realise human rights for all, achieve equality and empowerment for all women and girls, and ensure lasting protection for the planet and its natural resources. It is the purpose of Agenda 2030 - with seventeen global goals - that the world's countries jointly agreed upon five years ago. It was a global political success that the world succeeded in agreeing on goals that cover all three dimensions of sustainability: the economic, the social and the environmental.

THE MAP IS drawn - now we need the will and the power to reach our goal in the next ten years. I understand that today it might seem like a utopia and impossible to achieve. In the five years that have passed since the world agreed on Agenda 2030, the most fundamental values and human rights have been challenged by conservative and nationalist forces. And right now we are only seeing the beginning of the consequences of the new corona virus spreading across the world. The Covid-19 pandemic affects many people's health and lives and the measures to reduce the spread of infection have major consequences for the world economy. The global spread shows just how quickly local crises can become global and affect us all. It also displays how urgent joint international efforts are for the future. In these times, we need to show even more determination. All of us who want to see an equal and fair future must work hard together.

THE GREEN PARTY runs a feminist foreign policy with regards to climate, peace and democracy. We want Sweden to be a strong voice for justice, peace and sustainable development. We shall contribute solutions - showing the world that it is possible. We will never be a party that betrays those who do not have a voice. We will not close off Sweden from the outside world when we know that a strong, open and humane world policy is what is needed most. The world has faced great challenges in the past. We need to open our eyes and see that another world is possible.

Isabella Lövin,
Co-Spokesperson,
Minister for the
Environment,
Deputy PM



COVID-19 & HUMAN RIGHTS




RAOUL WALLENBERG INSTITUTE

OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN LAW

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STORIES OF TRANSITION: OUR FUTURE POST-GROWTH AND POST-CARBON

What will life after the Corona crisis look like? As the world still struggles under the burden of Covid-19, it is precisely in this moment that we have a huge opportunity to envision a future society that is more resilient and better able to cope. *The Perspective* spoke to Alf Hornborg, Ekaterina Chertkovskaya and Richard Heinberg to visualise some possibilities of transition.

Photos: Flickr

The last months have seen some fairly remarkable changes to life as we know it: a drastic drop in global production and travel, economic recession, entire countries on lockdown, government-enforced isolation – all measures few were ready to imagine, least of all endorse just before the outbreak of Covid-19.

IF THERE IS one takeaway from the crisis, it is perhaps the recognition that most states at this moment in time are ill-prepared for a global emergency and are highly vulnerable to external shocks. This lack of resilience has already shown devastating effects. Yet, it may be precisely in these times that we begin to grasp the even more devastating effects we will face in the future, in the 4-degree global warming scenario post ‘peak everything’ we are headed towards.

PEAK EVERYTHING IS based on the fact that most resources our economic system relies on are finite. A more familiar notion may be peak oil, that is the moment in time when the cost of extracting oil exceeds the market price of oil. Put differently, peak oil is the point of maximum production.

Several studies have concluded that this may have been reached already before 2010 or would have at the latest occurred by 2020.

BUT THIS CONCERNS quite a large share of other key resources as well. Some have started to re-advocate nuclear energy as a ‘green’ alternative to fossil fuels. However, uranium is expected to peak in 2035. Rob Hopkins, co-founder of the Transition Network and fellow at the Post-Carbon Institute, pointed out that if all the world’s electricity were to be generated by nuclear power, the uranium supply would only last for three years.

SOILS EXPERIENCE SUBSTANTIAL decreases in productivity and become ever more difficult to cultivate. According to the UN, every year, an area of fertile soil the size of Ukraine is lost. Some estimate that fertile top soils will be useless by 2050 and will have vanished by 2075. Coal as well is expected to peak soon, according to the Energy Watch Group by 2022.

ANOTHER KEY RESOURCE that is often overlooked is sand or what industrially is referred to as ‘aggregate’. In fact, natural aggregate is assumed

to be the world's second-most exploited resource after water. The UN published a report stating that aggregate mining significantly exceeds renewal rates. Aggregate is the primary component of concrete and asphalt, but it is also found in window panes, glasses, smartphone screens, or used for filtration in water-treatment facilities. The possibilities of replacing aggregate with recycled materials are extremely limited.

OVERALL, PEAK EVERYTHING is a result of the resource quantities we consume. Each year, The Global Footprint Network publishes their annual report on 'Earth Overshoot Day', marking the date when humanity has used up its natural resource budget for the entire year. Last year, this was on July 29. Should the world live as the Scandinavian countries do, that budget would have been depleted by around spring each year.

ALL OF THIS is a hard pill to swallow. Despite seemingly hard efforts, it is not nearly enough. Part of the inadequacy lies in overlooked factors of attitudes, such as the detached relationship we have to our consumer habits. Commodity fetishism is when we view an artefact as intrinsically productive, and we detach the object from the social relations making its mere existence possible. Money is a classic example of this as it seems to possess a life on its own. Instead of viewing production and exchange as a relationship between people, we view them as social relationships among things in themselves. It is partially for that reason that we tend to consume vast amounts of goods without much thinking.

ALF HORNBERG, PROFESSOR of Human Ecology at Lund University, argues that we collectively suffer from "technology fetishism". We fail to see the immense production, transportation and distribution behind, for example, our treasured smartphones. "There is a blind spot here regarding technology in that everyone thinks it is an integral part of the solution, and not the problem".

WHILE SUSTAINABILITY IS one of the most talked-about topics today, the debate seems to stagnate when it comes to envisioning viable alternative models of organising society. A famous saying attributed to both Fredric Jameson and Slavoj Žižek goes "it is easier to imagine an end to the


world than an end to capitalism". Perhaps this incapacity to picture an alternative is indeed the biggest tragedy of our modern age.

AS THE CURRENT pandemic has shown, our economic system is radically dependent on constant expansion through continuous production and circulation of wares. Turn it off for two weeks and the system collapses. There is an elephant in the room, or a sacred cow which many mainstream debates on sustainability still fail to address: GDP growth.

THERE IS NO denying that the fruits of capitalism have given, although highly unevenly, a large proportion of humankind access to higher living conditions unimaginable to past generations. However, given our current state of peak-resources and its general tendency to produce crises such as the current one, the reorganisation will soon not be a luxury of choice, but a dire necessity.

ON A MORE positive note, we may also acknowledge the level and scale of mobilisation and the response the current crisis has led to. These have already after just a short period of time had implications that transcend matters of the virus itself. Some may have seen pictures of the canals in Venice where the water is running clear for the first time in years. François Gemenne, director of The Hugo Observatory, suggested in *Forbes* magazine that more lives might be saved because of the reduction in air pollution than are lost to the virus. This is to say that substantial change may be possible but still requires a coherent and inclusive framework.

IN THIS REGARD, degrowth has emanated as a bold alternative. Although to many an alarming term signalling decline and a lowering of standards of living, these reactions also reveal the materialistic social conditioning capitalism has induced. It is precisely this transition from materialistic to a convivial and participatory society that degrowth aims to bring forth. By not placing profit and expansion as the primary concern for work and the general organisation of life, degrowth seeks to facilitate a transition from a materialistic society to one centred around ecological sustainability and social justice.



NEVERTHELESS, A DEPARTURE from our current lifestyles for many invokes fear, especially because of the association with a reduction in living standards.

IN ADDITION, RICHARD Heinberg, Senior Fellow of the Post-Carbon Institute, points out that a move away from an energy-intensive economy also implies an increase in manual labour. In other words, we would lose most of the convenience that our current lifestyles rely on.

FURTHERMORE, IT IS often argued that development unquestionably requires growth. Thus, whilst industrialised countries shall reduce their carbon emissions, less industrialised countries should be allowed to burn more fossil fuels to develop. Heinberg comments that this way of thinking is counterproductive. He states that we should rethink industrialisation overall and that, independent of the shape development will take in the future, it must be based on other forms of energy.

“IT IS NOT a question of denying the poor the exuberance of the rich. The rich will not be able to maintain their lifestyles, and we will all have to transition to a different way of living”, Heinberg says.

STILL, THERE ARE advances, such as in medicine, whose high value one cannot renounce, which require a global reach. Similarly, some countries may not be able to meet all their needs through domestic production. These challenges must be addressed to paint a comprehensive picture of society post-growth.

YET, IN RESPONSE to the fear and dismissal degrowth proposals often trigger, we might first assess to which extent our current system of work and consumption succeeds to fulfil our needs and make us happy.

AROUND SEVEN YEARS ago, David Graeber published his acclaimed essay “On the Phenomenon of Bullshit Jobs” later resulting in a book on the same topic. The book and essay pinpoint and theorise the wide sense of meaninglessness and alienation our contemporary form of office labour induces, calling it a kind of “spiritual violence”. In this sense, capitalism may have granted us the luxury

of more stuff, but at the expense of meaningful weekdays.

NO DOUBT THE sheer scale of the organisation of work has also contributed to this sense of alienation. More and more, we are seemingly reduced to smaller cogs in bigger profit-making machineries. Ekaterina Chertkovskaya, a degrowth researcher based at Lund University’s Technology & Society department, also puts this architecture of labour into question. She additionally stresses the fact that many in the global chain of production today work in dehumanising and dangerous conditions, for example, when mining for minerals essential for making gadgets they would not even be able to afford themselves. The structural violence is here more than spiritual.

WHEN DISCUSSING FEARS and trade-offs in different economic models, we should therefore not forget the many compromises we make in our current system. “We must seek to maintain what is essential, such as what is making us happy”, Heinberg tells us.

ON TOP OF that, there is, of course, the looming ecological crisis caused by the imposed logic of growth on a finite planet. What we attempt to do with strategies such as ‘green growth’ is to force sustainability while refusing to compromise growth. Green initiatives done in this manner can only be described as “fixing with the left hand what we have broken with our right hand” says Chertkovskaya, borrowing the metaphor from Žižek.

STILL, IT IS neither sufficient nor productive to dwell on the negative and to resort to shaming and blaming. Instead, we should create a positive vision of a future we would want to move towards. Chertkovskaya also affirms that we should focus more on collective change and collaboration. Our individual choices and scope of action are limited to a menu of options, she says. We need to re-engage with the community and build connections and alliances to collectively and creatively envision a society of abundance and prosperity without growth.

ONE GOOD ENTRY point in this regard may be to treat our reliance on fossil fuels like an addiction, as suggested by Hopkins. He writes that “in

dependent use, someone may either block out information that suggests their favoured substance is harmful, or they may continue using it, even when they know it could be killing them”.

HERE, IT IS crucial not only to share information, but to create spaces where people feel included and safe to voice their concerns and their resistance to change. From there, they can and need to develop their own arguments for change such that it is not an external compulsion, but a voluntary choice they have persuaded themselves to take. In other words, we should draw people in by being less patronising and reprimanding and more empathetic and open.

GOVERNMENTS HAVE AN important role in facilitating these networks and spaces of change. Although degrowth is a grass-root movement, the state and other governance institutions are important in assisting this change and ensuring the security and wellbeing of its citizens.

HORNBORG ASSERTS THAT democratic principles such as accountability and transparency are all important values needed for the transitioning to sustainability. Chertkovskaya also highlights that “policies are often top-down and can prevent transformative change”; instead, bottom-up initiatives should feed into and inform government policies.

DEGROWTH IS THUS a vision permeating the work towards true sustainability. All three interviewees to some extent raised the processual character of degrowth and transitioning. Ideas spring from action and actions spring from ideas. If one problem of sustainability lies in our incapacity to picture viable alternatives to capitalism, perhaps this is the natural way to go about it.

WITHIN THIS, HEINBERG stresses that the direction we should be heading is away from the highly energy-demanding production towards something more local and less consumer-oriented. “This is not a utopian idea without grounding”, Chertkovskaya emphasises. There are already numerous small, community-based organisations that make local and integrated solutions a reality. But these need to spread, collaborate, and share knowledge and experiences.

HORNBORG HERE MAKES an important point, much relating to the fears associated with degrowth as something backward-oriented; “These fear narratives are misleading. We can not ever ‘go back’. If we want to envision an alternative society, it is not a matter of reversing to the past but to build utopian visions based on the beliefs we value ... We can still turn to agriculture and be modern without going back to a hierarchical, feudal society”.

LOCALISATION IS A key-word in degrowth and debates on transition often with the motto “small is beautiful” (taken from Schumacher’s book with that title). A system wherein the individual can experience a greater sense of place, as in contrast to the cog in the machinery, “bullshit jobs” set-up.

THE WHOLE IDEA of work and labour is thus something which undeniably will have to be rethought. Hornborg would like to see the current idea of work simply phased out. That is not to say that there will not be any work to do in a transition or degrowth process, however, the orientation and definition of work will change. Chertkovskaya would eventually like to see work organised around principles of autonomy and cooperation, and a work ethic where everyone contributes to necessary tasks but also has spaces to engage in work they find joyful. In the end, the arguments point towards a society where we are less defined as workers.

AS REGARDS THE levels of trade and globalisation in the future, Heinberg is certain that the volumes of trade will decline. As Chertkovskaya highlights, our biophysical throughput must decrease. However, Heinberg emphasises that there has always been trade and thus there is no indication or necessity that we would live entirely without it. “Trade is about needs”, he points out, and as such will persist where needs cannot be met domestically. It should simply not be normalised.

“GLOBAL TRANSPORTS, IN particular of people, is another point we could do better without”, Hornborg states. “Historically, these have primarily served to expand the reach of the centre of capital accumulation, to access an increasingly expanding space”. He argues that our biological connectivity and coherence carries enormous risks, as the Covid-19 epidemic shows.

LIKE HEINBERG, HORNBERG is sceptical that the Global South requires development based on growth. He refers to thinkers such as Vandana Shiva in arguing that pre-modern technology, for example, seeds in agriculture, in many cases are superior. He also reflects on the Inca civilisation wondering if there really was anything we can offer today that is superior to what they had, for example in terms of communication and infrastructure. Overall, there is a flaw in the thinking of our history as a linear enhancement which keeps us from acknowledging the virtues of past technologies.

NEWER IS NOT always better, but undoubtedly, humanity has made some breakthroughs too precious to leave behind in the unsustainable past. What technologies bring joy, security and wellbeing? This is a question many degrowth and transition scholars seem to ponder. Heinberg, in particular, is concerned over the general lack of critical writings on new technologies. He mentions the implementation of the new 5G network as an example in regards to the amount of resources and energy needed to establish this infrastructure and the electromagnetic pollution it will cause.

Hornborg's argument about technology fetishism here becomes apparent.

AS THE ONGOING epidemic has shown however, communication networks remain important as a lifeline during crises, whilst having a world all plugged into a global market biologically connected presents huge risks of insecurity. "Our hyper-coherent global market has here proven itself to be too sensitive and lacking in resilience. To rather be digitally connected is here much better", Hornborg suggests. In practice, this would mean less transnational travel of both goods and people but still keeping some of the digital connectivity made available through the internet.

SO, WHAT ARE we moving toward? According to Chertkovskaya, the idea is to "share abundance whilst living within physical and ethical limits, and learning to live well with them". This relies on an equal and healthy balance between "having, doing, loving and being" and a strong emphasis on needs satisfaction and a less materialistic understanding of well-being.

BOTH HEINBERG AND Chertkovskaya find that



what makes us happy is being connected and contributing to the people around us and to the spaces we inhabit.

WE SHOULD FOCUS on rebuilding community and creating a good environment, Heinberg emphasises. In doing so, we may borrow indicators and ideas for example from the concept of Gross National Happiness or the sharing economy; that is, prioritising what makes peoples' lives better and more worthwhile rather than the usual economic indicators.

HEINBERG FINDS THE most persuasive goal to be an "economy of beauty and happiness". Biologically, beauty is crucial and it is foundational to nature, he explains. It is almost like an obsession that drives us, but that has been misused for its own ends by capitalism. However, it is those ideas that should be placed at the heart of future society. One positive aspect stemming from this change would be the revitalisation of the arts, that is to allow more people to take up music or theatre. Heinberg argues that it is those activities that bring us joy and we should create more spaces for them to flourish naturally.

RIGHT NOW, COVID-19 and the social distancing it requires pose an immense challenge to the reconnection and community engagement we would need. As Heinberg says, "today the most communitarian thing is to stay home". But as we witness people struggle to isolate despite the vast amounts of consumption goods at their disposal at home, and at the same time the increasing number of civil society initiatives to build support systems and provide mutual aid, it is perhaps precisely now that we should reflect on what we value the most. We will eventually overcome the pandemic. Up until now, we have pretty much no track record of ever learning from and acting upon past crises. Hornborg and Heinberg, however, remain positive that we might finally learn from this one – perhaps also for a lack of other options.

HORNBERG REMINDS US that "every cloud has a silver lining" – it is quite astonishing how quickly and easily we have accomplished what we thought was impossible only a few weeks ago. In this regard, ideas of 'utopia' may now be easier to think of and imagine.





THE POWER OF AN INNOVATIVE MINDSET

The entrepreneur is a hustler who sees opportunity where others see obstacles.

Moa Persdotter, Project Manager at Venture Lab, together with Sustainera, a Lund University born startup run by social scientists Melissa & Melanie, share their personal experiences on what has inspired them to work with innovation and entrepreneurship.

START-UP CULTURE IS thriving in today's contemporary world, where much focus goes into entrepreneurial education programs, incubators and start-up events. Investors and venture capitalists want entrepreneurs to stick out from the crowd, recognizing motivation and skill diversity is key to growth. VentureLab is placed in the heart of Lund, empowering students to create the future. They are on a mission to support students and graduates who want to start their own businesses and grow.

MOA PERSDOTTER, PROJECT Manager at Lund University's start-up incubator VentureLab, sits inside the spatial office and sips her coffee,



Moa Persdotter. Photo: VentureLab

"Our goal is to create an open space and a sense of community. A lot of students apply as single entrepreneurs, often engaged in a lot of activities like unions, nations or organizations such as the United Nations or Amnesty. We try to team them up based on their diverse backgrounds so they can learn from each other. Perhaps someone knows something about marketing, someone else has sales experience and another knows about website development - then they could help each other out! We arrange a broad range of social activities here where they can discuss problems but also success stories to create a community where everyone is part of the VentureLab family."

-What is VentureLab? Here we help students take their ideas to the next level. Our aim is to empower students to create a future. We do not really directly build startups, but we build entrepreneurs. We work with the whole university, students from all faculties are encouraged to join and are welcome here. They can work with whatever idea they would like to pursue - for free!

IT CAN BE a project, a company, a research idea, a podcast, a social idea, a profitable idea. When you're accepted to Lund University, you have the right to get help from VentureLab. We offer business and idea coaching guidance, a lot of inspirational activities and the incubator office space.

-WHAT KIND OF role do you see Social Scientists having in this environment?

"I'm a social scientist myself, with a masters degree in political science. I focused my bachelor and masters in how to use entrepreneurship and innovation to create new welfare policies and welfare solutions. I felt that my professors never introduced me to these relevant fields, but I felt super needed in that context. It would be great to have representation of all faculties each term. So far that hasn't happened. Students from the Faculty of Economics as well as the Faculty of Engineering have a natural way into the system, since they study relevant courses like "Product Development". It is more difficult for us to reach out to students studying for example, law or sociology, usually because they don't see themselves as entrepreneurs or they might not have heard of VentureLab before. Unfortunately it is not integrated into their education, although we'd like it to be.

With Agenda 2030, everyone is seeing the value in social matters and realising that sustainability is not only about environmental matters - it is also about social matters. It's about gender matters, equal opportunity for all, that we need to have diverse teams in order to make better strategic decisions, within governments, and within society. Here social scientists are a super valuable source because we study how to bring social solutions to the agenda. We study people, psychology, behavioural sciences, how to create change. We study how organizations are built, how decisions are being made and how power is distributed. These subjects are vital to discuss and social scientists are needed within groups where large decisions are being made."

- WHY ARE SOCIAL scientists needed within the arena of innovation?

"If you have a diverse board, you will make better strategic decisions, you will be more democratic and most importantly, you have a more sustainable

organization. In this sense, the social scientist will play a crucial role. The public, the private and the civil society sector are working together on different solutions. There won't only be business students needed, but also people who study people. These social scientists understand how social organizations change when responsibility is shifting. We need to connect people of all backgrounds to strengthen these industries. In VentureLab we want to create a diverse community and create this link between academia and business. Entrepreneurs do not need to have technological solutions to be entrepreneurs, we also need social solutions."

VENTURELAB ENABLES STUDENTS to take charge of their learning process with the freedom to make mistakes and ultimately challenges them to actively develop entrepreneurial skills. Founders of Sustainera, Melanie Kontonikolaou and Melissa Bojang, tell the Perspective Magazine about their entrepreneurial journey as social scientists and how they founded their start up.

-WHAT IS SUSTAINERA?

"Sustainera is a consulting company using the power of play to make the United Nation's sustainable development goals (SDGs) come true on a local level. Up to 91% of consumers worldwide want companies to put ethics and

UP TO 91% OF CONSUMERS
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ABILITY OVER PROFIT

sustainability over profit. The Sustainable Development Goals provide a common language and communication framework to achieve economic, ecological and social sustainability. However, often businesses and organizations struggle to know how they can implement the Global Goals in their local context. We want companies and organizations to get the chance to learn and take action on the United Nation's Global Goals using our 2030Roulette™. 2030Roulette™ is a game designed by Sustainera, based on all 17 goals, 169 targets and 232 indicators, which highlights the importance for partnership to achieve social, environmental and economic sustainability. It is an engaging and amusing way to get familiar with the United Nation's global goals and create a wide range of actions."



Melissa Bojang & Melanie Kontonikolaou. Photo: VentureLab

- **How did you** get started with entrepreneurship and innovation?

Melanie begins by answering, “I have a background in Business Administration and experience within consulting, having worked in the corporate sector for the past 5 years. I felt the urge to bring light to sustainability as a business topic, as I noticed businesses only tackled sustainability on the surface. As I have worked with larger corporations and customers, I have an understanding of the business culture. At one point I was working for Nokia and realized that the topic sustainability popped up at an event, where we had the opportunity to donate once a year to a refugee camp. I started wondering if sustainability was incorporated into their company’s value chain and found a deep passion within these topics. On top of this, I have also had experience volunteering at Amnesty, mainly working with human rights for women.”

Melissa continues, “I studied International Relations and have a deeper educational background in Human Rights. I have been active and working within civil society for the past 5 years. I always knew I wanted to work with helping people. In 2015 when the global goals were announced, I gained an interest for capacity building and began working in the public sector, where I learnt to understand how policy influences businesses. Here I learnt to interpret the law and began seeing patterns in legal regulations. On top of this, I have experience working within sales and have learnt I

enjoy networking, reaching out to new clients and convincing them!”

-**How did you** get started with innovation and entrepreneurship?

Melissa giggles at a memory, “Today Melanie and I both study a Masters within Entrepreneurship & Innovation, but we actually began texting one month before our studies began! We connected over our mutual interest for social impact and social entrepreneurship - after that, our business idea slowly began to flourish. The idea was a work in progress, but after realising how vital and large the global goals are, it became self-evident and we decided to dedicate our time to creating Sustainera. We became complementary business partners but also close friends. This was formed on the basis that we had similar values, work ethic and believed that teamwork was important. Our backgrounds complement each other really well - Melanie sees the details and creates structure, whilst I see an overarching picture - together we balance each other out!”

MELANIE CONCLUDES, “THROUGH our programme, I interpreted that partnerships were the most important goal. That is why Goal 17 within the Sustainable Development Goals is so important - to connect private and public. Our programme helped us to do that and allowed for us to meet a diverse range of people from different backgrounds.”

INSIDE THE LOCKDOWNS

Covid-19 is sweeping across the world. The World Health Organisation - WHO - has declared the virus to be a pandemic, with the number of new infections and deaths rising by the day. From Vietnam to Wales, Covid-19 is spreading through communities almost uninhibited - forcing countries into lockdown. The Perspective spoke to people in some countries in lockdown.

A deserted street in Milan, Italy. Photo:Valentina Grassi

IN DECEMBER 2019, the first cases of Covid-19 were reported in the Chinese city of Wuhan. The virus was traced back to a seafood market in the city. Initially, it was believed that China would be able to contain the outbreak as it first put Wuhan and then the surrounding province of Hubei into quarantine. But this was not to be. Covid-19 quickly spread to neighbouring countries, with South Korea soon becoming a virus hotspot. It then rapidly spread further afield, with more hotspots also developing in Iran and Italy. By 11 March 2020, Covid-19 had infected more than one-hundred and twenty-thousand people in one-hundred and fourteen countries, leading the WHO to declare a pandemic.

TWO DAYS BEFORE the WHO's declaration, the Italian government put the entire country into lockdown. Certain areas in the north of the country have already been in lockdown since 22 February. But, on 9 March, with the virus continuing to spread, the government in Rome took the unprecedented step of quarantining the entire country. Nicolò Fiammetti - a resident of Brescia who studies in Milan - told The Perspective why this was an inevitable step.

"PEOPLE FROM THE north, like students, went home to the south when the restrictions started. They unknowingly took the virus with them." WHO pattern data from Italy backs up Fiammetti's thoughts. The first Italian cases were reported in the northern Lombardy region, but then fanned southwards. Initially, it was hoped that Italy could retain some degree of normal life. "I think it's easy to say that everything should have been closed before," Fiammetti says, "But this whole situation is completely new."

AS NEW AS Covid-19 may be, the impact of the virus is being amplified by a severe lack of intensive care beds. Italy has an average of just 3.18 hospital beds per one-thousand people. The country's healthcare system is being stretched to breaking point. Fiammetti believes that the severity of the outbreak in Italy was compounded by misinformation: "At the beginning, the sentence "it is just a flu" was in everyone's mouths".

NEAR BRESCIA, LIES the town of Soncino. Anna Lombardi - also a student in Milan - lives there. Lombardi lives closer to areas that have

been in lockdown since 22 February. For her, the lockdown has cast an eerie shadow over Soncino. “There is complete silence [outside], only the sirens of the ambulances.” One aspect of the quarantine is that Italians can only leave their homes for food, medicine or if they work in an essential profession, like nursing or policing.

THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT is in constant communication with the people about the virus, the quarantine and the necessity of the measures. But this was not always the case. “The government didn’t talk to us in a clear way until the quarantine.” As a result, “a lot of people didn’t understand the gravity [of the situation].” Lombardi believes that the Italian government could have acted sooner, but she does still agree with the measures that are being taken. “Our hospitals are collapsing”, she adds.

DESPITE BEING IN quarantine, Lombardi is upbeat: “I am in a lucky situation. I live with my parents, so I can talk with other people.”

IN THE CITY of Milan itself, Luca Mapelli – an analyst and part-time musician – sees one positive of the lockdown: “It gives me freedom and saves me the time to commute”. Still, he regrets that he is being prevented from rehearsing with his band or meeting with his friends, family and girlfriend.

BUT MAPELLI THINKS that the crisis has highlighted solidarity and a sense of community among the people: “I often complain about Italians lacking social consciences: people here commonly elude taxes or drink and drive. Covid-19 has forced people to realise that sometimes we have to give up some personal advantage for the common good.”

DESPITE SOME POSITIVE side effects, Mapelli remains both worried and outraged about the unpreparedness. Some of his friends, who worked as nurses in other medical areas, now have been put in the Covid-care units. In some hospitals, medical personnel are not being tested for Covid-19 unless they show strong symptoms, out of fear so many could be infected that there would not be enough staff. “These workers are fighting like heroes to make up for a healthcare system that has been underfunded

thanks to austerity and bad management of public finances.”

LUCA IS SURPRISED that some other European countries did not follow the Italian example right away. He adds, national states just proved short-sighted and selfish behaviour. “The EU, instead, acted well, forcing some countries not to seize medical equipment and, despite the ECB initial reluctance, eventually allowing for fiscal support to countries in distress. This just shows how we badly need more European control and coordination”

“ THERE IS COMPLETE
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BANKERS, BROKERS, ANALYSTS and managers are working from home in adverse conditions. But even if the city looks dead, the vital organs are still in motion: “medical personnel must work extra hours, workers on production lines make goods that lorry drivers get delivered to our shelves. It puts things into perspective.” One week after Italy went into lockdown, the Czech Republic followed suit. Stella Zlateva – a student in Prague – spoke about the new normal for Czechs.

FOR ZLATEVA, THE lockdown means, above all, uncertainty: “I don’t know when I can do an internship abroad if the borders remain closed for longer.” Still, Zlateva tries to make the best of the situation. She finally had enough time to read all the books or watch films that were on her list.

WITH COVID-19 CAME a very big wave of solidarity across the Czech Republic. For example, since last week there have been initiatives to help buy groceries or medicines for the elderly.



*An empty train on the Copenhagen Metro
Photo: Metroen/Facebook*

ZLATEVA SAYS THAT: “Since there is a permanent deficit of protective masks in hospitals, many Czechs have decided to sew the protective masks themselves and give them to those who need them most. It’s a great idea.” Recently, an initiative was also founded to provide hospitals with snack packs for staff to make their work a little easier.

BUT OF COURSE, Zlateva is also worried about her grandparents and parents, for whom infection can have a critical impact. The temporary closure of her parents’ clothing store will also be a financial burden for the future: “The government is in the process of providing financial aid to all those affected, but no one knows when it should come.”

THE CZECH GOVERNMENT acted very quickly compared to Germany or France: “Friends of mine who live in Munich told me that there were markets full of people on the weekend. I think, of course, that is inappropriate. “However, the Czech Republic also failed in one respect: as already mentioned, there are insufficient protective masks and respirators for doctors who risk their lives in this way. The health ministry was not able to get these materials in time”. In addition, the European Union should

have implemented stricter measures earlier, Zlateva believes.

ANOTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRY with a strict lockdown is Denmark. The Danish government has banned most public gatherings, closed all schools and universities, and asked those in the country to move around as little as possible before shutting down the parliament itself. Soon afterwards, Denmark slammed its borders with Germany and Sweden shut. On 17 March, Denmark began to limit outdoor movement, largely restricting its citizens to their own homes. Steffen Bolvig Hansen – a resident of Copenhagen – spoke to The Perspective about the Danish lockdown.

EVEN AFTER THE borders closed, life in Denmark changed little for Bolvig Hansen. “Being in isolation is very different from person to person – some aren’t taking it seriously.” He has seen people in parks, cafes and bars, even though the number of cases in Denmark is steadily rising.

“ I REALLY THINK THAT
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GOVERNMENTS

But, as the Danish government has tightened the lockdown measures, Bolvig Hansen noted that “it’s hard to not be able to go out with a good conscience.”

IN BOLVIG HANSEN’S view, people in Copenhagen are now having to take the lockdown seriously. With any sort of gathering of more than two people now banned, the Danish government has made it clear that this is to be taken seriously. Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen has addressed the nation, telling people to stay indoors and to avoid all non-essential contact.

“THE GOVERNMENT HAS informed us, yes”, says Bolvig Hansen. But it appears to be the stories emerging from Italy that have had the starkest effect: “Denmark learned a lesson from Italy. I really think that this has been an eye-opener for people and for governments.”

THE WHO HAS declared that Europe is now the epicentre of the virus – with Italy and Spain being at the heart of this. Nuria Garcia, a student in Barcelona, spoke about the lockdown in Spain.

GARCIA SAYS THAT the beginning of the Spanish lockdown was disastrous: “The first days were pure selfishness, people stockpiled as if there was no tomorrow”. Now, instead, people seem to be more relaxed and, despite not having to buy a lot, they go out just to be able to leave home. “If you go out to buy, you feel a little criminal, since there is nobody on the street and the police come and go constantly”, she adds.

REGARDING THE HEALTH emergency, Garcia stresses: “I am concerned that this reaches especially the elderly and most vulnerable, especially in the villages.” This is a danger, not only because the virus is very contagious, but also because the health system will totally collapse. “It would be very difficult for you to be hospitalized and treated as you should”, she laments.

GARCIA ALSO FEARS that, on an economic level, the consequences might be very shocking. “We are already seeing that every day there are more companies that are closing permanently, so unemployment will skyrocket more and more, as cases and restrictions increase.”

WHAT IS WORSE, according to Garcia, is the fact that this crisis could have been avoided: “The confinement should have taken place much earlier, before the virus reached Europe. However, nobody likes to close companies and have economic losses if ‘it really is not necessary’”. Another issue are the government’s cuts that have been made in the health system year after year: “It is not enough to thank all those overflowed health personnel, what they need is more resources and research.” Nuria adds: “Everyone – citizens and politicians – is responsible.”

PEOPLE ELSEWHERE IN the world are also having to adapt to sudden, extreme measures. Idan Levy - a writer at The Perspective – had to leave Sweden in order to return to his native Israel before the government effectively closed the borders to all new arrivals. Immediately upon his return, Levy had to enter into a fourteen-day period of self-isolation at his family home near Tel Aviv.

“FROM SWEDEN, IT seemed crazy. Now, I think [leaving] was the right decision”, Levy said of his sudden departure. “But coming back to [self-isolation], it’s kind of absurd. I feel like I’m

“ IF YOU GO OUT...YOU
FEEL LIKE A CRIMINAL

in a hotel.” Shortly after Levy’s return, Israel increased measures within the country, ordering bars, cafes and restaurants to close, locking down the Palestinian Territories and asking people to minimise their outdoor movements.

THE INCREASED MEASURES have had one unexpected positive, Levy says: “It’s got the Israeli government talking to the Palestinians.” The two sides are attempting to put together a coordinated response for fighting the virus.

THE GOVERNMENT HAD clearly stated that “Israel has trouble with [hospital] bed capacity” meaning that the Ministry of Health has “had [to have] an extreme attitude”. The Israeli government is openly saying that it will increase measures within the country if necessary. “It’s too early to say how life will be impacted”, Levy adds.

THE MEASURES IN these countries are tough, but they are only likely to become tougher – both there and elsewhere in the world. The number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 is rising by the hour across the world – but particularly in the Schengen Area of Europe. No expert can comfortably say how long this pandemic will last, but one thing is certain: Covid-19 is here for the duration – and we may well only be at the beginning of it.

“WE MUST CLEAN UP THE HOUSE AND KEEP OUR PROMISES”

Damian Boeselager, 32, represents the progressive, pan-European movement Volt in the European Parliament. The young party follows a transnational program, seeking a unified Europe. In light of Covid-19, *The Perspective* spoke with the new MEP about the EU's current challenges and respective reforms.

MR BOESELAGER, I planned to ask you about the future of the EU, but of course we cannot avoid the issue of Covid-19. Why do you think there has not been any pan-European response in weeks to stop the virus from spreading?

“IN A NUTSHELL: the big problem is that the EU does not have the capacity and power to respond to such a crisis. Decisions regarding health, deployment of army or border closure - so executive decisions that are needed in a crisis like this - are all still with the nation state. Therefore, the EU has no power to do anything. It also angers me because I think that a coordinated approach would have helped early. Of course, regarding the whole of Europe, one would have understood much earlier that we had to do something in Italy. This is another example of the incompleteness of the EU. We must develop it further.”

PRESIDENT OF THE European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and the president of the European Central Bank (ECB), Christine Lagarde, seem to be reacting. However, as you say yourself, the nation state has exhausted its powers. Do you see more of a threat to the “European spirit” and the strengthening of nationalism due to Covid-19?

“THIS IS TOO early to say. It will certainly continue to develop for quite a while. I think that people are shown again that the nation state gives the answers, but at the same time, many understand that it would also be helpful if Europe cooperated

more. That’s why it’s hard to say how it will ultimately turn out. I hope that people understand that we need a coherent system.”

LET US TALK some more about nationalism and European solidarity. Volt is one of the first pan-European parties and has a clearly pro-European alignment. At the same time, Salvini is seeking a “new European dream”. Do you think we can expect pan-European-Eurosceptic parties in the 2024 election?

“THE PROBLEM WITH the nationalists is that they can’t establish transnational cooperation and take themselves seriously, so I’m not so afraid of a possible collaboration. I also think that Steve Bannon failed his attempt to set up this institute for nationalism in Europe. After all, nationalism is based on national borders, and then work across borders does not make any sense.”

SO, DO YOU see the previous collaboration between Eurosceptic parties as a “marriage of convenience” since they have a common enemy?

“I’M NOT SURE how much collaboration there is. There are of course the groups in the European Parliament and then there are these photo events from time to time, but I have never seen a really coordinated cooperation.”

SOME OTHER PROGRESSIVE parties, such as your colleagues from Renew Europe, are calling for transnational lists. Do you think those lists are realistic?

“IN OUR ELECTORAL program, we are calling for a two-vote system: one vote for the local MEP and the second for a European party. The question is how, to there, so you can think in stages. As a first step, a transnational list could be useful.”

SO IN THE long run ...?

“NO, NOT IN the long term. I believe that if you want to make transnational lists, then they should now be implemented in this legislative period.”

THEN WE HAVE four and a half years left.

“YES, I will definitely do my utmost to ensure that we make a good proposal from the European Parliament. In terms of voting rights, the Parliament has the right of the proposal. Accordingly, no one can stop us from making a good suggestion of what the right to vote should look like in the future, and I will do so.”

ANOTHER MAJOR ISSUE in the European elections is the Spitzenkandidat-principle. In 2019, we had Timmermanns and Weber, but in the end, Ursula von Leyen was nominated. What needs to be reformed?

“HERE AGAIN, IT is not that we are not fundamentally in the Spitzenkandidat-system, but that we believe that the Commission should be appointed by the strongest party or the largest coalition in the Parliament. At least that’s the approach. But if you build a top candidate system, you must stick to it. What we have criticized is that the Council has pulled von der Leyen out of the hat and has not chosen any of the top candidates.”

DO YOU THINK it makes sense to completely exclude the Council?

“THE QUESTION IS always what you can and cannot do within the current treaties. Under the current treaties, for example, you can say that we are making an interinstitutional agreement whereby the Council commits to appointing one of the top candidates as President of the Commission. That would be a sensible first step or a direction to go. But at the moment the treaties state that the heads of government appoint all commissioners and the president. As long as that is the case, we have to think about changing the treaties in order

to change the procedure.”

YOU PRAISED THE appointment of Commissioner Dubravka Šuica. She is in charge of the implementation of the “Conference on the Future of Europe”. What do you expect from this conference in view of the greater involvement of voters?

“FIRST OF ALL, we have to wait and see how the coronavirus delays everything. Basically, I think the conference is a huge opportunity to build the kind of dialogue that we need to convince national politicians that we need a change in the EU. That means: the conference is a success if it involves as many people as possible, is able to inspire many citizens and to build up political pressure. That is my big dream and for that, we need large citizen participation and, in the best case, also a binding commitment from the conference to implement the demands of the citizens.”

DO YOU THINK this bottom-up tactic is realistic? Or is there a risk that only those citizens who are already interested in the EU will take part?

“IT DEPENDS ON how you do it. It comes back to the question: will nationalism benefit from the crisis? It doesn’t do much to be afraid of it and to say “Oh, let’s not do it because it could go wrong, or the same people would be sitting there again”. For me, it is now important to fight for the conference to be as broad as possible. Volt will work to spread it as widely as possible and I hope that many other parties and organizations will do the same.”

ANOTHER TOPIC THAT has recently been lost in the news is EU enlargement and Macron’s criticism of the rules currently in place. What should we focus on after Brexit? More integration or enlargement?

“I THINK IT makes sense to keep the promises you made. It is not a vote to directly expand the EU, but to initiate the procedures. It is also important to keep these commitments so that local politics do not go in another direction. But I still think we have to clean up our house. We talked about it at the beginning: we are unable to respond to the major crises of our time and as long as this is not the case and the EU is unable to act, I believe it is at risk - due to nationalism or other critical tendencies. So: we must clean up the house and keep our promises.”

So, you think Macron's blockade is wrong?

"IT IS ANOTHER example of the fact that we have a system in which a country's veto ensures that a huge process, that actually has been completed, can be torpedoed. This is a paralysis of a system by individual national interests, and we must function much more democratically in this regard."

ARE THE NEW rules formulated by the Commission a good compromise for the candidate countries Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Albania?

"TO BE HONEST, I'm not an expert on these new rules and I have to look at them again in detail. I think there was a consensus that this process can be adjusted a bit, but I can't judge whether the rules have gotten any better."

FINALLY, APART FROM Covid-19, what is the EU's biggest challenge at the moment?

"DEFINITELY MIGRATION AND developing the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). These are the topics that I am currently working on and which I consider to be highly relevant. It cannot be that we have asylum seekers in Greek camps and at the borders, with no chance of quarantine or sanitary facilities or minimal care. Nobody has any idea how to organize it. This is both a humanitarian and health crisis that is just beginning. At the same time, I know that we will soon have to think again about what the financial framework for the EU will look like in the next seven years, and the proposals that come back from the countries are catastrophic."

Here again we would have the example: nation state versus the EU.

Yes.

Thank you very much for the interview!

Thank you!

“ A COUNTRY'S VETO
ENSURES THAT A
HUGE PROCESS, THAT
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COMPLETED, CAN BE
TORPEDOED



Damian Boeselager, Volt MEP from Germany

Photo: Private

TOWARDS A SUBLIME EUROPE

It feels like the European Union is constantly facing a crisis, shaking the grounds of perceived European values and, this time, the way of life of its citizens. The argument that crises forge people, implies a long-lasting dilemma: what is the way forward?



Photo: Pigsels

It is frightfully sublime in part because of its obscurity.

– Immanuel Kant

THE AESTHETIC THEORY of the sublime encounter explored by philosophers such as Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant enables us to come to terms with such powerful events that are outside the categories of our rational way of thinking.

FRIGHTFUL EVENTS ENCOMPASS overwhelming emotions of fear, uncertainty, powerlessness and inevitability with astonishment. In the state of astonishment of the soul, all its motions are

suspended but the degree of terror and pain experienced, in certain circumstances, can give us delight as defined by Burke in 1757.

THE SUBLIME is a magnificent reminder of human experience about feeling insignificant against the violence of the obscure - that is nature. This puts into a new perspective, who we are and what are the most important things in both individuals' lives and the societies we live in. Perhaps, this is what is happening in the European Union as it is battling Covid-19, a pandemic where healthcare professionals and those who work in essential services and take enormous personal responsibility, show the physical and emotional toll of working at the frontline.

AS COVID-19 TAKES over daily news cycles and spreads fear in desperation throughout communities, many other important struggles fade from the spotlight. Other battles, such as growing social inequalities, economic existence, physical and emotional safety become more prevalent as some groups' vulnerability increases. However, there is a sense of unification in this individual but also collective experience, showing how interconnected and vulnerable the world is – how everything that is human or human-made can and will be challenged at some point. For example when we see a lightning strike, it is both scary and beautiful. It is something that restores perspective – the feeling that is grasped by the sublime experience.

“ [COVID-19] IS
SOMETHING
THAT RESTORES
PERSPECTIVE

WITH EUROPE QUICKLY becoming the epicenter of the pandemic in only a matter of weeks, the stark realities of what it means to live through a pandemic has hit close to home for many Europeans. The new normal includes a dreadfully high number of deaths and confirmed cases reported daily; and there is no foreseeable end in sight. Many experts believe that we are only at the beginning of the storm with many tough months ahead. This led some to put the nation-state and their own authoritarian aspirations forward, others to transform the EU into a capable political body with the power of demonstrating real leadership.

CORNERSTONES OF THE EU have been continuously challenged in the recent years, outlining structural and institutional weaknesses. Most of the Member States are in partial or full lockdown with severe restrictions of gatherings, travel, restored border

control and obstruction of goods, often involving medical supplies. These measures showed little sign of solidarity or united action between nations in the beginning of the crisis.

CONDEMNED TO BE a belated act on closing external borders and securing the procurement of essential medical devices as well as the mechanisms of the internal market, it seems as if the EU was waiting for Member States to act up first. The EU is doing “too little, too late” as put by Guy Verhofstadt, Belgian politician and MEP of the Renew Europe Group. This, on one hand, signals the lack of political tools such as an established European response mechanism, still expecting the EU to act as a financial and security related safety web, on the other hand.

THE PANDEMIC HAS revealed how fragile even the strongest of democracies are. European countries have never implemented such restrictive measures that limit some of the fundamental rights of residents in peacetime. While special rules are essential and important, the threat of authoritarian rule might become real in some countries. The Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor

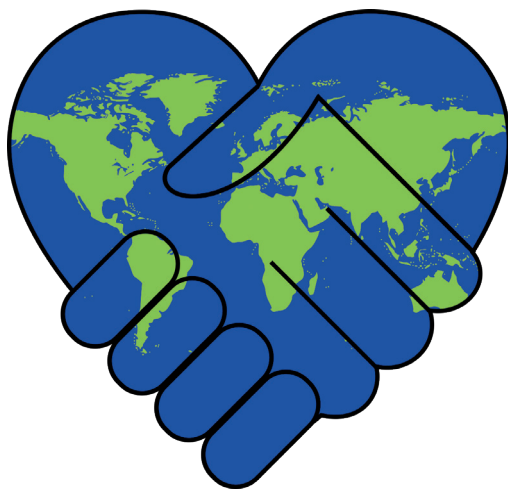


Photo: Needpix.com

Orbán, has pushed for a legislation that grants power to the government through special decrees, for an unlimited time period. This has suspended elections until the end of the emergency and increased the threat on Hungarians' freedom of speech and expression.

ON AN INDIVIDUAL level, with the realisation of the beyond price value of freedom, that of freedom of movement in the EU, the pandemic might contribute to the recognition of what it means to be European. As for Member States of the EU the process of sublimation – when things fall into perspective – will happen during and after the pandemic.

EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS DO their utmost to ensure the safety of their citizens through the implementation of unprecedented economic and legal measures but as the case may be, they are also made to feel small facing a global crisis on their own. The fear and uncertainty Covid-19 has brought upon nations has led some, like Emmanuel Macron to declare war against the global pandemic. It is a war indeed, but unlike others, it is not fought with weapons and requires global, especially European unity and action. European citizens need to hear the voice of their European leaders more than before, not only for the reassurance of their health safety but also their economic and political stability.

THERE ARE SEVERE disruptions of European democracy, a question mark on solidarity and the EU is soon going to face a serious economic downturn which requires strong and quick coordinated action. While there is still thunder above us, leaders should take this moment as a potential to rethink and reshape the political building blocks of the European political order. Signs of which are about to be seen through recently introduced measures.

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION set up a EUR 37 billion Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative to provide liquidity to small businesses and the health care sector. This measure is complemented by the European Central Bank announcing a EUR 750 billion plan to stem the impact of economies slowing down as well as further economic actions that are currently being negotiated.

HOWEVER, THE NECESSARY transformation would require further measures in strategic areas. Coordinated action in health care, fiscal policy, foreign and security policy proves to be confronted with the surge of populist and Eurosceptic political forces and populations.

HOW LONG CAN a union put up with such diverse ideas about its values and future? How can a supranational structure scatter whenever it needs to hold together the most? As waters calm down and the sky clears up, slowly answers will be made to these questions.

“ [FOR] THE EU, THIS
WILL BE A LESSON
LEARNT

REGARDLESS OF FURTHER actions of Member States and institutions of the EU this will be a lesson learnt. As the Earth takes a breath while people are limited in their freedom, environmental consequences of human activity become apparent. The Covid-19 pandemic and the proximity of terror will likely make us rethink our role in the planet, the moral and universal values we want to live accordingly.

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE SOCIETIES in all forms of the term – on environmental, economic, political and system level – is probably the only feasible way forward. It is obvious, however, that transnational challenges will continue to arise and European nation states are likely not to be able to deal with them alone. Because we are all too small against that obscurity.



ONCE UPON A TIME, THE INTERNET VANISHED OVERNIGHT THE TALE OF A DIGITAL SHUTDOWN IN IRAN

Photo: Freepik.com

On November 16, 2019, the Iranian cybersphere tumbled into the darkness. Ordered by the Supreme National Security Council and imposed by the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology, the blackout was meant to prevent riots that were expected to arise over skyrocketing gasoline prices. Iran's broadband outage constituted the first incident in history that has effectively isolated the whole nation against the World Wide Web. Will it remain the last?

BEFORE A GRIM ghost of an epidemic descended upon Iran, the country was already stricken down with a crisis. From the holy city of Mashhad to the cultural sites of Shiraz, from the industrial hub of Isfahan to the capital Tehran - in recent years, the country experienced a sharp spike in civil unrest. It was at the turn of 2019 and 2020 when another series of revolts called for the abolishment of the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and his government.

NOVEMBER 15, 2019, 00:00, TEHRAN. The government silently introduces a rise in petrol prices, ranging from 50 percent, up to 300 percent - effective immediately. For the country that has already succumbed to soaring inflation, it is the breaking point. Demonstrations commence overnight and grow into a storm torching dozens of banks and government sites. The protests quickly meet military response - security forces across the country clash the riots using tear gas and machine gunfire.

TO CAPTURE THE genesis of the uprisings, *The Perspective* reached out to Vittorio Felci, Senior Researcher at K3, Malmö University and Affiliated Researcher at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) at Lund University.

“THE ROOTS OF the protests are to be found in Iran's bad economy and its effects on the population, in particular, the massive unemployment rate and high inflation”, explains Felci, adding that the current state of the economy can be traced to the United States' withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal and the new wave of sanctions imposed by Donald Trump.

“I WOULD SAY that the decision to raise fuel prices occurred at the wrong time, as the people were already struggling and could not stand any more economic pressure”, continues Felci, noting that by no coincidence, the unrest clustered in rather impoverished areas, inherently vulnerable to economic distress.

LESS THAN 24 hours after the protests began, the country started experiencing Internet restrictions that gradually transformed into almost complete digital darkness. While “typical” shutdowns may occur due to cyberattacks or damage to undersea cables, the case of Iran was far from ordinary. The international community agreed that the shutdown constituted an attempt to cease the flow of information inside and outside the country.

“THE OUTAGE OF the Internet made it difficult for the protesters to communicate with each other and that affected the demonstrations. But they sought other ways. Those living in border towns used the SIM cards from neighboring countries; some also succeeded in penetrating the 5% Internet bandwidth - this way some news and videos were sent overseas” comments Mehdi Ghavideldostkahi, Persian Language and Iranian culture instructor at the CMES.

FOR MANY PEOPLE, the concept of purposely disconnecting an entire country from the Internet remains abstract. To bring this idea closer to understanding, The Perspective asked Maria Kihl, Professor in Internetnetworked Systems at Lund University, to explain what kind of methods the regime used to orchestrate the outage.

“THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT demanded all major Iranian Internet Service Providers (ISPs, network operators) to disable international traffic. It means they had to shut down all communication going to networks outside Iran. Every time Internet traffic is sent to another network, it must pass a specific router in the operator’s system that handles the inter-network communication. So it is quite easy to shut down the Internet if you control all ISPs in a country - like Iran’s government does”, explains Kihl, noting that the domestic Internet was available, but since all major media platforms are hosted abroad, Iranian users could not access them.

SOCIAL NETWORKING SERVICES such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube for long have been an engine of collective organization and grassroots news coverage. Over the years, social media have contributed their fair share towards shaping the political landscape of Iran - especially in the

period following the Arab Spring. Vittorio Felici further explains that over the last half a century, Iran saw two major waves of activism.

“THE FIRST WAVE emerged during the Shah’s reign from 1974 to 1979. This period saw a global ‘human rights revolution’ that made Iran a primary target of transnational advocacy networks. The second wave concerns digital activism against the Islamic republic from 2009 to the present.”

FELICI ADDS: “DIGITALIZATION of Iranian politics during and after the Persian Awakening illustrated the power of social media in terms of generating opposition, shaping political discourse, and facilitating action in the face of a powerful autocratic regime.”

SINCE 2009, THE government has undertaken several steps to prevent the spread of the digital revolution. The establishment of the Iranian Cyber Police (FATA) and the National Information Network (SHOMA) embodied the pinnacle of those efforts. According to the information retrieved from the EU Council Regulation No 359/2011, in 2012, FATA issued national guidelines for internet cafés that obliged the owners to install CCTV cameras, collect their guests’ credentials, and preserve their search history for 6 months. Data of such scope would easily allow the authorities to track down the activists or anyone considered a threat to national security.

ONE OF THE people deemed as such was Sattar Beheshti, author of a blog called My Life for Iran. According to journalismisnotacrime.com, a website documenting violations of press freedom in Iran, Beheshti was detained by FATA and beaten to death after publishing a series of posts criticizing the regime. Beheshti had disclosed the abuses within the Iranian judicial system, as well as generous, long-term funding of Hezbollah - a political and military group based in Lebanon.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHOMA, on the other hand, remains in progress. Around 80% complete, as of May 2019, it is set to replace the Internet without vast economic repercussions. The Iranian regime is not battling denial - while short-term Internet blackouts can temporarily

hide the atrocities of the regime, it comes at a steep cost. NetBlocks, a non-governmental organization monitoring Internet freedom, estimated the total cost impact of the five-day shutdown around \$300 million.

“MANY COMPLAINED ABOUT the disruption of businesses that were 100% Internet-dependent. Internet blackout also created problems for education, especially for students”, points out Mehdi Ghavideldostkahi.

GHAVIDELDOSTKOHI’S REMARKS COULD not be more accurate - industrial investors, largely dependent on foreign partnerships and suppliers, were abruptly disconnected from their sources of import. The startup ecosystem became virtually deprived of its ground base. E-commerce, taxi and navigation services, online banking transactions, and business deals were all thrown into turmoil that severely crippled the revenues and further distorted the economy.

AS GHAVIDELDOSTKOHI MENTIONED, the blackout also took a toll on education. To examine the academic angle, *The Perspective* contacted two Iranian students. One of them, Leyla Namdarimoghaddam from the College of Idaho,

“ IN A RIOT, IT IS THE BULLIES WHO BECOME LEADERS AND TAKE THINGS UNDER CONTROL.

— Mohammad, a student at the Sharif University of Technology in Tehran

was in the United States at the time of the blackout. The Perspective asked how she found out about the Internet outage in her homeland.

“I WAS TRYING to call my family but none of them answered. Finally, in the news, I saw what was happening. My mood completely changed and every day I was praying for their safety. There were lots of emotions: anxiety, sadness, and uncertainty because I used to talk to them daily”, says our interviewee.

“THE PROTESTS CONTINUED despite the shutdown. I know some people from outside of Iran who helped to organize them, and I know that many Iranians in other countries were protesting as well.



Torched petrol station in Iran, November 18, 2019. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

THE SITUATION WAS terrible. People were getting killed. One of my relatives died accidentally in the crowds. The situation was really hard to overcome. Being in the US and witnessing what was happening made me feel exhausted and worried all the time”, admits Leyla.

MOHAMMAD, A STUDENT at the Sharif University of Technology in Tehran, also agreed to share his experience and reflections from that period. The Perspective asked how the shutdown proceeded and what kind of obstacles he met throughout the process.

“I REMEMBER I was studying at the time. I got tired and wanted to check my cell phone, but there was no Internet signal. I tried restarting the phone a couple of times but that did not help. I thought it might be a problem with my bill, so I called the mobile network company, but they didn’t pick up. A few hours later I realized I was not alone.”

MOHAMMAD CONTINUES: “I am studying computer engineering. The blackout was a disaster for us. Instead of searching for programming issues, we had to look them up in textbooks 1000 pages long. The process that should take less than one minute lasted half an hour.”

AT THE END of the conversation, *The Perspective* asked about the impact of social media on generating opposition movements in Iran.

“I AM NOT calling it opposition. It’s a very classy word. What social media does, especially among young people, is fueling the rage and anxiety by posting sensitive content like shooting and beating during the protests. It does not stimulate a well-written political and social dispute. So, what social media does, in my opinion, is not generating opposition, but rather generating a will to protest, which may make the situation even worse. In a riot, it is the bullies who become leaders and take things under control”, concludes Mohammad.

WHILE IT IS estimated that the clashes left between 300 and 1500 Iranian protesters dead, the authorities refused to declare any specific numbers. Several more thousands are said to have become wounded, detained or tortured. The UN independent experts expressed their

deep concern over the riots and the blackout, while the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHCR) maintained its 2016 position that „the same rights people have offline must also be protected online”.

A LOT IS said, but seemingly little is done for the Iranians themselves. Amid the sanctions imposed and the deals reached, there is the human cost - often overlooked. The economic embargoes do not seem to yield expected backlash, only add up to the misfortune of ordinary Iranian people, who are stuck amidst the vicious cycle of power play. United in disagreement against the regime, they flood the streets only to meet violent retaliation instead of change. The retaliation conjures new sanctions, that yet again cause collateral damage. And so goes the cycle.

NOW IRANIANS ALSO face permanent exile from the global Internet community. If Iran’s intranet successfully replaces the Internet, the world will grow a blind spot. And what could happen behind the digitally closed doors?

Let’s hope the time won’t tell.

EFFECTIVE REPRESENTATION IN INTERNATIONAL ARENAS: DEVELOPING NATIONS STRUGGLE

In Khartoum, Sudan, a political activist was invited to speak at an international conference. She was asked to speak on behalf of Sudanese women about their struggles and their fight for rights. But she simply refused, saying that she is not the most suitable person to represent all Sudanese women; she can only represent a segment.

THE CONCEPT OF representation is extensively scrutinised and discussed in politics. Nowadays, it is mostly brought up when discussing the representation of marginalised and historically disenfranchised groups, how best to represent them and ensure fair access to power for them in representative democracies and to ensure their voices are being heard. An eminent issue that immediately arises when addressing this topic is meaningful representation ensuring effectiveness and fairness. This is an ongoing debate.

THIS ARTICLE IS concerned with a slightly different angle on the same topic. It tries to tackle the topic of representation of southern nations in global political summits, conferences, and international arenas in general.

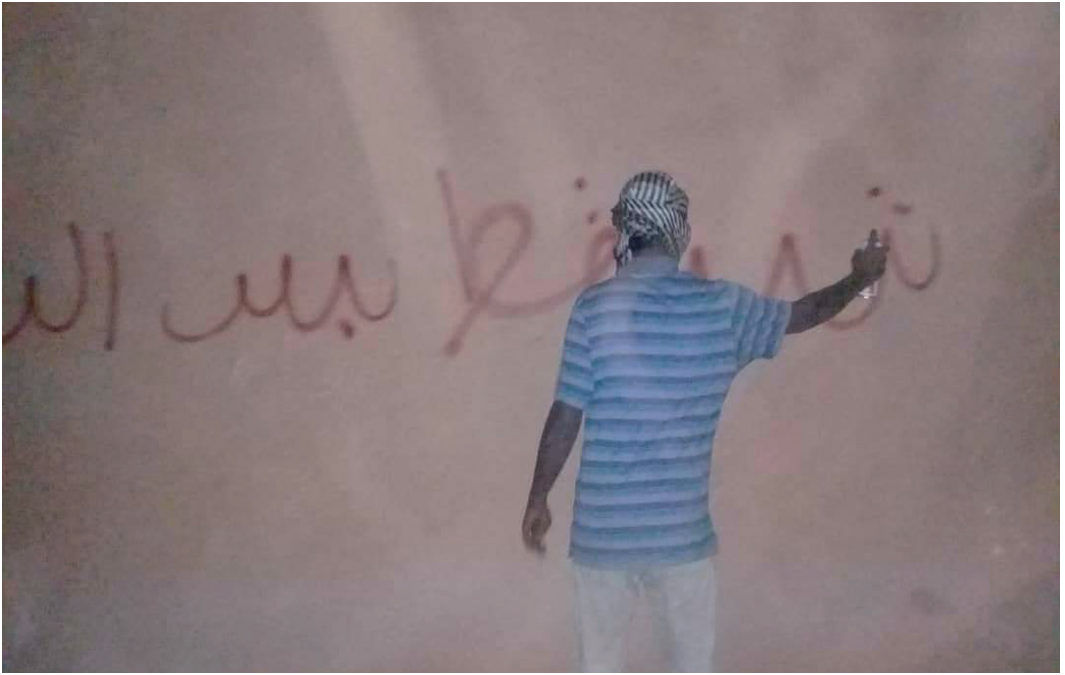
SINCE 1945, THE United Nations and its agencies have worked to ensure sustainable global peace. It has tried to represent each and every country. Despite the discrepancies in power and influence between these countries, it was a good idea, at least a potential for a good one. However, at that time, this very idea overlooked the fact that the majority - if not all - of nations in Africa and Asia were still colonised. Therefore, the UN simply echoed the colonists' political positions. After independence, the situation did not change, with the emerging

political elite in those countries preserving the former colonisers' interests. The influence of the former-colonisers ensured those young countries were just votes for their side.

BUT THE ISSUE did not stop there, actually another issue arose when these growing nations started to claim full autonomy over their territories and political positions.

THEY HAVE TRIED to find ways to establish efficient governance systems employing the values of the already-functioning systems in Europe, on top lies democracy as a way of ruling and representing. The model in most western countries is indirect or representative democracy. A system that requires pre-existing conditions in order to function effectively.

TWO MAJOR HINDRANCES stood in the way of fair representation in those recently independent countries. Firstly, they inherited a totally new system. With most of these nations being new to dealing with statehood, very soon governance systems grew in the wrong direction: authoritarian regimes, dictatorships, totalitarian states and failed states. These flawed systems in emerging nations often do not employ institutions and transparency in their work. Political actions under such systems are mostly unilateral decisions taken



A protestor graffiti's a pro-revolution slogan onto a wall. Photo: Flickr

by the powerful more than being democratic political processes. They are influenced by power, especially when it comes to representation and delegation. Under such systems, delegations to conferences are thought of rather as a prize or reward and do not comply with any transparent, democratic selection procedures. It is through power, connections and influence that people find their places.

ANOTHER ISSUE IS that the global system is built on Western standards, so it is working by assuming that similar institutions, tools and processes, most of all transparency, which indeed is missed in flawed governance systems, are all present. Therefore, sometimes, international organisations simply rely on symbolic representation as a compromised method for selection of delegates or representatives from developing nations. This is exactly what happened very recently in the Sudanese case.

A YOUNG WOMAN was filmed chanting atop a car, wearing traditional white Sudanese dress over

a crowd during the revolution that started in December 2018. It later overthrew Omer Elbashir, a dictator that governed Sudan for 30 years. It is a picture that was truly symbolic, inspirational and iconic for women participating in that revolution, nobody can argue against that. The traditionally-dressed girl represented Sudanese women fighting against an oppressive regime. Women were referred to as Kandakat (Kandaka, a term used to refer to the ruling queen in ancient Nubian civilizations in Sudan). The girl afterwards was known as the Sudanese Kandaka.

DUE TO THE symbolism and power of the picture, it soon went viral and the young woman was picked up by the media and attracted attention, first on social media, and later on some reporting news media. She did many interviews and was featured in famous newspapers around the world. However, what happened afterwards is the main concern, she started to get called to international conferences, speaking at UN summits on behalf of, not only Sudanese women, but the whole young generation that revolted against the dictatorship.

WHEN IT COMES to official representation for fighting against oppressive regimes, women struggle and fight for different rights. To ensure efficient representation for women's causes in Sudan at international summits and UN conferences is a political task. One that should ideally go through institutions charged with selecting the most suitable representatives. However, in this particular case, the international community was lazy in investigating. Instead, it went through local organisations and civil society to find the best fit which could have potentially

represented Sudanese women. It went for the easy pick, exploiting the symbolic picture of the girl to be the face of Sudanese women, media attention and the popularity of the young lady.

UNFORTUNATELY, THIS DID not help and might well have destroyed the young lady, as she was stretched to a role that she was not equipped to.

REPRESENTING DEVELOPING NATIONS in international arenas is a constant struggle and it creates many domestic political battles over who is the best to represent. Under many failed governments, it is an ensured failure - and it will be for quite some time. It is just one of the manifestations of poorly functioning governments. However, this places even more of a burden on the international community, at least in civil society organisations, and representation of their struggles. When it is possible, the best option is to represent, through a set of standard transparent procedures and engagement of relevant actors and institutions.

“ THE GLOBAL SYSTEM IS BUILT ON WESTERN STANDARDS



A train bedecked with pro-revolution protestors. Photo: Wikimedia Commons



**BAGUHHIN
ANG 'PINAS**

WAGING WAR ON THE FILIPINO DRUG TRADE

President Rodrigo Duterte, a brutal leader to some and a national hero to others, has waged war on the Filipino drug trade. Since his inauguration an estimated 27,000 people, most of them low income drug pushers, have been murdered by ‘death squads’. While Duterte deems his ‘war’ a success, others believe it is doing more harm than good and distracting from other pressing matters.

ALL OF YOU who are into drugs, you sons of bitches, I will really kill you,” is not typically something one would expect to hear a president say. But Rodrigo Duterte, the President of the Philippines, has proven time and time again that he isn’t a conventional leader. Not only is his rhetoric often vulgar and explicit, but it often involves enacting violence on certain groups of people; currently he is targeting drug pushers.

DUTERTE BUILT HIS presidential campaign off his promise to bring an end to the violence and destruction drugs have brought with them. His unforgiving brutality, arrogance and blatant disregard for political correctness has made him extremely popular among voters – voters who are tired of the same wealthy families running the country and making no difference in the lives of ordinary Filipinos. However, with death squads roaming the streets and police covering up murders of local drug pushers and users, has Duterte’s hard line on drugs actually made a difference or has it just made life more difficult and dangerous for already vulnerable groups of people?

THE OVERALL EFFECT of Duterte’s ‘War on Drugs’ is a contested debate. While some deem his campaign a success as drug pushers are too afraid to go out and sell drugs, others consider them a misguided attempt to decrease the amount of drugs in circulation. Duterte’s war does not

address the underlying causes of the Filipino drug trade. Instead, Duterte finds himself at war with the most vulnerable group of people in the Philippines, low-income households.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION AND the reality of Duterte’s “war on drugs” are vastly different. Almost two in three Filipinos believe that the number of drug users in their area has dropped since Duterte became President. Police data shows a 21.5% drop in reported crime, but the vice-president, Leni Robredo, claims that the government’s anti-drugs committee statistics shows that just 1% of the country’s total crystal meth supply had been seized in the same time period.

DUTERTE AND HIS team are thought by many to exaggerate and invent data, making it difficult to know which data to trust. For example, Duterte stated that there are 4 million drug users in the Philippines, however, the drug authorities estimate that number to be much lower as the prevalence of drug use by Filipinos is about 2.3%.

WHILE THE STATISTICS Duterte uses may be exaggerated, the murder rate is unfortunately accurate. As of October 2019, about 27 000 people have been killed, most of them low level drug pushers. This is 33 murders for every one person.

THE HIGH MURDER rates – which Duterte claims to demonstrate progress – have in fact done very

little to decrease the prevalence of drug users and address the underlying causes of the drug trade. Pervasive poverty and persistent corruption remain rampant in the Philippines forcing households to do what is necessary to survive. If Duterte's war on drugs isn't making a tangible difference in the drug trade, what type of impact is it having?

“ PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS AND THE REALITY OF THE WAR ON DRUGS ARE VASTLY DIFFERENT

THIS QUESTION IS difficult to answer. The Philippines is a low income country with a population of over 100 million people, most of which live in poverty. Duterte has focused his presidency so far on waging war on drugs, slandering international leaders and organisations that criticise him and cozying up to authoritarian leaders. He has done little to remove the weeds in the Filipino political world and even less to decrease poverty levels. What he has done however, is increase spending on infrastructure through his new project “Build, Build, Build.” However, even this well-intended project has come under fire as only 9 out of 75 projects have been completed.

THE PHILIPPINES’ deeply rooted corruption and poverty prioritize the already wealthy and well-connected Filipinos; limiting the spread of wealth to a pre-selected few. The poor and most vulnerable who suffer the most see little benefit from projects like “Build, Build, Build” as the disparities make sure they cannot afford to access new opportunities. Social mobility is very low, and for many it may seem impossible. What the Philippines needs is a leader who will implement political and economic policy that ‘drains the swamp’, instead of pushing ungrounded murderous policies that disregard human rights and show little to no results at a very high cost.

DUTERTE’S WAR ON drugs seems to divert attention away from other pressing issues that the Philippines faces, like poverty and inequality, which often are the root of many societal issues. By addressing the underlying causes of the drug trade in the Philippines, Duterte could, in a much more civil and legal manner, decrease the amount of drugs in circulation. As a result, less people would feel the financial need to sell and use drugs in order to survive. By implementing policies that increase job opportunities with better pay, better educational systems to increase and encourage social mobility, the drug trade would become less lucrative as individuals have the potential to earn more outside the drug trade.

A WORLD BANK study, *Innocent Bystanders: Developing Countries and the War on Drugs* discusses the negative effects of the prohibition of drugs as it encourages organized crime by increasing the profits that can be made. Instead of taking a violent and murderous head first approach which uses fear to control people, it would yield more sustainable results to focus on increasing citizens’ quality of life and human capital. A possible solution could be to increase investment in supply side policies, especially those focused on increasing human capital, like increasing investment in education and training programs. These types of strategies not only increase social mobility but give people the means to provide for themselves and adapt to changing economic and political circumstances. Supply side investments require large upfront investment and the benefits of the investment are only seen in the long term. As a result these policies tend to be unpopular with voters as it usually requires increased taxes and cut government spending in other areas which is why many politicians hesitate as they want to be reelected. In the Philippines, where many people are undocumented and the government has limited information about their population, collecting taxes becomes a difficult task.

THE DRUG-WAR in the Philippines is a by-product of decades of poor governance and mismanagement that has created several structural problems that have cemented into society. As time passes they require bigger, bolder and more drastic solutions as their side effects become more prevalent.

THE APOLITICAL FACADE OF SPORTS

Like music, movies and books, sports is one of the components of popular culture and a reflection of the larger masses. Democratic and authoritarian states compete against each other under the same circumstances with the same goal - to win. In this article, *The Perspective* explores the role sports play when it comes to national identity and politics.

100 HOURS, 6000 minutes, 360 000 seconds. The year is 1969: El Salvador and Honduras are competing against each other in the football World Cup qualifiers. Three games in total. Best out of three wins. The tension between the neighbouring countries is thick.

GAME ONE. LOCATION: Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Honduras wins by 1-0. Some disturbances are apparent. **Game two. Location:** San Salvador, El Salvador. El Salvador wins by 3-0. The tension between the two countries is great. The Salvadoreans mock the national flag and anthem of Honduras. The Honduran fans are provoked and brutalised. The Honduran team is harassed with dead rats and rotten eggs flying through

the broken windows of their hotel rooms. **Game three. Location:** Mexico City, Mexico the world cup host. El Salvador wins by 3-2. El Salvador qualifies for the 1970 World Cup. Honduras breaks off diplomatic relations with El Salvador the very same day of the game.

THE THIRD GAME was played on June 27th. By July 14th, El Salvador had invaded their neighbour and war was a fact. This was how the short war between Honduras and El Salvador broke out. The conflict is often referred to as the "Football War" but it is also known as the 100 Hour War.

THE FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES of war were not solely based on the game but mainly on areas such as

migration, trade and land disputes. Football plays an essential role in society in Latin America. Even though football was not the main cause of conflict it was football that pushed the two countries over the limit and resulted in the deaths of thousands, over a hundred thousand refugees and the last fought duels with propeller planes. As always, it is all fun and games until somebody gets hurt.

THE PERSPECTIVE SPOKE with David Webber, Senior Lecturer in Football Studies at Solent University to find out more about the relationship between football and politics. On the question if he thinks that sports are political Webber responds:

“FIFA, THE INTERNATIONAL Olympic Committee (IOC) have all made declarations recently about the need to keep sport and politics separate from one another. Indeed, part of the appeal of sport, and football in particular, certainly in its purest form, is that it appears to be apolitical. It is possible to watch, play and enjoy sport with someone else regardless of that person’s political beliefs.”

FOOTBALL, WITH ITS billions of followers across the globe in many respects speaks a common language and transcends many of the things that so often divide us. However – and this is the crucial point, sport, and football, is always political. It always reflects the society in which it is played – and, of course, society is inherently political. The same sort of power structures and hierarchies, whether they be financial, political and social, that exist in society, all, in some shape or form, exist within sport, and it is therefore impossible to disentangle the two from one another.”

WEBBER CONTINUES TO SAY:

“For decades now, sport remains a tool for states to announce themselves and promote their ideologies on the global stage. The 1934 World Cup, hosted and won by Italy, was used by Il Duce to showcase fascism, while two years later, the Berlin Olympics attempted to reassert Aryan superiority.”

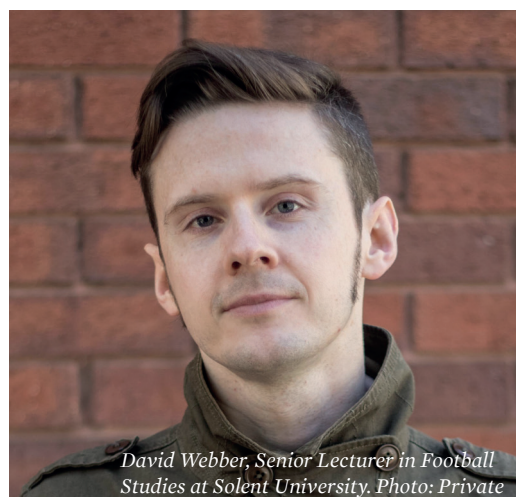
WHEN ASKED IF he thinks that football could potentially lead to any future conflicts between states Webber says:

“It is often argued that the now infamous riot at Dinamo Zagreb’s Maksimir Stadium on 13 May 1990 sparked Croatia’s war of independence. This is, however, a myth. It was, in fact, a fragile,

multi-ethnic polity, fractured with deep historical divisions, that triggered the violence which would lead to the bloody conflicts that fuelled the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. That, however, is not to say that football did not play a part in amplifying these tensions or provide a vehicle through which these identities and divisions could be manifested and displayed. Other examples abound of simmering tensions between states and political entities being played out on the football field. Clubs from Russia and Ukraine cannot, for instance, play each other due to the unfolding crisis between the two nations. Despite being located in the Middle East, Israel plays its qualification matches against European countries. The Arab-Israeli conflict, and subsequent Arab League boycott of Israel, mean that several Islamic nations refuse to play Israel.”

HE CONTINUES:

“Given these examples, there is certainly the possibility for football to spark a conflict between two or more states. The reality, however, is that it is long standing grievances rather than football matches themselves that will be the real cause for these wars. These examples, however, underline my earlier point that football itself remains a reflection and a product of the society in which it is played. In highly divided societies and contexts, football becomes a particularly contested terrain. It provides the stage for the symbols, meanings, and identities constructed by these ‘imagined communities’ to be performed and enacted, and as such offers the possibility for political conflict, revolution and, sometimes, even redemption.”



David Webber, Senior Lecturer in Football Studies at Solent University. Photo: Private



German Fritz Schilgen runs with the Olympic torch to the Olympic Stadium in Berlin during the opening ceremony of the politicised 1936 Summer Olympic Games.

“WORLD LEADERS CAN DRAW BENEFIT FROM THEIR COUNTRY SUCCEEDING IN DIFFERENT SPORTING EVENTS AND COMPETITIONS.

- Thomas Bodström, former Minister of Justice

THE PERSPECTIVE ALSO spoke with Thomas Bodström, Former Minister of Justice and former right-defender in the Swedish national league, who also thinks that sports can be political. He sees sports as a tool for states to express politics and emphasises that football could not only potentially lead to conflicts but also to further democratisation of the world. He thinks that:

“**POLITICS CAN BE** enacted through sports since world leaders can draw benefit from their country succeeding in different sporting events and competitions.”

USUALLY, WE DO not associate watching football with engaging in a political activity. Sports are instead traditionally perceived as entertainment for the larger masses. But, as David Webber and Thomas Bodström underline football also often has political implications. Further, within the larger masses, patriotic sentiments and thoughts grow through sports which politicises it. Losing can enhance irritation or dislike towards other groups and, like in the case of El Salvador and Honduras, winning or losing can be a matter of life and death. While the apolitical facade of sports reflects that it is mainly a game between nations, the core of sports reveals that it is so much more.

COLOMBIA - GIVING PEACE A CHANCE?

Colombia's president Juan Manuel Santos was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on 10 December 2016 for his efforts in ending the country's decades long civil war. However, the violence has continued in the aftermath of the peace process.

Violent conflicts have been a recurring theme in Colombia during the past two centuries. A famous Colombian saying is: "God made our land so beautiful it was unfair to the rest of the world. So to even the score, God populated the land with a race of evil men."

THE COUNTRY HAS the second-highest biodiversity in the world, rich natural resources and fertile soil. Ideally, this should have made Colombia rich and prosperous. Yet, like so many other Latin-American countries, it has been plagued by power struggles and political violence, impeding development.

THE MARXIST-LENINIST REVOLUTIONARY Armed Forces of Colombia, commonly known as FARC, emerged in the aftermath of "La Violencia". This bloody civil war between the Liberal and the Conservative parties claimed the lives of at least two hundred thousand people during the 1950's.

IN THE AFTERMATH of the civil war, major reforms in agriculture were instituted by the government. Traditionally, small farms produced food for local consumption. This changed as the government began pushing for large-scale industrial farming with the aim of increasing export. The policy resulted in hundreds of thousands of farmers being forced off their land as they were told that they weren't using the land effectively.

IN THE EARLY seventies, 70% of the farmland in Colombia was owned by 5.7% of the population. This development of ousting families from their land and wealthy elites consolidating power offered ample ground for the rise of far-left resistance groups.

FARC WAS FORMED in 1964 by Manuel Marulanda Vélez who also remained as their leader until his death in 2008. Initially, the guerilla was made up of only 48 members who fled into the mountains after a violent confrontation with the Colombian army.



Juan Manuel Santos Calderón (right), President of Colombia, gives former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, a pen similar to the ones used to sign the Colombian Peace Agreement. The pens are made from recycled bullets and have inscriptions that read: "Bullets wrote our past. Education, our future." Photo: Flickr/UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

DUE TO THE massive economic inequality and discontent with the political situation, the 48 guerilla members were soon joined by hundreds of disenfranchised people and grew rapidly. Through involvement in the coca trade, kidnappings for ransom and extortion, among other things, FARC grew to become a powerful, irregular army.

AFTER 52 YEARS of violent conflict between FARC and the Colombian army as well as various right-wing paramilitaries, the civil war officially came to an end after a peace agreement in 2016. The proposal for a peace treaty, which included allowing FARC to exist as a political party, was made into a national referendum which resulted in 50.2% voting against it. The proponents of declining the peace treaty argued, among other things, that guerilla members would be let off too lightly and not face appropriate justice for crimes committed.

DESPITE FAILING WITH a narrow margin in the national referendum, the treaty was slightly

altered and approved by congress, leading to some discontent regarding legitimacy. However, the peace agreement was still widely praised and President Juan Manuel Santos was awarded the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to end the conflict.

UNFORTUNATELY, FARC'S TRANSFORMATION from armed guerilla to political party has not been altogether peaceful. Included in the peace treaty was a promise to protect ex-FARC members from potential attacks once they laid down arms. However, as of February 2020, 181 demobilized FARC members have been murdered since the peace agreements were finalized.

THESE KILLINGS are often deemed to be score settling and it has led to critics to accuse the current president, Iván Duque, of not upholding the government's part of the deal. Furthermore, Rodrigo Londoño, the leader of FARC's political party, survived an alleged assassination plot by rearmed FARC members earlier this year.

“THE END OF A CONFLICT IS NOT THE DATE THAT IS STATED IN WIKIPEDIA ARTICLES.” — Oscar Hemberth Moreno Sonko

THE CONTINUED VIOLENCE has raised fears that the decades long civil war might reignite, perhaps in a different shape.

OSCAR HEMBERTH MORENO is a journalist and historian who has studied the political situation in Colombia closely. The Perspective spoke to him about the current tensions and the effects of the 2016 peace treaty.

AROUND 180 DEMOBILIZED FARC members have been killed since 2016. Do you think that the government has failed to protect former guerilla members who wish to reintegrate into society?

OSCAR: “**WE SHOULD** understand peace as a challenge, as a project during the coming years for Colombian society. Many intellectuals, politicians and historians warned that any peace process would include a lot of deaths. I think that a deeper analysis is needed so that we can understand why a nation gets into conflict with itself in the first place.”

“REGARDING SECURITY, ANY country that experiences civil war will also face threats to peace and security in its aftermath. The legacy of war is a difficult challenge, especially with a limited budget. Not only is the government tasked with reintegrating almost 13 000 former FARC members, there are conflicts over land, the drug trade and an increase of other armed groups that are attempting to fill the void left by FARC. “

WHAT DO YOU think about the current government’s role in the peace process?

OSCAR: “**IVAN DUQUE’S** (Colombia’s current president) government has not been very interested in strengthening institutions that support the peace deal. Their party, ‘Centro Democrático’, promotes military strength rather than social

development and education in vulnerable areas. They have tried to block agreements made by the predecessor Juan Manuel Santos and they were ardent supporters of the ‘No’ side leading up to the referendum.”

DO YOU THINK that the civil war between an armed FARC and the government could reignite?

OSCAR: “**YES, IVÁN Márquez** (A FARC leader involved in the peace negotiation who abandoned the process) has attracted some dissidents to his small rearmed group, but this conflict is different. I think we have to look at conflicts in Colombia from a different perspective. History has taught us that the key issue in the civil war is land. Farmers want to own the land they cultivate and other groups fight for control over drug trafficking and illegal mining.”

“MOST HISTORIANS AGREE that we need an agriculture reform to prevent future conflicts, also better education, healthcare and employment opportunities in areas affected by conflict. However, with the current Covid-19 pandemic it is very hard to imagine what the future will look like.”

THE REFERENDUM TO ratify the final peace agreement failed by 50.2% voting against and 49.8% voting for. Do you think the people’s anger towards FARC will be an obstacle in the pursuit of a peaceful future?

OSCAR: “**THE END** of a conflict is not the date that is stated in Wikipedia articles - it can take years or even decades to heal the wounds. However, the “no” side ran a campaign similar to those of Brexit and Trump, based on fake news and lies. We call it “posverdad” (post-truth politics).”

“ADDITIONALLY, MOST OF the people who voted No were middle- and upper class people living in the cities. The rural population, living in areas where FARC had committed horrible crimes, mostly voted yes. They made the decision to strive for peace and try to forgive.”

“PEACE IS A collective, communal and social construction. Peace is also an unknown land that we have to learn to walk in Colombia.”



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YEARBOOK

*The following pages are a collection of
the people, events and memories that
characterised our year in UPF.*

Thank you all!

THE PRESIDIUM

DEAR BELOVED **UPF** members, we are on our way to reach the final stage of this operational year and what a year it has been!

THE UPF PRESIDIUM would first off all like to give our gratitude to the UPF board, Sexual Harassment Contact People, Chief Recruiters, Deputy Heads of Lecture and all of our active members in the committees for all of your hard work. Our visions and achievements for this year would not have been possible without you and the time and effort you have put into this association this past year.

IT ALL STARTED with UPF receiving access to our new office due to renovations in AF. In conjunction with receiving access to the new office, the presidium decided that it was time for complete office makeover and went on an adventure to IKEA to buy new furniture and equipment to start off the year. With a new office, it was time to come up with new ideas for what the board of 19/20 should achieve during its mandate period. We quickly realized that our focus for the upcoming year would be to improve transparency, create a sustainable work environment and develop further knowledge. This was done through various projects and events.

WE STARTED OUT by creating committee hangout budget to give the committees more flexibility to have social events and hangouts for the active members as a way of showing appreciation. We also created a Foreign Correspondent Fund where members of UPF could apply for money to create



media content where the skies were the limit. We worked on creating new trustee positions to develop the association and give more members the opportunity to get more responsibility. This year we focused on recruitment and therefore created 2 new trusted positions: Chief Recruiters. Furthermore, we took a further step on improving the sustainable work environment and did so by implementing one UPF Free Week per semester for the board and active members. This week would give everyone a complete break from all UPF related work to focus on recovery, so that we can maintain the same energy and excitement towards the work throughout the year.

MOREOVER, UPF CONTINUED working on becoming a more transparent association. This was done by writing discussion protocols at board meetings so that you as members could follow the reasoning and discussions behind the decisions carried by the Board members. We have also had an open board meeting, where you as a member had the



Jesper, President



Jonatan, Vice President



Soha, Secretary



Sofia, UFS Representative

opportunity to sit in and see how we conduct them. Lastly, we created a working group that would focus on policy-review and updating our by-laws so that it would become more structured and transparent.

IN JANUARY, THE UPF board went to visit the board of UF Uppsala. During this weekend we had various workshops, giving us the opportunity to discuss organizational- and committee- work focusing on improvement areas and exchange of information on how we conduct our work within our associations'. This exchange led to both associations' presidium having a joint presidium meeting once a month to keep each other updated in different areas.



LAST BUT DEFINITELY not least, our biggest obstacle of the year. Can you guess what that could be? You guessed it right, the coronavirus. This current pandemic has created a grey cloud over the association and our work. New restrictions, cancelled events- and lectures, not to mention self-quarantines. This virus has taken a massive toll on the operations and we are sincerely sorry for all the hard work you have put into organizing



events that at the end needed to get cancelled due to these unfortunate circumstances.

MOVING FORWARD, WE face new challenges and need to work on finding solutions to continue the operations even in under these circumstances. Resilient organizations can adapt to new obstacles and grow from adversity. While being in deeply worrying times, perhaps this semester will be remembered as the one where UPF found new ways to improve our use of digital tools and technologies, pioneering what an association can be in the 21st century.

WITH THAT BEING said, we are not worried over what the future holds. Being a part of this community and getting to know you over this past year, reassure us that no matter what obstacles we face, UPF will stay strong thanks to all of you. Thank you for this amazing year and we hope that you have had a wonderful year with us!



Olle, IT



Benjamin, Treasurer



Mara, Deputy Treasurer

Sincerely,

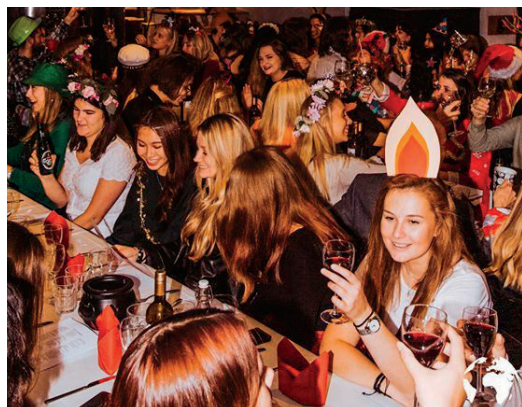
UPF Presidium of
19/20

THE ACTIVITY COMMITTEE

Heads: Hedda Carlsson, Isabel Gråby & Micaela Carhed

Authors: Clara Karlsson Schedvin, Hedda Carlsson & Isabel Gråby

THE ACTIVITY COMMITTEE had an amazing year with many different events and many new active members. We started the fall off with the "Let's celebrate" sittning, a sittning where everyone got to dress up as their favorite holiday. Never have so many holidays been celebrated in the same night; we got to see everything from Christmas, Easter and Swedish Midsummer to Saint Patrick's Day, Cinnamon Bun Day and Día De Los Muertos. It was definitely a night to remember, and a great start to the new school year.



"Let's celebrate" sittning 2019

BEFORE THE SWEDISH winter turned too dark and cold, we had a day-long hike on November 10th. After an early meet up at the central station, we made our way by train and bus out to Mölle and Kullaberg, not letting the damp and grey weather stop us. With two experienced hikers leading us, we made our way through the challenging forest to Nimis, a slightly illegal driftwood castle built right on the beach. Though the way there was sometimes tough, the hike offered great company, opportunities for getting to know some new

people and a well earned fika once we reached our goal for the day.

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, we have also hosted two very different pub quizzes. Our first one coincided with the release of the first The Perspective Magazine of the term. Some of the questions were based on the theme of the magazine: "Diplomacy of Tomorrow". Our second quiz was arranged in January as a part of the welcome activities for the new international students. This quiz was based on the Swedish TV show "På Spåret" which means "On the Track" and therefore, the game is based on three different destinations.

IN THE BEGINNING of November, we organised a trip to Copenhagen for our members. The project group booked meetings with two organisations: Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies and International Media Support. The third and final destination of the day was the UN City, where they hosted an event called "State of Nordic Fathers". We met several cool and interesting people, but for many the highlight was meeting the President of Iceland, which left us pretty starstruck.

THE LAST EVENT of the spring semester turned out to be our "Back to the 20's" sittning. We had just entered 2020 and we thought it suitable to bring it back to the last 20's, the 1920's! It was a night of sparkling dresses and fancy suits in true Gatsby spirit, as well as workers of the 20's who were



"Back to the 20's" sittning 2020

suffering from the Great Depression. At this event, the presidents introduced a new, amazing song “International Love!”, a song that we now hope will be frequently sung at UPF events in the future.

THIS SEMESTER HAS been quite special as our work was interrupted in the middle of March due to the Corona Crisis. This meant that we, with heavy hearts, had to cancel our biggest event of the year: the UPF Ball. We would like to give a big shout out to our awesome Ball Committee who worked really hard on making the ball amazing and were helping us sell more tickets than ever before! This bodes well for future events, and we keep our fingers crossed that we all will be able to attend the UPF Ball next year instead!



The study visit group with the President of Iceland

WE WOULD LIKE to thank all of our active members and especially our project groups; the sitting groups, pub quiz groups, the study visit group, the hiking group and the ball committee. You have all been so valuable to us and helped us make this year a fantastic one. Until next time!



THE PR COMMITTEE

The Public Relations Committee makes sure that the Association of Foreign Affairs reaches out to all its target groups. UPF Lund can be found on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Our goal is to reach out to more politically-minded people and attract a wider range of people to the Association.

We work with InDesign, Photoshop, Premiere Pro and Lightroom to design posters, flyers and cover photos on a weekly basis to promote all UPF events on social media. We are also in charge of creating merchandise, like coffee to go cups, tote bags, stickers, and water bottles to name a few.

Being a part of the PR committee is a great experience! Everyone is welcome to join and learn new skills or expand on ones that might already exist :)

If you have any questions email us under pr@upflund.se



HEY, EVERYONE! We are Juliet and Cheryl, the heads of the PR committee.

IT HAS BEEN a wonderful year for us as heads. We have executed many new and exciting PR projects for UPF, our collaboration partners and have launched a collection of merchandise at the same time.



OUR AIM WAS to provide more interactive and creative content to our members and followers. Therefore, we have been trying new and different strategies to promote UPF's lectures and events. These include creating trailers for lectures and polls on social media, as well as producing a promotional video for the association.

TOGETHER WITH OUR committee members, we would really like to say thank you to everyone who has been following our channels and supporting our work. Just because the end of the semester is near, doesn't mean the PR committee is going to stop doing cool stuff. So stay tuned for more great merchandise that will be introduced soon!

Juliet & Cheryl



THE LECTURE COMMITTEE

THE YEAR OF 2020 has definitely been an extraordinary and turbulent year so far. The year started off with the pandemic of the Covid-19 virus. This, of course, affects our work quite drastically. Before the pandemic really reached Sweden, we hosted a lecture revolving around privatization of violence and state actors. Two amazing lecturers both employed within different universities joined us to discuss this interesting subject. The lecturers had different backgrounds within the research community, one as a political scientist, and the other within global studies.

This intriguing lecture brought up subjects regarding how the future will turn out to be with an increasing amount of private protection companies circulating in warzones. Questions revolving around the possibility of entirely privatizing parts of the society also came up.

Active member Frida Lindberg



This picture was taken after the “Privatization of Armed Forces” event. Here we have the two lecturers and part of the committee.

I HAVE LEARNT so much about different topics that I never thought would be brought to my attention and I am so grateful for the tasks that



I have taken part in. Last semester, technically in autumn 2019, we had several UPF events that included Dunja Mijatovic, a talk show with the EU representatives from Sweden, Marissa Jackson Sow and Ambassador Lamberto Zannier, amongst others. Mijatovic brought attention to human rights and minorities in Europe, very educational and there are clearly parts of the human rights work in that region that must be worked on. The EU representatives discussed a large variety of subjects that Sweden takes an interest in, big tech companies like Google are, for example, of interest for the representatives. Ambassador Zannier highlighted the post-conflict work in the Yugoslavian region and the difficulties with preventing conflicts before they arise. Jackson Sow discussed intersectionality and the difficulties with the present political climate in the USA, especially in New York City. All lecturers and guests brought attention to important topics and educated the students some more outside of the normal university lectures. UPF brings the nexus of social life and inspirational education. *Active member Frida Lindberg*

AS A MEMBER of the UPF lecture committee, the work starts at the drawing board, when we together decide on which topics we want to lift in the near future, as well as dividing ourselves into working groups that will each be responsible for one topic. After this, the work is pretty continuous,

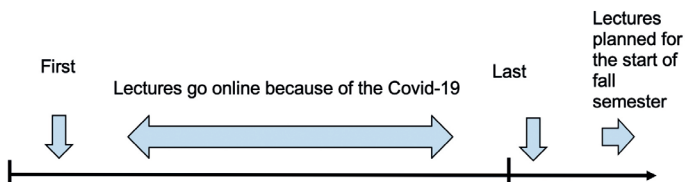


This picture was taken after the “From the EU to you” event. Here we have the participants, as well as the heads of the lecture committee.

writing emails, calling offices and keeping our fingers crossed and being persistent, an approach that usually pays off. Then, once a week, we have a big meeting together, where we talk about how our respective invitations are going, but also general planning and just fun chatter. At the end of the day, this committee is about taking our own ideas and realizing them together, while creating an exciting and insightful experience for all of our members.

Deputy Head Elias Matthiessen

Because of the disruptive effects of the coronavirus, our timeline for the year is a bit more uncertain than during most semesters, but this would be an approximation of the year. *Deputy Head Elias Matthiessen*



MY TENURE AS a Deputy Head of the Lecture Committee has been rather special so far. A few days after taking up the position, the new and deadly virus Covid-19 arrived in Sweden, and the committee’s work has, like large parts of society, been hugely disrupted. Some planned lectures were cancelled and for others we have had to rethink the concept of the UPF lecture completely, bringing the whole experience online. Social distancing rules have also affected our committee meetings, but the other heads and I, as well as the whole committee, have done our best to keep on with the committee’s work and ensure continuity.

BESIDES GETTING NEW and exciting perspectives on contemporary issues through the lectures, you learn so much about planning and executing different projects. To go from never having organized anything in your life, to inviting professionals and experts to attend your event, is such an amazing experience. I can honestly say that joining the UPF lecture committee was one of the best decisions I have made so far during my time in Lund. I can sincerely encourage every single person reading this to join UPF! *Deputy Head Carl Cotton*

THE CAREER COMMITTEE

WE ARE PEG and Linda and we are the Heads of the Career Committee. The Career Committee gives members insights into a potential career within Foreign Affairs. This year, we have been able to do more amazing things than we could ever have imagined. As Heads, we have had a relaxed “fika” with the Finnish President, and we have emailed, met and have had dinner with successful and interesting people from all over the world. We have gained more knowledge in how to organize events, how to be a good leader and how to maximise your future career. And last but not least, we have had the privilege of working with the most ambitious and motivated committee members we could have ever asked for.



WE HAVE HAD some obstacles along the way, such as global pandemics, that have made us cancel our trips and seminars. However, together with our innovative committee, we have managed to go online and finish the semester in the best way possible. Through webinars and online committee meetings, we will do our best to uphold spirits. We really hope that we can pave the way forward to the next year’s Career Committee.



QUOTES FROM OUR ACTIVE MEMBERS

“I have loved every minute of my time in the Career Committee. It provides an amazing environment to explore, both yourself and your future. Everyone has been so inclusive and you are allowed to be whoever you are and have whatever interests you want!” - Anna Mizser

“Inspiration, networking, connections.” - Felix St Kroon



"I was encouraged to join the career committee by a friend and I am so glad that I did. Being a member of the career committee has allowed me to be a part of various unforgettable seminars, events and other activities. However, the best part of the committee has been the warm and inclusive atmosphere which has made me feel at home there from day one". -Miljaemilia Wala

"In the Career Committee, I have realized that making contacts with important and influential people mostly requires just enough courage and confidence. I have learned so much and met so many people I could have never thought I would get to meet!" -Emma Liljeström

"I'm really inspired by all the people I've met through Career. Both the people we invited and the ones that are active. I have so many ideas of what I want to do with my future following this year." - Karin Mizser



Prep Course:

- Exclusive seminars with successful people
- Opportunity to ask all the questions you wondered about regarding a career within foreign affairs
- Dinner with the speakers after the seminars
- A chance to learn about possible careers for your future

Mentorship Programme:

- In collaboration with the Diplomatic Club in Lund
- Mentors are paired with students who are interested in careers within the field of foreign affairs
- The mentors provide the students with valuable insights, experiences and contacts
- Experience is being shared about careers in the EU, UN, The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and diplomacy

Other activities:

- Networking Events
- Study trips
- Open seminars with a career theme
- Kick-ins, kick-offs and dinners with an amazing committee

THE TRAVEL COMMITTEE

IT IS NOT just difficult but unfair to summarise hundreds of hours spent planning, booking and doing a trip, especially one so eventful and memorable as the trip taken by the UPF Lund Travel Committee of 2019/2020. During this year, our committee visited London, UK in the midst of the Brexit process and got to explore every aspect of this change in British politics, economics and foreign affairs. On top of that, we learnt about what it means to be in a global city of almost 9 million inhabitants who together speak around 300 languages.



WE VISITED MANY places and, if I didn't have a word count limit, I would write about each and every one of them. It's difficult to rank them by most-interesting, as each place gave us new perspectives, new insights and new knowledge. But I will mention the ones which we were most surprised to be invited to and, therefore, became the most valuable visits for us during the trip.

WE VISITED THE Foreign and Commonwealth Office where we got to meet with young British diplomats who gave us a private guided tour of the FCO and even let us peek into 10 Downing Street, an otherwise hidden place for the outside world. They told us about the many challenges they face in leaving the EU and what it means in reality. They also gave us useful tips for working in foreign affairs and told us what it's like living as a British diplomat.

WE ALSO GOT to go on an exclusive visit to Reuters, where we got to ask questions to several of their journalists about what it is like to work for the most widely read news outlet in the world and also get their perspective on some of the most important current issues. This was the hardest meeting to wrap up as there was no end to the many questions each of us in the committee had.

ANOTHER HIGHLIGHT WAS the visit to the World Bank Group, if not for the many things they do, then for the fact that all students have, at one point or another, used their data for an essay or some other school work. I don't think any of us who were on





that trip ever expected to see this place behind-the-scenes, much less get to take up an hour of their time and ask any question we wanted.

WE ALSO GOT to visit Morgan Stanley, Oxford University, the IEA, Chatham House, Mercy Corpse, LSE, the Swedish Embassy and Business Sweden, to name just a few more...

WHILE MANY OF our meetings and visits were phenomenal, the most valuable part of our committee work and trips were the members who, not only made this trip into what it became, but showcased that the biggest value UPF Lund

has is its exceptional and bright members who contribute to the organisation. I expect that future UPF Lund Travel Committees will be visiting these members at their workplaces one day and I wouldn't be surprised if it were to be one of the places we visited while in London.

IT HAS BEEN an absolute honor to be a Head of Travel of this year's UPF Lund Travel Committee.

Martina Divkovic, Head of Travel



THE WEBZINE COMMITTEE

WE ARE THE WEBZINE, the online publisher of The Perspective media! Every year we publish many interesting articles about foreign affairs written by a group of wonderful writers. Anyone who wants to gain experience in writing or wants to use the writing skills that they already have can join the Webzine. Having this open and welcoming environment is very important to us and it means that our writers are a super diverse bunch! Because our writers come from all over the world with different backgrounds, their stories do too, and what topics they are interested in within foreign affairs varies greatly. This means that this year our article topics have ranged from ongoing struggles in Kashmir to Brexit updates, and from the current conflict in Syria to the history of nuclear tests on the Bahama Islands.

WE DISCUSS OUR ideas for articles, breaking news, and upcoming events at our weekly meetings. These are always casual and fun and above all an excuse for us to have some fika together. But really, in addition to being super fun our meetings are also very productive: the Perspective Webzine published more than 50 articles this year! On the timeline we have selected some of our favourite (and best) articles that our sub-editors picked out, and some other highlights from 2019-2020.



EMILY'S EDITOR'S NOTE:

There are many things that I love about the Webzine committee, one of them being extracurricular activities—hanging out beyond our regular committee time. At the turn of a new decade, a bunch of us gathered at Stortorget to take part in the lighting of Christmas lights. This was the Friday evening before people leave for the Holidays. The lights were lit, the Holiday chorus sang their songs, the air was cold but we were all warm with excitement. We then shuffled home for dinner and played board games. We cracked jokes, cheered for 2020, and laughed so hard I cried. It was a lagom night, but one that gave me happy, fuzzy warmth. And a night that made me appreciate sharing memories with all the awesome peoples in the Webzine Committee.

NASRA'S EDITOR'S NOTE:

Like Emily there are many things I love about the Webzine committee - one of the things I love with Webzine is the “casual” philosophy we have during our editorial meetings. I love the fact that we have a really good time whilst being productive. The fact that we have nonsensical name-rounds in almost every meeting, that spiral out of control and result in a potential topic makes everybody feel comfortable. We may not have had as many pizza-hangouts as we have liked, but our fika discussions do sure make up for the lost hangouts. There is never a dull moment, and you'll never leave a meeting feeling uninspired. I couldn't have been a part of a more welcoming and wittier committee than the Webzine committee. It's been a pleasure to work with such an amazing team of writers!



The Chief Editors: Emily and Nasra

17 September 2019: First Webzine meeting of the semester!

26 September 2019, Writing seminar: In this seminar for new writers tips and insights about how to make a great Webzine article were discussed!

8 October 2019, *The Next War In The Middle East Will Start This Week, And It Will Have Major Implications* - by Fredrik Fahlman: Fredrik presents an outstanding overview of one of the hottest topics of 2019: the invasion of Northern Syria by the Turkish military, following the U.S. President's decision to withdraw troops from the area.

16 October 2019, *Misperceptions of Reality* - by Lorenzo Lombardi: In this piece, Lorenzo talks about the issue of migration into the EU. He showcases how the perception of its size by the average citizen differs from the statistical reality and how this relates to media reporting.

5 November 2019, *Whatever Happened to the Hope of Tahrir Square?* - by Johanne Kaufmanas: While many wished for Egypt to become more open and democratic after Mubarak, it has instead reverted back to authoritarianism. Johanne reports the exacerbation of repression measures and the ever-increasing violence of the current regime.

29 November 2019, *Thai Society Accepts LGBTQ People As Long As They Are Not Their Children* - by Wichuta Teeratanabodee: A first-hand insight on Thailand's LGBTQ Community, through an interview with three of its members. Considerations regarding the inclusivity of the Thai country in the field of sexual minorities' rights are put on the foreground by Wichuta.

16 December 2019, *Africa's Last Colony* - by Kerime Van Opijnen: As Spain left Western Sahara in 1975, the Sahrawi people did not gain freedom as Moroccan forces replaced the former invaders. Kerime details the Sahrawi's struggle for independence.

28 January 2020: First meeting of the new decade!

7 February 2020, *Portugal: The European Exception* - by Markus Barnevik Olsson: In a time when the whole of



Holiday hang-out with pizza and games

Europe is witnessing a resurrection of far-right ideology, Portugal appears as a stronghold of antifascism. Markus delves into the historical and political reasons behind this exception.

25 February 2020, *Massive Locust Swarms threatens Mass Starvation in East Africa* - by Daniel Bergdal: Daniel considers the ramification of a climate emergency of biblical dimensions, the propagation of locusts' swarms in Eastern Africa, and assesses the (lack of) measures that have been undertaken to tackle it.

8 March 2020, *The death of Feminism in Mexico? Cry for women's human rights in Latin America* - by Ayumi Yara: In this article, Ayumi describes an increasing trend of femicides all over Latin America, focusing on the case of Mexico. As Mexican women's very human rights are threatened, massive protests have followed, demanding action from a government they deem corrupt and ineffective.

23 april 2020: First online, fully corona-proof, Webzine meeting!



5 December 2020 At the big 'From the EU to You' event last December some Webzine Committee members got the chance to interview a MEP!

THE RADIO/ PODCAST COMMITTEE

Greetings from UPF Radio, or How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love to Podcast

IT IS INTERESTING HOW curiosity sometimes generates results in the most unexpected forms. When it comes to the subject of foreign affairs, podcasting is not necessarily how it is commonly presented. That is normally reserved for magazines, books or lectures in a classroom setting. In UPF's Radio Committee, not only is this something that we do on a weekly basis, but much of the content that has been produced covers both well-known and more obscure elements within the realm of foreign affairs.

FROM LAST YEAR'S protests in Hong Kong, to the COP25 conference in Madrid last fall or even the attempted impeachment process of US President Donald Trump that was concluded this year, our members have done an incredible amount of work in researching these issues to be able to ask provocative questions and to provide insights as to why political and non-political actors act the way they do on the world's stage.

THE MOST INCREDIBLE thing about being a part of this year's radio/podcasting family is the fact that most of us did not even have a clue about how to run a live show or the basics of audio production. From there, we grew and progressed into creating a variety of series, ranging from climate change policy and activism to the challenges that authoritarian extremist movements are posing to democracies around the world. Now that we are also on Spotify as UPF Lund, the sky's the limit for us here at UPF!

- Sanjin Alagic & Alejandro Guzman, Heads of UPF Radio '19-'20



OUR FAVORITE QUOTES FROM THE PODCASTS THIS YEAR

"Just one more thing on the list that we are very pessimistic about."

"Do we have anything long-term positive?"

"I have another negative point!"

- Clara, featuring Petja & Roman in *Talking Greenish Episode 5*

"You can legally call [AfD politician Björn] Höcke a fascist, because it's true and that guy needs to go."

- Victoria, in *The Current Rise of Right-Wing Extremism in Germany*

WHAT HAS BEEN MOST FUN ABOUT AUDIO PRODUCTION OR BEING LIVE ON AIR?

"The most fun about speaking live on air is that you cannot take back any statement you say and that is always a kind of challenge, which is fun. That is what keeps the show interesting and exciting to participate in."

- Anya

"Just to be able to delve into a cool, specific topic (the doomsday clock in my case) and learn about it while creating a podcast has been super fun. Also, figuring out neat transitions with music and other effects has been surprisingly satisfying."

- Max



HOW TO BECOME THE MOST PRODUCTIVE PODCAST CREW IN UPF HISTORY - AND STAY HUMBLE WHILE DOING IT

WHEN WE FIRST thought that climate change might be a good topic to talk about and to keep us occupied for one or two episodes, we had no idea that it would keep us busy for almost an entire year. The idea was bestowed upon us back in September, when the three of us were sitting on the very comfy UPF couch, with cookies as the only thing to help us through the anxiety that came with being at a radio meeting but having no clue whatsoever. What helped even better than the cookies though, was the reassurance by our head of radio, the honorable Mr. Sanjin Alagic, that ‘it would be better to be a group of idiots than to be an idiot by yourself’. Following this recommendation, we quickly decided to rather become a group of idiots and - surprising given the circumstances - quickly realized that climate change was not only a matter that we were all interested in, but that had also recently gotten a lot of attention thanks to a stubborn Swedish girl refusing to take her education seriously. But even though we were a group, having no clue still turned out to be an issue which was why our first episode took a long time in the making. However, after our struggles with microphones, studio equipment, editing and basically everything podcast-related, we still managed to become the first published podcast of



the fall semester back in November. And just like an opened family-sized bag of chips, we quickly realized that there was a lot more to deal with than we expected and that stopping would be much harder than anticipated. So, we just continued snacking away, leading to six published episodes as of now - including an interview with the Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation (picture us giving ourselves a pat on the back here). Even though we probably should be full by now, we are still hungry for more.

So, if you are looking for tips on how to be successful, just let us know.

MUCH LOVE FROM the Talking Greenish Crew: Petja, Clara and Roman

THE MAGAZINE COMMITTEE

This team has put together four issues of *The Perspective Magazine* throughout this academic year. The issue that you are holding in your hands right now is the culmination of a lot of hard work, dedication and great journalism by our brilliant, diverse team. The magazine is given to every member as part of their membership, meaning that every UPF member gets to read about a range of exclusive, interesting and atypical topics from across the world.

WITH OUR TIME as Editors-in-chief for *The Perspective Magazine* coming to an end, we are looking back at a year with a great team and truly amazing journalistic content. In these four issues, more than eighty articles have been published - and the stories have taken us as far as to Canada, China, Hungary, Iceland, Lebanon, Sudan and Turkey.

THREE FOREIGN MINISTERS, several senior diplomats, a dozen contemporary political activists and a multitude of experts on various political areas have been interviewed.

WE HAVE LEARNED - for better or worse - how to navigate the mazes of press secretaries, e-mails, and countless phone calls to reach that one person needed for making a story. Endurance has shown to pay off.

NONE OF THIS would have been possible without the extraordinary input of the Magazine's writers.

IT WAS OUR ambition to provide a learning environment and safe space for individual development. We look back on the UPF and our members with deepest gratitude.

Fredrik Fahlman & Moritz Neubauer
Editors-in-chief for *The Perspective Magazine*



The Perspective reporter James Rhys Davies interviewing Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan - the only interview he gave during his visit to Stockholm.





The Perspective reporters Luke Sandford and Nicole Skoglund discussing Russian democracy with Pussy Riot's Maria Alyokhina before her show at Mejeriet, Lund.



The Perspective reporters Julia Kaiser and Dorottya Meszner, interviewing MEP Fredrick Federley during his visit to Lund.

Why did you decide to apply for *The Perspective Magazine*, and what have you learned?

Agnieszka Gryz: Not only did the magazine allow me to sharpen my journalistic skills, but also to interview experts and witnesses of current affairs and breaking events. I'm happy and proud to have contributed to our common goal - producing content that matters.

Luke Sandford and Nicole Skoglund, you both interviewed and did a piece on Pussy Riot's front person Maria Alyokhina during her show in Lund. How was it?

Luke: "To have the opportunity to interview someone who is the living embodiment of foreign affairs was truly an experience. Pussy Riot's protest and subsequent imprisonment shone a spotlight on Russia, democracy and civil liberties. Had I not applied to the magazine committee, I would not have had this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Pussy Riot was certainly my personal highlight of the magazine this year. But, beyond the interview, it was important to write a balanced, just article."

Nicole: "I was really surprised by how knowledgeable and passionate Maria was. Watching the concert after having heard what the whole group has been through made a lot

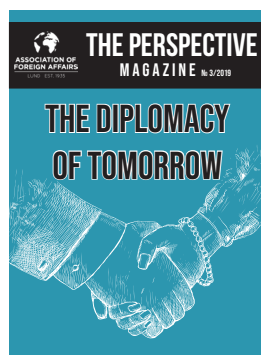
more sense. And talking to her, honestly I felt a bit starstruck. It was really cool, as it has been working with people that are so passionate in what they're doing. Writing a piece like this, with exclusive first-hand information, was very special."

What made you decide to apply to the magazine, and what have you enjoyed the most being a part of it?

Julia Kaiser: "I have always wanted to be a journalist and was interested in politics - in short, *The Perspective* is a perfect match! Getting to know so many interesting people has been my fondest memory. Thanks to the magazine I interviewed politicians from different political spectra and experts from different fields, but also "normal" people like you and me that are thrilled to share their experiences. I love to hear personal stories and be offered new perspectives!"

What would be one piece of advice you would give to the next year's writers?

"Don't be afraid to leave your comfort zone! If you are interested in a certain event but don't know much about it, let's say the country's history or political system, do your research well and then write an unbiased article. Who knows, maybe this very topic will open new doors for you!"





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