



On Politics

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On Politics is a peer-reviewed academic journal published annually each Spring by the University of Victoria Undergraduates of Political Science. It aims to encourage and facilitate undergraduate scholarship by providing students with a unique opportunity to have their work published in a formal medium. The editors of *On Politics* are drawn from among the undergraduate student body, and the journal publishes writing from a variety of theoretical perspectives, both intra- and interdisciplinary.

Submissions

Articles may be submitted by any undergraduate student at the University of Victoria. Submissions should be 8-25 pages in length and must have received a grade of B+ or higher in a 100-, 200-, 300- or 400-level course. Citations must consist of footnotes conforming to the *Chicago Manual of Style*. All submissions and inquiries should be directed to the Editor-in-Chief at onpol@uvic.ca.

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Note From The Editor

What a time to be alive! 2016 will likely go down in history one of the most exciting and tumultuous years of this early segment of the 21st Century. After much hard work and effort, we are proud to showcase some of the most stimulating political work UVic undergraduates were able to offer us.

The essays in this edition of *On Politics* address some very real issues in today's society, and in my opinion each one has a lesson about our society that we would do well to remember. This year, we received a staggering number of submissions, and the result of this was a set of very high-quality papers, narrowing them all down to just seven essays was nearly impossible!

The first essay, our 100-level showcase, addresses a problem we can all agree is real: low voter turnouts. The author provides an outstanding overview of the arguments for and against compulsory voting, with special consideration to the Canadian context. An insightful commentary related to the hot issue of electoral reform.

The second relates to the difficulties refugees face in the European Union, puts some of UVic's finest 200-level material on the stage. The author evaluates arguments relating to the administration of the Dublin Regulation, with the assertion that it must be reformed to meet human rights concerns.

Our third-year selection is deeper, with essays detailing the role of market politics in the Canadian context, the effects climate change will have on human demographics, the instability of the unipolar international system, and a critical account of Karl Marx's theory of primitive accumulation.

Our lone 400-level paper provides a detailed theoretical discussion of governmentality and freedom. Overall, our selection consists of two papers from the Canadian context, two from the theoretical realm, one on European Union politics, one on international relations and one on global issues.

One last thing; in consultation for the cover of this year's journal, the artist and I decided upon the Pangaea. This was not arbitrary; we live in a deeply politically divided world. Gone, it would seem, are the days in which opposing political parties could agree on basic principles. We now live in an age in which friction—not compromise—is the market mechanism of choice for many political actors, whether they be states, political parties, politicians or interest groups—even the person across from us at the dinner table. The reason we chose the Pangaea then, is to remind us all that no matter how many borders we draw, how many categories we place ourselves into, no matter how much we may blatantly disagree with each other, we all come from the same place.

The opportunity to edit for *On Politics* was once-in-a-lifetime, and I would like to thank everyone who was involved in the process; without you, my job would have been a whole lot harder.

Jarod Sicotte

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The Importance of Voting: *A Case Against Apathy*

Jacob Noseworthy

Two worrisome issues facing democracy today are voter apathy and declining voter turnouts. Many voters around the world feel cynical, believing that voting does not matter or that their voices are not being heard. Although many feel guilty about not voting,¹ they still choose to remain at home on Election Day. Despite declining voter turnouts, as more Canadians, and voters around the world, feel far less attached to political parties now than in the past,² voting remains as important as ever. Casting a ballot to elect a candidate is one of the most direct ways citizens can affect their government and voice their opinion. Regarding voting, this paper will discuss the importance of casting a vote and will outline how and why it is important. It will explain the current situation of apathy and low voter turnouts among voters around the world and how initiatives like compulsory voting can help the political system by getting more people out to vote, as well as outlining the arguments for and against the system. Finally, it will discuss how voting, or lack thereof, can greatly affect the representation of marginalised and traditionally underrepresented groups and how their voices are heard in government.

While Canadians, Americans, and Europeans increasingly identify as “very interested in politics”, faith in political parties, governmental and non-governmental institutions, and voter turnouts steadily decrease. Although factors such as nationality, age, and level of education cause differentiations in these numbers, historical data shows that there is far less faith in these institutions. These factors, among

others, play a role in the creation of political apathy. While many people identify as interested in the political sphere, this rising cynicism keeps voters away from traditional political parties and the polls.³ Depending on the path taken, it may not be possible to reverse the current trends, but it is still important that voters realise that voting and voicing their opinion matters. Granting that they distrust political parties and traditional institutions more than before, the best way to have a say in what happens with these organisations and institutions is to vote so their voices can be heard.

Over the course of history, numerous electoral systems and ways of voting have been explored to find the best solution. While some solutions have been less democratic than others, such as allowing a voter extra votes due to their job or level of education, other more democratic solutions have been suggested. These changes include automatic voter registration; various forms of proportional representation, in which the government more closely resembles the popular vote; less frequent elections, especially in countries where elections occur up to six times per year; and voting on weekends instead of the typical weekdays.⁴ One popular method of increasing voter turnout is through compulsory voting. Compulsory voting, in which citizens face the threat of a fine if they do not vote, has been implemented in several countries throughout the world. It significantly increases the voter turnout at elections with up to 30% higher turnout rates. Similarly, it has been argued that compulsory voting helps democracies by allowing more voices to participate in the important process of selecting governments.⁵ However, despite the arguments for the format of voting, many critics have presented arguments against the compulsory vote.⁶

Debates have raged for centuries on whether voting is a right or a duty. As far back as the eighteenth century, U.S. states

such as Georgia and Virginia attempted compulsory voting.⁷ However, despite the ongoing arguments, no consensus has been reached as to if voting should be mandatory or not. While numerous countries such as Argentina, Australia, Belgium, and Luxembourg have adopted compulsory voting,⁸ it has not become a standard around the world. These dramatic increases in voter turnout should be held as a success for democracy. It is ascertained by political scientists Berelson and Steiner that those who vote usually get involved in politics in other ways, as well.⁹ Just getting voters out to the polls not only increases the number of voices being heard on Election Day but can also help take steps towards eliminating political apathy in voters.

While there have been encouraging results from compulsory voting, there are many arguments against it, as well. One of the most prevalent of these arguments is “in defence of apathy”. Professor James Hogan argues that “the apathy . . . for which political democracy has been blamed is seen to be rather to its credit than otherwise. It means at any rate that people are free to interest themselves . . . as they please in politics”.¹⁰ Arguments such as these can be found to be lacking, however. Politics and government affect the day-to-day lives of all citizens whether they acknowledge it or not. It matters whether or not someone votes because by not voting, a person gives up a large part of their say in the government that rules him or her and influences his or her life. Furthermore, some consider that voting without possessing the desire to vote leads to casting a thoughtless vote. It can be argued that being engaged in the political process will keep citizens from being unwilling or indifferent when it comes to voting and it can encourage them to become educated on the subject. Additionally, compulsory voting does not force one to vote for a candidate.¹¹ An unwilling or indifferent voter can cast a blank or spoiled ballot without casting a thoughtless vote.¹²

Although criticisms of compulsory voting and defences of apathy are presented,¹³ the benefits of the system outweigh the negatives. With the importance of voting in a democratic society, compulsory voting is one of the best ways to ensure the voices of all citizens are heard, especially those who traditionally vote far less often than others. Despite numerous criticisms against its system, compulsory voting remains one of the strongest methods to increase voter turnout and have all citizens cast their vote and have their voices heard. Countries that have implemented compulsory voting have seen their voter turnout rise to record levels.^{14,15} For marginalised segments of society, defined here as minorities and the economically disadvantaged, they tend to vote at much lower rates than more privileged groups, due to discriminatory laws designed to make it harder for these groups to vote.^{16,17} By limiting and silencing these voices, it leads to governments and elected representatives that are not representative of their constituents and the voices of the less privileged going unheard. People who are affected by this discrimination are indicative of the importance of voting. Due to these groups being discouraged or disallowed from voting, they are underrepresented in government¹⁸ and do not have the same opportunities to have their issues considered. If these groups were granted the same opportunities to vote without hindrance—such as more privileged segments of society—marginalised people would be able to be better represented. Furthermore, those with more formal education and a higher socioeconomic standing have a disproportionately higher voter turnout globally than those with less formal education and a lower socioeconomic standing. This turnout typically favours right-wing parties, while left-wing parties, such as the Labour Party of the United Kingdom, fare better when the latter group turns out in higher numbers.¹⁹ While some political scientists have argued that higher voter turnouts benefit the right-

wing,²⁰ this hypothesis does not stand up to evidence presented in the present day.²¹

When less privileged voters or voters from traditionally underrepresented groups do not vote, their voices are not heard. When these voters do vote, however, they are able to have more influence on who is elected and their voice in government. An example of this situation is youth in Canada. In the 2015 Canadian federal election, voter turnout for those aged 18 to 24 increased from 38.8% in 2011 to 57.1%, a turnout increase of 18.3%, more than any other age group in the country.²² This abnormally high youth turnout paid immediate dividends for young Canadians, as Prime Minister Trudeau took on the portfolio of Minister of Youth.²³ This is an example of a traditionally underrepresented group making their voice heard and receiving representation in government after voting. It further proves that voting does matter and the vast youth turnout allowed for their voices to be heard by the government. These examples are strong indicators of the importance of voting and further prove that voting does matter.

By looking at historical arguments and examples, it becomes apparent that voting is critical and is an important duty of living in a democratic society. It is also one of the easiest and best ways for citizens to have their voices heard as it sends a message to the government that they are engaged and involved in the political process. Although each person only gets one vote and one voice, a chorus of votes and voices can make a clear and identifiable difference in government and politics. Although voter turnouts are decreasing and people are losing faith in political parties and their governments, it is still important that people fulfil their duties of voting as an apathetic population cannot influence government and have a say in the democratic process. While automatic registration,

proportional representation, having elections less often, and voting on weekends have been suggested as ways to increase voter turnout, compulsory voting is the most effective way to get citizens out to do the important job of casting a ballot and allowing their voice to be heard. While criticisms have been raised against the system, they can be refuted as the positives outweigh the negatives. Finally, numerous examples indicate the importance of voting and the difference it can make. When minority or marginalised populations struggle to vote due to discrimination, their representation and voice in the democratic process decrease. In comparison, when young people, a traditionally underrepresented group in politics, increased their vote share dramatically, their voice grew exponentially and even led to a Ministry being adopted specifically for youth. While apathy and lower voter turnouts are problems currently plaguing the democratic process around the world, there are solutions to allow for all citizens to engage in the important act of voting and have representation and a say in what goes on in the government that affects them.

Notes

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The Dublin Regulation: *A Failed European Asylum System*

Ben George Mosher

The current refugee crisis has proved to be an extremely difficult situation for the European Union to combat. Many of the issues, surrounding the EU's inability to effectively handle the influx of asylum seekers, stem from the implementation of a flawed system. This system arose from the ratification and implementation of the Dublin Regulation, which lays out the rules and structures surrounding how member states handle and process asylum seekers. These policies have exacerbated many of the current problems facing member states and refugees alike. The failure of the regulation to adequately deal with the influx of asylum seekers now begs the question: will the European Union need to look for an alternative to the Dublin System in order to effectively and fairly combat the refugee crisis? The current system has directly facilitated the extraordinarily unequal distribution of asylum claims across the EU, putting excessive strain on some member states, while simultaneously impeding the welfare of asylum seekers. This becomes clear when looking at the perpetuation and impact of unequal distribution, the negative effects associated with Dublin transfers, and the varying responses from member states and the European Commission. In order for the EU to both protect the welfare of refugees, and facilitate a cooperative solution to the migrant crisis, the Dublin Regulation will have to be replaced with a more cohesive and equitable common asylum policy.

The first Dublin Regulation was created in 1990 and was signed and ratified by 12 members of the European Communities. It is framed as a Europe-wide asylum system,

which involves a coordinated and standardized regulatory process for dealing with asylum seekers. The regulation implements a system designed to rapidly determine which member state is responsible for both the examination of an asylum claim, and the welfare of a refugee seeking international protection under the Geneva Convention.¹ For this system to function effectively throughout the EU, the European Dactyloscopy (EURODAC) was also implemented. EURODAC is a Europe-wide electronic fingerprinting database for unauthorized entrants to the EU.² It determines where an asylum seeker was originally processed, thereby establishing which country is responsible for the claim. This ensures that an asylum seeker remains in the country where they first applied for asylum. The original purpose of Dublin was to prevent migrants from applying for asylum in more than one member state, especially if their application was rejected in the original host country. It was also designed to keep a close record of asylum claims by reducing the number of ‘orbiting asylum seekers’ from moving freely between member states.³ This was meant to help member states keep track of the exact number of asylum seekers within their borders, and thus ensure that sufficient resources could be allocated towards protective services. However, these rigid asylum policies have intensified many of the issues posed by the migrant crisis, and have facilitated the unequal distribution of asylum seekers. Moreover, the Dublin Regulation has come under heavy criticism by human rights activists for enforcing policies that dangerously weaken refugee protection.⁴

The current refugee crisis has been the most stringent test for the Dublin system yet, and has exposed some drastic flaws in the regulation that previously flew under the radar. One of the main issues within the regulation is a provision that forces asylum seekers to remain in the country where they were first processed, or first applied for asylum. This ensures

that the member state responsible for an asylum claim will usually be the country into which an asylum seeker first entered the EU. This puts a disproportionate amount of the burden -created by the refugee crisis- on EU border-states like Greece and Italy where the majority of asylum seekers first land. In Greece, for example, resources and services offered to asylum seekers have been stretched thin. As a result, Greece has become a country that is unsafe for migrants in need of protection, and where human rights violations have become a common occurrence.⁵ Greece's protection for unaccompanied refugee children has been particularly abysmal. Often children will be detained "around the clock for months without access to interpreters or psychological care", while they await a space in the overburdened shelter system.⁶ Greece's failure to provide adequate care for unaccompanied children is part of a larger issue surrounding the unequal distribution of asylum seekers. The Dublin Regulation has ensured that Greece -and other border-states- will carry a disproportional amount of the burden of asylum claims, and has legitimized "callous inaction by other European countries" which could otherwise help ease the strain.⁷ To relieve some of the pressure mounting on border-states, the EU will have to pursue an alternative asylum policy that facilitates a more equitable distribution of asylum seekers.

Due to this grossly uneven distribution, some EU member states, overwhelmed by asylum claims, have been forced to reject an increasing number of applications. For example, Italy's asylum rejection rate rose to 64% in the fall of 2015, when the refugee crisis reached its peak.⁸ This can often force migrants to return to their country of origin, where they could face violence and persecution. The Dublin Regulation increases this problem by ensuring that if an asylum claim is denied by one country, that same asylum seeker cannot restart an asylum application process in any other member state.⁹ This

‘one and done’ policy is a total violation of refugee rights and poses a risk to the lives of individuals seeking protection within the EU. One asylum seeker alleged that the “shortcomings in the asylum procedure in Greece were such that he faced the risk of refoulement to his country of origin without any real examination of the merits of his asylum application”.¹⁰ The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has also expressed a great deal of concern over the right to a fair asylum claim examination under the Dublin system.¹¹ The unequal distribution of asylum claims across member states, facilitated by Dublin, has forced overburdened states to unfairly reject asylum applications. This poses a serious risk to the human rights and welfare of refugees seeking protection. Significant amendments to the current system will need to be made in order to establish a common asylum policy that ensures fair and effective treatment of refugees.¹²

Another problematic aspect of the Dublin Regulation is the so-called Dublin transfer system. Dublin transfers are introduced when an asylum seeker has failed to remain in the member state where their asylum application was first examined. The process involves the detention and transfer of an asylum seeker back to the member state in which they first applied for asylum, effectively ensuring that each individual remains in the country where they first entered the EU. This puts extra pressure on border-states that have already exceeded their capacity to protect incoming refugees, and can force an asylum seeker to return to a member state where they may not receive adequate services. The UNHCR has strongly criticized the use of Dublin transfers, stating that the Dublin Regulation’s transfer system infringes on the “legal rights and personal welfare of asylum-seekers, including their rights to a fair claim examination and, where recognized, to effective protection”.¹³ Moreover, Dublin transfers can prevent asylum

seekers from reuniting with their families in other countries, and can separate individuals from their families after they have been reunited. This represents a violation of international human rights under the Geneva Convention, which outlines a country's responsibility to facilitate the reunion of separated family members.¹⁴

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) dealt the Dublin transfer system a significant blow in the case of *M.S.S v. Belgium and Greece*.¹⁵ The situation involved the transfer of an asylum seeker, who chose to remain anonymous, from Belgium back to Greece, where his asylum application was originally processed. This separated the individual from his family in Belgium and, upon returning to Greece, he faced “degrading and inhumane treatment” in the inadequate shelter system.¹⁶ His case was brought in front of the ECHR, where it was ruled that by facilitating a Dublin transfer both Belgium and Greece had violated the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights; fines of €30,000 and €6,000 respectively were imposed upon the two countries.¹⁷ The UNHCR has recommended that member states “refrain from transferring asylum-seekers to Greece and take responsibility for examining the corresponding asylum applications themselves”.¹⁸ Since then, a number of European countries have refused to enforce the Dublin transfer system altogether, due to the possibility of human rights abuses associated with it.¹⁹ Moreover, Dublin transfers provide a mechanism that directly facilitates the unequal distribution of asylum seekers between member states, which is part of why services for migrants are so poor in the overburdened border-states, and why human rights violations have become more frequent as a result.²⁰ *M.S.S v. Belgium and Greece* highlighted some of these fundamental problems, and made it clear that the EU's current asylum policy is in need of extensive reform.

As the refugee crisis intensified, many EU member states responded by implementing their own national asylum policies. In some cases, this involved taking on a larger share of asylum seekers; in others, it involved restricting the flow of migrants or closing borders completely. Member states began to refuse to enforce the Dublin Regulation. It had failed to provide a common asylum system that was able to deal with the refugee crisis and the sheer quantity of asylum claims. Germany for example, in August 2015, enacted the Dublin Regulation's sovereignty clause, which allows a member state to "voluntarily assume responsibility for processing asylum applications for which it is not otherwise responsible under the criteria of the Regulation".²¹ The German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees also revoked the use of Dublin transfers, and implemented their own system for vetting asylum seekers due to inequities within the Dublin questionnaire.²² Germany recognized that the Dublin Regulation was failing, and decided to suspend its usage in order to effectively address the massive influx of refugees by taking on a larger share of the burden. In 2015, Germany processed almost 450,000 asylum applications, with many more still in progress.²³ Germany's decision to suspend the use of the Dublin Regulation illustrates the general view that the current asylum system is simply not able to handle the refugee crisis in the way a common asylum policy should. As a result, Germany will rely on national asylum mechanisms until a more sufficient EU system is implemented.

Hungary also took on a significant portion of asylum seekers, roughly 175,000 in 2015.²⁴ However, the burden on Hungary has become so great that the country has been changing its asylum policy, and slowly closing its borders to the steady flow of migrants seeking protection. In June 2015, the Hungarian government announced that it would no longer accept Dublin transfers from other member states back into

Hungary. The government maintained that the Dublin Regulation failed to provide an adequate system to combat the refugee crisis, and that in light of the “escalated situation, Hungary needs to take a move ahead of EU decisions”.²⁵ They later announced their plans to “build a fence along their southern border with Serbia to stem the flow of illegal migrants” entering the EU through the Balkans.²⁶ Human rights organizations have become concerned with Hungary’s failure to protect vulnerable refugees, and for excessive force used by border officials to keep desperate migrants at bay.²⁷ Hungary’s general willingness to defy the EU’s stance on asylum procedure clearly illustrates a lack of faith in the Dublin system. Much like Germany, Hungary has begun to utilize its own asylum and general immigration policy, instead of relying on a common EU mechanism. Similar practices have been occurring throughout Europe and it has had a significant impact on the lives of asylum seekers. Without an adequate common asylum policy, distribution of asylum seekers will remain imbalanced, and standards for refugee protection will continue to vary greatly between states.

In light of the Dublin Regulation’s inability to address the challenges posed by the refugee crisis, the European Commission has sought out some alternative measures. One of these “includes a scheme for the relocation of 160,000 refugees from Italy and Greece” into countries that are better equipped to protect asylum seekers.²⁸ However, this has not solved the problem of unequal distribution; rather, it has simply shifted the burden to other countries. The commission also unveiled a controversial proposal to impose “migrant quotas on the 28 countries of the union under a distribution ‘key’ system”.²⁹ This idea is supported by most of the Western European states, but has faced heavy opposition from the Visegrad countries who have adopted positions that are hostile to the relocation of refugees.³⁰ This highlights both the failure of the Dublin

Regulation as a common asylum policy, and the necessity of constructing a new system to combat the crisis. On May 4 2016, the EU made a number of significant amendments to the Dublin Regulation and officially proposed a reconstructed Dublin system, entitled the Dublin IV.³¹ Perhaps, if implemented, this will allow the EU to effectively combat the refugee crisis in a way that both protects asylum seekers and is fair to member states; however that remains to be seen. Ultimately, establishing a new redistribution mechanism that is accepted by all of the member states, though difficult to achieve, will be pivotal if the EU is going to tackle the migrant crisis as a united body.

The refugee crisis exposed some major flaws within the Dublin Regulation, showing it to be a completely ineffective common asylum policy. Its main failure is that it facilitates the unequal distribution of asylum seekers, which puts a disproportionately heavy burden on EU border-states. This, in turn, decreases the ability of those states to adequately protect the welfare of asylum seekers. Dublin transfers also deeply infringe upon the fundamental human rights of refugees, often separating individuals from their family members. Furthermore, the impotency of the Dublin system caused member states to pursue their own national asylum policies, which led to inconsistent treatment of migrants across the EU. Finally, the Commission itself, recognizing the regulation's inadequacy, began to pursue alternative measures to address the problems associated with the influx of asylum seekers. These factors illustrate the ways in which the Dublin Regulation has failed to provide an asylum system that can sufficiently deal with the challenges posed by the migrant crisis. In order for the EU to combat these challenges in a way that both protects the rights and welfare of refugees, and is equitable for all member states, a much more cohesive, fair, and cooperative asylum policy must be adopted.

Notes

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- ⁴ Cini and Borragan, *European Union Politics*, 288.
- ⁵ R. Goldirova, “Greece Under Fire Over Refugee Treatment,” *EUobserver*, 2008, <https://euobserver.com/justice/25910>.
- ⁶ R. Riddel, “The Tragedy of Greece’s Refugee Children,” *Human Rights Watch*, 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/09/09/tragedy-greeces-refugee-children>.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ E. Guild and S. Carrera, “Rethinking Asylum Distribution in the EU: shall we start with the facts,” *CEPS*, 2016, <https://www.ceps.eu/publications/rethinking-asylum-distribution-eu-shall-we-start-facts>.
- ⁹ “Advocate: Dublin Regulation,” Jesuit Refugee Service, Accessed Oct 15, 2016, <https://jrseurope.org/advocacy?LID=834>.
- ¹⁰ *M.S.S v. Belgium and Greece*. [2011] 30696/09 (European Court of Human Rights); 1.
- ¹¹ “UNHCR Comments on the European Commission’s Proposal for a Recast of the Regulation,” United Nations High

Commission on Refugees, Accessed October 20, 2016, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/49c0ca922.html>, 1.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ “Rule 105: Respect for the Family,” Costmary IHL, Accessed November 1, 2016, https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule105/.

¹⁵ *M.S.S v. Belgium and Greece*. [2011] 30696/09 (European Court of Human Rights); 1.

¹⁶ V. Pop, “Human rights court deals blow to EU asylum system,” *EUobserver*, 2011, <https://euobserver.com/justice/31681>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ “UNHCR Comments.”

¹⁹ “Greek Council for Refugees: The Application of the Dublin Criteria,” Asylum Information Database, accessed November 1, 2016, <http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/Greece/asylum-procedure/procedures/dublin>.

²⁰ “World Report 2015: European Union”, Human Rights Watch, Accessed October 20, 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/croatia-european-union-france-germany-greece-hungary-italy>.

²¹ “Germany: Halt on Dublin Procedures for Syrians”, AIDA, 2015, Accessed November 1, 2016, <http://www.asylumineurope.org/news/24-08-2015/germany-halt-dublin-procedures-syrians>.

²² Ibid.

²³ “Number of Asylum Seekers in the EU and EFTA Member States,” EuroStat, 2015, Accessed November 1, 2016, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Number_of_%28nonEU%29_asylum_

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²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ K. Than and S. Nasralla, “Defying EU, Hungary suspends rules on asylum seekers”, *Reuters*, 2015, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-europe-migrants-austria-hungary-idUKKBN0P31ZB20150623>.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ “Hungary: Failing to Protect Vulnerable Refugees,” Human Rights Watch, 2016, Accessed November 1, 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/09/20/hungary-failing-protect-vulnerable-refugees>.

²⁸ S. Lehne, “How the Refugee Crisis Will Reshape the EU. *Carnegie Europe*, 2016, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/2016/02/04/how-refugee-crisis-will-reshape-eu/itj7>.

²⁹ I. Traynor, “EU plans migrant quotas forcing states to ‘share’ burden,” *The Guardian*, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/10/european-commission-migrant-quota-plan-mediterranean-crisis>.

³⁰ Lehne, “How the Refugee Crisis.”

³¹ “Procedural Rights in the Proposed Dublin IV Regulation”, International Commission of Jurists, 2016, Accessed November 5, 2016, http://www.icj.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/EU-Dublin-IV-Regulation_Comment-Advocacy-Analysis-Brief-2016-ENG.pdf.

The Adaptive Virus of Capitalism:

A Critical Analysis of Marx's Theory of Primitive Accumulation

Alexa Lewis

Our world is plagued by an ever-adapting virus. It seeks to strip peoples from their means of survival, while corrupting the minds of landowners through greed and seduction. This plague is capitalism. Karl Marx is perhaps the most influential theorist in the sphere of economics and political theory pertaining to capitalism. Marx premises his theory of capitalism upon the concept of primitive accumulation. This essay will explore Marx's theory of primitive accumulation and illustrate its perceived shortcomings, which are most potent when applied to the narrative of colonialization. The process of dispossession in the colonies, which is accumulation, is neither created by nor exclusive to Karl Marx. His conception of primitive accumulation in colonialism is dependent upon the conclusions of E.G. Wakefield. His influence on Marx will be outlined, in order to explore how primitive accumulation functions in colonial society. Following this illustration, a critique of Marx's process of accumulation will be explored, premised upon the criticisms of Glen Coulthard and supported by Rosa Luxemburg. Coulthard centers his critique of Marx on three primary shortcomings of primitive accumulation in colonial society: Marx's assertion that primitive accumulation occurred in an era prior to capitalism, Marx's classification of traditional and non-Western societies, and Marx's ignorance of the non-economic forms of coercion that uphold capitalism. These critiques will be explored and used to illustrate a fundamental characteristic of capitalism that is downplayed in Marx's conception of primitive accumulation and capitalism itself. The adaptive nature of capitalism is evident in the

narrative of the colonies, and must not be ignored if Marxists ever wish to overthrow the capitalist world order.

In Marx's *Capital*, he outlines his theory of primitive accumulation. His theory is premised upon the commodification of material, labor, and land. Primitive accumulation can be defined as "the brutal process of separating people from their means of providing for themselves".¹ The process of dispossession "is about the historical origins of... wage labor, as well as about the accumulation [of] necessary assets in the hands of the capitalist class to employ them".² Through the gradual procession of time, two classes emerge from society. One class, the bourgeoisie, has stockpiled the means of production and land by stripping it away from the other class, the proletariat. The latter class, as they have no means to produce that which they need to subsist, is dependent upon the wages the bourgeoisie provide as means of subsistence. The owners of the means of production, however, are equally dependent upon the proletariat. Without a labor force, the bourgeoisie could not possibly hope to work the means of production and incur surplus value. They must employ the proletariat through the payment of wages in exchange for labor power. The deprivation of the proletariat's means of subsistence and the consolidation of the means of production into the hands of the bourgeoisie is the essence of primitive accumulation. Marx stipulates that it is this process of accumulation that creates the environment in which capitalism can flourish. Primitive accumulation, therefore, is the logical origin of capitalism, as it is this process that "served to undermine the ability of people to provide for themselves".³ Marx, unlike other philosophers such as Adam Smith,⁴ highlights the brutality of primitive accumulation. The deprivation of methods of survival is done without regard for kindness or compassion; instead it is "written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire".⁵

Although Marx describes the origins of capitalism through primitive accumulation in Europe, this process can also be evidenced in the colonization of the Americas. Upon applying his theory of primitive accumulation to the colonies, Marx draws on E.G. Wakefield in order to conceptualize his theory to suit the challenges of colonization. In Chapter 33 of *Capital*, Marx states that “Wakefield discovered that in the Colonies, property in money, means of subsistence, machines, and other means of production, does not as yet stamp a man as a capitalist if there be wanting the correlative — the wage-worker, the other man who is compelled to sell himself of his own free will”.⁶ This conception can only be made through the acceptance of the following characteristic of capitalism. Wakefield has found that “capital is not a thing, but a social relation between persons, established by the instrumentality of things”.⁷ In order to understand Wakefield’s influence upon Marx’s theory, one must understand the colonialism context. Settlers fleeing the industrialization of Europe sought homes in ‘the New World’. Land was readily available for ownership, and every man had to cultivate his own property to ensure his own survival. In short, social equality was dominant.⁸ Wakefield echoes this sentiment when he states that, “no man would have a motive for accumulating more capital than he could use with his own hands”.⁹ As there was no unemployed labor force, the accumulation of the means of production would lead to ruin, rather than profit. The lure free of land created a “passion for owning land [which] prevents the existence of a class of labourers for hire”.¹⁰ Marx’s theory of primitive accumulation, therefore, falls short of providing context for colonization without the influence of Wakefield.

The colonies offer two foundational problems that prevent the application of Marx’s theory of primitive accumulation. Firstly, capitalists are approached with how to

implement the capitalist system. As all land is free land, there is no motivation to stockpile the means of production. Without the motivation to consolidate the methods of subsistence, primitive accumulation cannot occur. Furthermore, a second challenge arises if the capitalist order were actually able to be implemented: the labor force of the colonies is unsteady and unreliable. It leaps forward in great bounds as laborers arrive as adults, but then remains stagnant for long stretches as immigration peters out. Marx illustrates this sentiment in *Capital*: “The absolute population [in the colonies] increases much more quickly than in the mother-country, because many labourers enter this world as ready-made adults, and yet the labour-market is always understocked”.¹¹ Due to the insufficient workforce, the labourer’s wage may soon grow larger than that of the capitalist himself, and the labourer will become a capitalist. If this continues, the capitalist system cannot hope to continue. Wakefield, however, provides essential influences that allow Marx’s theory to flourish under colonialism.

He offers one solution for two daunting problems of the Americas: commodify the free land. In doing so, the conundrum of implementing capitalism and the enigma of the stagnant labor force is solved. He commands the government to “put upon the virgin soil an artificial price, independent of the law of supply and demand, a price that compels the immigrant to work a long time for wages before he can earn enough money to buy land, and turn himself into an independent peasant”.¹² This act of accumulation will allow the means of production to be consolidated into the hands of the bourgeoisie, and force the proletariats into wage labor. Furthermore through the payment for land, the government is able to “import have-nothings from Europe into the colonies, and thus keep the wage labour market full for the capitalists”. Through Wakefield’s solution, the colonies are now locked in a

cycle of maintaining the capitalist system. Any wage labourers wishing to become landowners must purchase their land from the government, which will fund the importation of replacement wage-labourers. These workers will produce the funds necessary for the employment of future labour forces. Thus, capitalism persists.

As evidenced in the explanation of Marx's theory of primitive accumulation, his initial conception had intrinsic fallacies when applied to the colonies. His reinterpretation of accumulation is dependent upon Wakefield's influence for its survival in modern politics. This sentiment is further evidenced by the discovery of flaws by other Marxists and academic scholars upon their own application of Marx's theory to the colonial narrative. Glen Coulthard, in his work *Red Skins, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, asserts that Marx ignored aspects of the colonial narrative, instead choosing to focus on the emergence of its economic structure. The three shortcomings Coulthard identifies are as follows: Marx's relegation of the process of primitive accumulation to an era prior to capitalism, Marx's original classification of non-Western countries, and Marx's assumption that the capitalist order is maintained solely through coercion.

Coulthard's first criticism of Marx stems from Marxist and anarchist literature, as many scholars disagree with Marx's assertion that primitive accumulation occurs only in the time preceding capitalism. Marx states that although economic forces may imitate the process of accumulation, these are simply market forces at work. On the other hand, Coulthard insists that continual processes of accumulation are necessary to maintain capitalism, and are therefore evident in the colonies. He illustrates this notion by stating, "Marx tended to portray primitive accumulation as if it constituted a process

confined to a particular (if indefinite) period—one already largely passed in England, but still underway in the colonies at the time Marx wrote”.¹³ This sentiment is illustrated by the active dispossession of colonial inhabitants; Aborigines and migrants alike are stripped of their means of survival, for the sake of the creation of surplus value. Coulthard attributes this continuous cycle to neoliberalism as it is “neoliberalism’s ascent to hegemony has unmistakably demonstrated the persistent role that unconcealed, violent dispossession [which] continues to play in the reproduction of colonial and capitalist social relations in both the domestic and global contexts”.¹⁴ While Marx’s theory of primitive accumulation may illustrate the narrative of capitalism in England, Coulthard asserts that “this formulation, however, clearly does not conform well to our present global reality”.¹⁵ Marx ignores the perceived shortcomings of his assumption as he chooses to focus his study on the economic processes of capitalism, rather than the actual reality of colonialism.

Coulthard’s second criticism of Marx stems from his original classification of non-Western societies. Coulthard is careful to stress he only takes issue with Marx’s original conclusions as he later reformulated his conclusions with respect to the struggles of non-Western societies against colonialism.¹⁶ Marx is a product of his time. In this sense, his economic and political theory is embedded with racism and sexism that is simply unavoidable in this era. While these inherent barriers of race and gender need to be overcome, this would distract us from our analysis and critique of Marx’s theory. Marx viewed non-Western societies as “‘people without history’, existing ‘separate from the development of capital and locked in an immutable present without the capacity for historical innovation’”.¹⁷ This assumption is premised upon his acceptance of a singular narrative of human development. Marx assumes that humans are limited to one path of

existence. Development occurs, releasing the society from its barbarism, through the establishment of a state and a system of classes. Capitalism emerges. Ultimately, this order will be overthrown for humanity's true nature: a socialist world order. It is this sentiment that allows Marx to justify the brutal process of primitive accumulation. He argues that despite of the cruel methods accumulation entails, "colonial dispossession would nonetheless have the 'revolutionary' effect of bringing the 'despotic,' 'undignified,' and 'stagnant' life of the Indians into the fold of capitalist-modernity and thus onto the one true path of human development—socialism".¹⁸

Coulthard wholeheartedly rejects Marx's classification of non-Western societies by asserting that the capacity for human development is endless. There is no one single path for development, rather unique societies growing and adapting to their surroundings. Furthermore, he argues that Marx cannot simply "justify in antiquated developmental terms... the assimilation of noncapitalist, non-Western, Indigenous modes of life based on the racist assumption that this assimilation will some-how magically redeem itself by bringing the fruits of capitalist modernity into the supposedly "backward" world of the colonized".¹⁹ Relegating humanity to endure the brutal process of capitalism in order to eventually overthrow it and establish a socialist society is nothing short of insanity, despite the equality it will create.²⁰ Luckily, Marx later came to this realization. Both Marx and Coulthard now assert that it is not necessary to "pass through the destructive phase of capitalist development as the condition of possibility for human freedom and flourishing".²¹ Coulthard, and later Marx, understands the complexity of humanity. Traditional societies, while in Marx's time were viewed as antiquated and savage, are not inferior to modern states. Rather, they are another facet of human nature.

Finally, we come to Coulthard's last criticism of Marx's theory of primitive accumulation. Coulthard's finds flaws in Marx's assertion that capitalism is maintained through purely economic coercion. Instead, he illustrates the non-economic methods of coercion that serve to uphold the capitalist system. On this subject, Coulthard writes very little; he simply states that in the narrative of the Americas, the "colonial relations of power are no longer reproduced primarily through overtly coercive means, but rather through the asymmetrical exchange of mediated forms of state recognition and accommodation".²²

To understand Coulthard's final criticism of Marx, we will now explore another Marxist scholar who found similar critiques of Marx's theory of primitive accumulation. Rosa Luxemburg, like Coulthard, insists that capitalism cannot be maintained through purely coercive economic forces as evidenced by the colonial narrative. In chapter 26 of *Accumulation of Capital*, she initiates her claims by stating, that "there is no obvious reason why means of production and consumer goods should be produced by capitalist methods alone".²³ This assumption is premised upon the fact that capitalist forces, particularly in the colonies, are restricted by the commodities and land available. For this reason, the capitalist system (at this point in time) is bound to countries that meet the conditions necessary for reproduction. Capitalism, however, seeks to "[ransack] the whole world... from all level of civilisation and from all forms of society".²⁴ It cannot, therefore, be maintained and reproduced through only economic forces as they would prevent it from encompassing the globe. For example, capitalism requires an unemployed labour force. This problem is magnified in the Americas with little excess population. The presence and integration of non-capitalist societies is thus crucial to the fabric of capitalism, as they supply the necessary residual labour force. This is evidenced in "the first genuinely capitalist branch of

production, the English cotton industry, not only the cotton of the Southern states of the American Union was essential, but also the millions of African Negroes who were shipped to America to provide the labour power for the plantations”.²⁵ Contrary to Marx’s conclusions and as evidenced above, capitalism cannot possibly be maintained, particularly in the modern era, by exclusively economic coercion.

Furthermore, the capitalist system “also depends in all respects on non-capitalist strata and social organizations existing side by side with it”.²⁶ As we have established above, capitalism is dependent upon non-capitalist conditions to subsist. Luxemburg introduces the concept of internal and external markets to evidence the essential non-coercive forces at play in capitalism. Both the internal and external markets are “vital to capitalist development and yet fundamentally different, though they must be conceived in terms of social economy rather than of political geography”.²⁷ Luxemburg equates the concept of the internal market to the capitalist market. She then defines the external market as “the non-capitalist social environment which absorbs the products of capitalism and supplies producer goods and labour power for capitalist production”.²⁸ The state plays a significant role in the maintenance of capitalism through the external market. Through “the state taxation screw, the grant and monopolization of state land, war, and other factors not only in the economy, but also from state policy and penal law,” capitalism is fostered.²⁹ Without the influence and policy of the nation state, capitalism would be dependent upon purely economic forces of coercion, which as evidenced above, do not create a lasting capitalist order in the modern and specifically colonial eras.

As clearly evidenced above, Marx’s theory of primitive accumulation has many perceived flaws when applied to the

narrative of colonialism. Coulthard, and similarly Luxemburg, identified specific shortcomings of his theory, particularly Marx's relegation of primitive accumulation to an era prior to capitalism, Marx's classification of non-Western societies, and Marx's assumption that capitalism is maintained through purely coercive forces. In the next section of my essay I will explore how these criticisms reveal a central characteristic of capitalism Marx has failed to address sufficiently in *Capital, Vol. 1*: adaption.

Upon examining Marx's theory of primitive accumulation and exploring the various scholarly critiques his works have garnered, I am struck by the rigidity that characterized Marx's theory of economics and his conception of capitalism itself. The strict path he develops, and insists all countries must take, in order to for humanity to flourish, does not account for the challenges that modernity and intellectual developments necessitate. Adaptation is a key concept of the ever growing virus of capitalism. Without the constant and intelligent capacities it has illustrated it contains, capitalism could not hope to have functioned as long as it has. We live in a society that constantly reinvents itself. Computers and social media dominate our existence. Capitalism, however, has continued to persist. While Marx's theory of the capitalist system is dependent upon rigid processes and concrete assumptions, it is actually an adaptable creature. It has learned to continuously reinvent itself to fit the present climate. Coulthard and Luxemburg's critiques are simply the evidence of the necessity of adaption in the capitalist order. While Marx assumes that capitalism can be perfectly synthesized to a series of processes that simply must occur, he ignores its adaptive quality. It is a virus that grows, thinks, and learns. If capitalism stuck to the processes Marx relegated it to, it would have died out or been overthrown a long time ago.³⁰

Coulthard and Luxemburg's criticisms illustrate and reflect this notion. The continuance of accumulation is contrary to Marx's assertion that the process of primitive accumulation ceases with the institutionalization of capitalism, as he assumes that coercive economic forces will maintain the system. Primitive accumulation must be repeated in the capitalist system as capitalism requires continuous acts of dispossession in order to function. This was evidenced by Coulthard above, and is also addressed by other scholars such as David Harvey. The concept of primitive accumulation therefore adapts to its surroundings. Marx's original classification of non-Western societies also reflects the essentiality of adaption. His definition of traditional cultures required adaption even within his own lifetime. It grew to encompass and accept the sentiment that non-Western societies can be just as valid as Western ones. Finally, Marx asserted that capitalism is upheld through economic coercion. While that may have been true in England, it has been illustrated that in order for capitalism to function in the colonies, non-economic methods of coercion are necessary for capitalism's survival. The theory of capitalism is fluid, and it adapts to meet modern challenges. Marx, however, cannot be blamed for ignoring the fluidity of capitalism as he is simply one man of his specific time. No one could have predicted what great leaps humanity would make, particularly in light of technological advancements. Therefore while this paper has been mostly critical in nature, it is also in effort to illustrate the importance of Marx's findings in a modern world. Marx's knowledge is still essential to our society, despite its perceived shortcomings.

Capitalism has grown to define our very world. It has adapted from the creature Marx illustrated to a multi-faceted and adapting beast that has infiltrated every corner of the globe. Capitalism, however, began with Marx and his theory of

primitive accumulation. His conclusion, complemented by Wakefield's essential influence, remains relevant in modern society. Although Coulthard and Luxemburg have many important criticisms for Marx, his theories should not be dismissed as wrong. Marx's theory of capitalism, instead, should be reconfigured to meet the challenges of modernity.³¹ While Marx's relegation of primitive accumulation to an era previous to capitalism, Marx's definition of non-Western societies, and Marx's assertion that the capitalist system is maintained purely through economic coercion may have been flawed upon their application to colonialism, his genius is applicable to the modern era and beyond. His theory of primitive accumulation, and his grander theory of capitalism, should be regarded as a fluid creature, which adapts as society grows.

Notes

¹ Micheal Perelman, *The Invention of Capitalism : Classical political economy and the secret of primitive accumulation* (2000), 13.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/9780822380696>

² David Harvey, *A Companion to Marx's Capital* (London: Verso Books, 2010), 291.

³ Perelman, *Invention of Capitalism*, 14.

⁴ Adam Smith is an English political economist who is highly influential in the scholarship of liberal capitalism.

⁵ Harvey, *Companion to Capital*, 292.

⁶ Karl Marx, *Capital: Volume One* (1867), para. 2.

⁷ Marx, K. "The Modern Theory of Colonisation," in *Capital Volume One*, 1867. Para. 2. Retrieved from <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867->

⁸ The institutionalized equality, however, only extended to male citizens, as women, racial minorities, and the Indigenous peoples were severely oppressed and disenfranchised.

⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, para. 4.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, para. 7.

¹² *Ibid.*, para. 10.

¹³ Glen Coulthard, *Red Skins, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 8.

¹⁴ Coulthard, *Red Skins, White Masks*, 9.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁰ This sentiment reflects a personal opinion based on the notion of the equal application of liberties. Basic rights should be extended to all walks of human life, no matter their situation. Means, in my opinion, do not always justify the ends, particularly when those means justify mass suffering and exploitation. Again, I assert this is a personal belief that has led me to the present critique of Marx, which is supported by Coulthard's own work.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

²² *Ibid.*, 15.

²³ Rosa Luxemburg, "The Reproduction of Capital and Its Social Setting," *The Accumulation of Capital* (1913), para. 11.

²⁴ Luxemburg, "The Reproduction of Capital," para. 11.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 17.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 19.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 19.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, para. 24.

²⁹ Tadeusz Kowalik, *Rosa Luxemburg: Theory of Accumulation and Imperialism* (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 109.

³⁰ Many post- and neo-Marxist scholars refute this statement, as they attribute the continual survival of capitalism to modern and state-specific circumstances.

³¹ This sentiment is echoed by the extensive research of post- and neo-Marxist scholars whom attempt to resituate capitalism into the context of modernity.

Unipolarity:

A System Without Stability

Aliya Schwabe

Unipolarity refers to an international system in which the distribution of capabilities makes it such that only one state can be defined as a pole.¹ Most definitions describe a pole as a state that maintains a large share of the world's resources, and excels in components of state capabilities such as conventional military might, nuclear prowess, institutional competency, as well as a substantial population and territory.² The notion that we are currently living in a unipolar world with the United States acting as unipole is almost completely undisputed in International Relations literature.³ Thus, most scholars when researching the current unipolar system focus on questions of either unipolar stability or durability. For the purposes of this paper, the focus shall solely be on the question of unipolar stability. The fundamental claim of this paper is that unipolarity is inherently an unstable international system.

The paper will largely be structured by a critical assessment of William C. Wohlforth's article "The Stability of a Unipolar World" in which Wohlforth's definition of system stability will be applied in order to analyze his claims on their own merits. Throughout this section, it will be shown that by Wohlforth's own definition, the current unipolar system is unstable. Following this analysis, the question of unipolar stability will be extended beyond Wohlforth and other ideas shall be employed. The conclusion of this section will be that not only does unipolarity lead to an unstable international system, the potential decline of US hegemony acts to heighten this international instability.

The various ways in which scholars define system stability nearly exceeds the number of articles written on the topic. Some scholars even have a hard time sticking to their definition of what constitutes a stable international system. Kenneth N. Waltz in his famous article “The Stability of a Bipolar World” claims that stability must be measured “by the peacefulness of adjustment within the international system and by the durability of the system itself”.⁴ Several years later, however, Waltz shifts his definition of system stability to exclude peacefulness, and instead include the maintenance of anarchy.⁵ Contrarily, one year prior to Waltz’s shift in definition, other scholars argued that an international system is stable only if there is “a low probability of war”.⁶ In other words, these scholars argued that system stability ought to be defined in terms of peace.

Similarly, scholars Karl W. Deutsch and J. David Singer characterize a stable system in terms of peace and durability⁷. However, Deutsch and Singer add to their definition a characteristic that is fundamentally problematic to those who argue for unipolar stability.⁸ Deutsch and Singer argue that for an international system to be stable it must be the case that “no single nation becomes dominant”.⁹ If scholars were to accept this definition, it would follow that unipolarity is unstable on a definitional level. It is for this reason that the most prominent author who argues in favor of unipolar stability does not engage with this definition, for it would ground his research before it could even take off. Instead, William C. Wohlforth adopts a definition that closely resembles Waltz’s from 1964 - Wohlforth defines system stability “as peacefulness and durability”.¹⁰ In order to analyze and critique Wohlforth’s work on unipolar stability on its own merits, his definition of stability shall be used for the duration of this paper.

William C. Wohlforth in his prominent 1999 article argues that unipolarity yields a stable international system due to the fact that it is “not only peaceful but durable”.¹¹ Keeping in mind that Wohlforth claims a system is stable only if it maintains qualities of peace and durability, it follows that if a system is lacking in one of these two areas, the system is unstable. Therefore, the next section shall endeavor to prove that by Wohlforth’s own definition, the current unipolar system is unstable due to its conflict-producing nature.

Wohlforth argues that the unipolar system is peaceful for it eliminates hegemonic rivalry and reduces the “salience and stakes of balance-of-power politics”.¹² According to Wohlforth, the elimination of hegemonic rivalry makes great power war impossible in a unipolar system. The absence of great power conflict is at the heart of Wohlforth’s argument.¹³ Conversely, Nuno P. Monteiro disagrees with Wohlforth and argues that simply citing the fact that unipolarity eliminates great power war is not a good enough case for unipolar peace.¹⁴ According to Monteiro, it is obvious that a unipolar system would eliminate great power war given that there is only one great power in the system.¹⁵ As Wohlforth himself so cleverly states “ $2 - 1 = 1$ ”,¹⁶ therefore, if there was more than one great power, unipolarity would cease to be and the system would become bipolar again. Thus, Monteiro argues that Wohlforth’s claim that unipolarity is peaceful due to the absence of great power war should be saved for studies on unipolar durability, not on unipolar peace.¹⁷

While Monteiro may have a point that Wohlforth’s claim would be better suited in discussions on unipolar durability, the facts of his claim remains; a unipolar system eliminates the possibility of great power war - so long as the system remains unipolar. While it is an obvious point, it cannot be denied that it is true. However, this does not mean that one should

automatically jump to the conclusion that a lack of great power war makes the system more peaceful and hence more stable. The Cold War was a system of bipolarity which actually allowed for the possibility of great power war, and yet, it never occurred. Great power war in a system of bipolarity could be actually just as unlikely as in a system of unipolarity, for the costs would be too great to bear. Considering that great power wars are uncommon in the modern nuclear world, Wohlforth's fixation on the elimination of great power war in unipolarity may be missing the mark. Robert Jervis argues that while unipolarity does eliminate the likeliness of a world war "we cannot assume that regional war will decrease",¹⁸ therefore, a good theory on the peacefulness of unipolarity should not be fixated on the most uncommon kind of war, but instead consider all kinds of war. In response to this issue, Monteiro devotes a large portion of his article to the different kinds of conflict that can arise under a unipolar system. In doing this he comes to the opposite conclusion of Wohlforth and finds that in fact, "the unipolar era [has] been anything but peaceful".¹⁹

In Monteiro's article, he places heavy emphasis on the dramatic increase in the number of wars that have occurred in the unipolar era and contrasts this with other periods of multi or bipolarity.²⁰ According to Monteiro's findings, in a bipolar system the annual likeliness of a great power to engage in war is 3.4 percent, whereas in a unipolar system this number skyrockets to 18.2 percent.²¹ At the time of the article being written, the United States had been engaged in war for thirteen years out of its short twenty-two years as unipole.²² Presented differently, this twenty-two-year period only represents 10 percent of US history, and yet, it accounts for over 25 percent of America's total time at war.²³ Monteiro's evidence suggests that unipolarity may not be as peaceful as Wohlforth would like us to think. Without the system being peaceful, it follows

that by Wohlforth's own definition unipolarity is an unstable international system.

Wohlforth's scholarship counters Monteiro's claims by arguing that the current era of US unipolarity is wholly unique and leads to never-before-seen politics and power relations.²⁴ It follows from this assertion that with a unique international system comes the need for a unique set of theories to explain this system. Thus, Wohlforth explicitly states that it is "wrong to assume that theories developed to explain previous international systems apply to unipolarity".²⁵ Based off this statement, it is evident that proponents of Wohlforth's argument could discount Monteiro's critique, simply on the basis that Monteiro is applying inapplicable theories to his analysis of unipolar peace. However, it would appear that there is a lack of consistency in Wohlforth's argument. In spite of the assertion that old theories cannot apply to unipolarity, Wohlforth uses previously developed IR theories, such as hegemonic theory and balance-of-power theory, to support his claim that unipolarity is peaceful.²⁶ Therefore, it would appear that Wohlforth forbids the use of previously established IR theories when they are being used against him, and employs these theories when they can be used to his benefit. Furthermore, taking a closer look reveals that Wohlforth's attempt at applying these theories to his argument of peaceful unipolarity, actually falls flat.

Wohlforth argues that balance-of-power theory supports his argument of a peaceful unipolar world, for it follows Kenneth Waltz's logic, and it reduces uncertainty of alliance choices.²⁷ According to Wohlforth, "Waltz argued that bipolarity is less war prone than multipolarity because it reduces uncertainty. By the same logic, unipolarity is the least war prone of all structures".²⁸ While it is true that on a logical level Wohlforth's claim makes sense, he is forgetting a key

point that Waltz makes in his book “Theory of International Politics”. While Waltz was one of the major advocates of the stability of a bipolar world, this does not necessarily mean he would favour unipolarity. In fact, Waltz argues that in regards to the ideal number of poles within an international system, “two is the best of small numbers”.²⁹ Thus, Waltz firmly believes that bipolarity is more stable than all other systems, including unipolarity. Therefore, while Wohlforth would have liked to twist balance-of-power theory to support his argument of unipolar stability, it would appear that in this way, it does not.

Nevertheless, Wohlforth maintains that his argument fits with balance-of-power theory as it reduces uncertainty of alliance choice in the international system.³⁰ The author rests this claim on the assumption that “a unipolar system is one in which a counterbalance is impossible”.³¹ Thus, Wohlforth argues that within a unipolar system, state action is more predictable than ever before because the only option available for “second-tier states” is to bandwagon.³² Many scholars, however, would find Wohlforth’s assumption - that balancing under unipolarity is impossible - as being fundamentally problematic.³³

Wohlforth argues that counterbalancing is impossible in the current unipolar world because of the preponderance of US power.³⁴ Charles L. Glaser, however, disagrees with Wohlforth’s claim that states are not counterbalancing because of America’s sheer might.³⁵ Glaser argues that the reason why potential balancers such as the EU and China are not attempting to counter-balance against US power is due to the fact that “they do not believe that the United States poses a large threat to their vital interests”.³⁶ Therefore, if the US were to suddenly become a threat to these major powers, the EU and China’s security policies would take a dramatic shift and could

potentially engage in balancing.³⁷ Thus, according to Glaser balancing in a unipolar world is actually possible.

Stephen M. Walt is another well-known International Relations scholar who opposes Wohlforth's view that is impossible to balance in a unipolar world. According to Walt, in a unipolar world, states have three options: remain neutral, align with the unipole, or ally against the unipole to collectively reduce its influence.³⁸ Thus, Walt disagrees with Wohlforth's claim and allows for the possibility of balancing in a unipolar system. However, Walt does admit that the formation of an effective balancing coalition is challenging.³⁹ In the unipolar system, there is often greater incentive for states to free ride, bandwagon or engage in buck-passing with the unipole.⁴⁰ In addition, in the case of US unipolarity, balancers have to combat the added obstacle of America's geopolitical advantage which stems from its isolation from Eurasia and unrivaled power within its own region.⁴¹

Scholar Eyal Benvenisti echoes Walt's sentiments of the many challenges facing potential balancers in a unipolar system. Benvenisti argues that there is actually less incentive for collective action in the unipolar era than during the cold war.⁴² According to Benvenisti, this collective action problem is due to the fact that there is only one major power providing a security net instead of two, as well as that the United State's often engages in unilateral actions to achieve what it believes will provide global security.⁴³ While counterbalancing is possible in this system, the lack of incentives for collective action not only makes it more challenging, but also threatens system stability altogether.⁴⁴ Benvenisti explains how this applies to system stability:

The previous system was characterized by mutual deterrence between the duopoly of superpowers, each providing collective security to its group of allies... In

contrast, the current unipolar system consists of a global collective action problem with only one relatively strong actor that provides security almost unilaterally to a much larger group of beneficiaries... For these reasons, we live in an era where stability is constantly challenged and the collective good is constantly under-supplied.⁴⁵

Therefore, contrary to Wohlforth's claim, scholars Glaser, Walt and Benvenisti all show that balancing in a unipolar system is not impossible, but potential balancers face many challenges. In addition, Monteiro not only agrees with the other scholars, he sees the possibility of balancing as a potential source of conflict in the unipolar system. According to Monteiro, some smaller states will become unsatisfied by the status quo and thus become recalcitrant nations whose quest for power and security will undoubtedly lead to conflict.⁴⁶

Wohlforth argued that unipolarity is peaceful for it reduces superpower rivalry and its ensuing conflicts, and that it reduces some of the grievances associated with balance-of-power politics.⁴⁷ In regards to Wohlforth's first point, it was previously shown that while hegemonic rivalry and great-power war is indeed absent in the current system, other forms of conflict are abundant. His second point was based on the assumption that the uncertainty of state action is reduced in unipolarity since states no longer have the option of balancing. However, it has been shown that various scholars have an ample amount of evidence to argue that balancing actually is possible in unipolarity. Therefore, in a unipolar system, the same level of uncertainty of state action remains. Thus, by providing counter-evidence to both of Wohlforth's claims, it is evident that the unipolar system is not peaceful. Given that Wohlforth defines a stable international system as one that is peaceful and durable, it follows that since unipolarity lacks one of these qualifiers, peace, unipolarity is not a stable system.

Now, turning away from Wohlforth's argument, there is extensive research on unipolar instability that has yet to be mentioned. The next section shall focus on the potential instabilities that can arise in the face of unipolar expansion and hegemonic decline. In "Unipolarity: A Structural Perspective," Robert Jervis claims that international instability and conflict can arise when the unipole engages in excessive expansion.⁴⁸ According to Jervis, "states' definitions of their interests tend to expand along with their power," as increased capabilities make it possible to pursue new objectives.⁴⁹ Arnold Wolfers argues that with the expansion of states interests comes the expansion of state values.⁵⁰ These extended values come to be seen as necessities in need of protection.⁵¹ Consequently, a fear of losing some of the states extended values may lead to the unipole to expand even further, or to engage in war to maintain their esteemed position.⁵² In comparison with multipolar or bipolar systems, this unhindered territorial expansion is more likely in a unipolar system due to the lack of restraints on the unipole's exercise of power. Thus, to reduce the frequency of war and decrease system instability, the unipole should behave prudently and not overextend its values as depicted above.

In "Thucydides and Hegemony: Athens and the United States" scholars Richard Ned Lebow and Robert Kelly argue that if the unipole does not behave prudently, this will increase system instability and lead to the unipole's hegemonic decline.⁵³ Lebow and Kelly engage in a comparison of the United States and Athens. According to the authors, a large contributing factor to the decline of Athens was its failure to exercise self-restraint and behave prudently.⁵⁴ These scholars argue that the Melian Dialogue, written by Thucydides, is intended to symbolize the decay of Athenian hegemony, and the Athenians bullheaded attempt to hold on to their hegemony through coercion.⁵⁵ Lebow and Kelly point to the important distinction between *hegemonia* and *arkhe*.⁵⁶

According to the scholars, *hegemonia* is defined by legitimated leadership that is retained by consent and not force, while *arkhe* is simply control over a territory; *hegemonia* + *arkhe* = hegemony.⁵⁷ It is hotly debated amongst scholars whether the US ever held hegemony alongside their unipolarity. Lebow and Kelly argue that the US once did hold hegemony, however, it is now in decline.⁵⁸

If the US is truly in hegemonic decline alongside its role as unipole, there is some evidence to suggest that this would lead to an increase in terrorist activity. In 1992 the number of international terrorist attacks totaled at 363.⁵⁹ In 2014 this number reached a startling height at a total of 13,463 international terrorist attacks.⁶⁰ This is an astonishing increase in terrorist activities. Many scholars would argue this increase is partially due to the decline of US hegemony and the current unipolar system. In Chapter nine of the book *Hegemonic Declines Present and Past*, Albert J. Bergesen and Omar A. Lizardo agree with Lebow and Kelly in regards to the decline of US hegemony.⁶¹ According to Bergesen and Lizardo, when a major power's hegemony weakens, it has conflict inducing consequences for the international system in the form of increased terrorism. They argue that historically, terrorism "appears during periods of hegemonic decline".⁶² Thomas J. Volgy et al. corroborate Bergesen and Lizardo's claim that there is increased terrorism in periods of hegemonic decline⁶³. These scholars argue that since terrorism is counter-hegemonic in nature, in periods of hegemonic decline potential terrorists use this as an opportunity to undermine the established international political order.⁶⁴

While the previously mentioned scholars are arguing that terrorism becomes more prominent in a period of hegemonic decline, Robert Jervis suggests that non-state actors, such as terrorist organizations, increase in importance

under a unipolar system.⁶⁵ According to Jervis, given that unipolarity reduces the importance and influence of other state actors, non-state actors are actually yielded with more influence and a greater role in the international system.⁶⁶ Thus, not only does unipolarity lead to an unstable international system, this instability is further increased by the possible decline of US hegemony.

William C. Wohlforth in "The Stability of a Unipolar World" defined system stability "as peacefulness and durability".⁶⁷ He then argued that unipolarity meets these criteria. While unipolar durability was not engaged with in this paper, it was shown that Wohlforth's claim of unipolar peace falls short of reality. Wohlforth argued that because of a lack of great power war and due to an increase in alliance predictability, unipolarity is peaceful. However, it was shown that simply a lack of great power war does not go far enough in terms of peace. Great power war is uncommon and therefore other types of conflict need to be brought into consideration. Through observing the preponderance of other forms of conflict present under a unipolar system, it becomes evident that unipolarity is the opposite of peaceful. Wohlforth's second claim of unipolar peace was also engaged with. The result of this analysis was that balancing is in fact possible in a unipolar system, albeit challenging. Nevertheless, the possibility of balancing under unipolarity pokes a large hole in Wohlforth's reasoning behind unipolar peace. As a result, unipolarity cannot meet Wohlforth's definition of stability and is hence, an unstable system.

In the last section of the paper, other scholars who provide evidence of the instability of unipolarity were engaged with. The findings from this section were that an over-extension of the unipole's values can lead to an increase in conflict, and if the unipole has hegemony, it could also lead to a

decline in hegemony. Following, it was shown that this decline in hegemony, which may be presently occurring, can further lead to conflict through the form of non-state actors such as terrorist organizations. Thus, the current unipolar system is inherently unstable and conflict-producing on a multitude of fronts.

Notes

¹ John. G Ikenberry et al., "Introduction: Unipolarity, State Behavior, and Systemic Consequences," *World Politics* 61, no.1 (2009): 4.

² Ikenberry et al., "Unipolarity, State Behavior, and Systemic Consequences," 4.

³ Eyal Benvenisti, "The US and the Use of Force: Double-Edged Hegemony and the Management of Global Emergencies," *European Journal of International Law* 15, no.4 (2004); Charles L. Glaser, "Why Unipolarity Doesn't Matter (Much)," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 24, no.2 (2011); Ikenberry et al., "Unipolarity, State Behavior, and Systemic Consequences,"; Robert Jervis, "Unipolarity: A Structural Perspective," *World Politics* 61, no.1 (2009); Robert Ned Lebow and Robert Kelly, "Thucydides and Hegemony: Athens and the United States," *Review of International Studies* 27, no.4 (2001); Nuno P. Monteiro, "Unrest Assured: Why Unipolarity Is Not Peaceful," *International Security* 36, no.3 (2012); Thomas J. Volgy, Lawrence E. Imwalle and Jeff J. Corntassel, "Structural Determinants of International Terrorism: The Effects of Hegemony and Polarity on Terrorist Activity," *International Interactions* 23, no.2 (1997); Stephen M. Walt, "Alliances in a Unipolar World," *World Politics* 61, no.1 (2009); William C. Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security* 24, no.1 (1999); Stephen G. Brooks and William C.

Wohlforth, *World out of Balance International Relations and the Challenge of American Primacy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008)

⁴ Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security* 24, no.1 (1964): 881.

⁵ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1979), 161-162.

⁶ Charles W. Ostrom and John H. Aldrich, "The Relationship between Size and Stability in the Major Power International System," *American Journal of Political Science* 22, no.4 (1978): 747.

⁷ Karl W. Deutsch and David J. Singer, "Multipolar Power Systems and International Stability," *World Politics* 16, no.3 (1964): 390.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," 8 (note 11).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," 23.

¹³ Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," 23-24.

¹⁴ Monteiro, "Unrest Assured," 16-17.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," 10.

¹⁷ Monteiro, "Unrest Assured," 16-17.

¹⁸ Jervis, "Unipolarity: A Structural Perspective," 195.

¹⁹ Monteiro, "Unrest Assured," 11.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Monteiro, "Unrest Assured," 19.

²² Monteiro, "Unrest Assured," 11.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," 22.

²⁵ Brooks and Wohlforth, *World out of Balance*, 5.

²⁶ Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," 23-25.

²⁷ Ibid.

- ²⁸ Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," 24.
- ²⁹ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 161
- ³⁰ Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," 24-25.
- ³¹ Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," 29.
- ³² Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," 25.
- ³³ Benvenisti "The US and the Use of Force,"; Glaser, "Why Unipolarity Doesn't Matter (Much),"; Walt, "Alliances in a Unipolar World,"
- ³⁴ Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," 29.
- ³⁵ Glaser, "Why Unipolarity Doesn't Matter (Much)," 136.
- ³⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁷ Glaser, "Why Unipolarity Doesn't Matter (Much)," 136-138.
- ³⁸ Walt, "Alliances in a Unipolar World," 94.
- ³⁹ Walt, "Alliances in a Unipolar World," 96-97.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² Benvenisti "The US and the Use of Force," 681
- ⁴³ Benvenisti "The US and the Use of Force," 682
- ⁴⁴ Eyal Benvenisti, "The US and the Use of Force: Double-Edged Hegemony and the Management of Global Emergencies," *European Journal of International Law* 15, no.4 (2004): 682.
- ⁴⁵ Benvenisti "The US and the Use of Force," 683.
- ⁴⁶ Monteiro, "Unrest Assured," 39.
- ⁴⁷ Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," 23.
- ⁴⁸ Jervis, "Unipolarity: A Structural Perspective," 197-200.
- ⁴⁹ Jervis, "Unipolarity: A Structural Perspective," 199.
- ⁵⁰ Arnold Wolfers, "'National Security' as an Ambiguous Symbol," *Political Science Quarterly* 67, no.4 (1952): 489
- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² Jervis, "Unipolarity: A Structural Perspective," 200.
- ⁵³ Lebow and Kelly, "Thucydides and Hegemony," 596.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵⁵ Lebow and Kelly, "Thucydides and Hegemony," 593-596.
- ⁵⁶ Lebow and Kelly, "Thucydides and Hegemony," 594.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Lebow and Kelly, "Thucydides and Hegemony," 609.

⁵⁹ U.S. Department of State, "International Terrorist Incidents, 1978-97,"

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⁶⁰ U.S. Department of State, "National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism: Annex of Statistical Information,"

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⁶¹ Jonathan Friedman and Christopher Chase-Dunn eds., *Hegemonic Declines Present and Past* (Boulder, CO; London: Paradigm Publishers, 2005), 232.

⁶² Friedman and Chase-Dunn eds., *Hegemonic Declines Present and Past*, 229

⁶³ Volgy, Imwalle and Corntassel "Structural Determinants of International Terrorism," 209-212.

⁶⁴ Volgy, Imwalle and Corntassel "Structural Determinants of International Terrorism," 211.

⁶⁵ Jervis, "Unipolarity: A Structural Perspective," 203.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," 8 (note 11).

Climate Change and Refugees: *An Inevitable Global Crisis?*

Laura Ferreira

Climate change has become a significant topic recognized within the scientific community, more recently has gaining political attention, and rightfully so. The latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) strongly agrees that climate change poses significant risks on human and natural systems; illustrating the urgency for policymakers to cooperatively develop an adaptive and mitigative framework that can succeed against the impending environmental, political and social disasters. It is predicted that almost two hundred million people could be uprooted by the year 2050,¹ and there is no coherent legal framework that can navigate the issue of migration. Concentration of effort on a specific framework for climate change migration allows the rhetoric to be depoliticized and normalized. This is where this paper will interject; climate change presents an opportunity to facilitate political and social action in order to enhance the international community's resiliency when confronting future impacts in the face of environmental change. Human migration can become the more significant and serious issue the world will be faced with, and the current framework for refugee protection and international law is inadequate for both the affected states and those in a position to assist to deal with future conditions. Changing the narrative of 'refugee' from a threat to an opportunity can help direct legislation towards a protected and resilient future.

This age of the Anthropocene has produced incredible effects on the environment, security, and individual livelihoods. Human interference has facilitated the implications

of considerable pressure on Earth's natural systems and has produced consequences such as extreme weather events, increased global temperatures, drought and food security. Despite calls for decreasing carbon emissions and greenhouse gases that began in the 1990s, global emissions have continued to increase without pause as the globalized economy has continued to grow. The IPCC reports that the marked increase in anthropogenically forced climate change has increased more rapidly since 1970 than in prior decades, with present carbon dioxide and methane levels exceeding the amount from the past 800,000 years.² For the purpose of clarity, the remainder of this paper will refer to climate change from human-induced activities as anthropogenic climate change. The 'business as usual' path that society has refused to stray from will only intensify the disastrous consequences climate change presents.

The future of social, political, economic and environmental spheres are all in jeopardy; the disruption of livelihoods, human security from injury and illness, the breakdown of infrastructure, food insecurity, loss of ecosystems, and loss of communities are some of the many potential outcomes of a future of runaway climate change.³ The sad irony of climate change is the disproportionate effects developing states will bear, despite not being responsible for the majority of the emissions that accelerated climate change in the first place. The greatest consequence of climate change will be human migration. Historically humans, regularly migrated to new locations due to changing climates, but in present context sheer population numbers make migration significantly less feasible. The trouble with climate-induced migration is the predicted speed of its trajectory and the vast number of people it will affect; developing nations already lack food security, economic and political stability, and mobility options.⁴ Current refugee and international laws do not

provide protection for people internally or internationally displaced by climate change, because it does not qualify under one of the five provisions of the Refugee Convention.

Environmental impacts do not differentiate based on race, religion, political or societal position. These consequences will impact the whole world in some form or another, making the task of tackling migration even more daunting.

As previously stated, developing nations are the most vulnerable to the risks of climate change, particularly small island states whose limited territory is susceptible to extreme weather effects. Limited resources reduce their ability to adapt to rising sea levels and risks to human health. A case study from the island of Kiribati illustrates the difficulties facing citizens who either try to adapt to a changing climate or migrate. Kiribati, as one of the lowest-lying nations, has suffered frequent storm surges, coastal erosion and increased water salination. It is estimated that the island's capital city will be submerged by the year 2050. Kiribati is also on the UN's list of the forty-nine least developed countries meaning its economy and livelihoods are increasingly and particularly vulnerable to environmental and economic disasters. These challenges coupled with a rising population, minimal infrastructure and resource depletion, threaten the future prosperity of Kiribati to the point of extreme bleakness. A court case involving a Kiribati citizen applying for refugee status to New Zealand demonstrates the complexities and lack of convention regarding decision-making at the level of international courts. The Refugee Convention outlines provisions that must be met in order to be recognized as a legal refugee. Any prospective refugee must be a person who has: a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail

himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

According to this definition, climate-migrants do not qualify for refugee status because the cause of their displacement is not human - they are not in immediate jeopardy if they were to return to their country of origin, and environmental impacts are non-discriminatory. It is also not the job of the courts to alter this definition - and if they were to provide refugee status to a few it would open the floodgates to millions who are facing similar circumstances, state systems are not yet equipped to handle this.

The attractions to refugee status are the defined guarantees and human rights that accompany it, such as access to courts, education, work authorization and travel documents, as well as no forcible extradition to their country of origin.⁵ However, the case study from New Zealand illustrates the difficulties climate-migrants face; Ni also emphasized that previous cases where citizens of Pacific islands have attempted to claim asylum or refugee protection have *all* failed. There is no formal or legal definition of a climate-migrant, and the protection gap that exists within international law cannot be solved by expanding a concrete definition of refugee. It is up to the international community to fill this gap. Treaties such as the 1992 International Environmental Treaty have obliged rich states to assist their poorer cosignatories, who are facing the effects of climate change to help them overcome the costs of adaptation. Despite these soft-law promises, concern lies over what protections are available once states can no longer adapt to climate change and citizens are forced to vacate.

Current climate change discourse seeks to transform migration from a problem into a solution. Migration has always been one of the ways people have adapted to changing environments but sensationalized media attention has inaccurately dubbed climate migrants as the problem, the term ‘refugee’ invokes a sense of helplessness and a lack of dignity, and “. . . puts stigma on the victims, not the offenders”. Arguably the identification of migrants as ‘climate refugees’ is inaccurate because refugee status guarantees rights and protections – both are missing from the present circumstances. For this reason, this paper will mainly identify ‘climate refugees’ as *climate-induced migrants* (CIM) as an improved (yet still deficient) definition. Political discourse regarding migration is saturated with xenophobia and concerns about the securitization of migration. Parallel to this growing mistrust in migration, narratives that focus on the vulnerability of ‘climate refugees’ diminishes any adaptation efforts, and presents them as the problem instead of agents of transformation.

It is crucial to address the plight of climate-induced migrants because while the exact numbers of people affected are unknowable, it can be estimated that they will be in the tens of millions. Localized refugee crises in richer countries in the North can be prevented through the use of adaptive measures such as reinforced coastal protection, water supply management and changes in agricultural food production; but poorer countries are unlikely to have sufficient adaptive capacities⁶ or the financial resources to take the same mitigative measures. Population displacement will either be internal or international and will affect nearly every state, however disproportionately. Northern countries are not immune to the effects of climate change; biodiversity, resource availability, fisheries and water availability are just a few of the risks. In particular the Northwest Territories, an area that has adapted to and depends on the cold climate, faces

significant impacts from warming global temperatures - the most unavoidable instance being melting permafrost. Infrastructure such as roadways and buildings are built upon permafrost, and despite improved construction efforts melting permafrost has created ground movement that has resulted in sloped buildings and sinkholes, as well as erosion along rivers that threatens to topple bridges.⁷ Damages from climate change already cost around \$1 million per year, soon adaptation will become an inadequate method for coping with these changes as the land becomes inhospitable, and Canada could very well see its first internal climate-induced migrants.

What constitutes a climate 'refugee' is another issue with no legal definition. Biermann and Boas argue that climate refugee classification needs to be restricted to three direct and undisputed climate change impacts, such as sea-level rise, extreme weather events, drought and water scarcity. Then the force behind migration requires differentiating between environmentally motivated migrants, environmentally forced migrants or environmental refugees; the distinction between refugee and migrant in this case would be determined by adaptive capacity and financial resources available to the migrant, implying that the poorer refugee merits a different response. Climate change interacts with global trends of population growth, human mobility, urbanization, food, water, energy and insecurity and accelerates the displacement of already marginalized populations. Current global governance regimes conceptualize climate-induced migrants as internally displaced persons, which allows affected people to seek safety in another part of the country, but is not binding under international law and only provides marginal rights and protection. But incorporating the legal frameworks for internally displaced persons into national and regional legislation could ease the process of migration within a nation's borders.

The formation of a legal framework that provides and protects rights and resources to climate-induced migrants faces multiple challenges. As previously explained, expanding the Refugee Convention to incorporate climate change as a legitimate force behind migration has failed in courts, and other authors argue climate refugees require a *sui generis* regime that recognizes, protects and resettles climate refugees and is tailored to their appropriate needs. The international system would have to fund this system, as well as organize and accommodate some 200 million migrants over the next century; the financial burden on donor countries alone is enough to deter significant cooperation on the international stage. Multiple agencies and organizations would be required to work with governments in order to designate and manage different tasks throughout the process. Besides human displacement, some of the challenges government and humanitarian organizations would face within already weakened nations would include water stress, food security, spread of disease, and job loss.⁸

Political discourse has created a dichotomy of equality wherein some migrants are either accepted as refugees and protected, while some are not. The limited scope of framework regarding refugees has allowed states to exclude economic and environmental migrants from within the umbrella of refugee rights and responsibilities,⁹ but in any case the burden is placed upon the migrant. There have been conferences establishing principles and recommendations for states who volunteer to take on aspects of climate-induced migration, such as the Nansen Principles founded in the Cancun Adaptation Framework in 2011. Ten principles evolved out of the conference in order to guide responses to the complex challenges that would arise from CIM. In summary they recommend that:

- 1) state responses should be informed by adequate knowledge and guided by the fundamental principles of human rights
- 2) the primary duty of states is to protect their populations, in particular the special needs of the most vulnerable
- 3) the leadership and engagement of local governments, communities, civil society and the private sector is needed to address the challenges of climate change
- 4) regional and international frameworks should support national action
- 5) prevention and resilience need to be strengthened
- 6) local and national capacity to respond to disaster needs to be built alongside a reinforced international response
- 7) protection gaps within international law should be addressed
- 8) states are encouraged to implement the principles of Internal Displacement as a legal framework
- 9) a coherent approach of states working with the UNHCR is needed on the international level
- 10) national and international policies must be based on non-discrimination, consent, empowerment, participation and partnership.¹⁰

Despite the development of these principles, the international community has yet to fill the protection gaps within the law due to a lack of political will, concerns regarding security, the inability of civil society to effectively organize and the complicated issues of global actors avoiding responsibility for climate change. The implementation of a legal framework must be a political decision that adequately involves and consults dominating discourse views of human migration as a national security issue as well as a human rights issue. The narrative must move away from articulating ‘climate refugees’ as a threat to national security, and transform the aforementioned narrative into a potential solution.

So long as ‘climate refugees’ are seen as a threat little progress can be made towards a solution. Drawing upon a concept illustrated in the Nansen Principles, resilience can facilitate adaptive capacities and presents climate-induced migration as a rational strategy of adaptation. Resilience refers to the ability of social and ecological systems to absorb changes and still maintain basic system function, which can then adapt and transform. The optimistic perspective of climate-induced migration presented by Methmann establishes the transformational resiliency of migration as a solution that converts migrants into entrepreneurs who are consciously deciding to migrate. Resilience can adapt human and ecological systems to a new equilibrium with new infrastructure and diversifying income sources, and radically reorganize communities into more resilient networks. Resiliency addresses the rationalities of government by decentralizing risk management, and making individuals responsible for avoiding risk. To that end, the government is the actor responsible for relocating and resettling at-risk populations, and legitimizing the use of force when liberal order is threatened. The negative political implications of resilience deprive subjects of their rights, makes them vulnerable to exploitation and violence, and bases migration on ‘sheer survivability’. Resiliency provides a strategy for overcoming the challenges of CIM; however, associated costs and obstacles must be examined.

Climate-induced migration couches the loss and damages suffered in a normative ideal of progress and transformation. Responsibility and assistance is shifted from the North to the South, but most importantly it presupposes that climate change is an unavoidable reality. By focusing all efforts on adaptation and migration frameworks for the future, climate change becomes normalized and depoliticized.

Resignation and a sense of futility is not the way towards a solution. The options presented in this paper towards a legal protection for refugees have failed to produce a coherent and effective solution. Political, social and personal spheres are all susceptible to change, and must in order to dismantle the vicious discourse of superiority that plagues the protection efforts for refugees. In refusing to blindly accept the dangerous realities of climate change implications, insight is gained that may be applied to attain pathways to a safer global future. Denial of impending consequences holds more catastrophic implications than mitigated migration. Climate refugees remain on the periphery of international climate discourse, yet inevitably present an enormous challenge for the future.

Notes

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Political Marketing

And the Emergence of a Fifth Party System

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The twentieth century witnessed the ascent of the Liberal Party of Canada to the status of “natural governing party.” Throughout the third party system, brokerage politics were successful in delivering the Liberals lengthy periods of majority rule, interspersed only with short, reactionary periods of Tory control.¹ With the fragmentation of the 1990s, however, brokerage politics began to decline, and with it, the Liberals. By 2011, scholars of Canadian electoral politics wondered if the once hegemonic party would ever be electorally viable again. How was it then that the 2015 election catapulted the Liberals from a fringe party to majority government? With increasingly sophisticated communications and public opinion measurement technologies, the rise of the political marketing era was crucial to the Liberals’ success.

The purpose of this paper is two-fold. First, it will examine the development of market-, sales-, and product-oriented parties in Canada through the lens of the Lees-Marshment framework. This framework’s understanding of the electoral market builds upon previous trends in Canadian party organization such as professionalization and the creation of electoral machines. The framework also notes how decline in party membership has created political “consumers” who are free to shop the electoral market² and choose the party with the most appealing brand. Secondly, the paper will hypothesize that with new methods of competition and styles of organization, Canadian parties have entered a “new electoral era.”³ The years from 2004 to 2011 are often seen as a dealignment period in the Canadian party system.⁴ In reaction to these years, the 2015 election seemed to realign traditional

bases of party support, through modern electioneering. Although the Conservatives were the first party to adopt the market-oriented approach,⁵ the Liberals have since displaced the Tories in this respect, potentially leading to a period of renewed continuity in the system.

Drawing from the changes in communication tactics and policy development mechanisms in the 21st century, Jennifer Lees-Marshment has become the leading scholar of political marketing theory. The basis of her theory is as follows:

*Political marketing is a cross-disciplinary field that engages literature and practices in marketing, communication, and political science. It is foremost a philosophy characterized by an elite responsiveness to the political marketplace, such as holding a market-orientation, by being in touch with the citizenry, and by reflecting public preferences.*⁶

Political marketing thus fuses the ideas of responsiveness to public opinion with the goals of a party's upper echelons. It is an organizational approach applicable before, during, and after an election, and relates to opposition and governing parties alike.⁷ Parties' shifts toward political marketing strategies are attributable to the rise of the "permanent campaign" and the need for constant gauging of the public's perceptions of decision-making.⁸ Furthermore, with decreased party affiliation, "political consumers" have gained power in the electoral market because parties are always looking to broaden their limited bases.⁹ This is magnified by the constantly changing demographics of the Canadian electorate.¹⁰ In contemporary politics, parties ought to use market intelligence to connect with voters and supporters¹¹ and link party policies with valence issues.¹² Market intelligence aids political parties in making decisions

that coincide with the majority, or at least the plurality, of electors. It is also useful during the campaign in mobilizing party activists as informed brand ambassadors¹³ and in getting electors to the polls, particularly through microtargeting, that is, individualized messaging based on unique preferences associated with a given voter in a party's database system.¹⁴

Within the political marketing framework, there are three ideal types of party organizations: product-, sales-, and market-oriented. The product-oriented party (POP) is ideology-based. It begins with its internally-developed policies, campaigns on the benefits of the policies, and if elected, delivers its platform commitments regardless of changes in public opinion.¹⁵ The sales-oriented party (SOP) may also be rooted in core principles; however, it uses some market intelligence to adjust the party's communication of policy during an election.¹⁶ The SOP's main aim is therefore persuasion. Finally, the most electorally successful party is the market-oriented party (MOP). MOPs begin with public opinion as a basis for policy design and continually integrate market intelligence into their policy adjustment, communication, and delivery (if elected).¹⁷ Despite the potential for success with a market-oriented party organization, parties tend to float back to product or sales approaches once in government.¹⁸

During an election, parties also occupy different competitive roles. Market leaders, or the incumbents, face the most scrutiny and must adopt a defensive strategy that focuses on the track-record of the party.¹⁹ Market challengers are the strongest of the opposition contenders and are best positioned to adopt an offensive strategy and to produce innovative policy.²⁰ If a market challenger can capitalize on a market leader's disconnect with the electorate or turn perceived strengths into weaknesses, that party may win the election.²¹ Market followers are parties that do not vary substantially from the market challengers on many issues, but tend to

exploit market segmentation approaches to gain ground with particular constituencies. Their challenge concerns balancing outreach with loyalty to the grassroots.²² Finally, the market nichers have specialized agendas based on a consistently proposed political product, and thus do not aim to expand their electoral reach beyond their base.²³ Therefore, market leaders and challengers are the most concerned with broad policy and support, whereas market followers and nichers focus on their internal cohesion, core supporters, and ideological policy.

In order to obtain or remain in power, parties' policies must resonate with the public. Policy resonance can be achieved either by aggregating support through market segmentation or catch-all centrism.²⁴ Regardless of which strategy is employed, a party's platform must be distinct, easy to communicate, and seen as authentic or credible, not simply a vote-grabbing tactic.²⁵ If market intelligence indicates a gap between the public and policy-makers, the political product should be adjusted to manage the complex nexus of public-elite and executive-grassroots dynamics so as not to neglect the public in favour of the core or vice versa.²⁶ Party leaders still have the final say on whether or not to follow the research intelligence on their political products,²⁷ but if the leader becomes too focused on personal projects, subsequent electoral success is threatened. Thus, the degree to which implemented policy matches that which was promised in the election is the measure of success for a party's time in office.²⁸

Whereas the debate of the third party system centered around whether the Liberals or the Conservatives were the best brokerage or catch-all party, the current party system is one in which the two vie for the position as the most market-oriented. Conservatives were the first to undertake the political marketing approach, and Liberals lagged behind for years. As early as the Martin era, party activists demanded more public and member involvement in party politics.²⁹ Yet,

while the leader-professional party structure was believed to best pursue the national interest,³⁰ this model did not include the collection of market intelligence to support elite goals. The lack of modernization made the party less responsive to the electorate's concerns, eroding Liberal support and contributing to the 2006 loss to the Conservatives.³¹ It would not be until the crushing defeat of 2011 that the Liberals finally adapted their organization to the political marketing context.

In their first years as government, the Conservative Party was an obvious example of a market-orientation to politics. Following the merger of the Canadian Alliance and the Progressive Conservatives, fears of a social-conservative dismantling of Canadian identity effectively kept the Liberals in power.³² Noticing the gap between public opinion and the Conservative platform, Harper spearheaded a policy declaration at the party's 2005 convention that both strengthened internal support and shifted the Tories toward the centre, a more electorally viable territory.³³ The Conservatives used market intelligence to tap into feelings of distrust for the Liberals and campaigned on accountability, health care reform, and taxes, while the Liberals hoped that voters would reward them for the strong Canadian economy under their tenure.³⁴ Most importantly, the Tories used their unrivaled Constituent Information Management System to microtarget on valence issues and get supporters to the polls on election day.³⁵ As the market challenger, the Conservative Party played to the electorate's sense of disconnect with the long-reigning Liberals and presented a moderate platform that Tory party loyalists could confidently market in the field and that disaffected voters were willing to support.

Once in government, the Tories maintained their market orientation for the first two mandates, tending toward pragmatic stances over ideologically conservative policy. Even when 2008 delivered the Conservatives another precarious

minority government, the party maintained a long-term vision and stuck to its market orientation. For example, when the financial crisis shocked the world in 2008, the Harper government went into deficit to assuage public fears of a situation comparable to the United States. Good branding focuses on reassurance and an aspirational message,³⁶ and the Conservatives began solidifying their brand of strong leadership in difficult circumstances. When the Conservatives finally won a majority government in 2011, however, signs of a return to the SOP model began to appear. Some of the most controversial decisions of the Harper era emerged with his majority government, and voters increasingly felt disconnected from government on issues such as the Fair Elections Act. Where Harper had once prevailed at understanding the market, a vacuum for a new MOP was created with his party's return to SOP status.

In an ironic twist of fate, the 2015 federal election witnessed the Tories campaigning as a SOP defending their economic record, while the Liberals effectively capitalized on public frustration with the Harper government's decreased accountability, negative tone, and staleness from years in office. Furthermore, they turned the Tories' perceived strength (their economic record) into a weakness by pointing to societal inequality in the distribution of economic benefits.³⁷ The Harper government, once an advocate of sweeping democratic reform, also had its credibility tainted by the Duffy trial and PMO scandal.³⁸ Most indicative of the Conservative's abandonment of a market orientation, however, was the decision to pursue wedge issues. By engaging in highly partisan debate on refugee policy, even in light of the Alan Kurdi photo and the niqab, the Conservatives were targeting their base, but these debates did not resonate with potential supporters.³⁹ Perhaps Harper hoped a market segmentation approach would produce some electoral success; however, his policies were often so out-of-touch with the majority of

Canadians that the conditions were ripe for a market challenger to upset the status quo.

After four humiliating years as the rump of parliament, the Liberal Party was in a place where boldness was necessary. They had nothing to lose; “the party’s vaunted electoral machine was in ruins.”⁴⁰ Past leaders had openly rejected market intelligence if it conflicted with their personal convictions,⁴¹ but with the selection of Justin Trudeau as leader in 2013, modernization of the party organization was swift. Liberals finally hopped on the microtargeting bandwagon, developing their Liberalist database in preparation for the looming election.⁴² By the time the writ was dropped, the “Team Trudeau” brand⁴³ and “Real Change”⁴⁴ slogan were primed to be among the first political marketing tools utilized by the Liberal Party.

Initially viewed as market followers in an inferior position to both the governing Conservatives and Official Opposition New Democrats, the Liberals faced an uphill climb from the outset. Because of their market orientation transformation, however, the Liberals were able to gain ground. First of all, the political product of Trudeau leadership stood apart from Mulcair and Harper. While both Mulcair⁴⁵ and Harper⁴⁶ campaigned on their respective experience as seasoned politicians, Trudeau’s less tangible but more inspiring message of “hope and hard work” struck a chord with disaffected voters. “The Liberals offered ‘change voters’ a more ambitious and urgent version of change than the NDP” and a better tone than Harper.⁴⁷ At the time of the election, three in four Canadians believed it was time for a change in government, and most were not afraid of the possibility of fresh leadership.⁴⁸ Using this kind of market intelligence gave the Liberal Party license to be bold with policy. For example, the announcement of deficits was seen to be a turning point in positioning the Liberals as the clear market challenger to

Harper's years of austerity rhetoric.⁴⁹ Furthermore, Liberals were consistent in their promises, lending their campaign credibility.⁵⁰ From start to end, the Trudeau brand was clearly about the middle class and their role in the economy. Popular proposals such as a tax increase on the "wealthiest one percent"⁵¹ worked two-fold to co-opt some soft NDP support and to rebrand a party associated with big business under Chrétien and Martin into a party of the average Canadian.⁵²

At the local level, the Liberals' concerted political marketing efforts were also visible. Whereas past elections had centered around regional appeals for garnering support,⁵³ new technologies for voter engagement, coupled with strong field programs, bypassed regionalism in favour of localism. From canvassing to phone calls to literature drops, constituent interaction proved to be a method of political marketing success, particularly for the Liberals.⁵⁴ This was in stark contrast to the absence of Tory candidates at many local functions, as per national campaign directives. In one-on-one interactions with party activists, data was tracked rigorously through mobile apps into a classification system with the likelihood of that person voting for the party.⁵⁵ Soft supporters could then be flagged for follow-up interactions. When the results finally came in, the Liberals had won a majority mandate, with all 13 provinces and territories represented.⁵⁶ The party's dedication to voter engagement paid off, as evidenced by increased turnout rates and the broad base of support.

It has been just over a year since the Liberal government took office. Early indicators seem to suggest the party has still oriented itself toward the electoral market while in office. The most notable example of the Liberals' commitment to market orientation is the emphasis on consultations, town halls, and online feedback forms.⁵⁷ Furthermore, the government has followed through on many

of its platform promises such as an inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women, a national carbon tax, and the introduction of the Canada Child Benefit.⁵⁸ Continuing to engage with the public through a variety of platforms now that the party is in government seems to be worth the effort; approval ratings of the government remain in the mid to high forties.⁵⁹ It remains to be seen whether the Liberals can maintain their connection to the public pulse over time as decisions become increasingly difficult. The biggest hurdle to preserving the Liberal market orientation may be overpromising.⁶⁰ Issues such as electoral reform, marijuana legalization, and pipelines come to mind with regards to overpromising. If the government loses credibility as a result of overpromising and failing to deliver, the Liberal Party may have no choice but to return to a sales orientation if they can no longer claim to have public opinion reflected in their policy.

While major parties fight for electoral success as MOPs, third parties still play a role in the system as market followers and market nichers who are organized as SOPs or POPs. For example, the NDP, traditionally a POP, has slowly adopted a sales approach, recently witnessed when the party believed it had a chance at government in the 2015 election. Although the NDP did not use market intelligence to alter its policies, it did use market intelligence to help brand them. In 2014, for instance, the New Democrats spent \$375,000 on opinion polling to help steer their strategy.⁶¹ Yet, because they did not begin with market intelligence, the party could only go so far in selling what turned out to be a somewhat flawed product. Particularly on the issue of balanced budgets, NDP credibility as the party of social services was undermined, alienating many members of the base and not effectively reaching “soft” Liberals.⁶² In short, the New Democrat campaign centered around what strategists *thought* would play out well with the public instead of directly utilizing public opinion along the way so the party would *know* it played well. As disappointing of a

blow 2015 was for the NDP, perhaps it is a sign that the party should return to its roots as either a social conscience, market nicher, or as a left-wing balance to the Liberals that offers policy variations as a market follower.

In terms of the Bloc Quebecois and the Greens, their role in the electoral market has been far clearer: they are market nichers. The niche for the BQ is Quebec nationalism, and the niche for the Greens is environmentalism and participatory democracy. Although some of their platform commitments would not resonate with the general electorate, these parties understand that to alienate their base is futile because they will never form government. The persuasive methods of SOPs are not really at play for these parties either. For example, Elizabeth May spent almost all of her campaign time in British Columbia⁶³ and proposed tanker bans and eliminating subsidies for the oil and gas sector.⁶⁴ Clearly, advocacy of constituent interests is the primary concern of the BQ and Greens; therefore, they can be classified as POPs that present their platform “products” on the basis of their inherent benefits to the political consumer. Although minor parties worry less about representing broad public opinion trends in policy, the fact that they will never form government allows them to represent minority concerns that may otherwise be sidelined by the voice of the majority. In this sense, they play a vital role, even in an age of sophisticated political marketing tactics.

Many scholars argued that the 2011 election signified the beginning of polarized politics in Canada,⁶⁵ yet, the 2015 election seems to have refuted this hypothesis. Why did the dynamics change? Given the widespread shift to political marketing strategies, it seems there could be a gap between old understandings of parties and the current system. By this, it is meant that while ideology was the traditional understanding of parties of the 20th century, perhaps political

scientists of the 21st century need to view party organization through a “cross-disciplinary” approach as Lees-Marshment suggests.⁶⁶ Because parties are not only about ideology, this could be why polarization did not come to fruition in the Canadian context. Moreover, scholars should not forget Canada’s long history with the politics of brokerage and catch-all solutions. As Carty notes, Canada lacks natural unification in many areas, so parties have often been the actors to accommodate diverse interests under the umbrella of compromise.⁶⁷ Thus, compromise may still be the norm of Canadian politics, but just in a new form supported by market intelligence of public preferences.

If the above claims are accepted, the Harper era could simply be a protracted “Tory interregnum”⁶⁸ that lasted because of a fundamental shift in the system of party competition toward the political marketing model. Because the characteristics of the fourth party system remain murky,⁶⁹ it is difficult to say when this fifth party system began. Insofar as the system aligns with the dynamics of “continuity and change,”⁷⁰ the stability offered by the 2011 and 2015 elections (albeit for different parties) suggests the new system began with the Harper majority of 2011. In terms of continuity, the system appears to have reset to a two-and-a-half party system similar to the third party system, with Liberals and Conservatives alternating in government. In terms of change, local organization within the party structure seems to have been re-prioritized through expanded technologies for direct voter contact.

Over the course of Canadian history, parties have always fought to carve out a dominant position to win power. In the post-Confederation years that revolved around the “national interest,” in the war and interwar years technocratic Keynesianism arose, and more recently, brokerage was the approach to electoral success.⁷¹ As technology has advanced

and the public has demanded more responsiveness from parties, the system of party competition has changed in favour of the political consumer. Although the Conservative Party was the first to adopt a market orientation, the Liberal Party's history of coalition-building and pan-Canadian policy has helped it displace the Tories in that role. Because political marketing is rooted in representing public preferences directly into party management and policy, there is some altruism to this tactic.⁷² From a pragmatic stance, political marketing is also useful in that the onus is no longer on parties to shape public interest. Instead it is their role to respond to changes in the market.⁷³ Mass, ideological parties may never occupy the space of the MOPs, but they can nonetheless have sway in politics by advocating marginalized opinions. While the subsequent majority governments of the fifth party system suggest a period of stability with the "natural governing party" returned to power, the nature of voter volatility means that responsiveness to the electorate must be prioritized like never before for upheaval to be avoided.

Notes

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² Susan Delacourt, "Shopping for Votes: A Sequel?" in *Canadian Election Analysis 2015: Communication, Strategy, and Democracy*, eds. Alex Marland and Thierry Giasson, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 72.

³ Steve Patten, "The Evolution of the Canadian Party System," in *Canadian Parties in Transition (3rd edition)*, eds. Alain G Gagnon and Brian Tanguay (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2007), 56.

⁴ Koop and Bittner, “Parties and Elections after 2011,” 324.

⁵ Daniel Paré and Flavia Berger, “Political Marketing Canadian Style?” The Conservative Party and the 2006 Federal Election,” *Canadian Journal of Communication* 33.1 (2008): 46
<http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/docview/219534371?accountid=14846>.

⁶ Jennifer Lees-Marshment and Alex Marland, “Canadian Political Consultants’ Perspectives about Political Marketing,” *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 37.2 (2012): 334.
<http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/docview/1027767560?accountid=14846>.

⁷ Paré and Berger, “Political Marketing Canadian Style?” 43.

⁸ Jennifer Lees-Marshment *The Political Marketing Game*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011): 14.

⁹ Paré and Berger, “Political Marketing Canadian Style?” 41-42.

¹⁰ Ken Carty, “Has Brokerage Politics Ended? Canadian Parties in the New Century,” in *Parties, Elections, and the Future of Canadian Politics*, eds. Amanda Bittner and Royce Koop (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013): 11.

¹¹ Paré and Berger, “Political Marketing Canadian Style?” 42.

¹² *Ibid.*, 53.

¹³ Alex Marland, “Marketing political soap: a political marketing view of selling candidates like soap, of electioneering as a ritual, and of electoral military analogies,” *Journal of Public Affairs* 3.2 (2003): 109. Doi: 10.1002/pa.139.

¹⁴ Royce Koop, “Constituency Campaigning in the 2015 Federal Election,” in *Canadian Election Analysis 2015: Communication, Strategy, and Democracy*, eds. Alex Marland and Thierry Giasson, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 42.

¹⁵ Paré and Berger, “Political Marketing Canadian Style?” 44-45.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 44-45.

¹⁷ Paré and Berger, “Political Marketing Canadian Style?” 44-45.

¹⁸ Ibid., 57.

¹⁹ Lees-Marshment, *The Political Marketing Game*, 60.

²⁰ Ibid., 61.

²¹ Ibid., 62.

²² Ibid., 61.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 20.

²⁵ Paré and Berger, “Political Marketing Canadian Style” 50-52

²⁶ Ibid., 48.

²⁷ Lees-Marshment and Marland, “Canadian Political Consultants’ Perspectives,” 337.

²⁸ Lees-Marshment, *The Political Marketing Game*, 168.

²⁹ Stephen Clarkson, *The Big Red Machine: How the Liberal Party Dominates Canadian Politics*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), 219.

³⁰ Patten, “Evolution of the Canadian Party System,” 73.

³¹ Clarkson, *The Big Red Machine*, 248.

³² Lees-Marshment, *The Political Marketing Game*, 69.

³³ Paré and Berger, “Political Marketing Canadian Style?” 49.

³⁴ Ibid., 50.

³⁵ Steve Patten, “Data-Driven Microtargeting in the 2015 General Election,” in *Canadian Election Analysis 2015: Communication, Strategy, and Democracy*, eds. Alex Marland and Thierry Giasson, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 14.

³⁶ Lees-Marshment, *The Political Marketing Game*, 71.

³⁷ Tom Flanagan, “The Conservative Campaign,” in *Canadian Election Analysis 2015: Communication, Strategy, and Democracy*, eds. Alex Marland and Thierry Giasson, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 26.

³⁸ Ibid., 26.

³⁹ Denver McNeney, “Letting the Press Decide? Party Coverage, Media Tone, and Issue Salience in the 2015 Canadian Federal Election Newsprint,” in *Canadian Election Analysis 2015:*

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⁴⁰ Brooke Jeffrey, "The Liberals' Campaign for the Ages," in *Canadian Election Analysis 2015: Communication, Strategy, and Democracy*, eds. Alex Marland and Thierry Giasson, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 30.

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⁴² Patten, "Data-Driven Microtargeting," 14.

⁴³ Jamie Gillies, "The Presidentialization of Executive Leadership in Canada in *Canadian Election Analysis 2015: Communication, Strategy, and Democracy*, eds. Alex Marland and Thierry Giasson, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 38.

⁴⁴ Shannon Sampert and Linda Trimble, "The 'New Normal' of Mediatization and Narrowcasting," in *Canadian Election Analysis 2015: Communication, Strategy, and Democracy*, eds. Alex Marland and Thierry Giasson, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 70

⁴⁵ David McGrane, "The NDP's 'Government in Waiting Strategy,'" in *Canadian Election Analysis 2015: Communication, Strategy, and Democracy*, eds. Alex Marland and Thierry Giasson, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 32.

⁴⁶ Cristine de Clercy, "Leading the Party Troops on a Long Campaign: How the Party Leaders Managed the Message," in *Canadian Election Analysis 2015: Communication, Strategy, and Democracy*, eds. Alex Marland and Thierry Giasson, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 35.

⁴⁷ David Coletto and Maciej Czop, "Change above All Else: The Public Opinion Dynamics That Led to the Liberal Majority in *Canadian Election Analysis 2015: Communication, Strategy, and Democracy*, eds. Alex Marland and Thierry Giasson, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 117.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁴⁹ Jeffrey, "The Liberals' Campaign for the Ages," 31.

⁵⁰ Lees-Marshment, *The Political Marketing Game*, 59.

⁵¹ De Clercy, "Leading the Party Troops," 35.

⁵² Lees-Marshment, *The Political Marketing Game*, 69.

⁵³ Clarkson, *The Big Red Machine*, 206.

⁵⁴ Koop, "Constituency Campaigning," 42.

⁵⁵ Patten, "Data-Driven Microtargeting," 14.

⁵⁶ Richard Johnston, "The 2015 Election and the Canadian Party System," in *Canadian Election Analysis 2015: Communication, Strategy, and Democracy*, eds. Alex Marland and Thierry Giasson, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 22.

⁵⁷ Lees-Marshment, *The Political Marketing Game*, 28.

⁵⁸ Postmedia News. "Everything you need to know about the parties' platforms, from taxes and terrorism to the environment," *National Post*, August 2, 2015. Accessed November 16, 2016.

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⁶⁰ Lees-Marshment and Marland, "Political Consultants' Perspectives," 341.

⁶¹ Mark Burgess, "The Permanent Campaign Meets the 78-day Campaign, and Falls Apart," in *Canadian Election Analysis 2015: Communication, Strategy, and Democracy*, eds. Alex Marland and Thierry Giasson, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 19.

⁶² McGrane, "The NDP's Government in Waiting Strategy," 32.

⁶³ Nelson Wiseman, "Regional Sensibilities and Regional Voting," in *Canadian Election Analysis 2015: Communication, Strategy, and Democracy*, eds. Alex Marland and Thierry Giasson, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 99.

⁶⁴ Postmedia News. “Everything you need to know about the parties’ platforms.”

⁶⁵ Koop and Bittner, “Parties and Elections after 2011,” 324-325.

⁶⁶ Lees-Marshment and Marland, “Political Consultants’ Perspectives,” 334.

⁶⁷ Carty, “Has Brokerage Politics Ended?” 10.

⁶⁸ Koop and Bittner, “Parties and Elections after 2011,” 310

⁶⁹ Clarkson, *The Big Red Machine*, 234.

⁷⁰ Royce Koop and Amanda Bittner, “Introduction,” in *Parties, Elections, and the Future of Canadian Politics*, eds. Amanda Bittner and Royce Koop, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013), 2.

⁷¹ Patten, “The Evolution of the Canadian Party System,” 57-58.

⁷² Lees-Marshment and Marland, “Political Consultants’ Perspectives,” 334.

⁷³ Marland, “Marketing political soap,” 106.

The Labyrinth:

Powers of Freedom and the Politics of Self-Government

Jordan Konyk

This paper explores a single central question: what does the “analytics of governmentality” undertaken in Nikolas Rose’s 1999 work, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, tell us about self-government? In order to explore this question, I trace in this paper a number of key themes that are significant to Rose’s analysis. Among them are the relationship between power, freedom and government; the significance of an analytics of governmentality as a methodological approach; the role of the self, governable subjects and self-government; and the ways in which spaces of government come to be seen as such. Ultimately, I propose a visual metaphor as a productive way of understanding the vision of self-government articulated by Rose. That is, *Powers of Freedom* presents a vision of the government of self and others that encourages an understanding of self-government in terms of contingent and shifting labyrinths, of deeply complex systems of choices and possibilities, laid down in paths and framed by walls, that encourage subjects to move through them in delimited but creative ways – offering multiple possibilities for subjects to ‘act upon action’ and freely navigate within, but ultimately constrained by fixed and clear borders, and leading towards central goals and governmental aims.

Rose introduces his book as a response to “conventional ways of analyzing power and politics”.¹ Whereas conventional “ideas about the human beings who were the subjects of power” conceptualized and defined freedom in negative terms, of “the absence of coercion or domination”, Rose is concerned with the ways in which this has been “fundamentally

challenged by contemporary politics itself”.² Instead of looking to a rigid and mechanistic understanding of power as something which forces subjects to act certain ways, imposing from the outside and determining the capacity of a subject to be a certain thing or make certain choices, Rose looks to Foucault for a vision of power that takes subjectivity into account. Here power differs from domination in that power presupposes “the capacity of the subject of power to act”.³ Instead of reflecting the conventional view of politics as the arena for the application of power, this alternative understanding recognizes that “we have come to relate to ourselves as creatures of self-responsibility and self-mastery, with the capacity to transform ourselves and make our own lives the object of practices of self-shaping”.⁴ This is not a vision where subjects are at the whim of external power, but one where they are active in the project of creating and cultivating their own life. Even under power, the subject can act upon themselves.

It follows that if power is not simply something applied in relations of domination or coercion, then the conventional negative conceptualization of freedom as the absence of domination is inadequate as well. Freedom is not simply the absence of external power, but “a kind of power one brings to bear upon oneself, and a mode of bringing power to bear upon others”.⁵ Freedom entails a set of “self-activating capacities”,⁶ and is built around “autonomy, the capacity to realize one’s desires in one’s secular life, to fulfil one’s potential through one’s own endeavours, to determine the course of one’s own existence through acts of choice”.⁷ Freedom is understood in the positive sense, as the capacity to do certain things and follow certain paths as an individual. Thus, freedom is not the absence of power, but a certain type of power. And it can be brought upon oneself or brought upon others. This account of power recognizes the capacity of the subject to act upon

themselves, and understands freedom as a certain practice of power. What emerges is a vision of contemporary politics where in operations of power there are elements of freedom, and where in operations of freedom there are elements of power. This relationship between power and freedom is complex and reciprocal – neither element existing or operating in isolation from the other. Understanding power and freedom in such a way is necessary, for it is in these relationships that the importance of government emerges.

Building on Foucault's lectures on governmentality, where government was understood as the "conduct of conduct",⁸ Rose refers to government as "all endeavours to shape, guide, direct the conduct of others" and "the ways in which one might be urged and educated to bridle one's own passions, to control one's own instincts, to govern oneself".⁹ Counter to domination, which attempts to quell the capacity for the action of the dominated, government "is to recognize that capacity for action".¹⁰ Government is about enabling the action of the subject in certain ways and in particular directions. Indeed, "to govern is to act upon action" and to "presuppose the freedom of the governed".¹¹ By presupposing freedom, government recognizes the capacity of the subject to act upon themselves – recognizing the freedom and power of the subject. In acting upon action, government understands its subject as a free thing capable of particular conduct, and government uses that capacity for conduct to achieve certain ends. The subject has the capacity for action – to get the ball rolling, so to speak – and government acts upon this action – guiding the ball and influencing the terrain over which it rolls. While government is not confined to action, existing as a "genuinely heterogeneous dimension of thought and action",¹² comprised of a range of techniques and approaches, it does consider the capacity of the subject as its starting point. Thus emerges the seeming paradox that is at the center of Rose's

analysis, that we are “to be governed through our freedom”.¹³ The idea of governing through freedom emerged out of liberalism, significant because “for the first time the arts of government were systematically linked to the practice of freedom”.¹⁴ In this approach individuals are to come to “recognize and act upon themselves as both free and responsible, both beings of liberty and members of society”.¹⁵ Government thus works through both acting upon oneself and being acted upon, centered on the relationship between freedom and power, recognizing the importance of both, and yet prioritizing neither. Government through freedom is not about establishing or reinforcing domination or absolute power, but about accounting for and using the action of subjects to guide their conduct in ways that are in-line with their freedom.

Having briefly introduced the concepts of power, freedom and government as they are presented by Rose, it is useful to also consider the methodology that informs his account. Understanding what it is to undertake an ‘analytics of governmentality’ is necessary for understanding the wider context of *Powers of Freedom*. By elaborating on the overall project of what Rose is trying to accomplish, a much clearer space for the idea of self-government can begin to emerge.

From the outset Rose characterizes his project as the attempt to “suggest some alternative ways of thinking about our contemporary regimes of government and their histories”.¹⁶ In order to do this, he adopts an approach that seeks to “open a space for critical thought”,¹⁷ and, “stand against the maxims of one’s time, against the spirit of one’s age, against the current of received wisdom”.¹⁸ To approach the study of government in this way is to ask questions that focus on “what authorities of various sorts wanted to happen, in relation to problems defined how, in pursuit of what

objectives, through what strategies and techniques”.¹⁹ This entails adopting a genealogical approach, conducting a ‘history of the present’ that seeks to “examine the various ways in which the relations between power and freedom have been established”.²⁰ This is a fundamentally empirical project, where attention is paid to how things work and how they have come about. It adopts a critical stance, working on the assumption that by paying proper attention to the technical details and operations of various phenomena, certain questions will emerge that allow for the historically contingent and constructed nature of our contemporary world to be illuminated. Whereas at first glance certain understandings of freedom and government may seem to be natural, an analytics of governmentality is intended to illustrate how they are anything but. Work on governmentality has thus showed it is possible to “identify specific political rationalizations emerging in precise sites and at specific historical moments, and underpinned by coherent systems of thought, and that one could show how different kinds of calculations, strategies, and tactics were linked to each”.²¹ By understanding the ways in which ‘specific political rationalizations’ have emerged in the past, a sort of self-location in the space and time of the present is made possible. Furthermore, analytics of governmentality show that “the activity of government is inextricably bound up with the activity of thought. It is thus both made possible by and constrained by what can be thought and what cannot be thought at any particular moment in our history”.²² An analytics of governmentality thus operates in two spaces; one concerned with the minutia and technicalities of specific practices, such as the “encounters where conduct is subject to government”,²³ and the other the realm of governmental thought and rationality. In some sense, this is about tracking and articulating how “the values of freedom have been made real within practices for the government of conduct”.²⁴ The critical power of an analytics of governmentality is vested in

this articulation – the ways in which values or thought or rationalities are ‘made real’ as practices and techniques. By providing empirical accounts of how rationalities are ‘made real’, an analytics of governmentality upsets notions that the world has just ‘ended up a certain way’ while suggesting that our agency is far greater than we may realize. For if the rationalities of others can be made real, then perhaps we can find or create spaces where our own rationalities can be made real in the space of our own lives. In this, a certain notion of self-government – the ‘making real’ of our own rationalities – emerges from the methodological approach of an analytics of governmentality itself.

Rose’s genealogy of freedom is about attempting to look at the “ways in which freedom was put together historically, and the practices which it entails in the present”, ultimately helping to, “calculate the costs of being what we have become; hence it might allow us to invent ways of becoming other than what we are”.²⁵ The line that is drawn from historical to contemporary practices implies a certain trajectory, where thought is ‘made real’ and conditions are in a constant state of change, evolution and contingency. By having this line be made visible, in connecting past practices with present conditions, we can see that the present is able to be changed, and that there is a possibility of controlling, or at least influencing or improvising upon, where it goes in the future. In this spirit, Rose writes:

In showing us that what we take to be solid and inevitable is less so than we believe, genealogies of power and freedom also show us that we do not know what human beings are capable of, and that it has been, and is, possible for even the most unlikely subjects, in the most unpropitious circumstances, to act upon their

limits in the names of no principle but that of their own life.²⁶

In exposing the path from the past to the present, genealogies offer possibilities for action that support a strong form of self-government – they illuminate past practices and show that the dominant order is always up for contestation, that acting upon one’s own life is always a possibility, and that nothing is fixed or immutable. As a methodology, an analytics of governmentality thus seems to presuppose the capacity of subjects to act as self-governing. The usefulness of this approach is to “view the present as an array of problems and questions, an actuality to be acted upon and within by genealogical investigation, to be made amenable to action by the action of thought”.²⁷ Though an analytics of governmentality may claim to be morally neutral – to refrain from strong judgements about the rightness or wrongness of any given state of affairs – it does embrace self-government as an ontological feature of life. The capacity to act, whether as a modern liberal individual or any other historical form of subjectivity, is always present, and it is the action of the subject, however conceived, that is of great significance. Understood in such a way, it is conceivable that any book written in-line with an analytics of governmentality would contain, whether explicitly or not, a great deal of insight on the subject of self-government. *Powers of Freedom* is no exception.

In understanding the role of self-government in Rose’s analytics of governmentality, it seems obvious that questions surrounding the ‘self’ should be dealt with. What is the self? How can one call themselves a self? How has the self changed over time? What is the difference between governing the self and governing others? While these are interesting questions, Rose moves away from questions of this type. Criticizing the sociologically commonplace “grand history of the procession of

human types [...] from traditional subjects scarcely individuated, through the isolated, self-contained atoms of individualistic capitalism to the fragmented subject of post modernity”, he instead suggests that the history of the self is multiple, consisting of “the objectifications of human being within the discourses that would govern them, and their subjectification in diverse practices and techniques”.²⁸ In this multiple history, there is no unifying self that reigns at any given point in time, no set of conceptualizations that can articulate the experience of subject-hood across various subjects in any given historical context. Instead of the self understood in the context of the ‘procession of human types’, there is the subject, constantly changing and mutating, responding to subjectification and objectification and shifting based on the practical actions and interventions made by a variety of actors who wish to govern. In understanding the subject as such, the goal is not to locate or understand a certain type of self in a given epoch, but to go about “identifying the ways in which human beings are individuated and addressed within the various practices that would govern them, the relations to themselves that they have taken up within the variety of practices within which they have come to govern themselves”.²⁹ Rather than understanding the self as the starting point for government, or as the thing that must be governed, this brings to light the active role of government in crafting certain conceptions of the self, and the reciprocal condition of certain conceptions of the self-crafting modes of governance.

As such, rather than taking on the burden of asking the question of ‘what is the self?’ this approach asks a rather different set of questions that orbit around the ‘how’ of the subject. How does one relate to others? How is one governed? How does one govern themselves? These sorts of questions lead to a practical understanding of what Foucault called

“techniques of the self”,³⁰ that were “articulated in a whole variety of mundane texts of social reformers, campaigners for domestic hygiene, for urban planning and the like, each of which embodied certain presuppositions about what human subjects were” and were “made technical, embodied in a whole series of interventions aimed at producing the human being as a moral creature capable of exercising responsible judgement and stewardship over its own conduct”.³¹ Rather than focusing on the self as a historically significant or epochal mode of being, this approach localizes and adds specificity and context to the mundane and technical processes through which subjects come to understand their roles as responsible for governing themselves in certain things and being governed in others. Undertaking a genealogy of these ‘techniques of the self’, one can see a variety of forms of subjectification and objectification taking place that are exemplary of the changing features of the conditions of government at any given point in time.³² What the changing and contingent nature of the subject illustrates, and what is most relevant to this investigation of self-government, is that the process of government – of ‘acting upon action’ – is constantly active, churning and producing and operating, and is able to function relatively independently of whatever changing conceptions of the subject are in-play in any given context.

This is a point worth clarifying and elaborating. What I am suggesting is that because the self is not subject to any grand historical account, because you cannot point to a ‘capitalist self’ or a ‘post-modern self’ and reach any reliable conclusions without also diving deeply into the practices and articulations of government surrounding them, then it appears as if the action of government exists on a separate plane from that of the self. Insofar as conceptualizations of the self are contingent on approaches to governing, government exists on a different level. In this sense one can imagine a spatial plane of

government that can reach down into the self – or any other site – depending on what action is to be acted upon. When something needs to be governed, this governmental plane is engaged, and the site where it reaches down, whether the self or the family or the classroom, is not necessarily a function of some inherent quality of the thing that needs governing, but is entirely dependent on a variety of pragmatic and practical responses to contingent and shifting conditions. In this light, there is nothing particularly special about ‘self-government’ – it is merely one of the sites where governing can take place, a site where the plane of government is engaged with respect to a particular idea about what can be governed and how. If it is pragmatic to govern by acting upon the action of the self, to cordon off or define a certain aspect of the ‘conduct of conduct’ as that belonging to the conduct of the self, then conceptions of self-government will be engaged. As the genealogical approach shows, these differ over space and time, they are always being created and recreated, and changing based on context.

This does not mean that self-government is unimportant, or that subjects have no agency in regard to the ways in which they govern themselves. What it does suggest is that it is potentially misleading to try and settle on or nail down a certain conception of self-government that assumes a certain type of self or subject. By viewing government as something independent of the subject, as a separate plane of action, even when that subject is self-governing, one can create a more nuanced picture of how conduct is regulated. This moves away from the notion that self-government is necessarily better or more just, as it exposes how notions of the self are contingent on the operations of the plane of government themselves. This is not to suggest that the pursuit of self-government should be abandoned, instead, it is to suggest that by acknowledging the self as something that is contingent upon and susceptible to action from the plane of

government, broader possibilities for changing or taking hold of this relationship can be had. Given that “there is no such thing as ‘the governed’, only multiple objectifications of those over whom government is to be exercised”³³, these objectifications can be challenged. By asserting different and changing ideas of the self as a certain type of thing over which government is to be exercised, the relationship between self and government can be changed without falling into an obsession over certain types of self-government – such as the liberal “despotism of the self”³⁴– at the expense of other possibilities for conduct and politics that may extend beyond self-government. There is thus a certain type of fluidity and sense of possibility that comes from understanding ourselves as “governable subjects”³⁵, instead of simply as subjects who should strive for self-government.

If government is to be seen as existing on a plane, able to reach down and be enacted or engaged at different sites such as the self, then an important question becomes how these sites are chosen. As Rose puts it, “Governing does not just act on a pre-existing thought world with its natural divisions. To govern is to cut experience in certain ways, to distribute attractions and repulsions, passions and fears across it, to bring new facets and forces, new intensities and relations into being.”³⁶ If we are concerned with self-government, then the mechanisms or operations behind how the conduct of conduct is sorted or distributed into different spaces become highly relevant. Beyond the question of ‘what is self-government?’ this question becomes, ‘how did it come to be that that conduct is considered to be in the space of self-government?’ and ‘why is government enacted at certain sites in certain ways?’ Rose explores these questions through a variety of empirical examples, among them the functions of norms and numbers.

In order to govern, it must be possible to represent “the domain to be governed as an intelligible field with specifiable limits and particular characteristics”³⁷ and, “render visible the space over which government is to be exercised.”³⁸ An example of how one of these governable spaces was created and ‘rendered visible’ is through the development of norms – certain criteria that opened up ‘objective’ standards of behaviour, conduct and being which made intelligible to government a vast array of personal characteristics that were previously invisible. “Norms could be calculated for populations, individuals could be individuated by comparing their characteristics [...] with those of the population as a whole. The capacity to identify, measure, instill and regulate through the idea of the norm becomes a key technique of government.”³⁹ The norms calculated by statisticians opened new territories for government, filling in spaces on the maps of governance that were previously *terra incognita*. As a result of the mapping of this space of governance “free individuals became governable – in a range of different ways with different consequences – as normal subjects. To be free, in this modern sense, is to be attached to a polity where certain civilized modes of conducting one’s existence are identified as normal.”⁴⁰ Here a mode of government – the development of statistical norms – reaches down and changes what it is to be a subject. Indeed, in his discussion of numbers, Rose writes “numbers do not merely inscribe a pre-existing reality. They constitute it.”⁴¹

Whereas today our sense of self may be tied to norms in quite clear ways (from physical characteristics such as ‘tall’ or ‘short’ to more complex sociological and psychological ones such as ‘depressed’ or ‘happy’) that influence how we govern ourselves in daily life, these are not necessarily obvious or apparent without reference to norms that developed and were made visible through the process of government. Thus spaces

of government that may seem to naturally fall within the realm of self-government are not necessarily inherent to the realm of the self at all. If a norm which we govern ourselves by was not even conceivable in the recent past, then how can it be said to be an inherent characteristic of the self, or fall necessarily into the space of self-government? “Numbers, and the techniques of calculation in terms of numbers, have a role in subjectification – they can turn individuals into a calculating self endowed with a range of ways of thinking about, calculating about, predicting and judging their own activities and those of others.”⁴² The same certainly applies to norms – indeed, norms are only possible and thinkable through numbers – and it is illustrative of the ‘subjectification’ inherent in many modes of government. In creating certain types of subjects, norms and numbers carve out certain spaces for government to occupy. The location of the space of government, be it the self or elsewhere, is not the whole story – the whole story is how a certain practice was constructed, how it evolved, and how and where it was located among all the other possible spaces for the conduct of conduct.

Understanding the ways in which spaces of government are constructed allows for a further problematization of the concept of self-government. Again the idea of the self is called into question, this time because of the complex and contingent processes of government that lead to the spacialization of the self as constituting certain areas and not others. If we base our claims to self-government on certain intelligible fields, such as norms or numbers, we are bringing into these claims a vast array of governmental technologies and histories that extend far beyond the government of our self. Indeed, the very idea that a certain aspect of life or politics should be centered on or around self-government can be considered a function of government. Much of Rose’s analysis of freedom is based on this observation, that individuals, “must come to recognize and act upon themselves as both free and responsible, both beings

of liberty and members of society, if liberal government is to be possible.”⁴³ Liberalism extends the spaces of government to encompass individual’s freedom, responsibility, liberty, and place in society in order to achieve certain governmental ends. Whether or not this is desirable is largely a matter of opinion. What is more important in this analysis is the recognition that spaces of government – including and perhaps especially self-government – are contingent and constructed.

How can these observations on self-government, drawn from the analysis provided by Rose, be understood or conceptualized in a more complete and systematic way? In other words, what does *Power of Freedom* actually suggest about self-government? I think the best way of answering this is by looking towards a visual metaphor for a clear picture of the government of self and others – that of the labyrinth. Labyrinths of self-government consist of deeply complex systems of choices and possibilities, laid down in paths and framed by walls, that encourage subjects to move through them in delimited but creative ways – offering multiple possibilities for subjects to ‘act upon action’ and freely navigate within, but ultimately constrained by fixed and clear borders, and leading towards central goals and aims. A self-governing subject thus has a high degree of choice within the labyrinth. She can take any number of paths and combine them in creative ways. Within the labyrinth she is free to move around and explore, to govern herself at each intersection by ‘acting upon action’ and choosing a direction. Over time the structure of the labyrinth will change, closing and opening various spaces, widening certain paths, and changing specific walls. These changes will function like pragmatic interventions, designed to better facilitate the ability of subjects within the labyrinth to navigate and reach certain points. The ways in which the subject can move are constrained and delimited; if she tries to govern herself in a manner different from how the

labyrinth was designed, she will face barriers. The walls are not permeable, the paths not changeable. Within this labyrinth there is both freedom and control, self-government and government by others.

To extend this metaphor one final step, we can look at the function of an analytics of governmentality on the labyrinth of self-government. In conducting an analytics of governmentality, one can begin to trace historical lines and examine the changing nature of practices, changing conceptions of self, and changing spaces of government. In the labyrinth, this would give one perspective, it would change their point of view, allowing them to ascend from a fixed point so that individual paths, sections, and the structure itself would become visible and be made more intelligible. This would provide context for each path, and it might influence how one would govern themselves within the labyrinth. The crucial question, however, is if there is a way to escape – can one level the walls and paths and navigate completely freely? Would that be a condition of self-government? If not, then what is self-government about? Is it about breaking free of a structure entirely, or is it about navigating within a structure with a certain awareness?

Rose concludes *Powers of Freedom* with the idea that “rather than subordinate oneself in the name of an external code, truth, authority or goal, such a politics [the politics of life as ‘a work of art’] would operate under a different slogan: each person’s life should be its own telos. It would thus have its own minimal normativity: we should oppose all that which stands in the way of life being its own telos.”⁴⁴ This politics of life would be against essentialism, against identity and against humanist conceptions of self, but “in favour of life.”⁴⁵ For Rose, it seems that such a politics of self-government would seek to flatten the walls of the labyrinth and remove all obstacles that stand in the way of the pursuit of one’s end. Perhaps this is the

ideal form of self-government, but so too could value be found in the long and patient process of moving through a labyrinth. If nothing else, one might seek to gain new perspective on his or her position and govern themselves accordingly, to ‘reframe political thought’ for themselves, in line with the subtitle of *Powers of Freedom*. By recognizing the functions of power, freedom and government, by gaining perspective through genealogical investigation and the analytics of governmentality, and through tracing changing conceptions of the self and the shifting spaces of governance, one might equip themselves with the tools necessary to pursue his or her own telos and to “take the side of an active art of living”⁴⁶ even if in the end, escape from the labyrinth of self-government is not possible.

Notes

¹ Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1.

² *Ibid.*, 1–2.

³ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 3.

¹⁷ Ibid., 19.

¹⁸ Ibid., 20.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 65.

²¹ Ibid., 24.

²² Ibid., 8.

²³ Ibid., 5.

²⁴ Ibid., 10.

²⁵ Ibid., 97.

²⁶ Ibid., 284.

²⁷ Ibid., 11.

²⁸ Ibid., 41.

²⁹ Ibid., 43.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 42.

³² Ibid., 44–46.

³³ Ibid., 40.

³⁴ Ibid., 43.

³⁵ Ibid., 40.

³⁶ Ibid., 31.

³⁷ Ibid., 33.

³⁸ Ibid., 36.

³⁹ Ibid., 75.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 76.

⁴¹ Ibid., 212.

⁴² Ibid., 214.

⁴³ Ibid., 68.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 283.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

