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URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS: A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABOUT CIDS

CIDS (Conversations in Development Studies) is a peer-reviewed, quarterly research publication produced by the research team of Centre for New Economics Studies, O.P. Jindal Global University. The student-led editorial journal features solicited research commentaries (in the range of 2500-3000 words) from scholars currently working in the cross-sectional aspects of development studies. Each published CIDS Issue seeks to offer a comprehensive analysis on a specific theme identified within the scope of development scholarship.

The editorial team's vision is to let CIDS organically evolve as a space for cultivating creative ideas for research scholars (within and outside the University) to broaden the development discourse through conceptual engagement and methodological experimentation on contemporary issues.

Any research commentary submission features: a) brief review of the literature on a given research problem; b) the argument made by the author with details on the method used; c) documenting the findings and relevance of them in the larger scope of the literature; and (in some instances) d) present a brief policy action plan for agencies of the state (to address the issue-highlighted in the commentary). There are no pre-identified limitations or restrictions to methodological frameworks used by solicited scholars (i.e. those writing the commentary). However, the method incorporated in any accepted submission must be explained along with its relevance in context to the nature of the study undertaken.
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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Urban Transformations: A Transnational Perspective

The rate and pace of Urban transformation seen across the Indian landscape is changing the face of cities and the fate of its inhabitants. In common parlance, the phenomenon could also be observed as a new form of ‘urban renewal’ or ‘urban rehabilitation’. The scale of transformation simultaneously influences channels of distribution of: endowments (such as land, labour, capital); power (politically and financially), and knowledge of and within cities, and their interaction with other cities.

There is a critical need to understand the sociological, economic, spatial effects of “the new urban” and how it is dynamically affecting the demographical, ecological and consumption landscape within (and outside cities in India). Subsequently, a closer understanding of such events may help one collectively study the process of urban transformation, and study how it leads to urban restructuring, privatisation, intertwining of culture and economy. These are some of the inevitable consequences that results as part of growth of a city.

At the same time, such holistic view is not free from well-founded fears and critiques. Unplanned scale of urban transformation in emerging nations (including India) wreaks havoc in lives of migrating groups from distant or proximate rural spaces, while structurally altering the ecological base of the urban space. It further accentuates existing conflicts and competition in access to basic social and economic services, sometimes creating a rhetorical axis of ‘us vs. them’ (as seen in the political discourses on ‘negative’ effects of immigration).

In the present issue, three commentaries are being discussed here to showcase a transnational perspective of urbanization and the accompanying issues that surface from it.

The first commentary is a featurette of the Inter-Disciplinary Workshop on Development Studies, 2019 that examines three of the workshop research presentations made during the panel discussion sessions of the Workshop. These feature presentations by Professor H.B. Shin (London School of Economics), presenting his work on gentrification and urban
transformation in Seoul; Professor Mara Noguiera’s (London School of Economics) work in Brazil about labor markets and the effect of migrants and global competition. The third presentation is of Professor Santosh Mehrotra (JNU), who expressed his views on the nature of India’s urbanization and migration pattern, further focusing on the three critical challenges accompanying migratory trends across Indian cities.

The second commentary, by Abhay Amal (Research Assistant, Centre for New Economics Studies), looks at the Rwandan Genocide, analysing the identity conflict between the Hutus and the Tutsis and provides a comparative to the Holocaust. It further talks of the conflict between Rwanda and Brunei, with the argument of why Rwanda facing the major consequences of the mentioned conflict being highlighted in the commentary. The third and final research commentary is the result of field surveys and ethnographic research done in the area of Munnar, by Shyam Hari P. (Phd Candidate, NIAS), analysing the Pembilai Orumai movement, or the women united movement. His commentary presents an analysis showcasing how gender was not the main reason for the creation of the group, rather the specific interest of the community which came under the guise of a gender movement.
Urban Transformation- A Transnational Perspective
ISDS Workshop 2019 Featurette

Tarini Mehtani and Prithviraj Khann*

The following featurette will delve into the several research questions posed at the ISDS Workshop 2019 over the theme of Urban Transformations. Research on three different countries by leading research scholars and academicians is discussed here, especially in context to the role of the development state in catering to growing infrastructural needs due to changing societal dynamics and rapid urbanization. The issue of gentrification and the expanding housing sector in South Korea; the effect of the Chinese economy on local street vendors in Brazil, and the issues of employment, education and urbanization due to increased internal migration in India to highlight the different policy approaches used by the state and their limitations. Each research study concluded with proposals of issues which the state must focus on to tackle the rapid transformations occurring in urban spaces in their respective countries.

INTRODUCTION

The ISDS Workshop was held on 21st September, 2019 on the theme of Urban Transformations at OP Jindal Global University, Sonipat. The Workshop, organized by the Center for New Economic Studies, JSIA, constituted of three panel discussions on trending issues of urbanization. These includes topics such as migration and its socio-economic effects, changing topographies of land use from climate change and changing dynamics of social identities in urban spaces. The following commentary will be focusing on a range of presentations made within the abovementioned framework providing a transnational perspective on urban policies, planning and trends across the world and the role the developing state has played in tackling those issues. The common themes

1 Inter-Disciplinary Workshop on Development Studies, 2019 organized by the Center for New Economic Studies at OP Jindal Global University. The theme for the workshop was Urban Transformations.

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among the three different case studies is the conflict between inhabitants and the new immigrants in urban cities, the expansion of infrastructure transforming previous urban orders and the emergence of a politics of an ‘us vs. them’. This will include the urbanization and gentrification observation in South Korea, the social effects of labor markets in Brazil and the effect of migration in urban planning of India.

EMERGING TRENDS IN URBANIZATION POLICY: A CASE STUDY OF THE RE-DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

In the presentation made before the delegates of the Workshop, Professor Shin Hyun B. explained the operation of several key factors in urban policy which emerged from the re-development done in Seoul during the 1960s-1970s. The context established showcased a city housing one-fifth of the population of the country with only one percent of the territory, thus creating a high population density. In the 1960s, the growth of industrialization was coupled with migration of labor that boosted the economic development of the city, however the infrastructure of the city, especially housing, could not accommodate the same. This led to the creation of illegal and sub-standard housing settlements called *panchajoan* to emerge around Seoul. The growth of such illegal settlements, fueled by government neglect forced the government to undertake several redevelopment and construction programs.

The gentrification policy of the government operated through a two-prong approach. The first prong relied on the restriction of illegal constructions through monitoring and public awareness. The second prong involved the sanctioning of constructing large-scale residential estates and housing programs, the later reiterations of which relied heavily on collaborations between real estate businesses and property owners. The implementation of such a policy, according to Prof. Shin led to the promotion of vertical accumulation, where accumulation relied on high-density construction. This accumulation strategy led to a huge socio-economic hardship to be faced by the local residents as a result of displacement and relocation.

An important highlight from the above gentrification policy is the role of the developmental state, and its overall exercise of hegemony in the stated
context. Professor Shin explains how the increasing focus on the industrialization lead to a rise in demand for urbanization. A relation was then drawn to increasing the hegemony of the State who is primarily responsible for ensuring adequate housing for residents. Therefore, an increase in the demand for urbanization also needs an increase in the hegemony of the State by the virtue of it being the only source for its provision. This further leads towards the increase in domination of the State, thus envisaging a model of hegemony similar to that discussed by Gramsci and David Harvey. Rapid development thus gets enforced with the help of coercion, consent and cooperation of the local residents, according to Professor Shin. The state ensures a simultaneous presence of consent through coercive practices employed to ensure rapid development of areas. The type of state-led development, Professor Shin stated, aims to ensure a type of property hegemony which emerges from the state consolidating its power as a result of coercion, cooperation and consent of the local residents.

The theoretical context set-up by Professor Shin further analyses the re-development schemes of the government in the 1980s and 1990s, where there was an increase in the value of real estate as well as growing trends of speculative markets emerging. The urban policies of the municipal government, viewed as a trial and error method by Professor Shin, learnt from the policies of the 1970s to launch a model that will be followed for decades, called the Joint Redevelopment Program (JRP). Unlike the 1970s, the focus of this program was on high-rise apartments for the emerging middle class, either for investment or consumption, which would be constructed through joint partnerships between local property owners and builders, who financed and constructed the entire project. Prior to the JRP, the focus on controlling the substandard settlements led to acts such as the Temporary Act being adopted that created unfavorable conditions for property owners to invest in their own properties. Such suppression of development and gentrification, according to Professor Shin, led to an increase in the rent gap. This gap, therefore allowed for opportunities of reaping profits when the JRP got introduced and these settlements became open to commercial redevelopment.

In his conclusion, Professor Shin presented an opposing view to the general trend of gentrification that has a mobility aspect to it but rather in the case of Seoul, how there was an endogenous process undertaken to develop Seoul’s gentrification. This process did not rely on allowing
individual development, but rather entire neighborhoods were demolished and mass scale housing estates built in their position to cater to the needs of the middle-class population. While commenting on the future of gentrification in Seoul, Professor Shin remarked the importance of the developmental state and how its role in creating the speculative real estate investment environment broadens the present understanding of the global geography of gentrification. This further showcases how the State along with the conglomerates as its partners, creates a need for contextualizing the role of real estate capital and its relationship with the State. Therefore, the future depends on the real estate market, and how investor confidence reverts after the 2008 financial crisis.

THE IMPACT OF RESTRUCTURING OF GLOBAL MARKETS ON THE BRAZILLIAN INFORMAL ECONOMY

Professor Mara presented research on the ‘Impacts of the restructuring of global markets on the Brazilian informal economy and the effect Chinese migrants have had on local street vendors in the city of Belo Horizonte. She studies how the influx of Chinese migrant vendors and their products have affected the business of local street vendors and links it to a larger interaction between the global markets and the Brazilian informal economy.

The local street vendors at the hyper centre of the city of Belo Horizonte were banned from setting up their stalls at the hyper centre due to the overcrowding of the city. They were asked to vacate from their original selling locations and some were relocated to shopping malls. The vendors who remained on the street were shown no tolerance as street vending was made illegal. The shopping malls the vendors were relocated to had mostly Chinese migrant vendors which caused local vendors to compete with cheaper made-in-China products. The rent of these malls increased with time which most shopkeepers could not afford and started going back to the streets. As local vendors left the malls, Chinese migrants vendors occupied the shops. Although street vending remains illegal, the government cannot implement the law as they have been unable to adeptly handle the ongoing economic crisis. The total number of street vendors therefore increased between 2013-2017.
In 2017, the government attempted to formalize the market and include street vendors in it however the vendors were unhappy with the policy as it didn’t address their issues as details regarding labor rights and social security amongst others remained as precarious as before. This sparked violent encounters between street vendors and the police and the vendors were relocated back to the shopping malls. However, as the shopping malls restricted vendors’ mobility and shortened their working hours, they left the malls and returned to the street once again. In 2018, vendors began a political movement on the streets and demanded greater inclusion in the market.

Professor Mara also explained how Brazil’s economy has been impacted by the competition of cheap industrial goods from China. An increase in Chinese imports caused by a rise in Chinese immigrants has impacted Brazil’s trade relations with other countries, especially Paraguay, with whom Brazil had strong trade relations. These cheaper Chinese products have made the local markets more competitive which has directly impacted local vendors.

This brings out three key aspects of the changing dynamics of social identities in Brazil’s urban spaces. The first is the porosity between formal and informal. As countries develop and markets expand, it is integral for the state to create mechanisms and policies that include informal markets and grant them more recognition and security especially in emerging economies. Second, we see the multi-scalar nature of informal economies which employ significant portions of both developing and emerging economies. Finally, with the rise of Chinese immigrants in Brazil and their impact on the local economy, claims based on identity and a politics of difference has emerged which has led to increased tensions between different ethnic communities. An increase in identity based claims is being witnessed in multiple countries across the world and poses a major threat to democracy along with challenges to the sustained and equitable development for all groups of a society. Overall, the transformations occurring in Brazil’s urban spaces require a review of state mechanisms in handling them and making space for those changes without hampering growth or causing violence.
Urbanization, Education and Employment: The Three Mega Challenges of Migration in India

While addressing the Panel titled Migration and its Socio-Economic effects, Professor Santosh Mehrotra began his presentation with a critical analysis of the slowdown in the structural transformation in India. Giving a statistical analysis of the labor market, Professor Mehrotra remarked how in the 2000s, the growth rate of India was 8% with the non-agricultural job growth reaching 7.5 million per annum between 2004-5 and 2011-12. The new entrants into the job market however were only 2 million and the remaining 5 million were migrants from agricultural work, who were absorbed into construction activity. This internal migration trends, according to Professor Mehrotra, relied on patterns showcasing how the main recipients of migrants were metropolitan and capital cities such as Jaipur or cities engaged in large scale manufacturing like Surat. The level of internal migration has doubled from the 1990s to 2000s, implying that the rewards are greater than the risk and costs of migration.

The structure of jobs which are present in the manufacturing areas of urban areas present the job challenge that migration may create, as 38% of the workers involved in these areas are migrants. Migration also contributes heavily to the issue of informality in India’s work force. However, as per the NSSO data available, construction work has generated only 4.4 million jobs between 2012-18 as compared to the 25 million created between 2004-11. Professor Mehrotra further stated how migration has been accompanied by rapid urbanization, with India’s urban population being estimated of increasing from 410 million in 2014 to 814 million by 2050. Adding to the employment challenge, as per Professor Mehrotra is the issue of education that emerges from migration.

The maximum presence of migrants in non-agricultural jobs are in the areas of construction or being vendors. This emerges due to lack of technical or vocational training owing to their agricultural background which renders them ineligible to perform high-level jobs. While government schemes such as Right to Education have increased the enrollment rate of students, the overall jobs available to the graduating students are lesser. Also, when male migrants move with their families, the children have to leave their school and be enrolled in schools present in urban locales. As per the NSSO data of 2013, 10.7 million children aged 6 to 14 live in rural households that are prone to migration, out of which...
28% of the youth aged 15 to 19 in these households are illiterate as they were made to drop out of school. This renders more unqualified workers entering the workforce who lack proper or certified vocational skills, which as per the 2018 NSSO data is only acquired by 2.4% of the workforce.

Professor Mehrotra in his conclusion refers to the need for addressing these three mega challenges in the overall urban policy development, with there being an increased need to focus on middle-tier cities’ infrastructural development. Tiny towns having a population of less than half a million house half of the urban population of India, however investing in all of these cities would be a difficult task from an urban planning perspective. Therefore, an increased focus should be on these middle-tier cities to attract migration to them. Professor Mehrotra also draws a comparative to the Hukao system followed in China, through which population distribution is regulated along with rural-to-urban migration. While adopting an exact same structure would be difficult for India, the similar resource allocation done to tiny and mega towns with the purpose of migration control should be focused on, as per Professor Mehrotra.

CONCLUSION

In Seoul, South Korea, the developmental state was compelled to take a hegemonic role while carrying out gentrification at a large scale and building mass scale housing estates. To carry out development of the housing sector, the role of the state is crucial in creating a real estate investment environment. In Brazil, the porosity between formal and informal markets, the transformation of the urban city center and the increase in global Chinese competition has affected local market. In India, the issue of migration is accompanied with three challenges, education, unemployment and rapid urbanization. All of these must be collectively engaged with, and more focus should be drawn to the development of middle-tier cities to properly control internal migration.
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Violent Identities: Why the Hutu’s Committed Genocide in Rwanda

Abhay Amal*

The Rwandan genocide may not have claimed as many victims as the Holocaust, but in many ways it represents the true horrors of genocidal mania with as much clarity. While the Holocaust was caused, in part, by the lack of assimilation by the Jews into Germany, the Hutus and Tutsis of Rwanda and Burundi shared many, many similarities. In fact, these groups were once on course to form a sub-homogenous identity due to the various overlaps in their physical and cultural features. Yet, the year 1994 saw indescribable terrors envelop the state of Rwanda, but not Burundi. Despite the overwhelming resemblance between the ethnicities of these nations, only Rwanda witnessed the wholesale destruction that accompanied mutual visceral hatred between the two groups. This paper explores why this was the case. In doing so, it argues that one significant causal variable predisposed the Rwandan Hutus to commit the atrocities that their Burundian counterparts did not. This variable is the unprecedented foreign influence from nations like France and Uganda, as well as institutions like the IMF and World Bank. The paper outlines the merits held by this argument that others, such as the constructivist and primordialist views, fail to explain. The constructivist theory has often been taken for granted in cases like the Rwandan genocide, and there is evidence to suggest that violence was exacerbated due to the influence of colonisation. However, as this paper will argue, the historical idiosyncrasies of Rwanda pre-colonisation, as well as the foreign influences on the identities of Hutus and Tutsis are some factors the constructivist unfortunately does not usually consider.

INTRODUCTION

In The Dark Side of Democracy, Michael Mann calls the ethnic cleansing in Rwanda the most complete and rapid genocide the world has witnessed. Anywhere between 500,000-800,000 people were slaughtered by their neighbors over eleven weeks in 1994. Many more were forced to flee abroad. Even at 500,000 deaths, that amounts to 300 murders every hour for three months. (Mann 2005: 430) This, albeit the deadliest, was only

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one of the outbreaks of violence Rwanda experienced since its independence in 1962.

Its neighboring country, Burundi, has often been called Rwanda’s ‘twin’ due to their eerily similar histories, cultures, people, and accounts of violence. Among many other factors, these nations house the same ethnic groups (Hutus and Tutsis) and in the same proportion (85% and 15%). Burundi too experienced multiple waves of violence that ended with anywhere between 200,000-350,000 deaths. (Bhavnani, Becker 2000: 286) Waves of violence in the neighboring country radicalized natives and influenced violence in their own states. Thus, the two countries’ ethnic groups exerted cross-national influence on their co-ethnics and rivals, manifesting itself in further violence.

The question this paper addresses is this: given the almost similarity in economic, political, and historical conditions of the two countries, why was the scale of violence much more controlled and localized in Burundi, compared to the bloodbath that enveloped Rwanda? In what ways did the identities of the Tutsis and Hutus native to this land develop differently from it’s neighbour, and how did this affect the level of violence experienced by these groups?

In attempting to answer these questions, this paper firstly explores the historical convergence between these nations pre-colonization. It traces the impact of German and Belgian rule on the ethnic identities of Hutus and Tutsis, and the extent to which colonisation, and subsequent modernisation exacerbated conflict between them. It gives a brief account of the violence that enveloped both countries, and describes the post-conflict reconciliation efforts undertaken in these nations. Drawing from an analysis of these factors, this paper argues that a host of international influences played a decisive role in exacerbating the violence in Rwanda. Countries like Uganda, France, the US and international agencies such as the IMF, World Bank, UN, and others played a substantial role in the conflict not just in the aftermath of violence, but immediately post-colonization.

**A HISTORY OF THE HUTUS AND TUTSIS**

Before discussing the history of the two states, some details about the two countries need to be laid out. As mentioned, both countries house Hutu’s
and Tutsi’s, comprising approximately 85% and 15% of their populations respectively. A third ethnic group called Twa, along with European settlers forms less than 1% of the total number. (ibid 431) Both Rwanda and Burundi are two tiny\(^3\) neighboring countries that are among the most densely populated in Africa. Both countries house 7.5m and 6 million citizens in a space of about 27,000 sq km each. (Lemarchand 1994: 586) An overwhelming majority of their populations lives in rural areas. These groups speak languages that are over 80% cognate (Kinyarwanda and Kirundi), and share the same religions (Christianity and Islam). (Newbury 2001: 259) Rwanda and Burundi are also amongst the poorest countries in Africa. Both countries lack any significant mineral resources and rely on agriculture-based economies. (Lemarchand 1970: 14) In 1994, immediately after the conflict, the GDP per capita of Rwanda was just $290, while Burundi’s stood at $231. (Lemarchand 1994: 586)

1) THE TWO REGIONS AS KINGDOMS AND COLONIES

(A) BURUNDI

A comparison of the pre-colonial histories of the two countries is slightly dampened by a lack of extensive data. Knowledge of Burundi is minimal before 1800. (Newbury 2001: 280) Both kingdoms were monarchies, but the scale of their power was different. The monarch in Burundi did not possess as much power over the Tutsi chiefs as in Rwanda. This meant that regional autonomy was more prominent in Burundi. Two long periods of rule by kings during the nineteenth century established centralized monarchies that relied on local administrators for governance. This helped maintain an effective check on state power. (Isabirye, Mahmoudi 2000: 64)

Burundi in the late nineteenth century was subject to constant conflict between rival dynastic groups vying for power. Yet, this conflict was not racial or ethnic in nature. Lemarchard (1970) puts this down to the fact that society here was much more ethnically flexible than in Rwanda. The broader Tutsi identity contained two sub-identities called Tutsi-hima and Tutsi- Banyaruguru, whereas Tutsi identity was more homogeneous in Rwanda. The absence of an army also forced leaders in the 19th century to moderate their politics to gather more votes. (Lemarchand 1970: 24)

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\(^3\) Both countries are the size of Belgium, or the state of Vermont.
Finally, Tutsi settlements in Burundi were much more concentrated than in Rwanda, where they were spread evenly across the country.

(B) RWANDA

As mentioned before, monarchy was much more rigidly stratified in Rwanda than in Burundi. As in Burundi, Tutsi’s dominated elite circles in Rwanda. Rwanda was also subject to severe conflict in the late nineteenth century under its monarch, who pursued militaristic roles and further centralized the Rwandan state. The monarch, Rwabugiri, ruled with an iron fist, eliminating several threats to his power and pursuing expansionist policies. However, after his death his empire collapsed. Thus, Rwanda’s pre-colonial history was much more turbulent and unstable, as compared to the relatively moderate Burundi. (ibid 308-309)

There had been speculation that just before colonial rule, Hutu’s and Tutsi’s would soon resemble a sub-homogenous ethnic identity. (Isabirye, Mahmoudi 2000: 65) The two groups had enjoyed 400 years of cultural assimilation, and had developed several common customs and rituals in the process. About half of all Rwandans could be mistaken as either Hutu or Tutsi if judged purely on sight. (Mann 2005: 432) The genetic variation between the groups is not very pronounced, since intermarriage was allowed. (ibid 432) However, the ethnicity of the paternal lineage was granted more significance than maternal lineages. So the son of a Hutu father and a Tutsi mother would legally be a Hutu. (Newbury 2001: 272) This is of great significance for the primordialist, who explains future conflict as stemming from a historical struggle, but massive inbreeding between both groups means that they were not racially pure in any way.

Despite the convergence of both ethnicities, colonization by Germany (1908-1924) and Belgium (1924-1962) intensified ethnic differences between these groups in both countries. The Belgian’s united the two kingdoms in a province called ‘Ruanda-Urundi’, but discriminated heavily against the Hutus. They considered the Tutsi’s genetically closer to Europeans, and preferred them in all crucial economic and political matters. Government jobs were reserved for Tutsis, and the Hutus were reduced to a landless peasantry. They also issued identity cards based on differences such as skull and nose measurements. Colonial rule was enforced indirectly through two Tutsi kings, who consolidated all the arable land. However, monarchical rule in Rwanda was much more
unitary than in Burundi, where autonomy was marked. This resulted in Hutu’s dominating the education sector in Burundi despite colonial oppression. (Mann 2005: 432)

The Belgians granted the two kingdoms their independence as separate nations following a bloody civil war between 1959-1962. This war was caused by widespread Hutu rebellion against Tutsi elitism and Belgian colonization, resulting in the death and emigration of thousands from the minority group. But by the time the Belgians sent troops to control the violence, the Tutsi’s had become the main perpetrators in retaliation to the Hutus. However, the unaware Belgian authorities punished Tutsi’s as if they had initiated the conflict. (Lemarchand 1970: 167) The monarchy was legally abolished in 1961, but the UN intervened in this transitory phase. It did not support the immediate institutionalization of a stable government, preferring a “cooling-off” period instead before setting the process of rebuilding. This was met by violent reactions as radical Hutu’s captured power in a highly unstable environment. By 1962, democracy in the form of a republican government had essentially been forced onto Rwanda by the UN 4, who sought to avoid a racial dictatorship dominated by Hutu’s harboring hatred towards Tutsi’s. (ibid 197) Thus, Rwanda emerged from colonization as a Hutu dominated republic with a multiparty system. Burundi survived as a constitutional monarchy led by Tutsis. (ibid 581)

2) THE POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

Just as the pre-colonial time in Burundi was relatively more stable than its neighbors’, so was the build-up to its independence. While Rwanda was ravaged by civil war for three years, Burundi experienced a relatively peaceful transition post decolonization. So far Tutsi’s had largely dominated political administration in both countries, decolonization inverted the power relations as Hutu’s came to power in Rwanda. (Isabirye, Mahmoudi 2000: 67) The constructivist points to this stage in the history of the two countries to show how the Hutu and Tutsi identities were formed from colonial influence. However, the relative instability of

4 Hutu groups in the past had fought for a continuity of monarchical institutions.
Rwanda compared to Burundi pre-colonization will be significant in a discussion about identity during and post colonization. This section discusses the waves of violence that the two countries experienced, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands.

Burundi’s first major encounter with violence post-independence took place in the form of a Hutu rebellion in 1965-66, which was suppressed by the Tutsis. This led to mass political consolidation wherein Hutu leaders were stripped of their power, leading to another violent clash in 1969. The 1965 incident was a direct result of the civil war in Rwanda immediately before independence. (Mann 2005: 434) A round of violent repressions in Rwanda between 1963-64 killed 10,000-13,000 Tutsi’s and forced another 150,000 to flee further aggravated their worries. (Bhavnani, Becker 2000: 286) This culminated in another, much more extensive round of violence in Burundi during 1972, killing between 150,000-300,000 Hutu’s, with up to 300,000 displaced.

The 1972 violence helped the Tutsi’s consolidate complete political, social, and economic hegemony, leaving the Hutu movement leaderless. (Isabirye, Mahmoudi 2000: 68) The violence in 1972 and 1988 are the two major rounds of violence experienced by Burundi. Of these, the former was the more violent one. The opposite was the case in Rwanda, where violence increased more linearly. But the 1988 episode in Burundi is thought to be a precursor to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. 20,000 Hutus were killed, with about the same number displaced. The violence was also followed by an insurgency of Tutsi’s from Uganda, who formed the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) and attempted to conquer Rwanda. Though the attempt failed, it radicalized the Hutu in Rwanda. Facing massive economic recession, pressures to democratize in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the unacceptable Arusha Accords agreement, Rwanda quickly disintegrated into a war zone. (Mann 2005: 439)

THE ARGUMENT

This paper argues that the decisive influence leading to such protracted violence in Rwanda is the unprecedented international involvement in its ethnic conflicts leading up to 1994. It involves the roles of international bodies like the IMF, the UN, the Catholic Church, and countries such as France, Uganda, and the United States. Two clarifications are necessary
here. It is important to note that international involvement does not include the colonial rulers, since that would make this argument cohesive with the constructivist account. Another clarification is that, as Mann points out, indifference is not equivalent to criminality, and that the real perpetrators were the individuals involved in these crimes. The following section compares the role of international response in the two countries, and how this led to varying levels of violence in them.

France was the only country to take any serious interest in Rwanda in the build up to 1994. Some theorists have claimed that they aimed to build a la Francophonie, a loose collection of former French colonies into a French-African commonwealth. As the Belgians left in 1962, French cultural influence, stemming from prior linguistic roots, saturated Rwandan society, turning it into a little island of France. Rwanda was dependent on the French for its arts, financing, and arms for their military. France, in turn, was afraid of English neo-colonialism, and wished to maintain their own sphere of influence in Africa. (Wallis 2006: 9-10)

Additionally, France was a major donor to Rwanda, and President Mitterand shared an especially cordial relationship with Hutu leader President Habyarimana. Mitterand had provided Habyarimana with assistance during the 1990 RPF invasion, and an open letter issued by the Human Rights Watch accused France of being directly involved in the 1994 genocide as well. (ibid 75) The French, 1990 onwards, provided most of the military aide Rwanda had. They trained Hutu soldiers to use weapons in combat, and provided them with high-tech weaponry. (ibid 35) The constant involvement of French forces since Rwandan independence is significant for their influence on Rwandan politics and the economy. In another Human Rights Watch report, addressing the question of whether the genocide would have taken place without French assistance, the author claims that the murderers operated under the presumption of being backed by the French, who assured them that they could get away with it. (ibid 7) The French interference argument has the merit of explaining a broad section of Rwandan history, as long as the events immediately preceding the genocide. It also explains how ordinary combatants had the weapons, training, and organization to carry out such violence, given the extraordinary resources at Mitterand’s disposal.

Two other influences played a prominent role in exacerbating violent outbreaks across Rwanda. These were exerted by 1) the IMF and World Bank, and 2) Uganda. In the 1980s, the IMF, encouraged by growth in
Burundi as a result of foreign aid, imposed a structural adjustment programme that had dire consequences for the country. The plan made the poorest in the country even poorer, intensifying economic inequalities in an already poor country. (Mukasa 2011: 9, 17) This could have had major implications for the 1988 massacres in Burundi, which are considered to have influenced the 1994 genocide. The 1990 attempted coup by the RPF was made possible by the assistance of Ugandan President Museveni. He was keen to get rid of these Tutsis, who formed the RPF as they were unpopular amongst Ugandans, who discriminated against them and blocked their promotion in the public sector. Being pressured to return to Rwanda, President Museveni helped create the RPF in a bid to re-conquer Rwanda. (Mann 2005: 439) While Rwanda had experienced other instances of invasion since independence, the RPF soldiers had military experience as part of Museveni’s army, and were more effective than previous attempts. This event played a key role in radicalizing the Hutu elite before 1994, and at least some form of blame falls on President Museveni for sending an armed cadre of troops to Rwanda with the intention of conquering it.

CONCLUSION

The argument presented in this paper has several merits. It covers a broad span of time in Rwandan history, right from independence. It accounts for the role of violence in Burundi, and its effect on violence in Rwanda. Most importantly, the vast resources of a country like France explain several phenomena that other arguments fail to address. The French provided the Hutu in Rwanda with almost everything they required to utilize unstable conditions for ethnic cleansing. This included military training, financial support, arms sales, and other cultural components that reinforced their identity. While other international actors were also involved in some capacity, they cannot be held culpable for the violence in ways as direct as the ones mentioned. Thus, this paper argues for a unique explanation in explaining decades of violence, in positing international actors as the central determinant in the violence that have shocked and horrified the world, and from which these countries have yet to move past.
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Grievance in Identity Conflict: A Review of Pembilai Orumai (Women’s United) in Munnar

Shyam Hari P.*

Identity conflicts are common features in heterogeneous societies. These conflicts are understood around the grievances that include the specific interests and the value-centric nature of identity. In such a backdrop, this commentary engages with the conditions around the formation of ‘Pembilai Orumai’ or ‘Women’s United’ as a gender identity group in the plantation dominant Munnar Gram Panchayat. Based on the ethnographic survey and focused interviews, the study finds that the formation of the group was bound on specific interests that were independent of the elements of ‘gender’ as symbolic in their name. The association of the group with the gender identity is relatable to the general popularity of gender movements, especially as a point of interest for the media. In the process, the group gained dominance through the help of media publicity, but in practice it innately nurtured the elements of subjugation of itself in the political space. This case highlights a dichotomous viewpoint around the assertion of gender identity in conflicts where identity is treated as an instrument.

INTRODUCTION

A society that comprises of multiple identities is prone to conflicts over the incompatibilities between different identities. The grievances in identity conflict are understood over specific interests and the value-centric nature of identity (Al Ramiah, Hewstone, and Schmid, 2011; Goldstein and Rayner, 1994). The specific interests are around a frustrating object in conflict, the attainment of which is the focus of the actors that are engaged in that conflict. In the value-centric nature of identity, the identity in itself induces conflict. This may suggest that the frustrating object is neither rigid nor clearly defined as seen when the

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conflict is over specific interests. The interaction of interests and values in identity conflict is also understood to be observable at the various stages of conflict manifestation. At the stage of origin, the identity conflict is around specific interests, whereas, at an intense state of manifestation, the conflict pursues the values of an identity (Galtung 2009).

To understand the functioning of grievance in identity conflict, the case of ‘Pembilai Orumai’ or ‘Women’s United’ in the Kannan Devan Hills village in Munnar Gram Panchayat, Idukki district of Kerala is considered. The Pembilai Orumai gained popularity in 2015 when various media houses reported that the women plantation workers in numbers of few thousands were staging protests against a plantation company in the region for wage related issues. This movement was depicted as a political emergence of the unorganised section of women employed in the plantation sector for their rights. Based on an ethnographic field survey conducted in the village, the study aims to understand the trajectory and transition of the movement from its origin to its establishment as a registered trade union. Along with ethnographic field survey, the data from the interviews with key stakeholders that includes the leadership of Pembilai Orumai is considered relevant for the study. Field notes and literature available on the subject are also used for developing the arguments.

The commentary is divided into four sections including the introduction. The section following the introduction discusses the formation of the village society and institutions it nurtured. The next section engages with the advent and transition of Pembilai Orumai in the socio-political landscape as a movement to a trade union. The commentary concludes with the learnings from the case of Pembilai Orumai.

SOCIETY AND NEGOTIATORS

A society consists of structures that define the nature of the relationship between the various components of that society. These structures are built around various institutions. The institutions are responsible for the negotiations between multiple identities within a society by understanding and separating the specific interest and values of identity in conflict. In the plantation dominant Kannan Devan Hills village, the major institution involved in negotiation between actors involved are the trade unions. The
relevance of trade unions in the socio-political backdrop of the village can be understood from its temporal transitions (Hari P, 2019). The village traces its origin back to the later part of 19th century. A census of the region recorded in 1880 estimated the population to be around 2500 people (Munro, 1880). This region presently comprises of multiple villages and panchayats. The latest census of 2011 records the population of the Kannan Devan Hills village itself to be 55,738 (Hari P, 2019). The massive growth in the population over a century can be associated with the origin of the plantation industry in the village. The remote nature of the region and its climatic conditions attracted the British planters to the region. The planters saw the economic potential of the region in producing plantation crops for the global markets. The plantation activities began with the signing of the first Pooniat Concession in 1877 between a British planter and Poonjar royal family that held the control to the region (Nalapat, 2010).

The chief plantation crop when the first concession was signed was coffee. The coffee plantations needed only seasonal labour that was often provided by the Malayalis from the Travancore state. The Malayali labourers got engaged in the plantations jobs to earn extra income during lean agriculture seasons for traditional crops (Baak, 1992). The major societal transformation took place when the planters decided to focus on the cultivation of tea as the chief crop. The decision was influenced by the fall in the prices of coffee in global markets, and the political requirement to compete with Chinese tea. The tea trees, unlike coffee plants, needed constant care and maintenance, and hence a search for labour who could reside in the plantation became a priority. This labour came from the nearby regions in the Madras Presidency where the socio-economic conditions were fragile.

Through the Kangani system, indentured labour practise formed where a 'Kangani' or ‘Supervisor’ pays off a person’s debt in the village in advance for a promise of employment. This process led to the migration of a large number of Tamil Dalits into plantation jobs in the village. The migrant workers were housed in homestead houses within the plantation. In the initial periods, the Tamil Dalits continued to be engaged in the plantation activity fearing laws of the Travancore state, such as the Travancore Criminal Breach of Contract Act of 1865 (Raj, 2018). In the later period, it was more due to the factors of familiarity and acclimatisation (Hari P, 2019). With the expansion of the plantation estates, more Tamil Dalits
came into the village to work in the plantation. Over multiple generations of engagement in plantation activities, the migration of extended families, and the formation of new families within the migrated communities led to the strengthening of a village society within the plantation infrastructure. The village thus formed had a dominant population of Tamil settlers (Hari P, 2019). The peculiarity of this society was that 70.9 per cent of population belonged to the Scheduled caste and Scheduled tribe, with 91.7 per cent households being landless, and 91.4 per cent of the household’s highest member earning income being less than Rs. 5000/- (Hari P, 2019). As a dominant voter base, the issues of the Tamil Dalit plantation labourers led to several institutional involvements of political parties. At the level of central and state government, Plantation Labour Acts were passed that prescribed measures that were needed to be taken by the plantation companies to prevent exploitation of labour (Tantri, 2017). At the local level, trade unions of popular political parties assisted in the negotiation process between the labour and the plantation over various points of interactions including those prescribed in the various Plantation Acts. These interactions often extended over livelihood, accommodation, health facilities, water and other basic utilities. In this process, trade unions became critically relevant in the everyday life of the plantation (Hari P, 2019).

The relationship in society changed with subsequent transitions. Post India’s independence, the plantation companies continued to exercise their influence in the region as the earlier agreements between the companies and the predecessor state continued to be valid. This arrangement was influenced by the gaining popularity of tourism in the state. New opportunities emerged in commercialising the village as a hill station that did not directly threaten the earlier agreements with the plantation companies. The emergence of the tourism industry in the region impacted social demography (Hari P, 2019). The period saw an increase in the influx of Malayalis into the region who wanted to benefit from the economic prospects of tourism. The Malayalis who were dominant in the social, political and economic spaces of the Kerala state were able to make their influence in the village for constructing tourism infrastructure with relative ease. The Tamil Dalits who were often landless perceived this as a subjugation of their localised ethnic identities. The Tamil Dalits perceived competition with the Malayalis over resources such as land, livelihood and imposition of mainstream culture by use of Malayalam as official language (Hari P, 2019). The perception also
nurtured a sense of alienation from the region using institutions of the state that were dominated by Malayalis and was perceived to be in favour of Malayalis (Hari P, 2019).

The trade unions were considered to be negotiating and subjugating the Tamil identity (Hari P, 2019). Negotiation of Tamil identity was done by the separation of specific issues of land and livelihood from the ethnic nature of identity. The issues were addressed often with temporary remedies that increased the dependency on trade unions for recurring interventions. The subjugation of Tamil identity was conducted to maintain regional politics within the context of class struggle rather than ethnic tensions. This was articulated around a strong fear of possible leadership change with the emergence of ethnic politics. The familiarity and continuation of class politics that focussed on the employee and employer relationship between plantation labour and plantation companies had its own frustrating elements.

The trade unions and plantation companies were perceived to have formed informal alliances over the decades of their interaction. This may have formed naturally when practices like the collection of membership fees or ‘Chantha’ that a worker pays to the trade union of their choice is done through the plantation company who deducts it from the salary. The plantation companies also provided offices and residential spaces for the trade union leadership that are also at times unofficial revenue generators during peak tourist seasons. The multilevel alliances between the trade unions and plantation companies were considered preconditions to the failure of proper representation of the labour class. This failure in the part of negotiators created the spaces for alternative representatives in the social structure, and Pembilai Orumai was one such entrant.

**FORMATION AND TRANSITION OF PEMBILAI ORUMAI**

The failure of negotiators in society led to the conditions that further led to the advent of ‘Pembilai Orumai’ in the village. The grievance behind the initial protest was over the percentage of wage received as a bonus, and this was independent of the issues faced by any particular gender. The issue was anchored on the nature of jobs that prevailed in the plantation dominant village. The reason that this protest took place in 2015 can be related to the frustration that was slowly built around employee-buy-out model. Through the employee-buy-out model (EBO), the employees of
the plantation received certain shares of the company (Deepika, 2010). This mechanism addressed the problems around alienation of labour from the produce, but it created frustration over the actual sum received by the employees. The dividends of shares were lesser than what the workers expected. The estimation of the production quantity of tea was done by those workers who were engaged in the tea plucking activity, and this happened to be mainly women. From the workers engaged in tea plucking activities, the information spread to other sections in the workforce. The workers brought issues before their respective trade unions. The workers were not content with the responses they received from their negotiators. Perceiving collusion between the trade unions and plantation company, some workers from few estates within the plantation decided to protest. This group consisted of both women and men who were frustrated by the lackadaisical approach of the trade unions. This protest was covered and aired by the local media channels.

Some of the social practises in the society captured through the local media channels made multiple interpretations when adopted by media channels from outside the village, and this changed the course of the movement from its initial conceptions. When women and men gathered together to protest, they did so by maintaining physical space from each other as a form of an unsaid social taboo. With this context of space utilisation, the women who recognised the issue due to the nature of their job occupied the centre of the physical space of protest, and men surrounded the periphery. This protest took place in front of the regional office of the plantation company located in the village centre.

The village centre as a location for the protest had its significance as most women in the village would, as a common practice, procure Jasmine flowers along with other household commodities and socialise there. The media focussed on the Jasmine flowers worn by the women as a symbol of protest and named the movement as ‘Jasmine Revolution’. The movement gained popularity as a women’s movement as it received incremental media attention. Initially, the protestors wanted to name their movement as ‘Thalir’ or ‘Sprout’, as symbolic to the emergence of exploited people. Due to the recognition received as a women’s movement, the leadership dropped the earlier name and adopted the name ‘Pembilai Orumai’. The adoption of this name did not change the earlier demands of the protest. The success of the negotiation, and
recognition that Pembilai Orumai garnered resulted in the group being registered as a trade union.

The formal structure of the newly formed trade union had some innate elements of conflict. The movement initially had the active support of both women and men workers. With the new structure, male workers who had earlier been part of the protest were side-lined, and spaces were created for accommodating new leadership from women workers in the plantation. These women workers were from different estates within the village, who were not active in the initial protest, which even included the Malayalis tasked to negotiate with government bodies.

The increase in leadership and popularity came with an increase in stakes that prodded personal differences and issues due to lack of trust. The ethnic conflict between the Tamils and Malayalis are latently present in Munnar (Hari P, 2019) which was visible at the leadership level of Pembilai Orumai. Internal conflict over personal benefits emerged in Pembilai Orumai, and impacted the cohesion of the group. The trade unions utilised the internal conflict in Pembilai Orumai and made lucrative policies to attract its members. Special seats in estate subcommittees were created for the women leaders who left Pembilai Orumai and joined trade unions. This weakness in the group was understood by few of its earlier leadership, who inclined towards moving away Pembilai Orumai. To these leaders, the re-engagement in Dalit issues in general, and Tamil Dalit issues, in particular, were important. This highlights that the movement, and later the group, in its course of activities were not value-centric on the specific issues of women, but largely focussed on the issues that most members in the society faced. This is important considering that the socio-economic conditions of most people were similar, and in a family, the economic contribution of women and men were equally important.

CONCLUSION

The Munnar society was formed as a product of the plantation industry with a dominant population of Tamil Dalits. The important negotiator in the plantation dominant village society are the trade unions. The perception of failure of the negotiators has created spaces for new negotiators, and in such conditions Pembilai Orumai emerged as a new
actor in the socio-political space. The group in its conception stage was independent of gender identities and was focussed on the representation of Tamil Dalits who were oppressed in an informal alliance between trade unions and plantation companies. The social features interpreted by the media, and the general discourses around gender movements had led the movement to be imagined as a women’s movement. The restructuring of the movement as a gender group created impediments in attaining larger objectives, as it alienated some of its earlier support bases. The in-fighting in the group resulted in its weakening in the socio-political space. Considering this case, the study recommends that stakeholders engaged in understanding global social movements should focus on the subjective nature of local issues, and policymakers should consider the multiple angles in developing and implementing effective policies.

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