THE PENDULUM

CLEMSON'S INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS MAGAZINE

RISING 6
TEMPERATURES
& RISING TENSIONS
Geopolitics in a Warming Arctic

25 WILL DATA CENTERS
SQUEEZE
Drought-Stressed Communities
Dry?
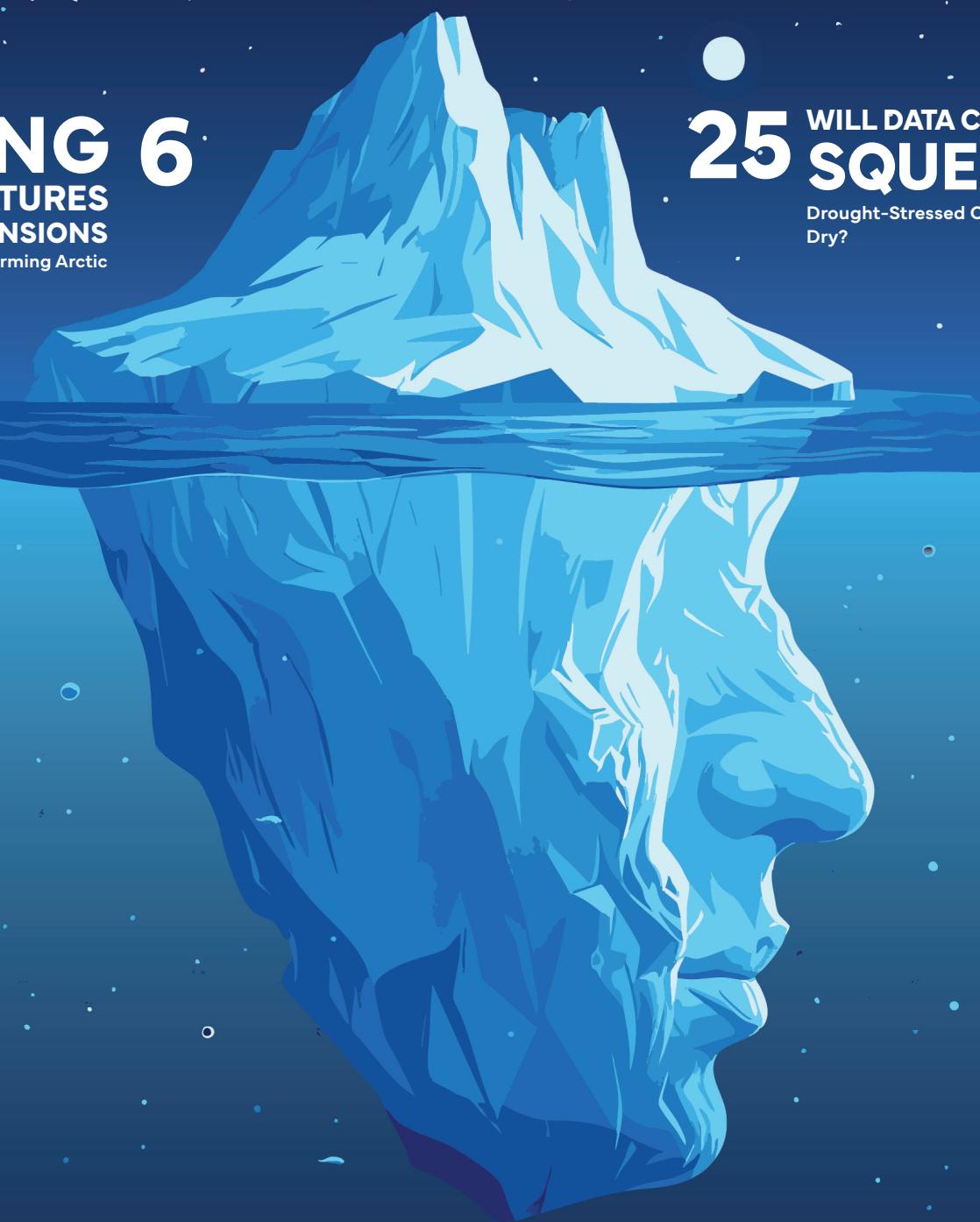
LETTER
FROM THE EDITOR

Dear readers,

Welcome to this issue of The Pendulum! In a world perpetually swinging between historical trends, we aim to offer perspectives that challenge, inform, and broaden the way you see global affairs. The world of international affairs is never static—its rhythms are shaped by conflict and cooperation, ideals and pragmatism, history and the unknown. The Arab scholar Ibn Khaldun once noted that "the past resembles the future more than one drop of water resembles another": an important reminder of the back-and-forth motion of societies, cultures, and where we might look for solutions to pressing problems.

This letter will be my last in the editor-in-chief role: earlier this semester, future EIC Briggs Murray and I agreed to split the role and serve as co-editors, as he gradually eases into the role. He is currently studying abroad in Senegal, and has handled much of the digital communications and timeline-planning while I continue to cover the on-the-ground happenings. He will take the position full-time starting in January as I step down to a desk editor position, and I am confident he will continue The Pendulum's excellent trajectory. More broadly, in this tumultuous time for writing and the humanities, our initiatives this semester have been primarily about assuring long-term stability and consistency in our end products. We have expanded our graphics and layout editing team, while filling all of our editing positions for the first time since early 2022.

In this edition, you will find articles ranging from emerging dynamics in the Arctic, to public memory in both Yugoslavia and Haiti, to the creation of data centers in vulnerable countries. As you turn these pages, my hope is that you will find both answers and questions — that our stories will not only inform but inspire you to think critically about the world we share. Thank you for being part of our journey, and for your ongoing commitment to understanding the complexities of our world today.

Warm regards,

Owen Eastman
Co-Editor-in-Chief, The Pendulum

CONTENTS

Issue 22 – Fall 2025

RISING TEMPERATURES & RISING TENSIONS

Geopolitics in a Warming Arctic

By Jack Kayal: Jack is a senior Economics and History major at Clemson University.

Once viewed as little more than a far-off frozen frontier and political backwater, the Arctic region is rapidly evolving into a flashpoint for global conflict and competition. Recent reductions in sea levels have thrust previously uninhabitable, strategically unimportant land to the forefront of international affairs. The National Snow and Ice Data Center reported that Arctic summer ice levels have declined by 13% each decade since 1979, while predicting that the Arctic will begin to experience fully ice-free summers before 2050. These developments have the potential to reshape trade routes, intensify resource competition and fundamentally alter security dynamics in the region. Accordingly, new frameworks are needed to prevent the region from becoming a militarized conflict zone. Possible measures ranging from the ratification of

demilitarization agreements and the establishment of shared resource protocols among Arctic states would work to ensure stability as the region countries experience greater economic and strategic activity.

The creation of new shipping routes resulting from climate change and melting ice will be a major international focus in the region and a potential source of significant conflict. As the ocean water in the region continues to warm, sea lanes that were once impassable due to ice are opening to international trade, providing valuable, time-saving routes in the Northern Hemisphere. By utilizing the Northern Sea Route along the Russian coast, as well as the Northwest Passage along Canada's coast, the shipping distance between Asia and Europe could be cut by up to 40% compared to using traditional routes such as the Suez

"This change could fundamentally alter the *balance* of international trade and *power* on the high seas..."

and Panama Canal routes. This change could fundamentally alter the balance of international trade and power on the high seas that has been in place since the construction of the Suez Canal in 1869.

In 2018, the world's largest container shipper, Maersk, sent its ice-class container vessel, Venta Maersk, on a trial voyage through the Northern Sea Route to assess the passage's commercial viability. At that time, Maersk noted that the route was only feasible for about three months a year and that it did not view it as a viable commercial alternative to existing routes, although continued ice melt may change this assessment. Additionally, numerous nations have begun to assess the passage's viability in hopes of gaining access to valuable natural resources as well as to exert control and influence over the region. China, in particular, has embraced this shift through its "Polar Silk Road," which it has integrated into its Belt and Road Initiative, a wide-reaching set of economic and political investments in infrastructure, research and development designed to expand the country's geopolitical influence.

As nations increase their economic and political involvement in the Arctic, it is important to keep in mind that, due to the lack of previous commercial viability, the necessary infrastructure to maintain shipping lines will need to be developed. To this end, countries historically at odds with the United States have collaborated to accelerate development in the region. For instance, the Arctic largely lacks the necessary port logistics and rescue infrastructure found elsewhere in the world. The potential new shipping routes are also encouraging cooperation between nations that have historically been at odds with the United States. For example, state-owned Chinese companies such as China National Petroleum Corporation and China National Offshore Oil Corporation have both invested in Russian liquefied natural gas projects on the Yamal Peninsula to secure transport corridors in the Arctic. This level of cooperation concerning the Arctic underscores the fact that the melting ice is not only shortening shipping routes but also altering trade networks between nations.

Similar investments in infrastructure are being made in natural resource extraction, as the region's mineral, oil, and natural gas reserves become more accessible. The Arctic is likely to contain valuable commodities such as oil, natural gas, and mineral deposits such as iron ore and copper. The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that the Arctic holds 13% of the world's undiscovered oil and 30% of its undiscovered gas reserves. Rosneft, Russia's state-controlled oil company, and Gazprom, one of the country's natural gas giants, are heavily invested in offshore projects in the Arctic. Additionally, Norway has continued to expand drilling efforts in the Barents Sea, further complicating the competition over resources in a relatively confined area of the world.

The geopolitical jockeying among various nations in the Arctic has exacerbated territorial disputes in the region, resulting in a complex set of jurisdictional issues. For instance, Canada, Denmark, and Russia have all submitted claims to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) over the Lomonosov Ridge, citing extended continental shelf rights under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This has produced a number of maps with conflicting boundaries of ownership beneath the Arctic seabed. These contested claims of sovereignty currently exist in a state of limbo, increasing the potential for international conflict to erupt over competing claims concerning natural resources and territorial control.

The increasing tension among nations in the Arctic has aggravated existing rivalries and paved the way for new ones to emerge. China has designated itself a "near Arctic state," a self-conferred title that is not internally recognized by the formal "Arctic States" designated by the Arctic Council. contributing to the sense of rivalry and tension, particularly in regards to the United States. While

China lacks legal standing under UNCLOS, the Chinese government maintains that it is providing valuable scientific and commercial partnerships through research funding in Iceland and Svalbard. It may be the case, however, that China's strategy is less about climate science and more about embedding Chinese influence in the Arctic to secure long-term access to resources.

The race to militarize and fortify national interests at the top of the world is increasingly becoming an important prerogative for numerous nations. Russia has worked to seize the initiative by rebuilding and modernizing Cold War-era bases throughout the region. This includes its base on Franz Josef Land (an Arctic archipelago in the Barents Sea, north of Russia), where the Russian military deployed S-400 air defense systems and expanded its fleet of nuclear icebreakers. The Moscow government views the Arctic as particularly important to its strategic objectives in the Northern Hemisphere due to its usefulness as a second-strike nuclear deterrent, given the presence of its Northern Fleet and submarine bases on the nearby Kola Peninsula.

In 2018, in response to Russia's rearming and militarization of northern island groups, NATO launched its largest military exercise in the Arctic since the 1980s. Named Trident Juncture, the exercise involved 50,000 troops, 250 aircraft, and 65 ships in Norway, testing the ability of various NATO member forces to operate together in snowy climates. Tensions rose in the area when Finland and Sweden joined NATO following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, further shifting the strategic balance in the region away from Russia and towards NATO. NATO's increased influence in the area places additional pressure on Russia's northern border. Competition in the region is further complicated by the unique environmental factors inherent to the Arctic, which have the potential to inflame tensions between NATO member nations and Russia. The Center for Strategic and International Studies, for example, emphasizes that the Arctic's remoteness and lack of communication protocols increase the chance of accidental clashes and incidents. Moreover, climate change will introduce unpredictable variables foreign nations may not be prepared for, from new navigational hazards to humanitarian disasters, that could quickly entangle military actors.

The Arctic Council remains the primary multilateral forum for governance in the Arctic region, but is limited to non-military issues such as environmental concerns and scientific research. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Council has suspended most cooperation with Moscow, further complicating its ability to adjudicate disputes in the region with a major power. UNCLOS provides a general framework for maritime law, but enforcement remains largely ineffective. Russia has at times flouted international arbitration, and the United States has never formally ratified UNCLOS despite adhering to its principles. Due to repeated issues in enforcement under UNCLOS, the Brookings Institute warns that without updated governance, Arctic institutions could fracture under the weight of great-power rivalry.

> **"These contested claims of *sovereignty*... exist in a state of limbo, increasing the potential for international conflict."**

Other institutions, such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO), have adopted the "Polar Code," which regulates ship safety and environmental standards, but compliance is uneven among nations involved in the Arctic. Critics argue that the patchwork nature of governance throughout the Arctic region leaves too many loopholes for states to exploit, particularly regarding military deployments. Of particular note is the fact that the code does not apply to ships weighing under 500 tons or military vessels. This loophole presents a potentially inflammatory situation in which a nation's navy may conduct surveillance or other official activities while remaining outside of the jurisdiction imposed by the Polar Code.

One potential solution might be to model new preventive frameworks on successful precedents. The Antarctic Treaty of 1959 demonstrates that agreements

founded on pillars of demilitarization and science-led governance can have positive effects on geopolitics in Antarctica. The treaty was able to effectively designate Antarctica as a cooperative international zone, banning military activity, nuclear testing, and waste disposal on the continent. While treaties implemented at the height of Cold War tensions may not be directly applicable today, they do demonstrate that the spirit of cooperative sovereignty can offer valuable guidance.

A variety of strategies have been explored to reduce tensions in the region, such as adapting Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)-style prerogatives, including advance notification of military exercises, observer missions, and joint crisis communication channels between nations operating in the Arctic. Another option is establishing a regional arms-control regime, capping the number of icebreakers or missile systems stationed north of the Arctic Circle. Yet true security in the Arctic extends beyond arms control and diplomacy and must also address the human and cultural dimensions that define life in the region.

While state actors often dominate discussions of Arctic strategy, effective governance must also account for the people who have long inhabited the region. Crucial to the creation and implementation of a functional security framework is the inclusion of these Indigenous perspectives in the governance process. The Saami Council, Inuit Circumpolar Council, and other groups have historically emphasized that Arctic security cannot be divorced from human security—protecting food systems, cultural traditions, and ecosystems. By stressing the need for involvement by indigenous communities, governance can ensure that measures reflect lived realities, not just great-power maneuvering.

Climate change has made the Arctic a new frontline of geopolitics. Melting ice is opening trade routes, resources are drawing in new world powers to the region, and military deployments are escalating tensions. Existing institutions are ill-prepared to manage these developments, especially as tension between the West and Russia has been exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The central challenge is whether the Arctic will remain a region of science and collaboration or become yet another arena of militarized rivalry. By establishing new security frameworks grounded in preventive diplomacy, confidence-building, and inclusive governance, the international community can test whether it has the capacity to manage great-power competition in one of Earth's most fragile regions.

TOMBSTONES
OF UTOPIA

The Rise and Ruin of
Yugoslavia's Spomeniks

By Molly Schweickhardt: Molly is a junior Historic Preservation and Community Planning & Urban Studies major at the College of Charleston.

Lying in an isolated Croatian countryside, a fallen concrete triple obelisk rests forgotten, coated in graffiti and overgrown with brush. Until it was destroyed in 1992, the structure proudly stood as a 56-foot-high monument of sharp intersecting planes, projecting dramatically upward from the hillside. Its brutalism and abstractness stand in direct contrast to the solemn beauty of the natural landscape around it. Despite its apparent unworldliness, architect Vuko Bombardelli, sponsored by the former Yugoslavian government, designed the monument in 1961 to memorialize resistance fighters in World War II who took up arms against the occupying Axis forces within Croatia in 1941. To Bombardelli, this type of monument, hereafter referred to by the South Slavic language group terminology spomeniks, symbolizes "youth's eternal struggle of defiance and its quest for internal purity." This spomenik, resting on the exact location where 24 young men were executed for their resistance against the Axis powers, is just one of the numerous memorials constructed during the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia made to memorialize the tragic events of World War II and the National Liberation War. The spomeniks are often seen as representations of the utopian idealism of former Yugoslavia, standing as physical pillars of the socialist vision of ethnic unity despite deep internal division within the country. Yet, after Yugoslavia's dissolution starting in 1991, new ethno-nationalist states lost interest in preserving spomenik cultural heritage. The deliberate neglect and destruction of the spomeniks after the balkanization of Yugoslavia reflects the evolution of new national identities, which demonstrates that political aesthetics are not merely reflective of national identity but instrumental in its creation.

While the country of Yugoslavia is best known for its post-World War II alignment with the Soviet bloc, a pre-communistic Yugoslavia existed following the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian empire after World War I. Before the nation was named Yugoslavia, The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes formed under the centralized monarchy of King Peter I Karadjordjević. However, this new state was short-lived as the country was occupied and divided by Germany, Italy, Hungary, and Bulgaria during the Second World War. Under fascist control of the Axis powers and the formation of the Ustaše---the Axis puppet state within Croatia---the country fell into a state of brutality and violence. The Ustaše established concentration camps throughout the country aimed at creating a pure Croat state through the ethnic cleansing of Serbs, Jews, and Romas. By 1941, more than 300,000 Serbs and pro-Yugoslav Croats

were reported slain by the fascist forces, with 300,000 to 500,000 Serbs reported systematically murdered by the end of the war. The Yugoslavs reacted to the occupier's extreme violence through the formation of anti-fascist revolutionary groups; the royalist Chetniks and the communist Partisan movement under Josip Broz Tito. Following World War II, with Allied support, the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia was born. Elections were held in 1945, with the Communist Partisan movement winning all the seats in the Constituent Assembly and in 1953 Josip Tito was officially elected president of Yugoslavia.

The Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia was characterized by its extreme diversity. The country boasted two alphabets, three languages, four religions, five nationalities, six republics, and eight ethnic minorities. Despite the complex ethnic diversity of the country, the new socialist government revolved around the slogan "bratstvo i jedinstvo"—meaning brotherhood and unity— that carried over from the Partisan movement of World War II and was intended to prevent the dominance of any single ethnic group. Tito attempted to satisfy the need for national homogenization through the creation of Yugoslav supranationally. At a speech given at the Slovene Academy of Arts and Sciences on November 26, 1948, Tito argues that the goal of the Communist Party "lies in the necessity for keeping a sharp lookout to see that national chauvinism does not appear and develop among any of the nationalities... to ensure that all the negative phenomena of nationalism disappear and that people are educated in the spirit of internationalism." Through adopting a wide Yugoslav identity, Tito aimed at minimizing the threat of local and regional nationalism which threatened to undermine the power of the central government and effectively Tito himself.

Yugoslavia stood at the forefront of socialist constructivism as Tito and the Partisan party actively and openly manufactured a new supranational identity through ambitious projects that utilized art and culture in service of political goals. Socialist constructivism refers to the theory developed by Soviet artists and architects following the 1917 Revolution, in which art and design focused on its utilitarian and social function over individual expression to actively construct a new socialist society. Tito embodied this theory through enacting an ambitious series of histographies, and encyclopedias written about Yugoslavian culture and the National Liberation War (WWII) to rewrite the nation's history under the guise of stability and unification. Similarly, to physically construct the new socialist utopian

"…it was critical that these spomeniks speak of the present and the near future.."

state, Tito enacted the spomenik project which, according to Nina Stevanović, served as an "ideological program that strived to create an official interpretation of the past in order to gain control over the society in the given present." The spomeniks were constructed in the exact locations where the battles, massacres, and historic episodes occurred during World War ll. Therefore, people who wanted to visit these monuments were obliged to travel to remote regions, creating a sort of patriotic tourism industry in which Yugoslavs could go on a historic pilgrimage from site to site.

Nevertheless, it was critical that these spomeniks speak of the present and the near future while avoiding the ethnic and religious tensions that scourged the nation. While other communist countries such as China and the Soviet Union adopted socialist realism---which utilized naturalism and realism to glorify the proletariat in art, sculpture, and propaganda posters alike---Yugoslavia turned toward avant-gardism. Sun Zixi's In Front of Tiananmen (1964) and the Soviet statue Warrior Liberator (1949) constructed by Yevgeny Vuchetich demonstrate how the Soviet Union and China condemned avant-garde art as bourgeois and elite, seemingly detached from the realities of the proletariat. Therefore, they opted for a realism that was easily digestible for the masses, one that workers could physically see themselves in. Contrasting the ideologies of the other communist nations, Yugoslavia opted for brutalism, futurism, and abstraction, which are all part of the international modernist movement, as their regime's official aesthetic.

While Tito initially described modern art as an "unacceptable foreign implant" incompatible with

"our socialist ethic" that is trying to "derail us from our revolutionary path," he ultimately accepted the usefulness of modern art toward his goal of constructing an egalitarian society. The rise of the modern art and architectural movement was rooted in the unification between industry and art. Industry becomes aligned with a concrete utopia, one that does not center on diversity or cultural distinctions, but rather speed, revolution, and production. Through functionalism, engineering, and industrial processes, modernists argued in favor of embracing the zeitgeist of the 20th century through utilizing industrialization to solve universal social qualms. Therefore, Yugoslavian state artists used concrete and reinforced steel in a brutalist fashion to emphasize the physical and emotional weight of the past. The brutalism paired with the abstractness of the monuments depersonalizes them from any singular ethnic group and forms a mentality of collectivism over individual accomplishment. Their futurism accentuates the ultimate contradiction of the monuments. While they seek to memorialize Yugoslavia's recent tragic past, they narratively enforce the idea of a total rebirth of their society, erasing past barriers through revolution while looking hopefully towards a new socialist society, physically constructed through these monuments. Therefore, brutalism, abstraction, and futurism embodied the goal of Tito: to form an egalitarian state that can move beyond its fractionalization spurred by regional nationalism and ethnic tension, instead building a modern concrete utopia rising to power on the global stage.

To stay true to this egalitarian vision, none of the spomeniks include accurate bodily anatomy; they rather stand as a collective of massive abstract concrete and metal shapes against the backdrop of the natural environment. While some spomnieks are anthropomorphic, they are always cubical, genderless, and blur the boundaries between human anatomy and abstract geometry. The Battle of Sutjeska Memorial Monument Complex (1971) in the Valley of Heros is an abstract set of concrete wings with

> **"The utopian vision of peace and harmony between different ethnicities and religious groups was completely dissolved... "**

various unintelligible faces, meant to commemorate the fighters and fallen soldiers during the Battle of Sutjeska in 1943. The Monument to the Revolution of the People of Moslavina (1967) rises as a massive pair of concrete wings with a futuristic, eye-like void at its center giving the appearance of a spaceship, made to recognize the community's rebellion against the Ustaše during the National Liberation War (WWII). The Monument to the Revolution at Kozara (1972) stands at roughly 108-feet tall, soaring upward in a cylindrical form encircled by concrete ribs that resemble an abstract fortress. This monument was created in remembrance of the Partisan fighters, fallen soldiers and civilian victims who died in the bloody Kozara Offensive in the spring of 1942. With roughly 1,000,000 total civilian and military deaths and roughly 6% of Yugoslavia's population dying under Axis occupation, these monuments were meant to serve as a partisan reminder of these tragic events while also acting as a unifying moment for the country.

After Tito's death in 1980, the country fell victim to tendencies of regional nationalism. Since Josip Tito declared himself president for life in 1974, there was no contingency plan on who would lead the country after his death. Yugoslavia chose to form a collective presidency in which each of the six republics and two autonomous regions voted for one member to represent them in an eight-person presidency, where a majority vote would constitute decision making. The formation of the collective presidency caused power to be stripped from the central government, allowing separatist identities to once again reign supreme.

The utopian vision of peace and harmony between different ethnicities and religious groups was completely dissolved as each republic and autonomous region had their own political and social priorities. Therefore, the central government collapsed as each region could not agree on how to govern the country at large along with rising tensions between different ethnic and religious groups. Religious fervor spurred the Catholic Croats against the

Orthodox Serbs, Christians against the minority Muslim Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats against Albanians and vice-versa. Similarly, mythological renditions of history placed Serbia as the cradle of ethnic superiority within the Balkans. Territorial disputes also began to rip apart the country as leaders such as Slobodan Milosevic, the head of state of Greater-Serbia, used ethno-nationalism to strengthen their justification for expansionist policies to ensure Serb dominance over the other republics. Milosevic found an opening within the feckless central government in which Serbia would usurp the Yugoslavian government. Through gaining control of Kosovo and Vojvodina and installing a pro-Serbian government in Montenegro, Serbia practically ran half of the collective presidency, which caused Croatia and Slovenia to declare their national independence. The most notable Balkan literary work of the 1980s, Danko Popović's book Knjiga o Milutinu published in 1985, proudly proclaimed that Croats and Slovenes were the enemies of the Serbs as they economically exploited the Serbian people. The book sold out within a week of its release and was reprinted thirteen times, demonstrating that these mentalities were commonplace within Yugoslavia and in extension foreshadowing the fall of the regime.

The dissolution of Yugoslavia took place between the years of 1991 to 2008, starting with the violent succession of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991 and finally ending with Kosovo declaring independence from Serbia in 2008. The increased militarization during balkanization led to the complete destruction of many of the spomeniks, as nationalistic forces and civilians sought to destroy many reminders of former Yugoslavia, especially those pertaining to ethnic unity. The modernist monuments in Vis, Kamensko, Mostar, Opuzen, Gevgelija, Petrova Gora, and countless others were completely destroyed or have fallen into disrepair.

Ethno-nationalist sentiments such as Greater-Serbia still plague the Balkans today, causing increased ethnic tension within the region. Serbia's current president, Aleksandar Vučić, grew up under Milosevic's ethno-nationalistic idea of a Greater-Serbia and formed the far-right Serbian Progressive Party at 23 years of age. During the Yugoslav Wars, he became famous for saying "You kill one Serb, and we will kill 100 Muslims" after the Srebrenica massacre in July 1995, where 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys were murdered by Bosnian Serb forces. This ethno-nationalism has continued to permeate throughout the region due to the extreme violence and ethnic cleansing of the Yugoslav Wars.

While the spomeniks were meant to memorialize some of Yugoslavia's greatest tragedies, the past 45 years have seen a shift in what they represent to the Balkan people. They now stand as tombstones of the former Yugoslavia, with their collapse standing as an example of the changing perception of ethnic homogeny under the new post-Yugoslavian states. The egalitarian monuments did not fit into the rhetoric of expansionist nationalists who sought to build ethnic identities. Therefore, their neglect and decay not only reflect the rejection of the socialist ideals they once embodied, but also the relics of a disintegrated vision that now stand only as witnesses to the region's fractured political and cultural identity.
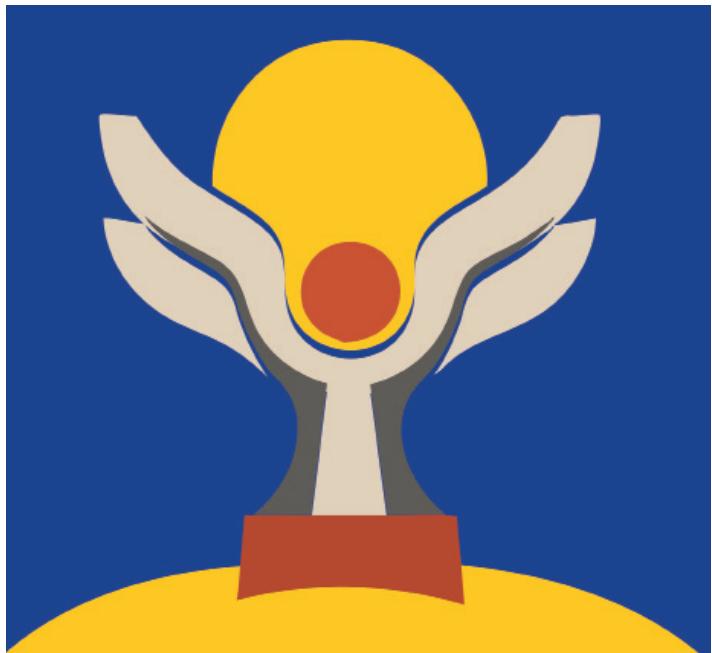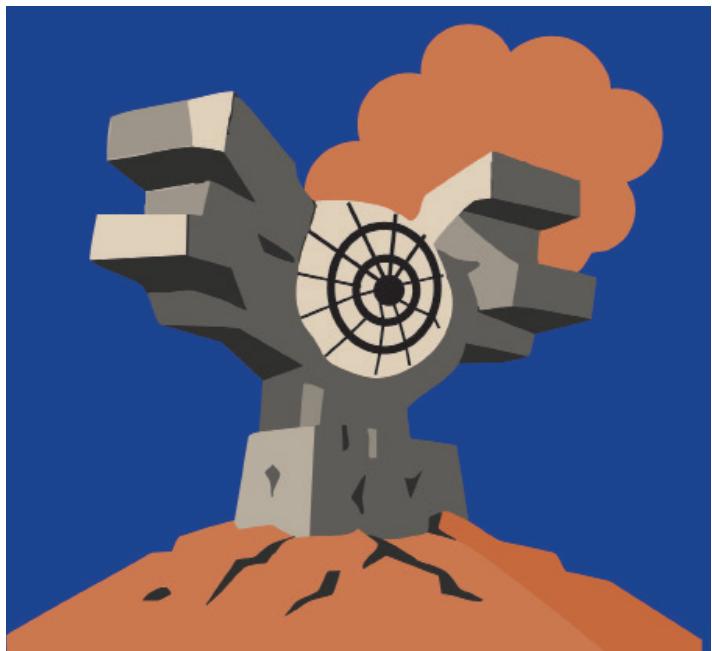
THE SWEET POISON

Coca-Cola's Grip on Chiapas

By Alejandra Rodriguez: Alejandra is a freshman Bioengineering major at Clemson University.

"More than one in three people in rural areas do not have access to running water", states Mexico's National Commission on Water. The lack of availability stands in stark contrast to the abundant rainfalls that the Mexican state of Chiapas experiences, illustrating that supply does not guarantee access. Chiapas has had serious problems regarding its communal health due to the relationship between water scarcity and increased soft drink consumption. "My head has no strength. I almost can't open my eyes," says 23-year-old Ismael Jimenez, a resident of San Cristobal de las Casas, the cultural center of Chiapas. He has been battling diabetes for almost thirteen years–a disease that is becoming increasingly prevalent across the principality. Within the hub of San Cristobal, most residents, like Jimenez, receive water for a mere "three hours every two days" . Having a population of 5.6 million people, it sees over three thousand diabetes-related deaths each year. This epidemic is only one part of a greater crisis since many residents face intermittent access to running water. Such a distressing situation is the unfortunate reality for most of the residents of Chiapas, Mexico. Furthermore, local hospitals are constantly inundated with patients experiencing the symptoms of a diabetic emergency.

ranked #1 globally in Coca-Cola consumption, residents drink over two liters of soft drinks a day.

Fomento Economico Mexicano S.A.B. (FEMSA), a Mexican multinational food and beverage conglomerate and established local producer of soft drinks, has taken advantage of scarce water resourcesTheir control has greatly contributed to communal health decline. Most residents consume Coke produced by the company, as it is easier to find than bottled water and is almost as cheap. Its plant has government-approved permits to extract more than "1.14 million liters every day from the nearby Huitepec volcano basin." The scale of extraction exemplifies how Coca-Cola's deep entanglement in local economies and politics enables disproportionate access to vital resources. The company contributes to thousands of jobs and billions of pesos in tax revenue, which incentivizes local and federal governments to turn a blind eye to environmental and health ramifications. As mentioned, Chiapas's heavy rains contribute to it having the highest water per capita in the entirety of Mexico. Yet, FEMSA's activities cause severe water stress, constraining resources. Industrial water extraction by soft-drink conglomerates also affects neighboring communities around San Cristobal, many of which are

already marginalized. As a result, enterprise-induced water shortages often hit these impoverished communities the hardest. Gloria Alvarez, a mother of six, told Al Jazeera news that she often must travel " thirty minutes or more by bus to find water." These alarming accounts ultimately echo the divergent interests of community health advocates and corporations. While multinational beverage companies make full use of their government-issued permits to extract natural resources, local families are left to compete for what little remains.

What was once viewed as flowing, abundant sources of nourishing water are now open sewers. For centuries, Chiapas was known for lush rivers, mountain springs, and reliable rainfall. Generations of local communities relied on these natural resources for various basic necessities, and also for regional agriculture. But over the past two decades, water quality and availability have drastically declined. Urban expansion, deforestation, and inadequate sewage treatment systems have polluted once-clear waterways. The exceedingly scarce amount of water that is present, however, is mostly tainted, rendering it undrinkable. San Cristobal's groundwater has fecal contamination, where the "annual probability of infection was higher than the safety threshold set by the Environmental Protection Agency". In other words, many locals who rely on untreated groundwater have a high chance of getting infected with deadly bacteria like E.coli and other pathogens. With widespread contamination, it is no wonder that residents have low confidence in the cleanliness of available drinking water. Industrial bottling operations, such as Coca-Cola's FEMSA plant, have further accelerated the decline, with over-extraction drying up local wells. As a result, locals only have sporadic access to chlorinated tap water or contaminated groundwater.

Bright splashes of red flank market sides and common gatherings. The dirt roads are contrasted with well-put-together billboards that depict a perfect and delicious treat - Coca-Cola. These allured many consumers and also led to an association between sugary drinks and local religious practices among indigenous communities. Corporations would make attention-grabbing designs in the native language of the tribes, along with models in traditional Tzotzil garb. Although the strategy has since been discontinued as a gesture of cultural respect, many Chipias residents still do not perceive soft-drink beverages negatively.

The precarious state of local groundwater sources means that most residents rely on bottled water or, as indicated

> **"The addictive and high-sugar properties of Coke create a never-ending cycle of consumer demand..."**

by rising diabetes rates within the community, Coca-Cola. The addictive and high-sugar properties of Coke create a never-ending cycle of consumer demand, with some falsely believing it is healthy. The widespread misconception stems from a mix of cultural normalization from years of acclimation, limited health education, and predatory marketing. Coke has also become a staple at family gatherings and religious ceremonies. This is especially concerning given Latino culture's emphasis on communal events, as the association further lends it a sense of trust and necessity. Such a mentality and the dependency it fosters are being passed down to children who go to school heavily stocked with Coke beverages. In San Cristobal and surrounding communities, Coca-Cola's branding is omnipresent. Whether on school walls or nearby stores, children grow up seeing the drink in every part of their routine.

Many Tzotzil, an indigenous group native to Mexico, believe that carbonated soda has medicinal qualities. This view is not merely symbolic; it actively defines day-to-day health practices. For instance, a New York Times article reported that a Chiapas resident, Mikael Ruiz, fervently believes that it helped cure her infant daughter, who had been experiencing persistent vomiting and diarrhea. Ruiz's diabetic mother performs elaborate 'soda ceremonies' and has been doing so for more than forty years. She believes the beverage can expel evil spirits, restore energy, and soothe internal ailments.

"I don't see why we should stop drinking it," says Manuela Dias, another local, during her interview with Al Jazeera News. Manuela is a Tzotzil woman whose five-person family cultivates corn and vegetables in the hills above San Cristóbal. Their rural lifestyle offers little access to alternative drinking resources. Along with the Tzotzil,

many other groups exhibit similar habits. Without access to resources on the negative health effects of drinking soda, they are left to believe that there is nothing wrong with their diet. These views, which, as stated, falsely see soft drinks as having a medicinal property, are all too common among diabetes-ridden residents. Furthermore, these practices not only reflect cultural adaptation but also expose how corporate influence and government inaction have reshaped public health norms.

Coca-Cola has several adverse health effects that are amplified by excessive consumption. Its high sugar content can directly contribute to weight gain, obesity, and Type-2 diabetes. As one report from the National Institute of Health (NIH) notes, excessive intake of the drink "should therefore be replaced by healthy alternatives such as water, to reduce risk of obesity and chronic diseases." Despite these warnings, thousands of growing children within Chiapas regularly face these downsides. Caffeine in soda can disrupt crucial sleep patterns and lead to attention problems in the classroom. Soda-addicted children can also experience symptoms of withdrawal, setting them up on a path of lifelong chronic disease. As demonstrated, Chiapas residents are experiencing a myriad of deleterious health problems due to their dependency on Coca-Cola. As a result, local healthcare workers are overworked by the influx of patients who share similar problems. Vicente Vaqueiros, a doctor at a San Juan Chamula (a municipality and township in Chiapas) clinic, told The New York Times that "health care workers were struggling" with Chiapas's "surge in diabetes." Vaqueiros also noted that when he was a child, there was no processed food, but now sees "kids drinking Coke and not water". Such a drastic shift in the local diet is related to contracts between soft-drink corporations and the Mexican government. The rise of processed food and sugary beverages in Chiapas is not simply a matter of consumer choice, but also a product of strategic contracts, permissive regulations, and aggressive marketing campaigns. This dynamic has created a landscape where corporate products saturate daily life so thoroughly that they shape not only diets, but also cultural identity, health norms, and even childhood upbringing.

Multiple environmental and civil rights groups published a 2017 report which found that "[FEMSA pays] 2,600 pesos ($155) for each water permit in Mexico". These favorable deals are often due to the strong connections between industry leaders and congressional, bureaucratic, and local government institutions. Such low-cost access to vital natural resources reflects the widespread corruption within the Mexican government, where corporate lobbying and political donations speak louder than public interest. This deal serves as a segue for multinational corporations to extract massive volumes of water, deepening inequality and accelerating health decline within its diverse communities. The poor infrastructure and rapid urbanization of Chiapas create a means for water supply issues to occur. According to Raúl Rodríguez, President of Mexico's Water Advisory Council, "the state and municipal governments must invest more economic resources to ensure the supply of water to the population" (Aljazeera 2025). Yet, his call for public investment is at odds with local administrators, who often divert resources or delay infrastructure improvements.

One potential solution to Mexico's struggle against soft-drink conglomerates would be to improve education access among indigenous groups, thus informing them of Coca-Cola's negative health effects. A potential solution would be to establish educational networks of health professionals who speak native languages. These group sessions could teach nutrition, diabetes prevention, and healthy dietary habits through a culturally sensitive lens. Companeros en Salud, a Mexico-based non-governmental organization (NGO), has already attempted such a program. In order communicate messages more effective, visual storytelling could be employed through murals, graphics, and other forms of visual media. As Maria de Lourdes Morales-Vargas, a researcher at local college in Chiapas, writes in her study on urban muralism in

> "The poor infrastructure and rapid urbanization of Chipas create a means for water supply issues to occur."

San Cristobal, "Murals become a form of public dialogue–accessible, emotional, and rooted in local identity". Culturally-conscious messaging ensures vital information is not lost in translation and remains easily understandable to indigenous audiences. Along with these efforts, a school curriculum could also be implemented so that young students are encouraged early on to prioritize drinking water over sugary drinks. Regarding the pressing problem of safe consumption, water-related infrastructure can be built through collaboration with NGOs, like Cantaro Azul, to install safe water kiosks and filtration systems. Existing artesian wells could also be repaired, along with rainwater catchment systems. Fixing in-place infrastructure, while building new projects as well, effectively ensures that public water access points are both free and reliable.

Addressing water accessibility issues requires realistic community-driven solutions. An effective approach involves collaboration with NGOs, which have already installed affordable, safe drinking water fountains.

Furthermore, restoring local artesian wells – which have fallen into disrepair due to over-extraction – can restore communal access to naturally pressurized groundwater. When properly maintained, these wells offer a reliable source of clean water without needing electricity or complex infrastructure. Another viable solution, rainwater catchment systems, when paired with basic filtration, drastically reduces dependence on bottled beverages and contaminated groundwater. Most importantly, these rebuilding efforts must be paired with public education initiatives delivered through local languages and culturally-conscious visual media. Yet, without addressing the deeply entrenched plutocratic ties between corporations and government, these efforts will likely be in vain. Reducing connections is critical to protecting public health and local environments against corporate interests. Doing so would help reverse decades of predatory marketing, and subsequent misconceptions about sugary drinks. What began as a drink has become a doctrine, poured into generations who deserve water, not worship.

THE SAHEL'S GREAT GAME

Combating Russian Influence in Africa

By Mark Adams: Mark is a senior International Affairs and French major at the Univeristy of Georgia.

To prevent the weakening of the international liberal order and the destruction of Western regional influence, the West must prove its ideological authority as a counterrorism & economic partner in Africa while combating the anti-Western propaganda spewing from Russia.

A Game of Flags:
Down with France, Up with Russia

In Mali, protestors burn Western flags while brandishing signs proclaiming a love for Russia, as traditional chiefs perform rituals that synthesize tradition with political claims, demanding an end to neo-colonial interference in their country. This is not a scene from the Cold War; although the actors may seem reminiscent, the context is quite different. Across Africa, since 2020, throughout the southern band of the Saharan desert known as the Sahel region, a smattering of coups has taken place that has replaced many of the formerly French-backed clientelist regimes with military autocracies dependent on military & political support from Wagner, a state-funded Russian private military company. Many countries in the Sahel region have been the victims of terrorist attacks, perpetrated by local branches of Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, alongside regional separatists such as the ethnic Tuareg people in northern Mali who have been fighting to create their own breakaway state, called Azawad, since 2012. After years of engagement under Operation Barkhane, the French military, the former colonial power of the region, was forced to depart in 2022 by the urging of the respective military coup junta leaders. This disengagement represents the end result of many Western failures in the region to present itself as a viable security partner capable of producing an ideologically coherent package of political and economic reform. The Sahel nations are in dire need of a regional power's protection due to the threat of terrorism and their weak political structures. However, this also shows blithe Western dismissal of the pernicious effects of mass media campaigns designed to influence the minds of Africans employed by groups connected to the Russian State. Although the Sahel may seem like an interminable

headache of corrupt elites versus insurrectionary rebel groups that causes for an absurd amount of U.S. money to be poured into another desert quagmire, this region is actually the canary in the mine for Western influence and a litmus test for the future of Western political will. In ten short years, the perception of the West has gone from salvatory to scorn. The Western global order has been dealt a humiliating blow by being shown to be incapable of managing the regional security that it supposedly had interest in guaranteeing. If the West is to continue to position itself as the leader of global order, based on economic and political liberalism, it must be able to offer a reliable security guarantee that comes with economic transformation. Additionally, it must use its vast media apparatus to extol the virtues of democratization and denounce Russian propaganda that seeks to misinform and divide in order to expand its own influence. Western failure to live up to these expectations will be an indication to other flashpoint regions that the West is overexerted and incapable of playing an influential role, thus triggering the thawing of conflicts that have been prevented by Western backing, to include NATO's Eastern flank, the Middle East, and the South China Sea. As anti-Western powers, such as Russia, cultivate influence over these states, they gain diplomatic and economic resources that allow them to circumvent Western levers of power, such as sanctions and U.N. resolutions. To understand how to rebuild Western influence, one must first see what caused it to fall.

Wagner's Winning Strategy

Russia and its pawn, Wagner, have essentially crafted a ready-made package to pull a state under its influence and transform a struggling democratic state aligned with the West into a Russian diplomatic ally and economic resource. Although this essay will not significantly enter into Chinese economic competition, aggressive Chinese development threatens Western economic influence while leaving space for Western ideological promotion. First, African leaders are courted by Putin and high-level Russian diplomatic officials, who advocate a shift towards a security partnership less restrictive on human rights and democratic governance, such as during the 2019 Sochi conference. Although Western-backed regimes have not universally respected democratic governance, economic aid and investment has been long tied to human rights standards, especially in a world after the Global War on Terrorism. In accord with the governing strongman of the

> **"As anti-Western powers, such as Russia, cultivate influence over these states, they... circumvent Western levers of power..."**

country, often who arrived in power from a coup, Wagner begins to create military bases within the country.

Wagner has three main functions: military, political, and economic. Wagner provides military support for the regime by training troops, providing intel, and fighting alongside local military in counterterrorism campaigns. This allows the fledgling regime to stand on its own two feet and often leads to the rejection of Western military, such as the coup leader of the Mali junta, Assimi Goïta, calling for the end of the French counterterrorism operation in the region, Operation Barkhane, days after coming to power. Politically, Wagner also implants a massive disinformation network that serves to capitalize on growing doubt on the viability of Western partnership and provides so-called "support" in monitoring elections that serves to intimidate. This network is composed of the Russian state-owned international networks RT News and Sputnik, private Russian entrepreneurs who profit from this increased media influence, and local NGOs or media producers who are sponsored by Wagner. In the case of Mali, this disinformation network serves to flood the media marketplace with content thematically close to pan-Africanist ideas, critiquing French influence as seen in the Franc CFA, Military intervention, and economic aid. From 2018 to 2022, articles published per month by the Russian-sponsored media networks RT France and Sputnik Africa with the tag "Mali" increased respectively by roughly 5 times. In return, Wagner gains quid pro quo economic contracts for mining and resource extraction, which allows Russia to circumvent Western sanctions by dealing in hard

to track physical materials such as gold and timber. This process of state capture results in an authoritarian regime propped up by Russian military and political support reliant on resource extraction contracts to pay off their godfathers. With so much influence over these weak states, it is no surprise Russia is able to gain much more diplomatic support at the United Nations. In the UN resolution condemning Russia for the Ukrainian invasion, 26 African nations failed to support the resolution. Nations with high Wagner influence, including Sudan, CAR, and Mali who abstained, and Burkina Faso, who had no recorded vote, were less likely to support the resolution.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The West failed in the Sahel for two reasons. Firstly, it failed to provide a successful counter-terrorism program that could prove ideological authority in people's minds. Regardless of military successes, counter-terrorism operations must do more to convince locals of the purpose of the partnership and show superiority to other offers. Secondly, it was blind to the Russian disinformation network that sows mass discontent and felt invincible to the possibility of Russian competition. Even before the coup in Mali, the Russian-sponsored disinformation machine was turning at full speed, laying the ground for a rejection of the Western liberal order. This greased the gears for the fall of much of the vast neo-colonial influence of the French in the Sahel region. To triage these shortcomings, the West must do more to reinforce the utility of counter-terrorrism in remaining countries with high levels of influence, such as Chad, Senegal, and Gabon. Secondly, the West must use its media influence with the clear intentions of showing the efforts of the liberal order while showing the consequences of Russian partnerships: human right violations, democratic backsliding, and economic corruption. Lastly, the West needs to unleash its vast economic resources to focus on investment in the content, competing with the value-blind investment of powers such as China, UAE, and Turkey. Previous Western mistakes in the region that have upheld neo-colonial hierarchies of power should be shifted towards new systems that authentically advocate for democratic governance. For the meantime, the West should conserve what influence it has while waiting for a good opportunity to expand influence in states that have recently moved towards Russia. If the West fails to do this, this will be the first domino to fall of regions with plummeting Western influence, and show that the West no longer has the power, will, or influence to preserve the order it has created. If the West shows weakness here, next will be the annexation of Ukraine, the remaking of the Middle Eastern regional order, and the heating up of the conflict in the South China Sea. This means the collapse of the Western liberal order based on free trade, human rights, and democracy, and an isolationist West licking its wounds as regional bullies like Russia and China try to dominate their neighbors and return to pre-WW2 norms of conquest.

> **" To triage these shortcomings, the West must do more to reinforce the utility of counter-terrorism in remaning countries with high levels of influence. "**

MASSACRES DO NOT CHANGE PEOPLE

The Parsely Massacre is Remembered

By Camila Polanco: Camila is a sophomore Political Science and International and Global Studies major at Sewanee: University of The South.

The Parsley Massacre in 1937 was a racially-charged massacre where Dominican soldiers killed over twenty thousand Haitians alongside the Dajabon River, yet to this day, this mass killing remains largely unknown. Since the massacre, little has changed, and racial tensions have continuously risen between both countries. Yet, the collective memory of the Massacre by both Haitians and Dominicans differs significantly: While the Dominicans don't concern themselves with a recollection of the events, the Haitians are forced to carry the mark of the massacre with them as victims. This phenomenon prompts the question: Why is the Parsley Massacre remembered in Haiti and not in the Dominican Republic? Existing theories, such as "collective memory," proposed by Maurice Halbwachs, relate to the subconscious memory of a group of people being passed down from one generation to the next. Meanwhile, "sites of memory," introduced by Pierre Nora, refer to specific places, objects, or concepts that are rich in historical significance and serve as collective memories for a community. Both of these theories can apply to this case. However, due to the differing national identities of both countries and the role political violence plays in nationalism in the Dominican

Republic, the Massacre is well-remembered in Haiti and minimally recalled in the Dominican Republic. Gathering different perspectives is a vital step in understanding why the dynamic between both countries remains hostile and how the hostility negatively affects how the Massacre is currently remembered. To this end, Dominicans born and raised in the Dominican Republic, Dominicans born in Spain and the U.S., a Haitian-American, and a born and raised Haitian were all interviewed for this article to compare how historical narratives differ on both sides.

In the context of the Parsley Massacre, "collective memory" is the difference in representations of truth between Haitians and Dominicans. However, collective memory does not equate to historical accuracy and does not entirely explain the issue between Dominicans and Haitians. For example, Halbwachs mentions that collective memory is gained through interactions with family and kinship. He describes how people gain unlived memories through those around them. Ideologies and behaviors that are passed down between families explain why the Massacre is rarely talked about in the Dominican Republic.

Families pass down their memories and ideologies

to one another, which enables cultures of silence to form. When applying Halbwachs' theory of family or kinship to the phenomena of forgetting the Parsley Massacre in the Dominican Republic, it is easy to understand why there is this "culture of silence" in the country (Bishop and Fernandez 2017). If older generations were taught to never bring up trauma, future generations will be even less likely to break that cycle of silence. However, memory is not erased due to silence; instead, it is an indicator of remembrance. According to different interpretations of Halbwachs' theory, "society itself seemingly ignores the memory of the event, yet the survivors bear the memory in their…silences" (Doolan, P. M. 2021: 4). While Haitians were targeted in the Massacre, dark-skinned Dominicans of Haitian descent were also killed. As a society, many Dominicans and Haitians block out or ignore the Massacre and other aspects of then-President Rafael Trujillo's regime. Despite this, survivors are forced to remember the Massacre through learned behaviors, family tensions, and everyday life. This idea reinforces how "individuals, not societies, may experience amnesia" (Doolan, P. M. 2021: 4). Individuals may not know about the Massacre, but society holds onto the legacy of racism, nationalism, and anti-Haitianism that was left behind.

However, Nora highlights how memory and history are not synonyms. He describes how "memory has been promoted to the center of history," which is important because it depicts and acknowledges both versions regarding historical events (Nora 1989: 24). He highlights how memory plays a role in history and that memory is just as important as history. Nora mentions how memory "remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting" (Nora 1989: 8). Here Nora explains a key difference between memory and history: memory is subject to change while history is not. Many of his points, such as memory relying "entirely on the materiality of the trace [and] the immediacy of the recording," relate to the Parsley Massacre because Trujillo delayed telling the truth and distorted the facts of the Massacre (Nora 1989: 13). Due to his manipulation, the memory of Dominicans was severely altered. Nora claims "history's goal and ambition is not to exalt but to annihilate what has in reality taken place" (Nora 1989: 9). When asking the question why societies remember or forget, analyzing history is crucial to getting an answer.

A superior image of a national identity was created by Trujillo through his acts of political violence and the absence of this violence from the collective memory. He left

> **"A superior image of a national identity was created by Trujillo through his acts of political violence…and the absence…from the collective memory. "**

behind a legacy of nationalism and anti-Haitianism within Dominicans in an attempt to whiten the country. He was vocally proud of his European ancestry and demonized his African heritage. Trujillo had a political agenda behind the Massacre, other than expelling Haitians out of the country: he used the Massacre as a ploy not only to "make the Dominican Republic richer". Since Haiti was economically better off, Trujillo knew that an attack this large would weaken Haiti. The Massacre was his opportunity to establish white-supremacist ideologies and expand his territory.

Trujillo justified his political violence against Haitians and relied on harmful rhetoric that promoted a stronger sense of nationalism in the country. He painted Haitians as barbaric to Dominican society (Baud 2005). His desire to "Dominicanize the country" instilled a sense of nationalism within the people. He used the Massacre as a way to establish Haitians as an enemy of Dominicans. There was significant "racial rhetoric," and if Haitians—or more specifically their African heritage—could be deemed demonic; then, the Massacre can be "painted as just" (Bishop and Fernandez 2017). His tactics to rise politically and gain popularity allowed him to establish more control over the social narrative.

Trujillo's tactics became fundamental to Dominican national identity; if Dominicans remembered the Massacre, it would challenge that identity. Trujillo exploited the nationalist ideology set by the "Dominican elite" to govern his people (Baud 2005: 127). Over time, the Massacre was written in history books but it was "more like a footnote" (Bishop and Fernandez 2017). Dominicans acknowledged

the Massacre but could not tell the full history. Similarly, relating to Nora's argument of memory relying on "the materiality of the trace," failing to communicate events to a society has been shown to effectively create a false reality. Trujillo's manipulation and disguise of the Massacre allowed him to assure a legacy of nationalism and spare him from the political violence he took part in. Many Dominicans were kept in the dark about the Massacre and also forced to partake in that "culture of silence" (Bishop and Fernandez 2017). With Dominican culture valorizing passed down lessons, many feel a certain way about talking about the past. They resist carrying the guilt and uncovering the trauma of Trujillo's regime. They prefer remaining divided in order to continue exploiting Haitians in the Dominican Republic. Uncovering the truth on a cultural level would force people to reject who they are.

The Parsley Massacre severity raises multiple questions about why and how it seems forgotten or suppressed. Under Rafael Trujillo's authoritarian regime, he ordered his soldiers to exterminate Haitians alongside the border of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. For generations people would cross over with ease between the countries and the two cultures would regularly intermix. Those with a dark complexion were targeted. However, Trujillo specifically targeted ethnic Haitians. In order to distinguish Haitians from Dominicans, soldiers would show a sprig of parsley and ask people to name the herb. Because of the linguistic differences between Haitian-Creole and Spanish when pronouncing the "r" in the word perejil, those who pronounced "perejil" differently would be killed. This strategy is how the Massacre got the name: the Parsley Massacre.

Preconceptions are tricky when analyzing history and memory. Assuming Dominicans chose not to remember the Massacre solely due to racist culture on the island, on a surface level, seems logical. However, unpacking the history and understanding the legacy and manipulation people underwent during Trujillo's dictatorship helps explain this foggy point in history. After conducting interviews

with a variety of Haitians and Dominicans, both sides were surprisingly similar. Out of the seven interviews conducted, only two people knew about the Parsley Massacre, and both were Dominican.

The legacy of anti-Haitianism Trujillo left behind was overtly present in the responses some Dominicans gave; especially of those born and raised in the Dominican Republic. Respondents used discriminatory language but followed up with "not to discriminate" statements. It was evident that racism and a lack of compassion towards Haitians are very normalized within Dominican society. One respondent laughed off important matters, and another used derogatory language to describe how they felt about Haitians, despite being born in Haiti. Curiously enough, one of the Haitian respondents described a disappointment in his country due to the current political crisis of the

country and religious practices such as Vodun: a religion originating in West Africa. Similarly, another Haitian respondent expressed profound sadness about the current situation that Haiti finds itself in. Because of the Massacre, he is skeptical about the Dominican government and will never be happy with them. He has a deep love for Haiti and hopes that one day his son can visit and understand his love for Haiti. The responses suggest a strong anti-Haitian sentiment dominating Dominican society. As well as pain for Haiti's mistreatment.

Trujillo also left a legacy of nationalism in the country. All of the Dominican individuals, when asked the question "What are your thoughts on the Dominican Republic or people?", mentioned how it is the "best country in the Caribbean". Responses claimed that the Dominican Republic makes people "feel very welcomed." However, when asked the same question for Haiti, most responses coming from Dominicans were negative and anti-Haitian. Most Dominicans were not aware of the manipulation that occurred during Trujillo's regime and how normalized Trujillo's legacy is in their society. While almost none of the respondents knew about the Massacre, their testimonies helped understand the toxic Haitian and Dominican dynamic. Within Dominican society, people hold onto the Trujillo legacy. In both countries, there has been no space for the actual remembrance of the Massacre.

Currently, Haiti is at a critical point in its survival as a country. The nation is currently going through a gang war where "criminal gangs have tightened their grip…[and] multinational security" resulted in little social progress (Locked in Transition 2025). For many it can be "difficult for people to look back and ponder long ago horrors" (Haitians Times 2024). However, some individuals still carry the weight of the Massacre and seek justice for the victims. Many who lived the horrors of the Massacre fear setting foot in the Dominican Republic. The survivors of the Massacre will likely die without justice, as seen with the case of "Marcellus Jean [who] died at the age of 102" (Haitian Times 2024).

However, Dominicans are fighting against the "culture of silence" on the Island. Over "100,000 Dominican signatures ask[ed] for a truth and reconciliation" (Bishop and Fernandez 2017). An NPR podcast on this topic, for example, interviewed a Dominican woman feels guilty for her grandfather's role in the Massacre and actively attempts to eliminate anti-Haitianism by working with nonprofit organizations that help Haitian immigrants (Bishop and Fernandez 2017). Another example of Dominicans

commemorating the Massacre is a Dominican priest Regino Martinez who works on human rights cases in Dajabón. He led an event that "would break the silence of the last 75 years," and spoke at a Catholic Church "as hundreds… lit candles and plodded toward the river " (Fieser 2012). On the Haitian side of the river they noticed "the glow of candles" where people danced and "commemorated the event" (Fieser 2012). The Massacre is a weight both countries carry but cannot seem to acknowledge.

These developments also contradict aspects of "collective memory." While the idea that "Individuals, not societies, may experience amnesia" was mentioned earlier, it is the opposite in this case (Doolan, P. M. 2021). While both societies hold onto remnants of the Massacre, the Massacre is almost ignored in both countries by society. Neither the government or society in both the Dominican Republic or Haiti give a place for the Massacre to be rightfully commemorated. Nevertheless, multiple individuals across both countries have struggled to one day receive justice for the victims of the Parsley Massacre.

Analyzing why Haitians remember The Parsley Massacre and why Dominicans do not is complex. Most of the secondary sources lack historical context and were about commemorating the seventy-fifth or eightieth year of the Massacre. However, journal articles helped contextualize the information in these secondary sources. The process of writing this article was difficult because when investigating historical events that are barely talked about, forgotten, and ignored it is hard to find adequate sources. Trujillo got away with the Massacre, manipulation, and instilling anti-Haitianism in the country. The fact that the Massacre is unremembered is the result of a tool that solidifies Haitian and Dominican dynamics to this day. Having conducted the research, it is crucial that no historical event goes unreported and that authoritarian manipulation of history is diminished. A regime forcefully creating different collective memories for a political agenda only allows for further discrimination, fostering hatred, and leads to extreme nationalist ideologies. Revealing this truth is the best and only way to heal the traumas of Trujillo's regime and build a better nation with a foundation of truth and reconciliation.

WILL DATA CENTERS SQUEEZE DROUGHT-STRESSED COMMUNITIES DRY?
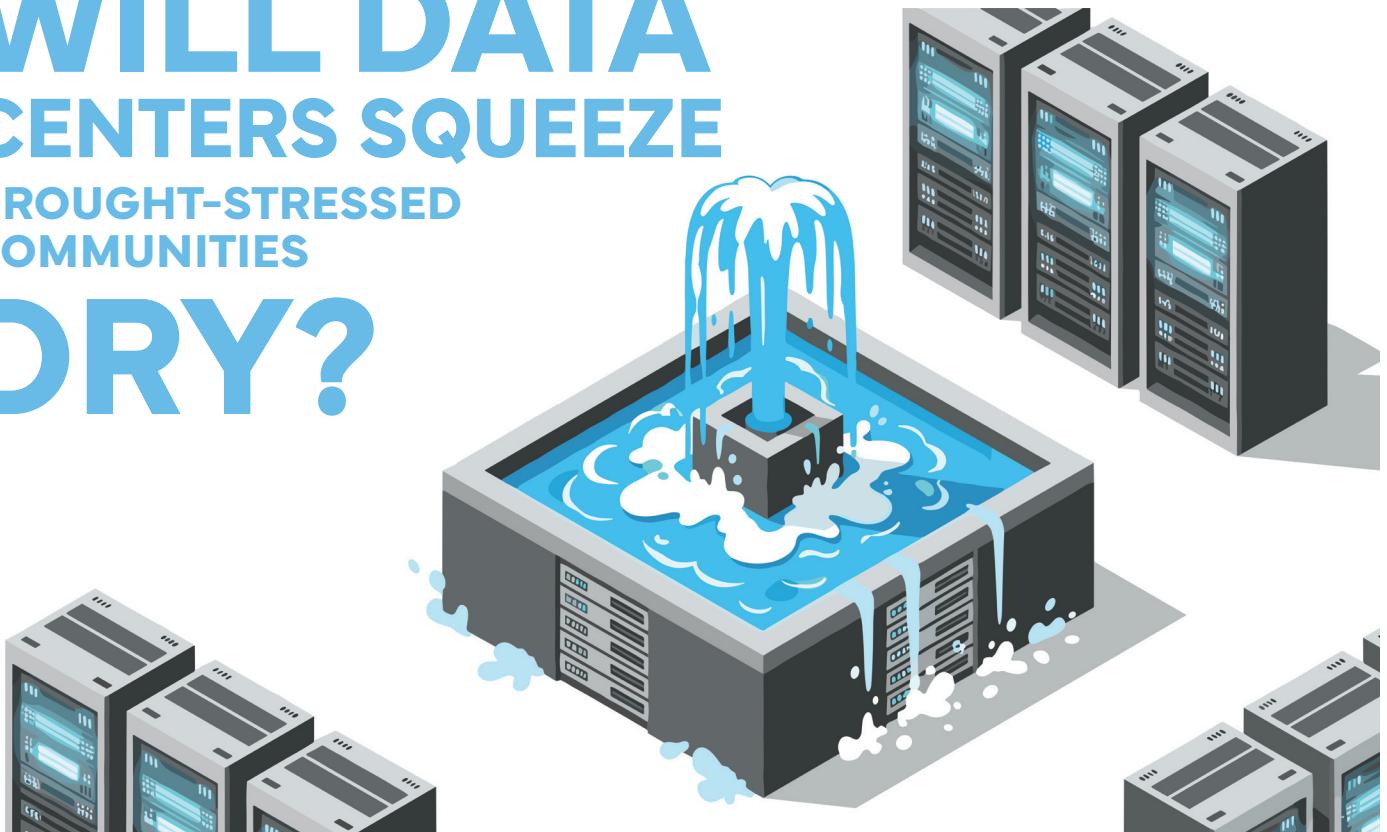
By Robert Johnson: Robert is a freshman Computer Science and Psychology major at Clemson University.

Microsoft, Google, and Amazon's data centers are receiving priority access to freshwater in drought-stressed areas globally, amplifying local communities' water scarcity. Yet, these tech giants plan to continue expanding their infrastructure within these regions. Moreover, residents are often forced to take action through grassroots activism, as their local governments often welcome these companies as neighbors without regard to those living in these areas. Still, data centers form the backbone of the internet, storing, processing, and dispersing the data of every website and app. Their importance is undeniable, particularly in light of the current data demands of artificial intelligence (AI). However, water-intensive data centers continue to arrive in regions, like Chile and the Middle East, that are at risk of drought, and local governments are allowing it.

So why are water-scarce communities a favorable choice for thirsty data centers? Low-humidity locations can prevent metal corrosion, which can shorten the lifespan of a center's cooling system and lead to other maintenance issues. Simply put, the cost of downtime for repairs outweighs the cost of water for tech giants. Furthermore, data centers cluster around specific sections of arid regions, as many have governments that support local AI development and provide cheap energy, which cuts costs for tech companies.

And why are data centers so thirsty? Cooling systems are necessary to prevent their computer servers from overheating, as they are constantly in use. One of the most common systems is evaporative cooling, which involves guiding the hot air into a cooler that evaporates water. The proccess outputs cold air, which is then redirected back into the data center. While the other most common method, air cooling, consumes significantly less water than evaporative cooling, it still indirectly depletes millions of gallons of freshwater annually. Furthermore, air cooling cannot keep up with the intense demands of artificial intelligence and is likely to decrease in popularity as data centers continue to develop. Thankfully, an emerging process could help mitigate the exacerbation of water scarcity that data centers present. Microsoft recently launched a cooling system that consumes zero water after construction, recycling water in a closed loop. It has high potential for developing data centers in drought-stressed regions; however, this technology isn't widely used due to its high upfront cost and the little

legislation enforcing environmentally conscious design.

Mosacat, a grassroots organization, finally stood up to big tech after learning about a 200-million-dollar proposal for a new data center in Santiago, Chile. Chile has been facing an ongoing megadrought since 2010, which has been exacerbated by climate change. In 2015, Google opened its first data center in Santiago. This center was authorized to extract one billion liters of water every year. With Google and other smaller companies receiving primary access to freshwater resources, many farmers didn't have enough water to grow crops anymore and were forced to purchase food to support themselves. Santiago locals' bathrooms were inoperable as they didn't have enough water to run properly. Then, in 2019, Google announced plans to develop another data center in Cerrillos, Santiago that was authorized to extract over 7 billion liters per year, or 228 liters per second. With such an egregious exacerbation of water scarcity, this project was the final straw for locals. Mosacat staged a series of protests against the construction of this center. Their efforts caught the attention of a Chilean environmental court, which forced Google to revise its project, this time accounting for the environmental impacts and water concerns of the area it would occupy. Google announced that it would revise its plans to abide by environmental regulations.

Tania Rodríguez, an environmental activist who helped found Mosacat, points out why tech giants come to Chile: "Chile is attractive because our laws are lax. We have almost no legislation. Plus, there is no political responsibility." Many Mosacat activists, including Tania Rodriguez, find that the Chilean government is prioritizing data center construction over the community they serve, as they don't want to fall behind in the AI race. And while the president has responded to community pushback against recent data center developments, moving construction to the less populated North, there still seems to be a disconnect between the interests of the government and the population it serves. Many environmentalists voice concern over the impact that data centers may have on the Atacama Desert. Yet, their government has no intention of halting their multi-billion-dollar national data center plan to position Chile as a global leader in digital infrastructure.

Several human rights organizations argue that Israeli authorities restrict Palestinian access to water while prioritizing infrastructure like data centers. The Israeli military possesses complete control over all water resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including the West Bank and Gaza. Ozan Agbas, an emergency operations

> **" The same water being used to support their cooling systems is being stripped away... "**

manager, finds that "as with food, supplies, and health care, the Israeli military is restricting access to water to minimal levels. By refraining from cutting off water entirely, they allow plausible deniability while choking Palestinians of their means of survival." But Israel's real intentions are made ever more obvious by their allocation of water resources. Tel Aviv has become a hub for data centers, and Israel only plans to expand on its technology infrastructure. One report states that Israel currently houses 32 data centers and plans to develop 26 more, which will nearly double the number of their server rooms. But the same water being used to support their cooling systems is being stripped away from Gaza and West Bank, causing a water crisis in Palestine. Israel's upcoming projects will only exacerbate the dire situation many Palestinians are facing.

Like in Cerrillos, mega corporations are promising to reduce their environmental footprint. Microsoft, Google, Meta, and Amazon have all pledged to at least replenish all the water they consume by 2030. These tech giants are promoting water stewardship through developing and funding watershed restoration projects and implementing advanced cooling systems. In 2023, the organizations funded by Meta replenished 1.5 billion gallons of water to regions facing drought, coming close to their end goal of restoring 1.9 billion gallons annually. Google returned 64% of the freshwater consumed by their data centers in 2024, totaling 4.5 billion gallons.

Residents of drought-stressed communities are increasingly being forced to welcome water-guzzling data centers as neighbors. These server rooms are developed in arid regions to prevent metal corrosion from occurring, as it leads to maintenance issues and forced down-time. And tech giants are clustering their data centers within communities

with the cheapest energy providers to cut costs. What makes these buildings so thirsty is their cooling systems, which oftentimes evaporate large quantities of water to dissipate heat. One group, Mosacat, is working with these tech giants to protect their communities' water resources. Their efforts successfully halted progress on a Google data center planned to be developed in Carrillos, Santiago, until Google finds a more sustainable cooling system. However, it still seems as though Chilean officials care more about developing their country into a digital infrastructure epicenter than about protecting their population. And in the Middle East, Israeli officials are deliberately withholding water resources from Palestine, leading to many Palestinians dying of thirst. And Israel continues developing water-guzzling data centers as another display of their dominance over Palestinian water resources. Nevertheless, influential companies, including Microsoft, Google, Amazon, and Meta, have all pledged to replenish all the water they consume by 2030 and have made considerable progress towards this objective. Yet, government officials still seem to struggle with prioritizing the communities they serve. Unless governments prioritize communities over corporate interests, technological progress will continue to come at the expense of human survival.
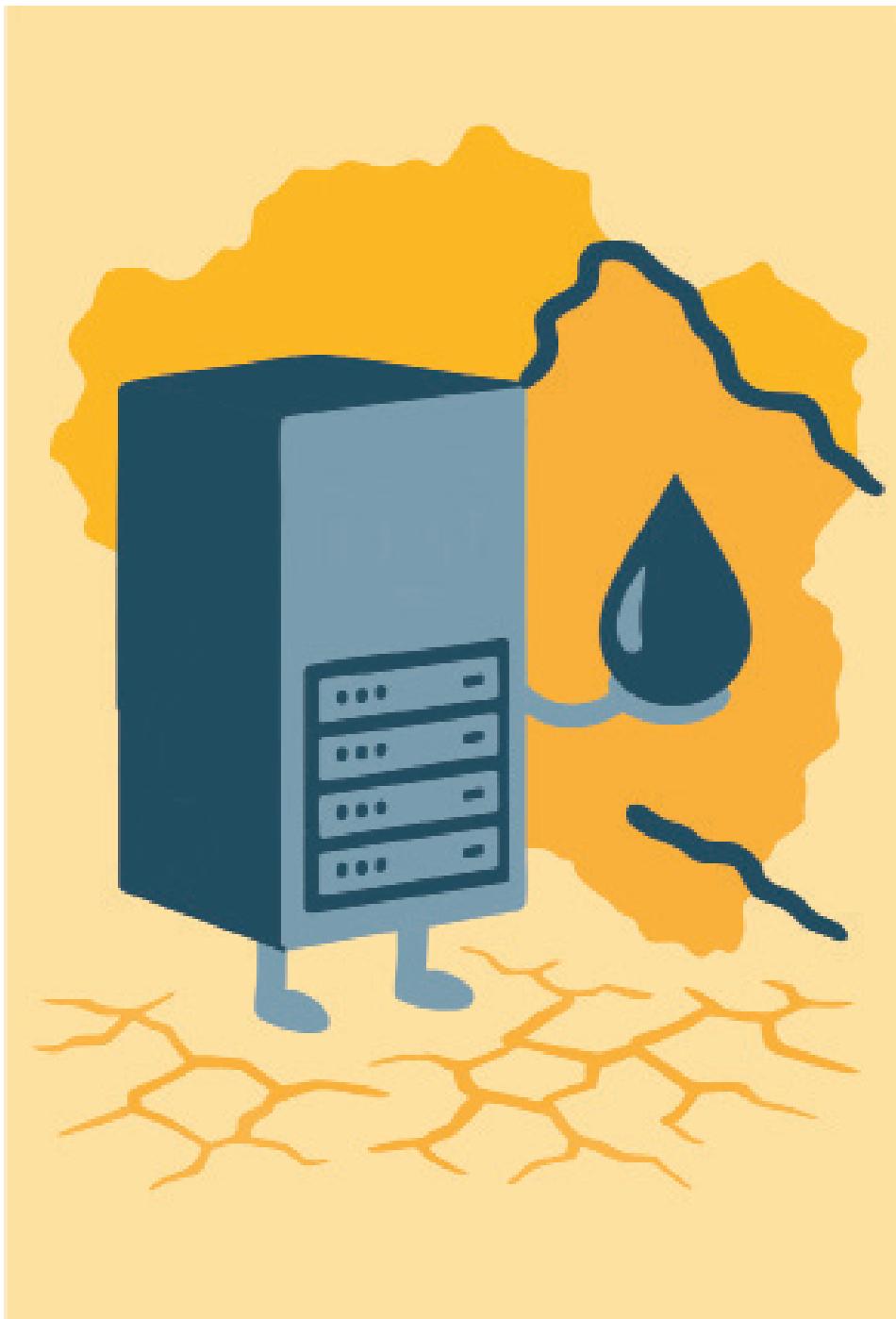
UNORDINARY SILENCE

The 1400-year Story of Women's Resistance in Iran
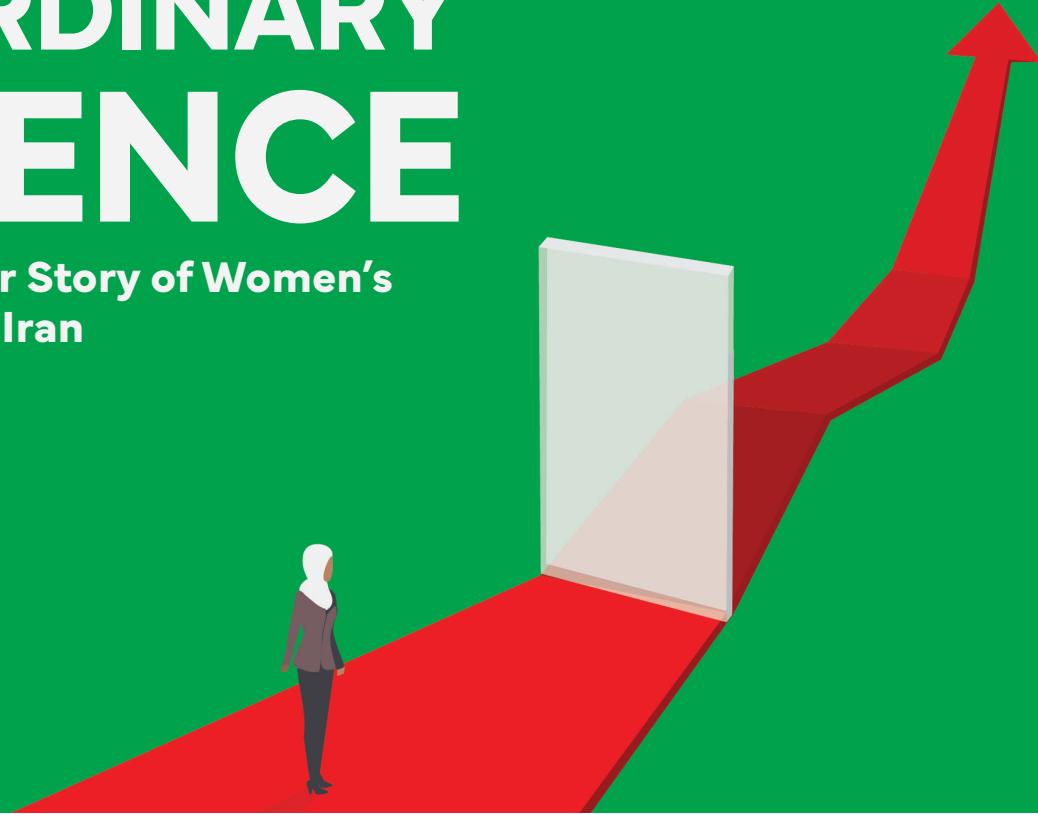
By Blake Arias: Blake is a freshman Horticulture major at Clemson University.

A sudden chill shot down my back as I quickly hung up the phone. It was not until that moment that I fully understood the silence —an unordinary silence. The interviewee's abrupt refusal to continue the conversation when I said "women in Iran" was what struck me the most, revealing a culture of fear so deep that even speaking safely felt impossible. That instant mirrored what many Iranians feel daily: that even a single word can come at a cost. What was meant to be a simple interview call about Iranian gender dynamics had instead revealed a chilling, unspoken reality, and, more importantly, an attempt to tell the story of women in Iran.

For women in particular, silence is more than just caution; it is a deliberate restraint imposed by centuries of systemic patriarchal extremism. In Iran, the rights of women have been restricted by extreme interpretations of religion and law. Over centuries of regime change, Shari'ah evolved alongside Iran's history, defining those limits, but it has also inspired women to defy them through education, work, and resilience. The women of Iran fight not only for their voice, but for the right to determine who they are

allowed to become.

Ironically, for the first three thousand years of Iran's history, women had a voice. In ancient Iran, known then as Persia, women were, in many cases, treated as equals to men. They could own property, conduct business, earn equal pay, travel freely, and even hold positions of political power. These early examples of women's entrepreneurship show that Iranian women's strength and independence are deeply rooted in history, not a modern feminist fad.

That freedom began to erode in 633 AD, a dramatic turning point for ancient Persia. One year after the Prophet Mohammed's death, Arab Muslim forces overwhelmed the previously weakened Sasanian Empire. Within 21 years, the Zoroastrian empire collapsed, marking the end of a millennium of dynastic rule— but also giving birth to a new Iran and with it, a new chapter for its women.

After the Muslim conquest of Iran, Islam spread gradually through cultural influence rather than coercion, eventually surpassing Zoroastrianism. By the early 9th century, Iranian cities had emerged as prominent hubs connecting the West and East. These cultural crossroads

attracted people from surrounding rural areas and became centers where art, architecture, and eventually Shari'ah took root.

The Development of Shari'ah

Shari'ah, meaning "the way" in Arabic, is the moral and legal framework that guides a Muslim's life, shaping everything from daily rituals to social and political conduct. During the Prophet Mohammed's ministry, these principles helped resolve disputes and provide guidance for living according to God's wishes. After his death, scholars compiled Shari'ah from the Qur'an and Sunnah and interpreted it through Fiqh, allowing it to adapt to different times and societies. Over the centuries, these varied interpretations, shaped in part by Arab cultural norms, became embedded in Iranian society, creating the systems that designated restricted roles and participation in public life for women. Understanding Shari'ah shows that it is not a rigid obstacle, but a framework whose application has shaped, but not defined, women's roles and presence in Iranian society throughout history.

Abbasid Empire:
Hidden Women (750–1258 AD)

Persians played a key role in advancing Islamic civilization during the "Islamic Golden Age," creating a rich cultural fusion with Arabs that shaped art, philosophy, and scholarship within the Abbasid Caliphate. This period also brought new interpretations of Shari'ah that advanced Islamic scholarship but increasingly limited women's public roles. Scholar Leila Ahmed notes that pre-Islamic Arab traditions were absorbed into Islamic legal thought, influencing Shari'ah interpretations and introducing ideals of female seclusion and exclusion from political life. These influences shaped applications of Shari'ah that reflected not divine command, but the patriarchal norms of their time.

Mongol Invasion and Timurid Empire:
Reemergence of Women (1258-1507)

Weakened by Mongol invasions in the thirteenth century, the Abbasid Caliphate collapsed in 1258, bringing social turmoil but also small social openings for women. The Mongols introduced new Eastern ideas that blended with Persian and Arabic traditions, influencing the role of women in later Turco-Mongol dynasties such as the Timurids (1370–1507). Compared to earlier Islamic societies, Timurid women were less confined to domestic spaces. They could engage in trade, textile production, and even hold influence in court and community affairs. Though patriarchal limits remained, women regained a measure of visibility and participation in public life. Yet by the early sixteenth century, Iran was again on the brink of transformation, not through conquest, but through faith.

Safavid and Qajar Eras:
Faith and Resistance (1507-1925) Era

Following the Timurid era, Iran underwent another major transformation under the Safavid and later Qajar dynasties with the institutionalization of Twelver Shi'ism. By declaring Shi'ism as the state religion, the Safavids created a distinct Iranian identity that set the empire apart from its Sunni neighbors and reshaped its social and religious order. Twelver Shi'ism centers on the belief in twelve divinely appointed Imams, spiritual leaders viewed as God's representatives on earth, whose authority replaced the caliphal model of Sunni Islam.

This shift in faith also reshaped gender norms. The Mongols' relatively lenient attitudes toward women gave way to renewed expectations of veiling and seclusion. Wealthier women could exercise influence through patronage or family ties to religious scholars, but many, especially within the royal court, were confined to the Shah's harem. Yet within the walls of clerical households, a quieter form of resistance emerged. Educated women, often relatives of scholars, helped preserve and spread Shi'ism's teachings through written works, many of which they published anonymously to avoid backlash. Their contributions reveal that even in the most restrictive eras, Iranian women found ways to shape the spiritual and intellectual life of their society.

Under the Qajar dynasty (late 18th–early 20th century), Twelver Shi'ism became deeply intertwined with state power and everyday life, reinforcing strict gender hierarchies. Most women were confined to domestic labor and child-rearing, while those in lower classes often worked outside the home to help sustain their families. As Western ideas entered Iran through trade, education, and print culture, women became increasingly aware of existing inequalities. Reformers such as Bibi Khanum Astarabadi emerged at the turn of the century, establishing girls' schools and challenging traditional norms. Bibi, in particular, wrote the satirical Vices of Men in response to

the deeply patriarchal attitudes toward women, advocating for women's equality and especially for girls' education. Her efforts marked the beginning of Iran's modern women's movement.

Phalavi Dynasty: Feminist Gilded Age (1925-1979)

In 1921, the weakened Qajar dynasty was replaced by the Pahlavis, beginning a period of modernization and secularization that opened unprecedented opportunities for women. Reforms raised the legal marriage age, expanded access to education, and controversially mandated unveiling. While some saw these changes as part of the regime's Westernization agenda, they allowed women to attend universities, take government jobs, and participate more fully in public life, freedoms unseen since before Islam. At the same time, these state-imposed reforms often served political interests rather than genuine grassroots empowerment. Conservative clerics and traditionalists feared cultural erosion and strongly opposed these policies, leaving Iranian society divided over how to balance progress with religious and cultural values.

Islamic Revolution of 1979: The Breaking Point

By the late 1970s, Iranians, both secular and religious, had grown weary of the Shah's authoritarian rule and its heavy Western influence. When promised political reforms failed to take place, diverse groups, including progressives and traditionalists, united under Ayatollah Khomeini in opposition. As social unrest toppled the monarchy and the Shah fled, Khomeini transformed the revolution's broad coalition into an Islamic Republic, replacing the secular monarchy with a theocratic state governed by strict interpretations of Shari'ah.

The Islamic Republic of Iran: The New Resistance (1979-present)

The Islamic Republic ended up reversing many of the reforms that had once expanded women's opportunities in education, employment, and public life. Schools and universities were segregated, and many women lost their government jobs. Most visibly, the state reimplemented mandatory veiling, insisting that women dress "properly." Yet, not all women accepted these limits in silence. A new

> **"A new generation of devout, non-secular women began advocating for their rights within the framework of Islam itself..."**

generation of devout, non-secular women began advocating for their rights within the framework of Islam itself, arguing that true Islam supports women's rights and equality. Rather than directly defying the law, they pushed to reinterpret Shari'ah and remove discriminatory laws and policies from within the system. Over time, their nonconfrontational persistence helped reopen spaces for women in education, work, and even politics.

By the turn of the 21st century, the rise of the internet connected Iranians, especially young women, to entirely new global realities. Abbaszadeh and colleagues observed that even in rural areas, global media began influencing fashion, language, and social expectations, gradually blurring the boundaries between tradition and modernity. As women grew more aware of global trends towards gender and freedom, they began to see how deeply inequality was woven into their own lives. Through this awareness, many came to recognize the true depth of the system that had long silenced them, and the power of reclaiming their voices against it.

This growing awareness erupted into a national movement in 2022 after the death of Mahsa Amini, a young woman detained by the "morality police" for allegedly violating hijab laws. Her death sparked the "Woman, Life, Freedom" protests, where women publicly removed or burned their veils in defiance of state control. The movement exposed how the Iranian government continues to marginalize women, effectively controlling half of the population to maintain power. Much like Bibi Khanum Astarabadi a century earlier, today's women challenge

oppression, trying to claim a measure of independence. But this growing awareness also deepened the state's fear of losing control. In seeking to include firsthand perspectives, I experienced this tension. When I mentioned "women's rights" to a trusted contact from Iran, they immediately replied, "I'm sorry, I cannot answer these questions," and ended the conversation. That silence revealed the true totalitarian grip and fear the government maintains over its citizens, even from thousands of miles away, into the heart of the US.

Another associate who lived in Iran and remains in contact with family explained that, in an attempt to stamp out Western influence, the government has banned several social media platforms. Still, many Iranians find ways around these restrictions by using VPNs to access the outside world. He noted that while the government may be totalitarian, it often fails to act like one, because it is inefficient.

Despite the barriers women continue to face, many pursue higher education and even run their own businesses. Today, women make up nearly 60% of all university students in Iran, a striking figure that reflects their determination even under restrictions. Yet, a 2009 Review of Economics of the Household study found that fewer than one in five Iranian women work outside the home. The research shows that even though women are becoming more educated and changing family life, they still face barriers to equality in work and society because of the extreme interpretation of Shari'ah.

Iranian women are not just surviving; they are empowering themselves by turning to entrepreneurship as an act of social resistance. Take Nahid, for example. She is a 40-year-old entrepreneur who began marketing homemade dolls on Instagram. Her business became so successful that she had to employ 18 local women to meet the demand. Another female entrepreneur, Elli, 30, also started a business called Elit Kala, which centers on the resale of kitchen equipment and thrives largely because of her Instagram presence. It has become so successful that even her husband has left his job to support her. Women entrepreneurs have even successfully established businesses in industries such as agriculture and landscaping, where they often face additional barriers in male-dominated fields. For instance, I spoke with a woman working in landscaping who described the challenges she encountered but emphasized how she persevered for many years. Despite economic sanctions and government-imposed setbacks, these women exemplify the resilience that could strengthen Iran's economy, demonstrating the potential of women's entrepreneurship in driving that growth.

The story of Iranian women is remarkable. For centuries, they have lived at the crossroads of evolving Shari'ah interpretations, cultural and traditional fusions, and shifting powers, shaped by systems that sought to silence them, but that never fully succeeded. From the elusive women scholars of the Safavid era who anonymously contributed to Islamic knowledge, to Bibi Khanum Astarabadi, who challenged patriarchal norms through education and reform in the Qajar era, to Nahid and Elli, modern entrepreneurs who have built businesses under sanctions and censorship, Iranian women persevere. Today, their resilience takes place in classrooms, through small businesses, and across digital spaces that defy censorship. Unlike the state-imposed reforms of the Pahlavi era, today's transformation is shaped by women themselves. Even with restrictions in place, real change in Iran begins not with power, but with those who quietly refuse to disappear.

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A PITCH

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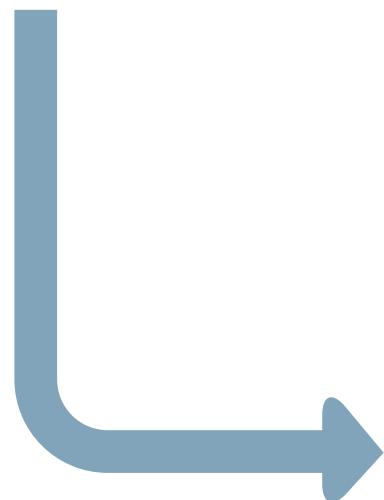
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