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Contents

Editor's Note

In this issue of Peace and Security Review, the contents are based on subjects that greatly impact our lives. The use of unconventional means of warfare in the modern era influencing the decision-making process from individual to the state level has been depicted in the articles of this edition. The discussions start from examining the implications of influence operations and how it processes among different factors and further analyse the grey-zone where these influence operations occur. It also examines how female radicalisation occurs in Bangladesh and how technology has worked as a catalyst during the Covid-19 pandemic to influence females to adopt extremist ideologies. Finally, it provides an outlook of how external factors like sports and their implications affect policymaking. The portrayal of methodologies, the implications, and analysis to identify such issues regarding influence operations has been one of the key features of this edition. Addressing the upsurge of females in extremist groups need attention of law enforcement agencies and counter measures to tackle female radicalisation. Understanding these topics are essential as they can drive people to take decisions which can be detrimental to any nation. It describes how every activity in our daily live has broader implications on nation building or influencing it to other directions.

The First article titled "Friendly Fire: Examining the Implications of Domestic Co-Option in 'Foreign' Influence Operations" by Mrugank Bhusari analyses the actors and implications of influence operations in the world today and how their rapid increase is affecting everyone. The principal argument of the article is that the human domain is subjected to cause influence operations, knowingly or unknowingly, initiated by foreign governments or at times even initiate influence operations themselves aligned with foreign actors. Furthermore, those actors with malicious and nefarious motives easily merge within the broader chaotic information environment. The author has clearly pointed out why such influence operations, instigated by foreign states, can hamper the domestic stability of a country. Here, the different methodologies and mediums by which various domestic actors, concerned only about their

self-interest, influence people in shaping their ideologies and decision-making processes are portrayed in detail. It can also be understood what implications it has for society and how it can drastically influence major decisions up to a state level for the advantage of a foreign state. In this article, an elaborate discussion on the process and effects of influence operations conveys a message on how alarming the situation can be if the actors, both individual and organisation, do not anticipate it.

The Second Article titled "Disentangling Grey-Zone Warfare: Substantiating an Emerging Threat to National and International Security" by Simen Agnalt Nielson signifies the importance of understanding the grey-zone. The author signifies the importance of evolving nature of wars, from conventional wars by the use of kinetic force to a much modern system of warfare, which includes coercion within economic, socio-cultural, diplomatic, information, cyber, energy, infrastructure, criminal activities, conventional military action and intelligence operations existing within the grey-zone area representing a 'hybrid' action. A great importance is given to ground a basic understanding of the grey-zone, and its functions and limitations. An extensive comparison of the modern grey-zone warfare with multiple historic incidents, where the other means of influence other than battlefields were used, is portrayed for depicting a clear understanding of the grey-zone. It is also stated that the grey-zone offers nothing fundamentally new concerning the nature of war, and it is corroborated by specific contemporary socio-political and historical conditions all facilitated by modern technological infrastructure. An extensive analysis of the process of distinguishing the actors of grey-zone warfare from conventional ones is evaluated with the intention of laying a foundation for future a more disaggregated exploration of the grey-zone. It is also mentioned that important global initiatives, such as Passportisation by Russia or Belt and Route Initiative by China, are important elements of modern-day influence operations signifying the grey-zone warfare. It is also arguing that, while it is important to carefully consider the long and short-term strategies of adversaries, it is not always useful to link these with the connotations of warfare for considering it as a grey-zone. Therefore, there needs to be a certain proportion of intentionality in its framework. In the near future, grey-zone activities will increase both in scope and sophistication and will therefore be very important for researchers and practitioners to understand.

The Third article with the title 'The Gendered Face of Terrorism in Bangladesh-Part II: Roles of Women and Why They Are Radicalised' by Marjuka Binte Afzal, is the second part of the article which appeared in the last edition of the Peace and Security Review 'The Gendered Face of Terrorism in

Bangladesh-Part I: What Drives Women into Extremism'. Following the discussion on the recruitments and socio-economic factors driving females towards radicalisation in the first part, the article covers many practical aspects of female extremism. Here, different roles of women in the groups, both sedimentary and active participation in conflicts, are analysed and substantiated. The process of recruitment and the implications for women in extremist groups are also portrayed in the article. Different activities undertaken by women in these groups, mostly active involvement in the conflicts, are statistically shown, alongside how they can go undetected in the male-dominated extremist groups. Most law-enforcement agencies commonly see women as victims, giving the group an edge while operating terrorist activities. The article also focuses on the current circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic that has given everyone unrestricted access to radical information and allowed extremist groups to recruit beyond the borders. The effect of domestic violence towards women and socio-economic depression due to the situation is also highlighted as one of the main reasons leading to a rise in female radicalisation during the pandemic. Finally, the author suggests the measures through which such concerning factors of female extremism can be countered, including an efficient investigation process in the LEAs and empowering women in a stronger way to fill up the urgent need that drives them to join the terrorist groups.

The Fourth Article titled, "What Sport Tells us about India-Pakistan Ties" by Jitendra Nath Misra, is an article with the exclusive overview of how different sporting activities effect the policymakers in shaping Indo-Pak ties. Here, an extensive understanding is portrayed of how the competition in different sports, from cricket to hockey, has great political significance. Different cases and incidents have in various times affected on a greater scale. The behaviour of both India and Pakistan have severely tilted into different directions from various outcomes of sports results and the rivalry it possesses on the field. The data used in the article establishes a connection between state cohesion and sporting success. At present, the economic and political gap seems to be rising as neither country tours the other for bilateral series. While there is a great sense of disparities in providing opportunities in the collection of revenue of sports in both countries, the widening gap in power raises question about the future of this famous rivalry.

The journal presents an all-inclusive view towards understanding different aspects of influence operations and geopolitics. It will assist everyone in their decision-making process. They will assess the information they are provided from various sources and resist getting influenced by different actors. Influence

operations, the grey-zone warfare and the rise of female radicalisation will be major challenges that the world will be facing in the modern era with an upsurge in the use of technology, especially in the post-COVID-19 period. Many nations across the world are introducing different countering measures to tackle such influence operations from foreign states. Perceiving these concerning subjects with a holistic approach in this edition of the journal will provide the readers with an edge in assessing the direction world is heading.

Major General ANM Muniruzzaman, ndc, psc (Retd.)
Editor

Friendly Fire: Examining the Implications of Domestic Co-Option in 'Foreign' Influence Operations

Mrugank Bhusari[1]

Abstract

Concerns regarding influence operations (IOs) as a new form of statecraft and their ability to derail domestic political, economic, and security objectives heightened in the last few years, particularly with the rapid development of technology. The underlying premise shaping policy responses is an understanding that IOs conducted by foreign actors are problematic and warrant attention. In this article, I argue that this underlying premise only partially aids our comprehension of IOs and that IOs defy easy categorisation. Several domestic actors, knowingly or unknowingly, but always willingly, co-opt into IOs initiated by foreign governments or may even initiate IOs themselves aligned with foreign actors. These actors, which include civilians as well as organisations, typically do not act at the behest of foreign governments, but in pursuit of their own political, monetary, and ideological interests. It further blurs how we distinguish problematic IOs from acceptable ones. Domestic co-option has three implications for countering IOs: first, it introduces new domestic actors in the mix, which makes attribution extremely difficult. Second, and relatedly, the difficulty in discerning motivations complicates the possibilities of countering IOs through international and domestic laws. Third,

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the frame of analysis needs to move away from governments and governmental agents/agencies to a mixed model of governments and private actors. Taken together, these implications demonstrate the tremendous inadequacy of the current paradigms for countering IOs. Emphasis should be paid on collaboration, information gathering and information sharing between multiple governmental agencies, as well as with others outside the state system, in particular social media companies.

I.   Introduction

Since the turn of the century, the rapid development of technology has dramatically altered the information environment in which we live. The contemporary technological landscape and information environment are particularly conducive to attempts at influencing collective perceptions. Due to its composition of a multitude of trust-based networks, social media provides fertile ground for disseminating propaganda and disinformation with the consequent manipulation of collective and individual beliefs.[2] These evolving vulnerabilities are subsequently being exploited by domestic and foreign actors, including states, as a tool of statecraft.

While most forms of influence are perfectly innocent and are a routine part of daily life, not all sophisticated attempts at exercising influence are equally legitimate. Since exercising influence may allow actors to alter behaviours, some are more problematic than others. Different actors operating in their self-interest could, for instance, promote public disharmony or hold tremendous sway over national elections and policymaking processes. It has become a particularly relevant concern in the last decade in the field of international relations with accusations of Russian electoral interference in the U.S. as well as Europe through extensive and sophisticated influence operations (IOs). As a result, regulating the abilities of different actors to exercise influence deemed illegitimate among subjects of the state has become a policy priority, particularly in the West.

The underlying premise shaping policy responses is an understanding that IOs *conducted* by *foreign* actors are problematic and warrant attention. Such operations put the interests of foreign states and entities ahead of those of the target state. However, while provocative, these evolving tactics in international relations are designed to be non-kinetic and non-lethal, and fall below the threshold of conflict. As such, these tactics do not necessitate nor

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[2]   Svetoka, Sanda. (2016). *Social Media as a Tool of Hybrid Warfare.* Riga: NATOStrategic Communications Center of Excellence.

justify a warlike response.[3] Subsequently, policy responses have emphasised collecting foreign intelligence, identifying the IOs and disrupting them while outsourcing the bulk of the task to social media companies. The unit of analysis has staunchly remained foreign governments.

In this article, I argue that this underlying premise only partially aids our comprehension of IOs and that IOs defy easy categorisation. Several domestic actors, knowingly or unknowingly, but always willingly, co-opt into IOs initiated by foreign governments, or may even initiate IOs themselves, pursuing their own political, monetary and ideological interests. These actors, which include civilians and proxy organisations, typically do not act at the behest of foreign governments, and it further blurs how we distinguish *problematic* IOs from acceptable ones. This phenomenon has deep implications for strategies in countering IOs. Counter-IOs must adopt approaches that pay more attention to domestic actors, which inadvertently forward the aims and goals of foreign actors. But most consequentially, this paper indicates an urgent need to reach consensus as a society on what constitutes acceptable forms of persuasion techniques and who has the right to engage in them.

The rest of the paper proceeds as follows. In Section II, I will describe the increasing relevance of the *human domain* in modern conflict and the evolving role of influence in achieving military and diplomatic objectives under this domain. Next, in Section III, I will discuss various criteria proposed for distinguishing between problematic and acceptable IOs and that the underlying assumption in such criteria is that foreign governments and their agents conduct problematic IOs. In Section IV, I will describe and categorise several different domestic actors that co-opt into 'foreign' IOs, or perpetuate their narratives, for their own individualised or group interests. In Section V, I will discuss the implications of this phenomenon for understanding and countering IOs. Lastly, in Section VI, I shall conclude.

II. The Human Domain

The dynamics of international warfare have evolved considerably since the Second World War. While the large-scale violent conflict was once characterised by interstate wars, in recent decades, it has increasingly played out between state and non-state actors such as insurgents, terrorist actors, and

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[3] Paterson, Thomas & Hanley, Lauren. (2020). Political Warfare in the Digital Age: Cyber Subversion, Information Operations and 'Deep Fakes', *Australian Journal of International Affairs, 74*(4), 439-454.

rebel groups. These non-state actors create identification problems for the state by merging into the domestic population since the state cannot accurately discriminate between rebels and civilians. Furthermore, they exploit human and social networks[4] whose dynamics can neither be fully comprehended nor countered. Mere military superiority cannot guarantee victory when fighting a non-state actor. Under such circumstances, civilians come to play a critical role in warfare by supplying or withholding information about rebel activity.[5] While theories have been developed as how violence is strategically employed as a means to compel civilians to side with the state, there is an increasing recognition that intervening forces must not only re-evaluate their tactics, techniques and procedures, but also develop new strategies and objectives more broadly to achieve objectives in modern conflicts effectively. Recent experiences of warfighting in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as Latin America and East Asia, and the Global War on Terror have highlighted these evolving dynamics and have aroused a sense of urgency to adapt to them.

At the same time, interstate rivalries continue to remain relevant to global politics today. These rivalries serve an ever-present risk of escalation to violent conflict. However, the mutually assured destruction of war between nuclear powers, immense power asymmetries between rivals, and the enormous economic and humanitarian costs of war have compelled the exploration of new domains of warfighting. The advent of the internet, the democratisation of information that it has advanced and its centrality to information systems in a globalised world have opened new avenues for actors to pursue and broaden the range of strategies they can employ.

As a result, there have been calls to create the sixth domain of warfighting, the *human domain,* analytically distinct from the existing domains of warfare (air, land, sea, cyber, and space). While the definition and purpose of the human domain as well as its links to other domains are highly contested, Heather Gregg provides the most comprehensive definition: *The human domain is comprised of humans—including humans as physical beings, human thought, emotions, and human action—and what they create, such as groups, infrastructure, art and so on. In other words, the human domain is what humans are, what they think, how they act, and what they create.[6]*

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4 Parkinson, Sarah E. (2013). Organizing Rebellion: Rethinking High-Risk Mobilization and Social Networks in War, *American Political Science Review, 107*(3), 418-432.

5 Kalyvas, Stathis. (2006). *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

6 Gregg, Heather. S. (2016). The Human Domain and Influence Operations in the 21st Century. *Special Operations Journal, 2*(2), 92–105.

It thus becomes clear that the human domain comprises not only the domain itself, but also all that is in the terrain. Gregg further points out that each subdivision of the human domain – the physical being, thought, action, and what humans create – can become a focus of human warfare. To that extent, it becomes important to consider the dynamics that affect the subdivisions within the human domain. Salmoni and Holmes-Eber point out that since humans continuously affect and are affected by their environment, the relationship between humans and their surrounding is dynamic.[7] They subsequently describe three models to explain human behaviour better. The first is the "ecological model", which probes the relationship between humans and the physical environment. The second is the "social structure model", which focuses on the social, political, and economic systems humans create and how the methods of the organisation affect them. The third is the "symbolic model" which investigates the relationships with beliefs, symbols, and rituals of a group. In supplement to these three, Gregg proposes two additional dynamics that affect the human domain. Technological innovations have opened new domains of warfare, and hence the fourth dynamic is the relationships of humans to technology. The fifth dynamic, as proposed by Gregg, is humans' relationship to information. It is because information can be manipulated and disseminated to shape perceptions, beliefs and behaviour.

The military objective of the human domain is to exercise influence – influence over what humans are, what they think, how they act, and what they create – and to do so better than the adversary. Efforts at exercising such influence do not exist in a vacuum. Still, they are part of a broader set of measures directed at developing and augmenting what political scientist Joseph Nye has identified as "soft power".[8] According to Nye, soft power involves a country getting other countries and actors to "want what it wants". It implies that such influence operations extend far beyond coercive measures, but also inculcate efforts to shape perceptions and behaviours resulting from it.

III. What Makes an Influence Operation Problematic?

Influence operations are broadly defined as "a deployment of resources for cognitive ends that foster or change a targeted audience's behaviour".[9] Such IOs can have tremendous impacts on elections, foreign and domestic

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7 Salmoni, Barak A.&Holmes-Eber, Paula. (2008). *Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Applications*. Quantico: Marine Cops University Press.
8 Nye, Joseph S. (1990). Soft Power. *Foreign Policy*, 80, 153-171.
9 Hollis, Duncan B. (2018). TheInfluence of War; The War for Influence. *Temple International and Comparative Law Journal*, 32(1), 31–46.

policy, long-term preferences, and public harmony, among other dynamics. Importantly, these IOs allow foreign actors to shape policy rather than cope with and respond to it. Since such attempts at exercising influence have the capacity to undermine the interests of the target country, it is crucial to comprehend and counter these attempts at influencing. However, the greatest difficulty in countering IOs is separating problematic ones from those that are perfectly acceptable. It is because even within our political lives, we are continually subjected to influence. Political advertisements, public diplomacy, coercive threats and multilateral forums, each for instance, attempt to manage perceptions and influence the decision-making processes of a target audience within a polity. While influence operations and public diplomacy can operate separately, they can also mutually reinforce 'communication lanes' to achieve specific geostrategic purposes.[10] As a result, from a doctrinal standpoint, there is a need to separate a country's IOs (which can include deception) from what are perceived to be more 'positive', 'softer' and less adversarial forms of state-driven international communication, which are typically subsumed within the notion of public diplomacy. *Influence operations* hence need to be delineated in a way that clarifies what sorts of attempts at exercising influence are acceptable from those worthy of policy and regulatory attention from an international relations perspective.

Larson et al.'s often cited definition of IOs contains clues about their acceptability. They define influence operations as "the coordinated, integrated, and synchronised application of national diplomatic, informational, military, economic, and other capabilities in peacetime, crisis, conflict, and post-conflict to foster attitudes, behaviours, or decisions by foreign target audiences that further U.S. interests and objectives."[11] According to this definition, first, IOs can be carried out during peacetime as well as during armed conflict. Second, these operations do not exist in a vacuum but work closely in tandem with other components of the country's hard and soft power, or as Nye describes it, "smart power".[12] Kinetic military operations (which target the physical dimension or the ecological dynamic of the human domain) and cyber operations (which target the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of data and information networks; thus targeting the technology and information dynamics of the human domain) can qualify as influence operations, particularly if they

10 Potter, Evan H. (2019). 'Russia's Strategy for Perception Management through Public Diplomacy and Influence Operations: The Canadian Case', *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 14(4), 402-425.
11 Larson, Eric V., Darilek, Richard E., Gibran, Daniel, Nichiporuk, Brian, Richardson, Amy, Schwartz, Lowell H. & Thurston, Cathryn Quantic. *Foundations of Effective Influence Operations: A Framework for Enhancing Army Capabilities*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation.
12 Nye, Joseph S. (2011). *The Future of Power*. New York: Public Affairs.

generate cognitive effects simultaneously. Third, and crucially for this paper, they explicitly state that IOs are carried out *by instruments of the state* on another state and its subjects.

Additionally, several criteria have been proposed to distinguish between different influence operations that provide insight into which ones are problematic. In discussing what it is about efforts to shape public perception on issues of international concern that make them problematic, Thomas et al. suggest that a fundamental question to answer is whether it is the *behaviour* or the *content* of the effort that makes it problematic.[13] The *behaviour* can be problematic in principle because it implies that the state cannot pursue its own ends in truly sovereign ways. Foreign powers instead are pushing their own interests at the expense of those of the target state. In turn, the *content* can be problematic in practice because it can undermine faith in public institutions,[14] perpetuate inaccurate information and narratives, strain national and international harmony among others.

Similarly, in his speech introducing the National Security Legislation Amendment (Espionage and Foreign Interference) Bill in 2017, then Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull described behaviour that is "covert, coercive or corruptive" as unacceptable. This formula of the 3Cs suggests that beyond the behaviour and content, it is also the *method* that distinguishes between problematic and non-problematic attempts at exercising influence.

Furthermore, Hollis proposes five open-ended candidates for discriminating among influence operations and determining which ones are more problematic than other ones – (i) transparency; (ii) deception; (iii) purpose; (iv) scale; and (v) effects.[15] He argues that one of these, or a combination of some or all of these, could guide our understanding of influence operations. However, Thomas, Thompson & Wanless argue that the question of categorising IOs is highly ambiguous because most often, the actions cannot be clearly attributed to a single actor, and when they can, their motives cannot always be ascertained.[16]

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13 Thomas, Elise, Thomson, Natalie & Wanless, Alicia. (2020). *The Challenges of Countering Influence Operations*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

14 For instance, several authors have argued that Russia's strategy with respect to its influence operations in USA and Europe over the last few years has been to question all narratives and obfuscate facts, rather than pursue a singular narrative, with the ultimate goal of degrading trust in western institutions and the democratic process [Bodine-Baron, Elizabeth, Helmus Todd, Radin, Andrew & Treyger, Elina. (2018). *Countering Russian Social Media Influence.* Santa Monica: RAND Corporation.]

15 Hollis, Duncan B. (2018). TheInfluence of War; The War for Influence. *Temple International and Comparative Law Journal*, 32(1), 31–46.

16 Thomas, Elise, Thomson, Natalie & Wanless, Alicia. (2020). *The Challenges of Countering Influence Operations*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

These discussions above reflect the rudimentary nature of our comprehension of IOs. There is no consensus over when IOs are problematic. Still, a common theme underlying the assessments mentioned above is that problematic IOs are coordinated phenomena primarily conducted by specialised agents and subjects of foreign governments with nefarious motivations. This underlying assumption, along with the judgement of 'foreign' influence to be problematic, has determined the landscape of options for countering IOs. However, as this paper will show, IOs defy easy categorisation, which may hamper the governmental response to such threats. In the following section, I seek to show how even foreign IOs nearly always involve domestic actors acting on their own accord. It further blurs the lines of what is acceptable influence.

IV. Domestic co-option into influence operations

In the above discussion of influence operations and when they are problematic, nearly all implicitly assume that the pre-requisite for an IO to be problematic is that it ought to be conducted by a foreign state and its agents. However, as I will show in this section, domestic actors opt into the IO or even initiate them themselves for their own individualised interests, simultaneously also forwarding the interests of the foreign actor.

The major challenge to counter influence operations, and one rather underacknowledged, is that certain domestic actors knowingly or unknowingly, but always willingly, co-opt into the operation. This fact has major implications for countering such operations because the current focus on collecting foreign intelligence to counter IOs may be immensely lacking. In this section, I will list and categorise with examples some actors that co-opt in pursuit of their own interest, typically remaining independent of instruction from the foreign actor.

i.   Politicians and Political Parties

Foreign actors often attempt to exploit internal political divisions and competition within a country. It opens avenues for them to exercise influence on those holding power directly within the state structure.

In some cases, influential individual politicians may benefit from the narratives being forwarded as part of an IO. In such cases, they may offer the least resistance, or even active endorsement and encouragement, for such pursuits. For instance, in July 2016, a few months before the Presidential elections, candidate Donald Trump directly appealed to Russia to hack opposing candidate Hillary

Clinton's emails and make them public. That same day, the Russians — whether they had tuned in or not — made their first effort to break into the servers used by Mrs. Clinton's personal office.[17] In 2019, the then-President made a similar appeal to China to examine claims against former Vice President and political rival Joe Biden as well.[18] These were direct public endorsements of foreign governments, both considered rivals, undertaking actions to influence domestic affairs, and President Trump co-opted into them because the narratives directly benefited his contemporary interests.

Next, politicians and political parties may co-opt due to commitments made in exchange for funding or other individualised financial benefits. It is best illustrated with the case of Australia. Australia was one of the few advanced democracies that did not prohibit campaign donations from foreign nationals, creating a loophole for rich benefactors with links to the Communist Party of China to donate large sums of money to the major parties. Reports indicate that even after receiving warnings from the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation about accepting donations from two Chinese billionaires, the Coalition and Labor continued doing so, receiving AUD 897,960 and AUD 200,000, respectively.[19] Importantly, the reports also indicate that one of the billionaires attempted to use an AUD 400,000 donation as leverage to pressure the Australian Labor Party over its policy on China a fortnight before the election.

Furthermore, social media today are significant platforms for political engagement and crucial channels for disseminating news content. As a result, this has motivated the use of malicious political bots to manipulate public opinion.[20] In their bids to spread disinformation, foreign actors rely heavily on digital propaganda, which Neyazi defines as the use of machines – in addition to human users – to interact with humans, run a campaign online, and computer and

17 Schmidt, Michael S. (2018). Trump Invited the Russians to Hack Clinton. Were They Listening?*The New York Times,* 13 July. Available at:https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/13/us/politics/trump-russia-clinton-emails.html (Accessed: 25 September 2020).

18 Baker, Peter & Eileen Sullivan. (2019).Trump Publicly Urges China to Investigate the Bidens. *The New York Times*, 3 October. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/03/us/politics/trump-china-bidens.html. (Accessed: 25 September 2020).

19 McKenzie, Nick & Uhlmann, Chris. (2017). ASIO Warned Politicians About Taking Cash from Huang Xiangmo, Chau Chak Wing, *The Australian Financial Review*, 5 June. Available at: https://www.afr.com/politics/asio-warned-politicians-about-taking-cash-from-huang-xiangmo-chau-chak-wing-20170605-gwktc9#ixzz4j8s5RpMB. (Accessed: 28 September 2020)

20 Wooley, Samuel C. & Howard, Philip N. (2017). *Computational Propaganda Worldwide: Executive Summary*. Oxford: Project on Computational Propaganda.

mobile devices designed to manipulate public opinion during crises or elections deliberately.[21] However, with the case of India, Neyazi goes on to illustrate how domestic political parties release innumerable bots to manipulate the domestic narrative. These bots mask other bots and users engaged in foreign IOs by creating a huge stock of bots in the virtual space. In turn, they are themselves masked by the existence of foreign bots. All bots – belonging to both domestic and foreign IOs – benefit from this chaotic environment, thus complementing one another and making it difficult to identify and address the challenges of these bots.

ii.   Political and Monetary Opportunists:

Information sharing on social media has become a critical medium of conducting influence operations. However, not all such information is shared by bots or state-affiliated persons. Non-state-affiliated persons, including nationals and citizens of the target state and those beyond borders, may also engage in the sharing of such information. Such persons may be motivated by conviction but also by commercial interests. In their brilliant analysis of an online anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian campaign originating in Israel and targeting audiences in Canada, Elise Thomas, Natalie Thompson, Alicia Wanless explain how and why individuals, including those in Canada, engage in such activities.[22] Most of the content they share is not necessarily false but tends to be intentionally misleading or taken out of context to present the most inflammatory narrative possible. The aim is to offer clickbait material.[23] While they may be doing so out of genuine conviction, it is important to note that every time a user clicks on their link and is rerouted to their website, they earn advertising revenue. It is hence in their interest to generate any content that will get users to their website. Since controversial stories often get clicks, their content frequently runs parallel with the narrative objectives of a foreign IO. As a result, this is a clear case of co-option into an influence operation because it serves the political ends of the foreign actor while also bringing monetary benefits to the individual. However, the true motives of these opportunists remain blurred.

21 Neyazi, Taberez A. (2020). Digital Propaganda, Political Bots and Polarized Politics in India. *Asian Journal of Communication,30*(1), 39-57.

22 Thomas, Elise, Thomson, Natalie & Wanless, Alicia. (2020). *The Challenges of Countering Influence Operations*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

23 Content whose main purpose is to attract attention and encourage visitors to click on a link to a particular web page.

Social media influencer engagement provides another route for monetary opportunists. These individuals and groups have large followers on social media and can hence be paid to promote certain messages. Conveying messages through influencers adds legitimacy and offers immense reach. While mega-influencers can certainly be tapped into, their content is often scrutinised heavily, and they are also expensive. The relatively small bases of nano-influencers (accounts with < 5000 followers) make them a powerful political tool since they are typically considered trustworthy within their circles. Domestic agents can engage with such influencers to directly or indirectly promote their messages within the influencer's following, foreign actors can do the same through proxies.

iii. Dissenters and dissidents from the state:

Certain individuals who are/were citizens or residents of a country and who may hold deep reservations about the regime may seek to collaborate with foreign actors to achieve their own domestic goals. The two most prominent examples are the Soviet Union and North Korea. During the Cold War, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, both of whom were overseen and covertly funded by the Central Intelligence Committee between 1949 and 1972,[24] were crucial components of American outreach to Soviet residents. These programs heavily depended on émigrés and other nationals of the target countries for broadcasting in local languages within relevant local contexts, groundwork and collecting surveys. Similarly, several North Korean defectors have been involved in movements such as the *Flash Drives for Freedom* campaign coordinated by the Human Rights Foundation located in the USA. They have organised efforts to smuggle outside information into North Korea on USB drives to counter domestic propaganda. These individuals and groups knowingly co-opt into foreign IOs due to their opposition to the domestic regime.

iv. "Useful idiots":

"Useful idiot" typically refers to naive individuals and groups that are perceived to be propagandising for a cause without fully comprehending the complete scope of its true intentions and goals. It is a phrase commonly attributed to Vladimir Lenin, although there

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24 Johnson, A. Ross. (2018). Managing Media Influence Operations: Lessons from Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty. *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, 31(4), 681–701.

is little evidence that he ever actually used it.[25] In the case of IOs, *useful idiots* can be understood as domestic proxies who believe and amplify the narratives of the IO-conducting state and are oblivious to their function in serving the objectives of a foreign power. The key characteristic of such groups is that members do not intentionally serve the foreign power's purpose. Instead, they spread information originating from proxies of the foreign power because it aligns with their ideological standpoint or for financial or political gain. These *useful idiots* are critical because they can be encouraged to act outside of the internet, such as rallies, and in fact, they can also end up doing most of the work for the influencing state.

Alex Jones of Info Wars infamy in the US is a chief example. Between 2014 and 2017, Info Wars re-published over 1,000 articles from Kremlin-backed Russia Today (RT).[26] It provided Kremlin with a way to channel information into the American info-landscape amplified by a voice trusted by a section of society. Similarly, Robert Mueller's report identified 'dozens' of rallies organised by a Russian troll farm prior to the 2016 election.[27] While a U.S. person typically coordinated the events, they were initiated, announced, and promoted by the Internet Research Agency, a Russian organisation.

v.   **Domestic firms and businesses:**

The dynamic of domestic firms and corporations forwarding the interests of foreign actors within governmental bodies can be classified into two categories.

The first is paid-for proxies typically referred to as lobbyists/ public affairs professionals/practitioners of public relations. These individuals work at the direction of and payment from foreign actors. They are not of the government but work closely with and have access to individuals embedded in the government and policymaking ecosystem. Their activities are not typically clandestine, and countries often require them to declare their clients for a certain amount of transparency.

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25 Safire, William. (1987). On Language. *The New York Times Magazine.*12 April. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/1987/04/12/magazine/on-language.html. (Accessed: 29 September 2020).
26 Friday, Francesca. (2017). InfoWars' Alex Jones Stole Over 1,000 Articles From Kremlin-Backed Russia Today. *Observer*, 9 November. Available at: https://observer.com/2017/11/infowars-alex-jones-stole-content-from-kremlin-backed-russia-today/. (Accessed 30 September 2020).
27 Mueller, Robert. (2019). *Report on the Investigation into Russian Interference inthe 2016 Presidential Election*. *1* of *2*(March). Washington, DC: U.S Department of Justice.

The second categorisation is also the more problematic one from the perspective of understanding IOs. At times the interests of domestic corporations may align with those of the foreign actor. In turn, the corporations may engage their lobbying capacity on behalf of the foreign actor. The differential characteristic here compared to the first category is that they do not act in the direction of or payment from foreign actors but do so primarily out of self-interest.[28] Such a confluence of interests may emerge when a corporation identifies potential to expand in a foreign market, which the foreign government will permit only following certain policy changes by the domestic government. Alternately, sanctions imposed by the domestic government may prevent corporations from engaging in the enticing foreign market. In such situations, although no formal relationships exist, there is an implicitly understood quid pro quo, which decreases the transparency of intentions and activities of the corporation. For instance, Exxon Mobil, the U.S. based world's largest publicly traded crude producer by market value, was reported to have retained the Nickles Group, a D.C. based lobbying group, in 2015 as negotiations regarding Iran sanctions were gathering pace.[29] In their original Lobbying Disclosure form, the intended work included "issues related to Iran and Russian sanctions." Exxon Mobil swiftly denied that it was lobbying on Iran sanctions. Nevertheless, given the oil resources in Iran, this exemplifies a credible confluence of interests of a domestic corporation and foreign government.

v.   Conspiracy-oriented individuals and conspiracy-theorists:

Far-right and far-left conspiracy theorists have forwarded niche narratives and can be easy targets for co-option into IOs. Strategic communications today involve not only outright information manipulation but also a global narrative competition.[30] This chaotic information environment described in the sub-sections above has opened avenues for foreign actors to insert their own narratives or amplify certain ones. As they can merge within the wider information environment, it becomes extremely difficult to distinguish accounts

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[28] Tromblay, Darren E. (2018). *Political Influence Operations: How Foreign Actors Seek to Shape U.S. Policy Making.* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

[29] Carroll, Joe & Blas, Javier. (2015). Exxon Mobil Accelerates Iran Sanctions Lobbying as Nuke Deal Looms. *World Oil,* 21 May. Available at: https://www.worldoil.com/news/2015/5/21/exxon-mobil-accelerates-iran-sanctions-lobbying-as-nuke-deal-looms. (Accessed: 30 September 2020).

[30] Potter, Evan H. (2019). 'Russia's Strategy for Perception Management through Public Diplomacy and Influence Operations: The Canadian Case', *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 14(4), 402-425.

Figure 1 SEQ* ARABIC
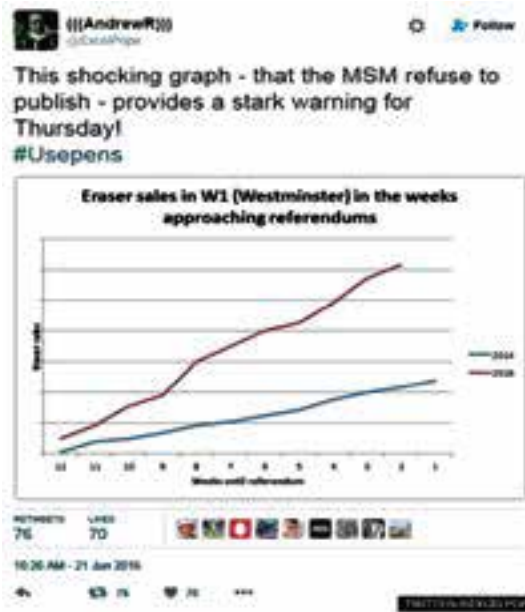
and posts that are handled by foreign actors from those handled by conspiracy-oriented individuals. Conspiracy theorists often buy into these theories' content and willingly share it while typically being oblivious to its origins. Hanson et al. illustrate how conspiracy theorists can function in conjunction with foreign IOs.[31] They study the case of the Brexit vote, during which what appeared to be a conspiracy theory spread online, urging voters to use pens, not pencils, to complete their ballot papers (such as in figure 1 and figure 2). The underlying content was **consistent with Russian efforts to sow distrust** in public institutions.

Figure 2 Source: BBC (2016).

Conspiracy-oriented individuals and conspiracy theorists do not intentionally serve the foreign power's purpose. However, they differ from *useful idiots* in that they do not stand to gain personally from sharing this content in any way but perceive some element of truth in the content.

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[31] Hanson, Fergus, O'Connor, Sarah, Walker, Mali & Courtois, Luke. (2019). *Hacking Democracies: Cataloguing Cyber-Enabled Attacks on Elections.* Canberra: Australian Strategic Policy Institute.

V.   Implications for countering influence operations

From the discussion above, it does not seem like the actions that the domestic actors are engaging in are inherently problematic. In most cases, they engage in commonly acceptable legal, legitimate, and innocent transactions that are a regular part of daily life. Importantly, most perhaps with the exception of dissenters, are acting within the purview of the law. Each of these actors makes motivated and conscious choices in self-interest for financial or political gain or out of ideological sympathies. However, the actions become problematic when they inadvertently forward a foreign nation's interests.

This co-option of domestic actors in influence operations, a phenomenon that the states conducting the IOs are distinctly aware of, means that influence operations defy easy categorisation. Influence operations cannot be clearly distinguished as "foreign" and "domestic", but instead, they interplay with one another.

This co-option has three major inter-related implications for countering IOs and for distinguishing between *problematic* and *non-problematic* IOs. The first is that it introduces new actors in the mix, particularly domestic and not foreign. Under current paradigms of countering IOs, attention is paid specifically to those that originate in and are coordinated by foreign actors; the actors of interest have always been foreign. But the above analysis clearly shows that distinguishing between 'foreign' and 'domestic' is untenable for countering IOs. Furthermore, the introduction of new players makes attribution extremely difficult. Determining who precisely was involved, what their roles were, and how they were managed becomes impossible.

Second, the unit of analysis must move away from governments and governmental agents/agencies to a mixed model of governments and private actors. Private actors with no links or liabilities to governments can very much be invested in the IOs for their own interests. Importantly, these private individuals and organisations could be based domestically as well as abroad. For instance, political and monetary opportunists as well as conspiracy-oriented individuals who are subjects of a foreign state, due to the anonymous and transnational nature of social media, could still engage in IOs while located abroad even without acting at the behest of a government.

Third, countering IOs becomes more complicated because motivations are diluted. As typically understood, all actors engaging in IOs do not intend to sabotage the target state's institutions or proceedings. Given the profusion of interests involved, discerning the motives of individual actors becomes impractical since it is completely unclear what the driving force is. It

constrains the possibilities of countering IOs with respect to international as well as domestic law. But more importantly, an ambiguous comprehension of motives undermines the modelling of IOs as well as the resulting paradigms employed to tackle them.

Taken together, these implications demonstrate the tremendous inadequacy of the current paradigms for countering IOs. States need to move away from legislative and punitive approaches to counter IOs. This is because it is unclear what was *wrong* in their actions, especially since individuals are often unaware of their own role in larger IOs. Similarly, in terms of international law, there are few, if any, international laws and treaties governing influence operations that are conducted by civilians or proxy organisations, and not by one state or another. The provisions of a breach are difficult to attain and even more complicated to attribute wrongdoing to a state or entity when the work is highly professional.[32] But more importantly, such strategies to countering IOs adopt a piecemeal approach of individual punishments; the elimination of anyone node of the larger network leaves the IO infrastructures intact. At present, therefore, the complexity and diversity of IOs suggest that they should not be seen as the exclusive regulatory province of any single group.[33] Emphasis should be paid on collaboration, information gathering and information sharing between multiple governmental agencies, as well as with others outside the state system, in particular social media companies.

VI. Conclusion

In this paper, I have presented a range of domestic actors including civilians and organisations that are either based in or are subjects of the target state, that knowingly or unknowingly, but always willingly, co-opt into the influence operations of a foreign actor. These actors are motivated by their self-interest and are not typically at the behest of the foreign actors. Domestic actors willingly amplify the narratives of the foreign influence operation, while the foreign actors carefully target efforts at these domestic proxies for the same purpose. Furthermore, those actors with malicious and nefarious motives easily merge within the broader chaotic information environment. Consequently, this paper argues that influence operations defy easy categorisation as "foreign" or "domestic", and any effort to counter influence operations must accept this reality prior to formulating any policy.

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[32] Sander, Barrie. (2019). Democracy Under the Influence: Paradigms of State Responsibility for Cyber Influence Operations on Elections, *Chinese Journal of International Law, 18*(1), 1-56.

[33] Hollis, Duncan B. (2018). TheInfluence of War; The War for Influence. *Temple International and Comparative Law Journal, 32*(1), 31–46.

Democracies are particularly vulnerable to information warfare because freedom of expression ensures that dissenters pursue their interests and disseminate content unimpeded.[34] The evolution of information technology has introduced additional vectors for the collection of information and exercise of influence. This has made responding to and regulating such IOs an urgent matter of national and international concern. The technology and information dynamics of the human domain, in particular, have become vulnerable to influence operations. The problems of IOs will only expound with the sophistication of deepfakes, artificial intelligence, and machine learning. Not only will the prevailing troubles of IOs remain, but the development of these new information streams will have a damning effect on the information dynamics of the human domain – more aggregate information will be available, which will be increasingly difficult to distinguish as untrue. But as this paper shows, it is not only foreign actors that exploit this weakness, but also domestic ones.

Fundamental to any approach to countering influence operations is a comprehension of problematic influence operations. This article points to an urgent need to clarify as a society what constitutes acceptable forms of persuasion techniques and tactics of engagement. Influence operations rarely employ tactics of coercion and domestic actors are rarely working at the behest of foreign governments. Which of the above co-opting actors, if any, are in the "wrong"? The rise of the internet in a hyperconnected world also raises the question of who has the right to influence in a given geographical region? Another question that arises is how can public diplomacy, which is typically acceptable, be distinguished from other forms of influence? Such overarching questions need urgent critical attention and must be answered before formulating sustainable and holistic policies.

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[34] Paterson, Thomas & Hanley, Lauren. (2020). Political Warfare in the Digital Age: Cyber Subversion, Information Operations and 'Deep Fakes', *Australian Journal of International Affairs, 74*(4), 439-454.

Disentangling Grey-Zone Warfare: Substantiating an Emerging Threat to National and International Security
Simen Agnalt Nilsen[1]

Abstract

"Grey-zone warfare" has become increasingly persuasive as a phenomenon of contemporary international power competition. Despite increasing attention, discourses on the characteristics of the grey-zone have only been explored to a limited degree. This lack of attention has contributed to much confusion within the literature, most pertinently connected to what it is trying to explain, where it originates, and more broadly, whether it is useful in explaining the modern characteristics of warfare. Many consider the grey-zone a "buzzword" used to incite excitement among researchers and practitioners yet bearing little conceptual or empirical value. This article disentangles the conceptual features of Grey-zone warfare by assessing its origins and ontological foundation. It thereby offers seven distinctive mechanisms of the grey-zone pertinent to understand for researchers and practitioners of security. Overall, it is argued that Grey-zone warfare provides a useful concept for understanding contemporary power competition. However, we must be aware of its distinguishing mechanisms and accompanying limitations. Failure to do so can risk the inadvertent escalation of tension.

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Introduction

War is as old as the hills. With conflicting interest comes conflict[2]. War is recognised as the most brutal form of conflict, tearing peoples and societies apart and causing immeasurable pain and suffering. The Prussian Army philosopher Carl Von Clausewitz upheld that the nature of war remains eternally constant, yet the character of war manifests itself differently throughout time. Unlike the time of Clausewitz, modern war is less decided by decisive victories and direct battlefield confrontation. War today is more often fought through the construction of artificial islands, cyber-operations, economic coercion and proxy warfare. It does not mark conventional war obsolete; nevertheless, the increasing scope of activities taking place in a space between peace and war by actors unwilling to risk large-scale escalation has become a defining characteristic of contemporary warfare, and hence in need of greater attention.

Despite increasing attention, discourses on the characteristics of the grey-zone have only been explored to a limited degree. This lack of attention has contributed to much confusion within the literature, most pertinently connected to what it is trying to explain, where it originates, and more broadly, whether it is useful in explaining the modern characteristics of warfare.[3] [4] Many consider the grey-zone a 'buzzword' used to incite excitement among researchers and practitioners yet bearing little conceptual or empirical value.[5] Others contend it offers no novelties to our understanding of warfare.[6] Many have also incorrectly linked it to the Russian "Gerasimov doctrine".[7] The grey-zone is a wide and constantly evolving space that has been subjected to poor empirical investigation and plagued by circular citations to date.

The grey-zone is an epistemologically difficult phenomenon to study by virtue of its ambiguity. Yet, understanding it is important to stay up to date in a constantly shifting strategic sphere. As Wirtz[8] puts it, the shadowy nature

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2 Howard, M. (2006). A Long War? Survival, 48(4), 7–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/0039633060106267rd

3 Libiseller, C., & Milevski, L. (2021). War and Peace: Reaffirming the Distinction. Survival, 63(1), 101–112. https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2021.1881256

4 Johnson, R. (2017). Hybrid War and Its Countermeasures: A Critique of the Literature. Small Wars & Insurgencies, 29(1), 141–163. https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2018.1404770

5 Stoker, D and Whiteside, C. (2020) "Blurred Lines: Gray-Zone Conflict and Hybrid War—Two Failures of American Strategic Thinking," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 73 : No. 1 , Article 4.

6 Owen, W. F. (2009, November 1). The war of new words. Armed Forces Journal. http://armed-forcesjournal.com/essay-the-war-of-new-words/

7 Galeotti, M. (2016). Hybrid, ambiguous, and non-linear? How new is Russia's "new way of war"?. Small Wars & Insurgencies, 27(2), 282–301. https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2015.1129170

8 Wirtz, J. J. (2017). Life in the "Gray Zone": observations for contemporary strategists. Defense & Security Analysis, 33(2), 106–114. https://doi.org/10.1080/14751798.2017.1310702

of grey-zone operations necessitates strategists to take a step back to see the 'forest for the trees'. Before strategies can be employed, there is a need to understand what they will be employed against. This paper will use discourse analysis to interrogate the grey zone in three main parts:

The first part constitutes a conceptual exploration of the grey zone assessing its origins and ontological foundation, seeking to disentangle and clarify discourse. Here it will be argued that the grey-zone constitutes an organic development that should not be dislodged from contemporary social and political factors. It is enabled by today´s international context defined by technological innovation, increased interdependence and normative and pragmatic incentives to avoid overt warfare. It is accompanied with significant attention emanating from sources of American strategic thinking which often describe it juxtaposed the means and methods employed by its adversaries. Secondly, part one will address a misconception that the broadening categorisation of warring acts, as caused by the conception of the grey-zone, seeks to alter our understanding of the nature of war. Using teachings from Clausewitz´ that war changes character over time, it will be argued that the grey-zone should be understood as descriptive rather than a dictative characteristic of warfare from a terminological point of view. There is nothing inherent within the conception of grey-zone warfare that put it at odds with Clausewitz´s theoretical device of the trinity between politics, chance and passion.[9] Part one will make the point that grey-zone warfare comes with strong explanatory potential concerning the space in which contemporary international strategic competition occurs yet remains caveated by the need for substantiation. Premature over-grouping of belligerent acts remains an issue which can pull actors closer to the brink of direct confrontation. The ultimate goal of part one is to establish an adequate and precise framework in which part two can lay out empirical findings of the determining mechanisms of modern grey-zone warfare.

Part two recognises seven distinctive mechanisms of the grey-zone, which should be known. These mechanisms will be illustrated through the use of present-day examples. It seeks to help navigate a sphere, which as Burnett and Freier[10], put it, entails more of a "broad carrying concept for sometimes dissimilar defence-related challenges" and is therefore "better described than

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9 Thomas Waldman (2009) 'War, Clausewitz, and the Trinity', Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Warwick,

10 Burnett, C. R., & Freier, N. (2016). Outplayed: regaining strategic initiative in the gray zone. Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press.

defined"[11].

Grey-zone literature is criticised by its strong inclination towards the American strategic perspective. It is not surprising, as the concept has often been utilised to explain the paradox of decreasing US strategic superiority despite possessing the greatest arsenal of conventional military force in history. There are henceforth significant gaps to fill in studying the grey-zone respective to non-Western, non-American perspectives. Given the state of current literature, this is difficult without the influx of more non-western empirical studies. This lack of broader study material constitutes an epistemological challenge in this study.

This paper does not seek to dive into policy discussions on how to best counter-act grey-zone operations. This article does adopt an actor specific focal point. Policy discussions will be vague and of little practical value. Counter-acting the grey-zone will require further disaggregated, threat specific and context-dependent approaches, accounting for historical, political and social underpinnings. The general scope of this article, which is to substantiate and disentangle, does not justify such a task. Nevertheless, it provides a starting point which will aid researchers and practitioners gain a better overview, and assist in traversing the clouded, ever-changing, and expanding space of the grey-zone.

Clearing up the grey

Warfare, Chambers writes[12], is the "mechanism, method or modality of armed conflict deployed against an enemy". Methods of warfare are always changing, being inextricably linked to the time and context in which they are deployed. As Clausewitz saw it, methods categorising war always reflect the social circumstances they are performed in.[13] All wars, regardless of time according to Clausewitz, are unpredictable, and they all require fine skill and creative reflection. According to Clausewitz, war is not a science but a form of art, commonly beset by the lack of information on the enemy´s capabilities and intentions. Clausewitz recognised the ambiguity of war, which he more rivetingly referred to as the "fog of war".[14] He also recognised that war changes over time; "it is not only chameleon-like in character, but it also changes colour

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11 Ibid
12 Chambers, J, (2016). Countering Gray-Zone Hybrid Threats: An Analysis of Russias New Generation Warfare and Implications for the US Army: US Military Academy-Modern War institute West Point United States
13 Coker, C. (2008). Ethics and war in the 21st century. Routledge.
14 Ibid.

in each particular case".[15] Similarly, today´s discussions on the grey-zone are concerned with the enabling tactics, procedures, and technology which constitute its practice.[16]

The grey-zone has well seeped into the highest level of strategic decision-making.[17] [18] The 2018 US National Security Strategy mentions that "adversaries and competitors became adept at operating below the threshold of open military conflict and at the edges of international law ".[19] Also, the 2018 National Defense Strategy by the US Department of Defense (DoD) acknowledges changes to the character of war driven by the re-emergence of strategic competition between nations.[20] It is not just in the US where the grey zone has gained attention. NATO has also recognised that modern adversaries have intentions of inflicting damage without taking to the battlefield. As expressed in the 2019 Secretary General´s annual report, adversaries can seek political and strategic goals by spreading disinformation, launching cyber-attacks, and using deception and sabotage.[21] The implications of grey-zone warfare are also subject to a discussion elsewhere, such as in South Asia and the Middle East.[22] [23] However, more research is needed on non-Euro-Atlantic perspectives.

"Grey-zone warfare" can be described as a set of more or less coercive activities, taking place in the space of neither peace nor war. Within this space, aggressors conduct actions ranging from lower-end informational operations to the more heavy-handed use of proxy warfare, infiltration by "little green

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15 Carl Von Clausewitz. (2010). On War: Volume I: Vol. (). The Floating Press. (Original work published 1832)

16 Chambers, 2016

17 Hughes, G. (2020). War in the Grey Zone: Historical Reflections and Contemporary Implications. Survival, 62(3), 131–158. https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2020.1763618

18 Green, M., Hicks, K., Cooper, Z., Schaus, J., & Douglas, J. (2017). Countering Coercion in Maritime Asia; The Theory and Practice of Grey Zone Deterrence. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

19 United States. (2017). National Security Strategy of the United States of America. President of the US.

20 US Department of Defense. (2018). Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States. https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf

21 Stoltenberg, J. (2019). The Secretary General´s Annual Report 2019. NATO/OTAN.

22 Mahmood Azad, T., & Waqas Haider, M. (2020). Deterrence in Realm of Grey Zone Warfare. Journal of Indian Studies, 6(2), 285–304.

23 Ahluwalia, P. (2019, November). Grey Zone Conflicts and Informatization in the Indian Context: Challenges, Capabilities and the way ahead. CLAWS. https://www.claws.in/static/IB-198_Grey-Zone-Conflicts.pdf

men", or assaults seeking to reach a "fait accompli".[24] [25] Many scholars and practitioners have explored the blurred lines between peace and war.[26] [27] Of such Morris, et al.,[28] Mazzarr[29] Hicks and Friend[30], Hughes[31], Chambers[32], and Freier[33] have all made important contributions in compiling defining characteristics, yet no consensus as to which activities fall in, and which fall without the space of the grey-zone.

Construed by ambiguity, this should come as little surprise as the grey-zone is, as Almäng writes[34], a "vague term". He argues that this is a feature of terms that have "no non-arbitrary boundaries between entities within and without its extension.[35] Many have subsequently grappled with the issue of whether or not grey-zone warfare can be considered war.[36] [37] Many actions within the grey-zone can be considered war, yet others are contested to be more relevant to the category of traditional coercive statecraft. Libiseller and Milevski criticise both the concepts of hybrid and grey-zone warfare arguing that they arbitrarily conflate elements of both war and peacetime competition into a single concept.[38] This, they argue, comes from an impelled tendency in strategic thinking to over-classify novelties within the realm of international security.[39] Galeotti[40] also mentions the practice of re-bottling or recycle existing

24 Jackson, V. (2016, May 31). Grappling with the Fait Accompli: A Classical Tactic in the Modern Strategic Landscape. War on the Rocks. https://warontherocks.com/2016/05/grappling-with-the-fait-accompli-a-classical-tactic-in-the-modern-strategic-landscape/

25 Pifer, S. (2014, July 7). Watch Out for Little Green Men. Brookings. https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/watch-out-for-little-green-men/

26 Murray, W. and Mansoor, P.R. (2012). Hybrid warfare: fighting complex opponents from the ancient world to the present. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

27 Morris, L. J., Mazarr, M. J., Hornung, J. W., Pezard, S., Binnendijk, A., & Kepe, M. (2019). Gaining Competitive Advantage in the Gray Zone: Response Options for Coercive Aggression Below the Threshold of Major War. Www.rand.org. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2942.html

28 Ibid.

29 Mazarr, M. J. (2015). Mastering the Gray Zone: : understanding a changing era of conflict. United States Army War College Press.

30 Hicks and Friend (2019)

31 Hughes (2020)

32 Chambers (2016)

33 Freier, (2016)

34 Almäng, J. (2019). War, vagueness and hybrid war. Defence Studies, 19(2), pp.189–204.

35 Ibid. 189

36 Stoker and Whiteside, (2020)

37 Hughes (2020)

38 Libiseller and Milevski (2021; 102)

39 Ibid.

40 Galeotti, M. (2018). The mythical "Gerasimov Doctrine" and the language of threat. Critical Studies on Security, 7(2), 1–5. https://doi.org/10.1080/21624887.2018.1441623

vocabulary in order to appear more modern and novel. Following the same line of critique, Owen[41] exemplifies this with the use of "hybrid", which he argues offers nothing more than a re-bottling of "irregulars" or "guerillas". As Troeder [42] further suggests, interchangeable use and the conflation of terminology reduces precision in what is attempted to be explained. Some, therefore, campaign for the scrapping of the grey-zone as a description of war altogether. Stoker and Whiteside[43], unsettled by the fact that warfare can exist without kinetic force, call for eliminating the grey-zone from the strategic lexicon. Their broader contention claims activities conducted within the grey-zone are better dealt with through existing means such as law-enforcement agencies, conventions, intelligence services and other established security structures.

Many terms, sometimes pejoratively labelled "buzzwords", are subject to much of the critique mentioned above. Others include "post-modern warfare", "irregular-warfare", "political warfare", or simply "new wars".[44] [45] [46] [47] Grey-zone warfare, by most benchmarks, also falls into this category. However, we should carefully draw hasty conclusions on the relevance of grey-zone warfare, or other "buzzwords" before thoroughly assessing their empirical value. Doing so prematurely omits the nuances they seek to explain, while forgetting that their emergence into contemporary discussions in and of itself signifies importance.[48] It also forgets the contexts they seek to explain and the understandings they intend to bring to the fore. Grey-zone warfare seeks to explain quite peculiar features of contemporary international struggles and the methods used which fall in between the traditional dichotomy of peace and war.[49] Coercion within economic, socio-cultural, diplomatic, information, cyber, energy, infrastructure, criminal activities, conventional military action and intelligence operations can all exist within this area. The extent to which

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41 Owen (2009)

42 Troeder, E. (2019). A whole-of-government approach to gray zone warfare. Strategic Studies Institute And U.S. Army War College Press.

43 Stoker and Whiteside (2020;2)

44 Kaldor, M. (2013). In Defence of New Wars. Stability: International Journal of Security and Development, 2(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.5334/sta.at

45 Weissmann, M. (2019). Hybrid warfare and hybrid threats today and tomorrow: towards an analytical framework. Journal on Baltic Security, 5(1), 17–26. https://doi.org/10.2478/jobs-2019-0002

46 Ehrhart, H.-G. (2017). Postmodern warfare and the blurred boundaries between war and peace. Defense & Security Analysis, 33(3), 263–275. https://doi.org/10.1080/14751798.2017.1351156

47 Bressan, S., & Sulg, M.-L. (2020). Welcome to the grey zone: Future war and peace. *New Perspectives*, *28*(3), 379–397. https://doi.org/10.1177/2336825x20935244

48 Chambers (2016)

49 Kwiat, M. (2020). Pandemics, Grey Zone Warfare, and (Inter)National Security. Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs, 14(2), 259–274. https://doi.org/10.1080/23739770.2020.1815388

they manifest will depend on the context they are situated in and the intent they are grounded upon.

War is a considerably difficult phenomenon to define and encompass a much broader set of assumptions. However, that war can present itself without kinetic force is almost certain in the present day. As stated at the beginning, war is not a rigid concept and may take on various characteristics inherent to its context. To take the example of cyber-capabilities, many countries and international conventions treat cyber-capabilities equal to conventional weapon systems and tie them in with the requirements of jus ad bellum and jus ad bello (concerning justifications for initiating war and just conduct in war, respectively).[50] Although cyber-systems do not possess the kinetic force of conventional weaponry, they may, in many cases, cause destruction of comparison in societies ever-more reliant on technological infrastructures.[51] Similarly, others argue that economic coercion can be equally or even more harmful than armed conflict based on its aggregate consequences.[52] Since both cyber-attacks and economic coercion frequently appear within the grey-zone, it is reasonable to judge them by the adverse consequences they produce. Acknowledging that modern war occurs in a vague grey-zone does not in and of itself constitute a strategic impediment driven by the attempt to re-invent the understanding of warfare. It is rather an acknowledgement that the empirical characteristics of modern warfare have altered from that of the past, thus requiring creative thinking to adapt to the new environment. Over-categorisation and strategic deficit happen because of a lack of attention to the present phenomenon, not from the attempt to explain the present.

One important point to be drawn from the more general critique, not necessarily related to whether or not grey-zone operations actually occur as something distinct, novel or semantically useful, is the problem of viewing the grey-zone too broadly. It enlarges the list of belligerent activities and subsequently expands the room for confrontation.[53] Hence, it is imperative to ground a basic understanding of the grey-zone, where it stems from, and its functions and limitations. It will provide a sobering understanding of the often-exaggerated threat perceptions caused by the widening scope of security risks present today.

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50 Finlay, C. J. (2018). Just War, Cyber War, and the Concept of Violence. Philosophy & Technology, 31(3), 357–377. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-017-0299-6
51 Ibid. (358)
52 Early, B. R., & Schulzke, M. (2018). Still Unjust, Just in Different Ways: How Targeted Sanctions Fall Short of Just War Theory's Principles. International Studies Review, 21(1), 57–80. https://doi.org/10.1093/isr/viy012
53 Raine, J. (2019, April 3). War or peace? Understanding the grey zone. IISS. https://www.iiss.org/blogs/analysis/2019/04/understanding-the-grey-zone

Locating the Grey-Zone

This section seeks to explain the novelties the grey-zone brings into the discussion on strategy today by placing it in a historical perspective. Albeit it simultaneously seeks to remind us that the grey-zone offers nothing fundamentally new to the nature of warfare, being corroborated by modern socio-political and historical conditions.

Despite garnishing renewed attention in recent years, it is widely accepted that grey-zone warfare offers nothing fundamentally new.[54] Some even argue that throughout history, hybrid actions within a grey-zone has been the norm.[55] Grey-zone operations have been traced back to antiquity, but probably go back even further.[56] Greek city-states were known to take use of subversion campaigns, use proxy forces and inciting slave rebellions. Similarly, the Romans relied on hundreds of proxy forces situated throughout their vast empire.[57] During the Cold War, the Truman Doctrine and the Policy of Containment used non-violent methods to avoid escalation thresholds. The Policy of Containment, inspired by American diplomat George Kennan, sought to limit the spread of communism without resorting to overt violence. In his own words, Kennan described it as "political warfare", involving "the deployment of all the means at a nation's command, short of war, to achieve its national objectives".[58] Political warfare, as Kennan saw it, covered a broad range of activities, both overt and covert, spanning all aspects of national power, including diplomatic, military, economic and informational – all intended towards some strategic end, without resorting to kinetic violence.[59] Likewise, the Soviet Union endeavoured to use methods below conventional warfare in pursuit of their own goals, sometimes referred to as "active measures" intending to weaken the West without inciting retaliation.[60]

Propelled by the Russian actions of 2014, much attention has been directed towards the Russian "Gerasimov doctrine". Named after the Russian Chief of General Staff, the doctrine refers to Gerasimov´s public communication on the

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54 Johnson (2018)
55 Echevarria II, A. (2016). Operating in the gray zone: an alternative paradigm for U.S. military strategy. Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press.
56 Mazzarr (2015)
57 Ibid. (47)
58 George F. Kennan (1948) "Policy Planning Staff Memorandum,". National Archives, RG 273, Records of the National Security Council, NSC 10/2, available at http://academic.brooklyn.cuny. edu/history/johnson/65ciafounding3.html.
59 Cohen, R. S., & Robinson, L. (2018, April 13). Political Warfare Is Back with a Vengeance. Www. rand.org. https://www.rand.org/blog/2018/04/political-warfare-is-back-with-a-vengeance.html
60 Mazzarr (2015)

concept of Russian hybrid-warfare in the 21ˢᵗ century. In his communication, Gerasimov, emphasised the blurring lines between peace and war and the subsequent need for operational flexibility in modern security strategy.[61] [62] He also described the role of non-military methods of warfare, which he explains, in many cases, exceeded the power of conventional weapons.[63] Following Gerasimov´s comments, many were led to believe grey-zone activities were systematic products of Russian strategic thinking. However, this is most likely based on an elaborative mistake.[64] [65] Mark Galeotti, the author responsible for first translating General Gerasimov´s works into English, confirms this, citing that the Gerasimov Doctrine does not exist.[66] Instead, he explains, what floriated as the Gerasimov doctrine was a product of his desire to introduce his translations with a "snappy title".[67] Hughes also warns of what he calls the "mastermind theory". This, he suggests, is a conviction among theorists and practitioners that revisionist states are forming systematic plots which are impossible to counter.[68] Russia has a rich history with grey-zone operations. Galeotti reminds us, we should therefore not be derailed by Russian grey-zone operations today. In his own words, "from the tsars to the Bolsheviks, the Russians have accustomed a style of warfare that eagerly embraces elements of both the irregular and the criminal, the spook and the provocateur".[69]

The takeaway is that the modern conception of the grey-zone did likely not originate in the backrooms of Moscow or Beijing. Instead, following the logic of Clausewitz, it is a reflection of the modern social and political circumstances it is situated in.[70] Mazzarr offers three reasons for why the grey-zone has yielded so much attention in recent years.[71]

First and quite simply, many actors today appear ever-more interested in achieving their strategic objectives through cyber, economic and political coercion, all of which generally exist above the scope of everyday politics,

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61 Freier (2016; 43)

62 Belo, D., & Carment, D. (2018). War's Future: The Risks and Rewards of Grey Zone Conflict and Hybrid Warfare. Canadian Global Affairs Institute.

63 Galeotti (2018a; 296)

64 Stoker and Whitside (2020)

65 Galeotti, M. (2018b). The mythical "Gerasimov Doctrine" and the language of threat. Critical Studies on Security, 7(2), 1–5. https://doi.org/10.1080/21624887.2018.1441623

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid. (158)

68 Hughes (2020; 139)

69 Galeotti, M. (2016; 296). Hybrid, ambiguous, and non-linear? How new is Russia's "new way of war"?. Small Wars & Insurgencies, 27(2), 282–301. https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2015.1129170

70 Coker (2008)

71 Mazzarr (2015)

but below that of war. Secondly, the cost of aggression today has swelled in line with deeper global economic and social interdependence. Finally, developments within the cyber and informational domain have opened new spaces for operations to be conducted. Overall, Mazzarr traces globalisation and technological innovation to be significant pull-factors for grey-zone activities. Yet, three additional features can be considered.

First, increased openness of many modern societies yields vulnerabilities of malign actors seeking to exploit weaknesses in the liberal-democratic system. Plurality, inclusion and social openness generally serve positive functions by promoting equality, reducing discrimination, and preventing bigotry through dialogue and constructive communication.[72] Yet, open societies are also vulnerable to disruption as malign actors endeavor to amplify latent small to medium scale conflicts often present in diverse societies. It can manifest as the exploitation of competing narratives, or systematic campaigns directed to deepen social cleavages through the spread of misinformation and disinformation.[73]

Secondly, in recent years states have displayed a tendency of lower concern to international law, regimes and conventions.[74] It is accompanied by states showing less willingness to act collectively, rather aspiring unilateral objectives.[75]

Finally, the two great wars of the 20th century and the proliferation of nuclear weapons have established a precedent for states to seek pacific settlements of disputes. Consequently, there is a normative inclination towards non-military engagement in international affairs, and an incentive to avoid attribution of non-consensual military interference.

Modern grey-zone warfare emerges from distinctive modern features. It is also, and rather importantly, related to a context where American conventional military superiority and the Western-dominated normative international dominance has dissipated. Revisionist states are pulled into the grey-zone seeking to challenge the US overwhelming conventional military superiority, and exploit weaknesses of decision-making, democratic, political

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72 Jean-Francois Rioux, & Vern Neufeld Redekop. (2013). Introduction to conflict studies: empirical, theoretical, and ethical dimensions. Oxford University Press.
73 Morris et al., (2019; 11)
74 Sari, A. (2020). Legal resilience in an era of grey zone conflicts and hybrid threats. Cambridge Review of International Affairs, 33(6), 846–867. https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2020.1752147
75 Wirtz (2017)

and security structures, and international legal frameworks.[76] [77] Nevertheless, the grey-zone offers nothing fundamentally new concerning the nature of war. It is corroborated by specific contemporary socio-political and historical conditions all facilitated by modern technological infrastructure.

Distinguishing mechanisms

Thus far, the grey-zone has been disentangled as a concept seeking to explain characteristics relevant to the present-day conflict. It has been understood as a clouded, ambiguous space, where actors use methods short of conventional war, although these may also be combined with low-intensity conventional force. The next section seeks to substantiate the grey-zone by devising its distinguishing mechanisms.

It is difficult to pin down the grey-zone by nature of its ambiguity. Yet, knowing its mechanisms will further aid our understanding. This section recognises seven distinguishable mechanisms devised through an analysis of existing literature. These will first be described, then explained through the use of empirical examples. First, however, some attention is warranted towards answering what exactly it is to be distinguished from, and how this may differ depending on circumstance. Quite simply, and has already been explained, the grey-zone is meant to be located in a somewhat arbitrary centre within the peace-war continuum *(see figure 1.0).* As this is not a non-arbitrary area, actions occurring at either end can, depending on circumstance, be categorised as either within or without. Two things are important to keep in mind to avoid being derailed: intentionality and context. These, which may be understood as principles, are aspects that explain why in some cases political, economic, and diplomatic methods can be accepted within the connotations of warfare. This will be assessed in more detail in the discussion section.

The coming mechanisms should not be understood as exhaustive or authoritative. They are intended to provide references for future discussion and lay a foundation for future, more disaggregated exploration of the grey-zone.

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76 Echevarria II, (2016; 9)
77 Murray and Mansoor, (2012; 2)

Figure 1.0 [78]

1. <u>Actors avoid the threshold of conventional war by short of war strategies</u>

Actors operating in the grey zone do so to avoid escalating tensions or inciting military retribution. Actors will therefore scale their actions to fall below escalation triggers.[79] [80] Operating in the grey-zone also yields more maneuvering space because of less fear of heavy-handed retribution, damage to prestige, or risk of isolation by the international community.[81] Grey zone operations are often set up in such a way that the victim risks strategic defeat by responding with kinetic force. Depending on the relation between the aggressor and defender, this can play out in two ways. First, if a stronger actor conducts the operation on a weaker actor, the stronger power will be able to dictate the dynamics of escalation through escalation superiority. If conducted by a smaller power towards a more powerful one, a forceful response will likely entail an unwanted shift in strategy from one of deterrence to one of war.[82] Short of war strategies is, for this exact reason, particularly effective as they seek to target the victim's strategy, especially when founded on deterrence.[83]

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78 Feith, D. J., & Shaul Chorev. (2020). The Evolving Nature of War. RealClearDefense; Real-ClearDefense.   https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2020/05/07/the_evolving_nature_of_war_115259.html
79 Hughes (2020)
80 Morris, et al., (2019; 8)
81 Hughes (2020)
82 Wirtz (2017)
83 Ibid. (107)

The dynamics of threshold aversion through the use of short of war are witnessed in Russia´s operations in the former Soviet space. Here, Russia conducts a range of both covert and overt operations in a more or less ambiguous fashion under the threshold where NATO would consider a collective military response through article 5.

North Korea also seeks to avoid escalation tensions by performing a short of war strategy referred to "hot and cold", or strategic deception.[84] North Korea seeks to deceive adversaries of strategic ambitions by alternating between periods of provocation and de-escalation. By doing so, North Korea wants to deceive its sudden "positive" shift in trajectory as a sign of progress.[85] In practice, this can look like a sudden adherence to international norms, promises of nuclear de-escalations, or building relations with South Korea, the US or also more broadly, or a vow for greater participation in the international community.

The compelling nature of grey-zone operations comes from its potentials to avert major crises and potential war.[86] Both smaller regional powers and great powers will have this similar motivation, although their approach to risk and the broader consequences of their actions will divert. For smaller regional powers, examples show that crossing the threshold can lead to international isolation and military defeat by a greater power. Such was the case with Saddam Hussein´s Iraq in the Gulf War, where Hussein miscalculated the importance the international community would place on the disruption of energy resources following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Iraq´s failure to anticipate the consequences of using conventional force almost led to a complete annihilation of Iraqi forces.[87]

For greater powers, such as China or Russia crossing the threshold can be even more disastrous. It involves a best case of sanctions and international isolation, and a worst case of global conflict or nuclear war.[88] Contrary to Iraq in the Gulf war, many actors of the present day recognise the consequences caused by conventional war, therefore, peruses operations below escalation thresholds. Taking the example of Russia, both the 2008 Russo-Georgian war and more recent involvement in Eastern Ukraine displays a general aversion

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84 Sang-Hun, C. (2020, June 24). For North Korea, Blowing Hot and Cold Is Part of the Strategy. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/24/world/asia/north-korea-kim-jong-un.html

85 Ibid.

86 Hughes (2020)

87 Ibid. (133)

88 Ibid.

from the overt and traceable use of forces.[89]

Remaining below the threshold of conventional war also serves other compelling functions of minimising casualties and procurement costs of conventional military capabilities. It is preferred for two reasons. First, and most obviously, sacrificing lives is preferred avoided when possible. From a moral point of view, even the most "Machiavellian" of leaders recognise that life has a purpose and that it should not be expended for no sensible purpose. Also, from the view of realpolitik, sacrificing soldiers when other methods are available makes no sense. Moreover, professionally training and equipping soldiers comes at a cost, both in terms of time and money. Training soldiers to no avail is therefore nonsensical.

Secondly, huge battlefield losses can cause distrust in political leadership over time. Although the "rally" effect may initially boost public support, prolonged efforts that yield little success will cause the public to question its sustainability. Overall, the rationale for acting below escalation thresholds is strong.[90] [91]

2.   Inherent ambiguity

Ambiguity is another central feature of grey zone warfare. Barno and Bensahel refer to it as an inherent uncertainty to grey-zone actors' ultimate objectives.[92] Ambiguity presents for both the attacking and defending parties in the forms of causing confusion to whom an action is emanating from; whether or not a threshold has been violated; whether international law is breached; and what role conventional military forces can play in response. Ambiguity is in many ways a feature that overarches several tools of the grey zone.[93]

The ambiguity of grey-zone operations obscures the link between an aggressor's and a specific act.[94] It can happen through actions such as the use of proxies, cyber-attacks, influence operations and many others. Ambiguity can take on

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89 Matisek, J. (2017). Shades of Gray Deterrence: Issues of Fighting in the Gray Zone. Journal of Strategic Security, 10(3), 1–26. https://doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.10.3.1589

90 Lee, J. (1977). Rallying around the Flag: Foreign Policy Events and Presidential Populari-ty. Presidential Studies Quarterly, 7(4), 252-256. Retrieved March 9, 2021, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/27547364

91 Hale, H. E. (2018). How Crimea Pays: Media, Rallying 'Round the Flag, and Authoritarian Sup-port. Comparative Politics, 50(3), 369–391. https://doi.org/10.5129/001041518822704953

92 Barno, D., & Bensahel, N. (2015, May 19). Fighting and Winning in the "Gray Zone." War on the Rocks. https://warontherocks.com/2015/05/fighting-and-winning-in-the-gray-zone/

93 Morris (2019)

94 Green, M., Hicks, K., Cooper, Z., Schaus, J., & Douglas, J. (2017). Countering Coercion in Mari-time Asia; The Theory and Practice of Grey Zone deterrence. Center for Strategic and Internation-al Studies (CSIS).

many forms, two of which, Green et al., suggest, are information asymmetry and normative asymmetry.[95] Information asymmetry relates to a type of deceptive ambiguity which makes it difficult to determine what happened when, where, why and by whom.[96] The second type, normative ambiguity, makes it difficult for the receiving party to determine whether a law has been violated, if a treaty clause can be invoked, or over time, whether the status quo has been changed.[97] On the defending end, it becomes difficult for defenders to respond unambiguously. It allows actors to operate with impunity while the defending part scrambles to understand what is happening. Such was the case in the Russian interference in the 2016 US elections where knowledge of the scope of what had happened only became known after the fact.[98]

3.   Incremental change

The third determining feature is that of incremental change.[99] It can also be understood as "strategic gradualism" or "salami tactics". Gradualist strategies involve the slow accumulation of small, incremental changes, none of which of a stature which can act as a casus belli for retaliation, but all of which intend to cumulate a change to the status quo.[100] By spreading aggressive actions over time (years, or even decades), the aggressor provides less rationale for the defender to retaliate forcefully.[101] Gradualist actions often prey on a defender´s inaction, or the fact that a defending actor is either risk-aversive or unable to detect the incremental nature of the aggressor's action. Often, this causes the aggressor to become more confident and pray on the recognition that the defender is aversive to retaliation.[102] Ultimately, the pursuit of incremental change through the grey-zone can allow willing and capable actors to peck away on the edges of the status quo and eventually tear apart the pillars of the current order[103]

An example of incremental change is seen in the Chinese "salami slicing" practice in the South China sea. Here, China masks offence and defence in an ultimately non-aggressive way. When interacting with competitors for

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95 Ibid (32)

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid.

98 Mueller, R. (2019). Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election. US Department of Justice.

99 Kwiat (2020)

100 Mazzarr (2015; 38)

101 Morris, et al., (2019; 9)

102 Freier (2016; 75)

103 Brands, Hal (2016) Paradoxes of the Gray Zone. SSRN January 2016. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=2737593

China's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) offers a "Hobson´s choice" of either suffering in silence or risk stricter economic, diplomatic or military coercion.[104] It sounds painfully familiar to the notorious passage from the Melian Dialogue by the ancient Greek scholar Thucydides, where the superior Athenians gave the weaker Melians the ultimatum of surrendering or being destroyed. As the Athenians put it; "the strong take what they can and the weak suffer what they must".[105] Although China has no intent in destroying its neighbours in the South China Sea, it has used its economic, political and military superiority to bully its neighbours into subsuming to its will. In the South-China Sea, China is also using salami slicing to incrementally expand its EEZ by constructing artificial islands and capturing disputed islands such as the Paracel and Spratly islands.[106] The incremental characteristic allows grey-zone actors to avoid attribution by plausibly denying their involvement. It leads to the fourth characteristic.

4.   Attribution and plausible deniability

The ambiguous nature of the grey-zone offers space for aggressors to avoid attribution and claim plausible deniability. Through covert missions such as proxy warfare and cyber-operations, information operations actors can insulate themselves from blame.[107] Conversely, because of the difficulty of attribution, defending states will remain risk aversive. This is again linked to the ambiguous nature of the grey-zone and the obscured link between the aggressor and the committed action.[108]

Although the difficulty of attribution is a general characteristic of the grey-zone, it does not apply to all activities.[109] Some activities, such as the Chinese construction of artificial islands in the South China Sea, are patently overt, yet the intention behind the act is still difficult to determine. In other cases, however, the perpetrator is easily traceable despite the use of proxies, surrogates or sponsors. Cormac and Aldrich, therefore, suggest that there lies a paradox within the nature of plausible deniability precisely because

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104 Chellaney, B. (2013, July 25). China's salami-slice strategy. The Japan Times. https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2013/07/25/commentary/world-commentary/chinas-salami-slice-strategy/#.Xu84jpozbIU

105 Thucydides. (431 B.C.E.). The Melian Dialogue XVII. Mtholyoke.edu. https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/melian.htm

106 Kaplan, R. (2011). *THE SOUTH CHINA SEA IS THE FUTURE OF CONFLICT*. Foreign Policy Issue 188. 9-10 2011; Foreign Policy.

107 Thomas, E., Thompson, N. T., & Wanless, A. (2020, June 10). The Challenges of Countering Influence Operations. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/06/10/challenges-of-countering-influence-operations-pub-82031

108 Brands, (2020; 1)

109 Morris, (2019; 9)

many actions intended to be covert are not actually so.[110] Whether an actor is actually able to hide its identity therefore rests less on the evidence tying it to some action, and more on the defending state's (un)willingness to attribute it to the act. Overall, grey-zone actors seeking are, to an extent, left to act with impunity.[111]

The abovementioned is often demonstrated through the use of proxies. Iran and Russia have made this a trademark international conduct where they seek out strategic ambitions through surrogates abroad. Iran seeks to destabilise adversaries in the Middle East and alternate the regional balance of power through the Quds force.[112] [113] Quds actively assist Iranian regional power projection through cultivating surrogates, providing them with arms, training and financial support.[114] Iran also uses its proxies to mask political involvement and propagate social and cultural norms of the Iranian revolutionary movement as seen through the nurturing of Iranian legitimacy in Lebanon, Syria and Iraq.[115] In Lebanon, Hezbollah also serves as an important sponsor receiving an estimated 700 million USD per year intended towards checking Israeli regional power.[116]

Russia also attempts to mask its involvement in several close and distant theatres where Russian strategic interests are present. In Eastern Ukraine and Crimea, Russia assembled factions of non-distinguishable soldiers, popularised as "little green men", in an attempt to conceal intentions and avoid an attribution.[117] The same is repeated in other contemporary theatres where Russia is involved. In the Libyan Civil war, Russia has aided General Haftar and his opposition forces with the "Wagner group", a private Russian military proxy. Although the Wagner group appears as a private military company, it retains an opaque relationship with the Russian state.[118] Putin´s

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110 Cormac, R., & Aldrich, R. J. (2018; 477). Grey is the new black: covert action and implausible deniability. International Affairs, 94(3), 477–494. https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiy067

111 Ibid.

112 Goldenberg, I., Heras, N., Thomas, K., & Matuschak, J. (2020; 2). Countering Iran in the Gray Zone: What the United States Should Learn from Israel's Operations in Syria (pp. 2-6, Rep.). Center for a New American Security. doi:10.2307/resrep24223.4

113 Brands (2020)

114 lane, A. (2020, December 17). Iran's Islamist Proxies in the Middle East | Wilson Center. Www. wilsoncenter.org. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/irans-islamist-proxies

115 Goldenberg, (2020; 2)

116 Khan, A., & Zhaoying, H. (2020). Iran-Hezbollah Alliance Reconsidered: What Contributes to the Survival of State-Proxy Alliance? Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs, 7(1), 101–123. https://doi.org/10.1177/2347797020906654

117 Pifer (2014)

118 Marten, K. (2019). Russia's use of semi-state security forces: the case of the Wagner Group. Post-Soviet Affairs, 35(3), 181–204. https://doi.org/10.1080/1060586x.2019.1591142

little green men and masked involvement through the Wagner Group allow Moscow to insulate itself from direct allegations of military interference in foreign territories, although in reality, few question their involvement.

Overall, the issue of attribution and plausible deniability enables grey-zone actors to pursue revisionist ambitions while simultaneously avoiding attribution by denying their actions. What remains most important from a general point of view is that the claim of plausible deniability deters the international community from forcefully sanctioning an aggressor's behaviour.

5.   Unilateral Political, Historical and Legal Justifications

Grey zone actors will try to find legal, political, or historical justifications for their actions. These are or will be unilateral in nature and supported by narrow, one-sided interpretations of history or unilateral interpretations of the international legal framework.[119] It is accompanied by strong and elaborate legal claims to justify their actions. It occurred in Crimea when Putin justified the Russian intervention with the intentions of protecting the Crimean and aiding them in exercising their right to self-determination.[120] Russia relied on established features of international law, namely that it first recognised the "Republic of Crimea" as an independent state, before agreeing to merge its territory with that of the Russian Federation.[121] However, the Russian action saw a selective interpretation of international law that did not recognise Ukraine´s right to territorial integrity, as stipulated in Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations.[122]

Russia has also utilised the use of historical and legal justifications in other former Soviet spaces. The policy of Passportization systematically encourages ethnic Russians, or Russian speaking people, in particular, bordering regions to acquire Russian passports.[123] Russia has converted extraterritorial naturalisation into a systematic political arrangement where the rationale is believed to be a potential justification for future intervention into neighbouring territories.[124] Putin's statements concerning Eastern Ukraine this, mentioning that Russia would continue to "actively defend the rights of Russians, our

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119 Morris et al., (2019)
120 Sari (2020)
121 Ibid.
122 United Nations. (1945). UN Charter; Chapter 1, article 2
123 Nagashima, T. (2017). Russia's Passportization Policy toward Unrecognized Republics. Problems of Post-Communism, 66(3), 186–199. https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2017.1388182
124 Hoffman, T., & Chochia, A. (2018). The institution of citizenship and practices of passportization in Russia's European neighbourhood policies. In Russia and the EU: Spaces of interaction. Routhledge.

compatriots abroad, using the entire range of available means — from political and economic to operations under international humanitarian law and the right of self-defence".[125] Passportization is seen in the Georgian territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia Transnistria in Moldova, along with Eastern Estonia and Latvia and of course – Ukraine.[126] [127] [128]

6.   <u>Measured revisionism</u>

Mazzarr contends grey-zone aggressors do not necessarily desire a violent and sudden breach of the current system.[129] It is because grey-zone actors, although frustrated with the current state of affairs, still benefit from it and have no interest in a manifestly destabilised world. Grey-zone actors perform a dualist function where on the one hand, they are protagonists to the current rules-based order, engaging in concealed activities in the pursuit of changing the status quo in their favour. Yet, on the other hand, they simultaneously seek to reap the benefits of the current system through economic and political participation. As Mazzarr further argues, these are not revisionist in the sense of Hitler´s Germany - they aspire to be leaders, albeit, with an alternative normative interpretation[130]. The grey-zone thereby offers plenty of opportunity for ambitious change, albeit, doing so incrementally and typically without conventional force. [131]

To some extent, all greay-zone actors possess this characteristic. It is obvious, as no states in the current nuclear age are interested in inflaming the international system to the point of another great war. Still, only China and possibly Russia (albeit mainly due to its membership in the UN security council and nuclear capabilities) have the ability to perform the dualist function of providing leadership in the current system while also vexing to change it. The United States could also be included in this category based on its political, informational, economic and considerable use of proxy operations. Yet, the

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125 Herszenhorn, David. M. (2014, July 2). Putin Vows to "Actively Defend" Russians Living Abroad. Atlantic Council. https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/putin-vows-to-ac-tively-defend-russians-living-abroad/
126 Nagashima (2019)
127 Grigas, A. (2014, October 21). Compatriot Games: Russian-Speaking Minorities in the Baltic States. Www.worldpoliticsreview.com. https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/14240/compatriot-games-russian-speaking-minorities-in-the-baltic-states
128 Hoffman and Cochia, (2018)
129 Mazzarr (2015; 23)
130 Ibid.
131 Morris (2015; 25)

motive or intent of the incremental change is not there to the same degree.[132] [133]

7. Limited effectiveness of conventional military deterrence and the Stability-Instability paradox

Grey-zone operations are not easily deterred through conventional military means. This is because the low intensity of grey-zone actions generally does not justify augmented responses. Effective deterrence involves offering credible threats with agonising consequences, while also demonstrating the capabilities to execute them, and willingness to follow through on that threat in the case of non-compliance from the target.[134] However, there is a paradox insinuated in the way deterrence works in the grey zone: actors involved in grey-zone activity generally do so because they are deterred from achieving their strategic goals through conventional force. As Green et al. exemplifies it, American conventional military dominance encourages its competitors to seek lower intensity actions.[135] This, which is also known as the Stability-Instability paradox, deters actors from using force when facing an adversary with escalation dominance.[136] Yet by doing so, they simultaneously compel actors to evaluate alternative methods below escalation thresholds. Actors end up using grey zone tactics, which paradoxically, are much more difficult to deter against conventionally.[137]

It still does not apply to all grey-zone activities. Some grey-zone activities, like territorial expansion, can still be deterred by conventional means.[138] Russia is, for instance, unlikely to intervene with any solidity in the Baltic region of Europe because of NATO deterrence. This does not mean that Russia is not still active in the region, however, the more ambitious objectives are abandoned in favour of lower-end actions such as cyber-attacks or energy coercion.[139]

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132 Benowitz, B., & Ross, T. (2020, April 9). Time to Get a Handle on America's Conduct of Proxy Warfare. Lawfare. https://www.lawfareblog.com/time-get-handle-americas-conduct-proxy-warfare

133 Mazzarr, 2015

134 Pettyjohn, S. L., & Wasser, B. (2020; 31). Competing in the Gray Zone: Russian tactics and western responses. RAND corporation.

135 Green et al., (2017)

136 Jervis, R. (1988). The illogic of American nuclear strategy. Cornell University Press.

137 Green et al., (2017; 29)

138 Pettyjohn and Wasser (2019;33)

139 Morris, et al., (2019)

Discussion

Grey-zone warfare is a useful concept for understanding warfare in the current day and age. Still, there are spiralling hazards present in over-grouping belligerent acts, and caution is essential when using mechanisms of the grey-zone to classify acts of aggression. The ambiguity of the grey-zone concept quickly makes it a lump term and essentially obsolete by its own expansiveness. Overhanging the conceptual risks is also the very practical risk of inadvertently escalating tensions. Some lower-end activities such as "peacekeeping diplomacy", describing the practice of increasing a contributing state´s self-image through participation in peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities, are perhaps better left out.[140] This comes despite the fact that lower-end activities can constitute smaller parts of incremental strategic ambitions. Highlighting the, at times, arbitrary boundaries between white and grey is the decision in this study to categorise the practice of passportization as a tool of grey-zone warfare. Seen in isolation, the practice of issuing second passports should have no connotation to the means and methods of warfare. However, this point underscores two very important factors sin qua non to determining grey-zone activities; context (historical precedence, geo-political factors, recent developments and intentionality.[141] Russia, as determined by its assertive campaigns in Ukraine and Georgia, can have the intention of constructing another justification for a fait accompli in neighboring territories. The practice of passportization can provide a means to achieve that end. Being aware of the aggressor' intentions and coupling these with context-dependent guiding assumptions, lays the foundation for understanding grey-zone activities.

The Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) comes to mind with its many political, economic and diplomatic minded activities. On the one end it is clear that Chinese activities reflect growing regional and global ambitions, yet on the other hand we should be careful in attributing BRI to a particular grand Chinese rationale without substantiative evidence.[142] Actions, such as debt-trapping, should be paid attention to, however, even here, there is a dispute over the extent to which Chinese loans drive calamities of debt.[143] The bottom line is that the lack of clarity between action and intention can risk weaponising otherwise mundane behaviours of statecraft and lead to inadvertent escalation. While it is important to consider the long and short-

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140 Freier (2016)

141 Mazzarr (2015)

142 Tekdal, V. (2017). China's Belt and Road Initiative: at the crossroads of challenges and ambitions. The Pacific Review, 31(3), 373–390. https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2017.1391864

143 Singh, Ajit. "The Myth of 'Debt-Trap Diplomacy' and Realities of Chinese Development Finance." Third World Quarterly 42, no. 2 (August 29, 2020): 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/0143659 7.2020.1807318.

term strategies of adversaries carefully, it is not always useful to link these with the connotations of warfare.

Grey-zone activities must be determined by their intent, time-horizons, the potential objectives of the aggressor, and the broader stakes at play.[144] As Mazzarr puts it, for grey-zone activities to have meaning, they must contain some degree of intentionality by its design. [145] They must also come by deliberate choices, and rationally leveraged above the use of conventional military operations.[146] The challenge remains to find working strategic-minded consensus´ on the distinguishing mechanisms of the grey-zone that are applicable to the individual context they are representative of. Some have been offered here; however, these are general in nature. Strategists need first to understand the distinctive mechanisms at play and how they interact with the intentions and objectives of the grey-zone aggressor. The much-used quote from Sun Tzu comes to mind "if you know yourself and your enemy, you can win a hundred battles without a single loss".[147] Assessing the horizon, it must also be considered whether grey-zone threats will become more persistent. In the case of Advanced Persistent Threats (ATP) in the cyber-domain, this is already the case.[148] With the rapid acceleration of state and non-state actors wanting to act below the thresholds of conventional war, the grey-zone may very well become, as the late Michael Howard put it "the only war we are likely to get: it is also the only kind of peace." [149]

Conclusion

Grey-zone warfare constitutes an ambiguous area between war and peace where states conduct operations below escalation thresholds, often with the intention to keep their identities hidden. It is nothing new and, although its renaissance into present strategic thinking is facilitated by modern features such as innovations in technology and communications. As Clausewitz suggested, war changes its characteristics over time and is inextricably linked to the social context it is situated in. In the future, grey-zone activities will

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144 Wasser and Pettyjohn, (2019)

145 Mazzarr (2015; 86)

146 Ibid.

147 Tzu, S. (2017; 13). Sun tzu's the art of war: Bilingual chinese and english text - complete edition. Tuttle Publishing.

148 Chen P., Desmet L., Huygens C. (2014) A Study on Advanced Persistent Threats. In: De Decker B., Zúquete A. (eds) Communications and Multimedia Security. CMS 2014. Lecture Notes in Computer Science, vol 8735. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-44885-4_5

149 Howard, M. (2006; 14). A Long War? Survival, 48(4), 7–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/003963306010626753

likely increase in scope and sophistication and is therefore important to understand both for researchers and practitioners.

This article has sought to substantiate and disentangle the ever-growing, fragmented discourse on grey-zone operations. It has sought to provide clarity to the many conjectures and assumptions generated by swayed predications and circular citations. Grey-zone warfare provides a useful concept for understanding warfare today; however, we must be aware of its distinguishing mechanisms and accompanying limitations. Failure to do so can inadvertently risk escalating tensions, rather than de-escalating.

Finally, grey-zone activities are not zero-sum. Although traditional deterrence provides limited success, this does not automatically translate into advantages towards grey-zone aggressors. The grey-zone is not an easy area to navigate for aggressors, and activities come at a cost. It is illustrated by Russia´s recent actions, which have come with rippling effects impacting both the modernisation of its armed forces, the standard of living of its citizens, and its stature internationally. Understanding this can be sobering for the most hawkish foreign policy agendas. As Hughes reminds us, grey-zone warfare, although methods differ, is evolutionary, not revolutionary.[150] Many nations already have considerable experience in dealing with operations between the peace-war continuum.

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150 Hughes (2020)

The Gendered Face of Terrorism in Bangladesh-Part II:
Roles of Women and Why They Are Radicalised

Marjuka Binte Afzal[1]

Abstract

Like everything that constitutes society, the good and the bad, terrorism
has a gendered perspective that needs to be upheld and studied. Especially
given the advent of new tools and traits of militancy and how it impacts
societies, thereby the youth and the women, female radicalisation is
becoming a significant issue that concerns the law enforcement agencies
more now than ever before. Female radicalisation functions differently, and
its effects spread like wildfire, making it a major crisis for modern society.
And with the rise of using information and communication technology
(the internet and social media), women are recruited significantly higher to
become the person behind the screen that recruits and indoctrinates other
potential militants. Women are the axis of societies, with them running
families, making them the perfect embodiment of radical ideologies that can
recruit and propagate. All these features make women the perfect candidate
for radicalisation. The role of women in extremism has evolved over the
decades, and because of the sensationalist nature of Jihadi Feminism, women
now are actively participating in militancy, becoming not just propagators
but foot soldiers. This shift in the nature of roles of female militants needs
to be observed to create counter-narratives and counter-terrorism measures.
And if there is an increase in female radicalisation and participation in
militancy, there can be no better preventive measure than to create gender-

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inclusive opportunities to be part of the law enforcement agencies. Women in security are the antidote that can create a better fighting chance against extremism and militancy in Bangladesh.

1. Introduction

Since July 1, 2016, the day Holey Artisan Bakery was attacked, Bangladesh, once heralded as a country of tolerance and secularism, has somehow found its way into becoming an area for Islamist militancy. Now, it is studied by scholars as a country that brought in a new wave of terrorism. Since then, Bangladesh has been experiencing what now is being called the Fourth Wave of Terrorism, where communicative technology and social media have become tools to spread propaganda, recruit militants and share technical know-how to create chaos through disinformation and fake news. Another significant trait in this wave is the increase of female involvement in militancy. Women are actively participating in spreading propaganda, leading and abetting operations to disrupt socio-political and administrative functions.

In many cases, the influence of terrorism does not remain within the borders of a state it originates. The key aspect of terrorism is the ideology that promotes it, and this ideology cannot be contained within the physical borders of nations. The ideology either directly influences the vulnerable people of other states or becomes a source of inspiration, a spark, a touchstone to develop their very own version of an ideology. Ideology and terrorism go hand in hand, and radicalism is used to cultivate followers of the said ideology.

What we often fail to note is that ideologies affect women as much as they affect men. Strong feelings such as patriotism, religious zeal, and the determination

SEDENTARY ROLES -
Marrying foreign fighters
System of Marraige
Giving birth to the next generation of Jihadists
To Support and Abate
Followers
Service Providers
Peers
Pose as family members
Sex slaves
Motivator

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION-
Financiers
Recruiters
Perpetrators
Propagandists
Infiltrators
Foot soldiers
Fighters
Carriers of explosives and arms
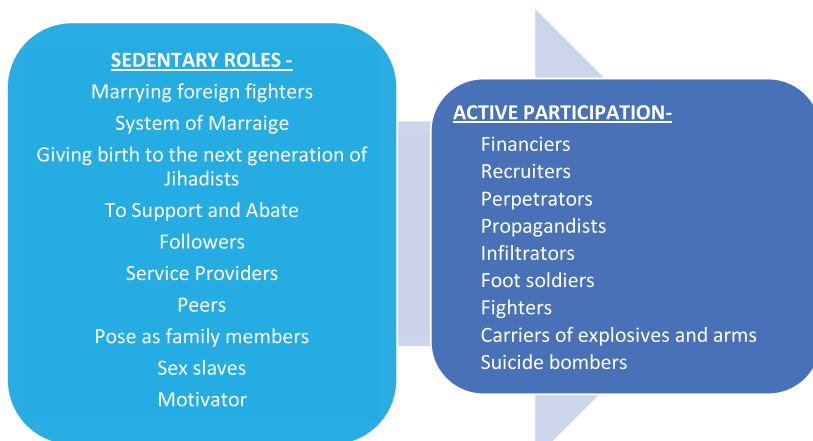Suicide bombers

Figure 3.1 Sedentary Roles Transforming to Active Participation.

to change the system are still strongly affiliated with men. Men also do the acts and dominant feats that follow these feelings. So, we hardly consider women to possess such strong feelings to bring revolution, to challenge a system, or bring it down for the sake of religious duty and patriotism. Here is where gender construct prevents us from understanding how gendered violence and manifested acts of violence can be. In part-I of this research paper, published in the last issue of *Peace and Security Review*, we discussed what drives women into extremism. We dove deep into the ticks of female radicalisation, the drivers, and the processes through which they are radicalised. In this part, we will discuss further the gendered face of terrorism in Bangladesh, the roles women play in militancy, and why they are selected in particular as opposed to men for radicalisation. This paper is to understand that women are now more vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism than ever before. With the rise of the fourth wave of terrorism in Bangladesh, female militancy is on the rise and becoming a default trait in extremism. Without studying the psychological and socio-economic drives behind women choosing extremist paths and how their roles change their behaviour, there cannot be a holistic and all-encompassing approach to deradicalisation and counter-terrorism.

2.   Role of Women in Extremism

With the change of the four generations of Terrorism in Bangladesh, we did not just see the rise and fall of the domestic and foreign militant organisations' influences on the terrorist outfits; we saw a direct impact on the participation and role of women in those terror outfits.

During the influence of Al Qaeda on Bangladeshi terrorist groups like Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and Harakat ul-Jihad-I-Islami Bangladesh (HuJI-B), women were recruited to pose as family members. The pre-existing female family members were further indoctrinated to teach the future generation about the group's ideologies, apart from other sedentary roles. Their sedentary roles usually included maintaining the household, rearing children, and serving their husbands and other male members of the families. Women were considered perfect for the companions of foreign fighters who were off fighting in Afghanistan, Iraq, Levant and Syria. Hence, women were recruited particularly to give those foreign fighters the pleasure of a family and marital life. The lowest levels for a woman were as sex slaves to these fighters, as we have seen examples of the Yazidi women. As discussed in the previous part of this research article in the last issue of the journal, the generations of terrorism in Bangladesh developed through several changes, clearly indicated by the action, behaviour, and inclusion of women in militancy. These kinds of

behaviour of women in their sedentary roles continued in the First Generation (1997-2001) and began to develop throughout Second Generation (2001-2005) when women began to participate in recruitment procedures, motivators, working to support and abate.

But we saw a drastic change once the influence of IS began to fall on the terrorist groups and both Neo-JMB and HuJI-B began to change tactics. In Third Generation (2013-2016), seeing them actively participating in war and armed attacks, as well as in covert missions, infiltrations, and suicide bombings, Neo-JMB began to recruit women slowly to do just the same. Women began to show up as financiers, recruiters in *mehfil*, *halaqa,* and online. A large number of women began to work in the IT sectors of these terrorist cells, recruiting men and women both through online content and narratives and chatting through direct messaging. The functions became more aggressive as women were trained in basic self-defence and in use of arms when Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA) came to apprehend them. A good number of women began to wear explosive vests, coming out with their child in tow, threatening to explode themselves along with their children when asked to cooperate and surrender by the law enforcement agents. A female militant, who was only identified as the wife of militant Sumon, and her minor son Afif Qadri Arif of age 14, died in two separate suicide bombings when the CTTC went on a task to apprehend them during an anti-militant police raid. The raid was called *Operation Ripple 24*, operated at Ashkona of Dakkhin Khan in Dhaka on December 24, 2016 . The child was later identified further as the son of Tanveer Kadri. Two other female militants and two more minors surrendered during this operation.

When we observe the roles of women this way, we find them primarily of two types. These are either Sedentary Roles (like house help, rearing children, marriage to foreign fighters, etc.) or Active Participations (like financiers, recruiters, IT managers, foot soldiers, infiltrators, suicide bombers, etc.)

Family as a Terror Unit: Discussed by Major General Munizzaman (2019) of Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS), women play a leading role in the concept of "Family as a Terror Unit" , where, if a woman is radicalised first, she is easily able to indoctrinate not just her husband, but her entire family. Women tend to have such an influence over other families as well, infiltrating into the women's circles and going from home to home with *Dawaat* of Islam, radicalising other women. The latter, in turn, radicalise their husbands and families. This goes on to spread like a contagion.

Women in this shifting of roles find a strange way of empowerment. A new wave of feminism, called Jihadi Feminism, has taken the Islamic world by

storm now. The manner where Jihadi feminism empowers women even in the toughest of situations, making them their decision-makers and financers and helping them contribute to their society is rattling. Not a major threat, but an imminent one, Jihadi feminism might be the next trigger for women to find solicitation and empowerment if not provided in the right ways. Women looking for an understanding environment of sisterhood and finding security and feeling of belongingness find empowerment in violence that is justified by false and misinterpreted religious notions. This, in turn, makes them feel like they are doing something concrete to contribute to society, humanity, and religion. But to what extent is this a true form of feminism? Despite empowering women, the women are being used to take part and carry out the violence and intentions of harming civilians that are thought of as by men. Women aren't empowered. They intend to be empowered. Militants of ISIL, HuJI-B, Taliban, etc. want them to begin participating. Thus, it becomes a new form of female subjugation, where women willingly participate.

IS's intention to establish an Islamic "State" is not going to come to reality if the other gender of their recruited members, that is, women, are kept at home and are not included in their so-called state-building. The intentions remain the same. Joseph Makanda's (2019) literature on *"The Jihad Feminist Dynamics of Terrorism and Subordination of Women in the ISIS"* advocates this, and it can be agreed to here . These women are being used to do work for the men, fulfilling their terrorist tasks and activities. They are not making their own conscious decisions or separating to make their own choices.

So, are these women choosing this path actively or coerced into making a journey like this?

3.   Why are Women Choosing the Path of Extremism?

When we talk about choices, we mostly see the societal pressures and wrong, misinterpreted religious norms that dictate the women to take up extremisms. In the records given by National Security Intelligence (NSI) on women and their motivations to choose a path of extremism. many concerns, like ideological commitments, the hope of reward in the afterlife, frustration and fear of uncertainty, revenge for the loss of family members, influence of family members, sense of belongingness, etc. were taken into consideration, which show ideological commitments at 37% and revenge and sense of belongingness coming at a low 9% each.

Notice that, major drivers are psychological, may it be the ideological commitment, frustration, and fear of uncertainty, or sense of belongingness,
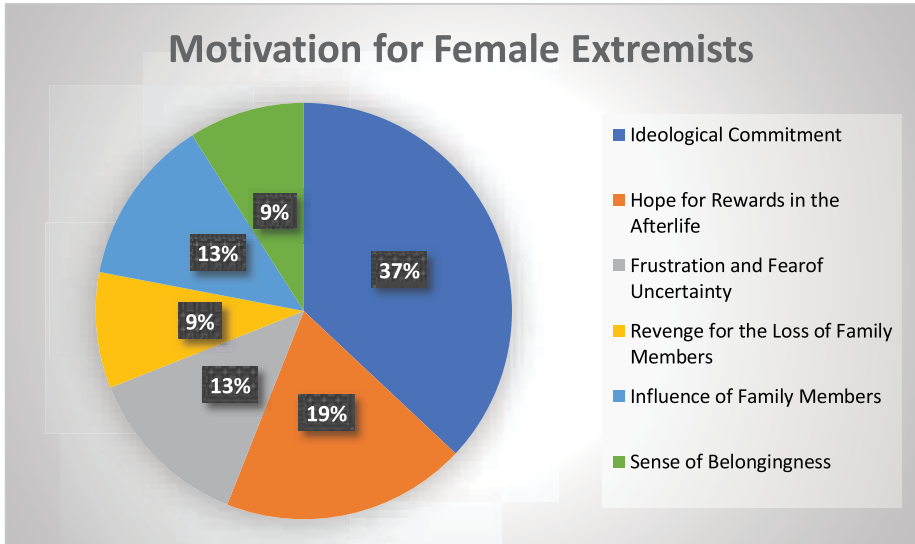
Figure 4.1 Motivation for Female Extremism (Collected from an Interview, CTB NSI, 2019)

together, they constitute 59% of the reasons. Psychological reasons are least studied when it comes to terrorism discourses. The reason they do this needs to be studied from the root, and that can only be done if their psychology is studied. The same goes for deradicalisation processes and rehabilitation of the radicals and extremists.

There are deeper psychological triggers that leave women contemplating taking the path of extremism. Women going through an identity crisis, whether religious or cultural or otherwise, succumb to depression and frustration and seek a connection with people of their standing and similar social circles. If a terror cell can provide a woman that, she would happily trade her unfulfilling life for that, despite the
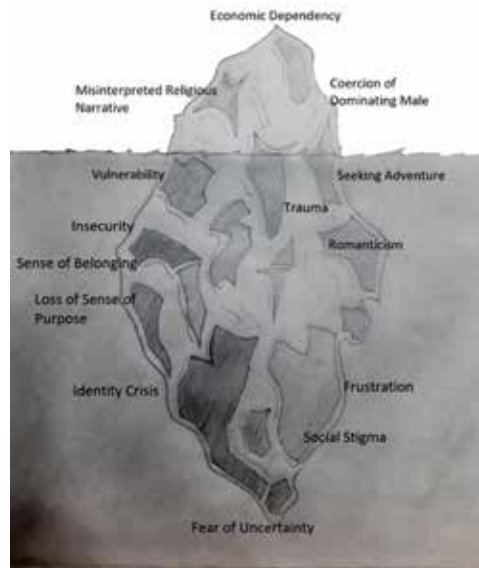

Figure 4.2 Ice Berg Diagram representing Psychological Reasons behind Surface-Level Reasons of Extremism (Annotated by the Author, 2019).

violence. Ishrat Jahan Mou, a case study showcased in the last issue, has had a lonely childhood. When she found companionship and a feeling of sisterhood with Khadiza and Akhlima (a hardened extremist), she readily changed her opinions and life choices to be with them and be united in the cause of their extremist ideologies. The same happened with Nushrat Jahan Ripi (another case study from Part I of the paper published in the last issue), who found a lot of her classmates from Arabic classes as well as fellow female radicals like Nushrat Jahan Eshita and Samia, who had male members of their family in Jihad as well. This *developing sisterhood* among women is what women seek and have strong underlying psychological needs they want to be fulfilled. The romanticism of life in Jihad becomes a life goal for many of these women. Most of them are in an unfulfilled relationship or perhaps are failing at marriage. A foreign fighter offering them a life of adventure, action and a heavenly hereafter, promising to live together and die together on the path of Islam seems like a better way of life to them, as explained by Brigadier General M. Sakhawat Hussain (2019) in his interview[2]. Coercion of dominating male members and Economic dependency are only the reasons that are seen on the surface. The underlying reasons are deeply rooted, as represented in the following Ice Berg diagram of psychological reasons for extremism for women. Psychological reasons like social stigma and insecurity make women get coerced by dominating male members.

5. Recruiting Women and Men in Extremism: A Comparative Discussion

Here is what the numbers say when it comes to women versus men recruited in different terrorist groups. There is, of course, a huge gap between the numbers, religious terrorism has not employed a lot of women in the past few years, and it will not be equal to the number recruited in men. But the number is exponentially increasing, and some of the major attacks done in the capital city of Dhaka had women involved.

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2 Hossain, M. S. (2019). *Key Informant Interview 2.* [In Person]. South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance, North South University, Dhaka.

Total number of arrested persons since 2015 under Anti-Terrorism Act 2009

Serial Number	Year	Total Cases	Total Charge Sheet	Total Final Report	Total Accused under Chargesheet
01.	2015	05	05	-	27
02.	2016	32	31	-	92
03.	2017	23	19	01	67
04.	2018	17	11	-	12
05.	2019	09	-	-	-
Total:		86	66	01	192

Table 5.1 Number of Terrorists Apprehended, and the Male-Female ratio.
(Collected from an Interview, CTTC DMP, 2019)

(CTTC has arrested 555 terror suspects in the last three years. It has also conducted 19 high-risk operations where 63 terrorists (most of them were in leading positions of different groups) were killed in action.):

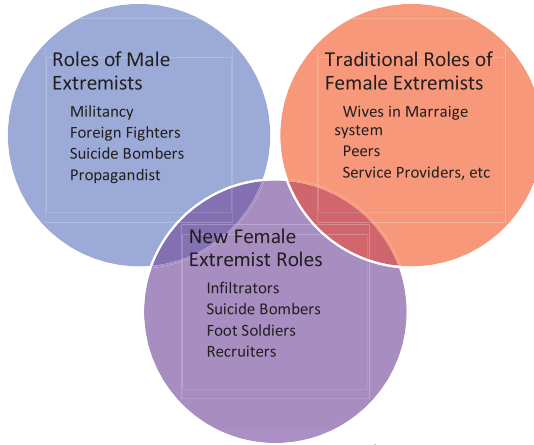Number of Terrorists apprehended since July 1 2016 (Source: RAB Intelligence, 2019):

Serial Number	Year	Total	Number of Women	Ratio
01.	01-07-2016	88	07	7.95% women
02.	2017	320	05	1.56% women
03.	2018	238	06	2.52% women
04.	2019	131	06	4.58% women
05.	**Total**	**777**	**24**	**3.08% women**

Table 5.2 Number of terrorists apprehended with male-female ratio.
(Collected from an Interview, RAB Intelligence, 2019)

In the data given above, the numbers speak words of warning. Apprehended women seem to have a deeper connection to ISIL and AQ and are trained to infiltrate and do suicide bombings and have done so on several occasions.

Interestingly, some of the activities of men have been taken on by women. The roles in extremism haven't become interchanged, men are mostly militants and foreign fighters or recruiters and propagandists, but we will not see them in sedentary activities as women do. Even the 14 years old son of Tanveer Kadri, Afif Qadri, was the leader of the cell he was in, which had only seven other women much older than him (Islam, 2019). Monirul Islam, the Additional Commissioner of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime Unit of Dhaka

Roles of Male Extremists
Militancy
Foreign Fighters
Suicide Bombers
Propagandist

Traditional Roles of Female Extremists
Wives in Marraige system
Peers
Service Providers, etc

New Female Extremist Roles
Infiltrators
Suicide Bombers
Foot Soldiers
Recruiters

Metropolitan Police, said in his interview, "This 14-year-old boy (Afif Qadri) was the leader here; he was the decision-maker. The women didn't have a say on whether they were going to surrender, or fight, or talk to the police because the power of decision-making is in the hands of a 14-year old 'man'."

However, we see women taking on roles that men previously did, like infiltration, recruiting new members, working in IT departments (Case study of Nushrat Jahan Ripi from Part-I, that discussed her work as a director of INFOLDER Soft, a software-based company), foot soldiers, and suicide bombers.

6. But Why Women?

Stereotypes and gender constructs mostly make women the perfect recruit to be assimilated in a militancy. There are several factors to consider here:

- Women are suspected less. Women are still largely believed to be victims, meek, and too subordinate to be active participants in terrorism, let alone be propagandists, influencers, and leaders.

- They are checked less for concealed weapons and looked into less because there are not enough female officers in security forces and law enforcement agencies who can intervene on checkpoints and check them.

- Women are better recruiters who recruit other potential female radicals and recruit men better than male recruiters. Their presence online is better, reading the targets' mindset and enticing them, inspiring and manipulating them more than their male counterpart.

- Female extremists and suicide bombers create more sensational

news and headlines than male extremists do, making them perfect candidates to spread the message and ideologies of the militant outfits.

- Women's want to get empowered and become active participants to create a better society based on religion and equality, makes them susceptible to radicalisation by terror outfits like Ansar-al Islam (AAI) or Neo-JMB (*Jihadi feminism*).

The argument to prove women as militants can be explained in two words; accessibility and noticeability. Women are the invisible weapon. In a male-dominated world, with patriarchal disciplines, orders, and restrictions keeping women at bay, and with terrorism known to be a male-dominant world, women go unnoticed and are more likely to be set aside as victims and bystanders, letting them go scot-free. The questioned militants normally have given that it is easy for them to go unnoticed. It is easy for them to approach other women for recruiting. It is difficult for law-enforcement to readily stop them and search them for obvious social conduct. And another significant crisis was pointed out by Additional Deputy Commissioner Mahfuza Liza, of CTTC, that compared to the male officers in LEAs, the number of female officers is astoundingly low[3]. So, there will not be enough female officers present in every post to check on the approaching women for arms and explosions. "Normally, even the law-enforcements are generally soft towards women," said Monirul Islam[4]. So, they can take advantage of this situation, and that's why women are preferred in some cases by terrorist organisations and groups. But at the same time, even in the rural areas, we have seen women being used to propagating things, not as active combatants but to spread the message. Take the *Burkha Brigade* for an example. "This was a JMB effort post-Hefazat-killing in Dhaka city. They did a smart thing," commented Muniruzzaman (2019). These women get clips of videos on Muslims being oppressed in war and videos of the Hefazat boys from various sources, put them on their cell phones, and a group of three to four women in burka would go from house to house in a village. And since they are women, they are allowed to go inside. And then, they would go and interact with the female members and show them on the cell phones the atrocities that were carried out on the Hefazat boys, thereby trying to trigger a reaction from the women. So, in those kinds of roles, we have seen their activities in rural and urban areas.

"They can be given any missions easily as people suspect them less. They are doubted less and are hence more successful," said Brigadier General

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3 Liza, M (2019). *Key Informant Interview 5* [In person]. Ramna, Dhaka.
4 Islam, M. (2019), *Key Informant Interview 4* [In person]. Ramna, Dhaka.

Sarwar Hossain[5]. Both hard and soft skills have become essential to carry out operations. Female terrorists offer both tactical and strategic advantages. Here gender stereotypes again come into play. Till very recently, women were not visualised as perpetrators of terrorist acts. It made recruitment, the spread of propaganda, and transmitting operation details comparatively easy. Moreover, stories of female attackers are usually sensationalised and given more publicity which benefits the objectives of terrorist organisations. Women generate a lot more *media attention* than men, and a woman terrorist being apprehended will always cut into the sensational news.

7. Female Radicalisation in a Post-COVID World

While the world's attention befittingly concentrates on the health and economic impacts of COVID-19, the threat of radicalisation leading to violent extremism persists. In some circumstances, it has been aggravated during the crisis.

Within the first few months of 2020, several female leaders of Neo-JMB were apprehended by the CTTC and RAB. Among them, Asmani Khatun Asma, the Head of the Female Wing, Neo-JMB, stood out the most. Asma had several pseudonyms, using which she got quite a formidable online presence. According to a correspondent in the Daily Star, she was connected online with top Neo-JMB leaders like Islam Al Hindi, Abu Dujan, and Abu Mohammed. She was a chief recruiter for a long time. She headed many operations, among which she had planned and executed an operation of attacking several government establishments to establish Caliphate and Sharia law in the country, "carrying out destructive activities and destroy public property"[6]. Even in lockdown, several other incidents took place within the country and across borders in India that had female militants' participation affiliated to Neo-JMB.

The lockdowns, quarantines, and inactive time during the closure facilitate a few situations that create multiple grounds for the process of spreading radicalisation.

The young women and men are confined at home and surfing the internet unsupervised, where they easily come across radical narratives from websites

5 Hossain, M. S. (2019). Key Informant Interview 2. [In Person]. South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance, North South University, Dhaka.

6 Head of 'Neo JMB' female wing nabbed by CTTC (2020) Thedailystar.net. Available at: https://www.thedailystar.net/city/neo-jmb-female-wing-head-arrested-1863874 (Accessed: August 28, 2021).

and social media. It elicits Cyber Radicalization. Cyber radicalisation has been a significant threat in the country since 2005 and is now deeply rooted. Cyber radicalisation is harder to track as numerous channels and apps are cropping up every time one is taken down. With the lockdown and isolation in place, youths are more vulnerable to indoctrination.

Mental disturbance and illnesses could also trigger post-COVID radicalisation. Women out of work are suffering from frustration and depression, sparking the need to divert their minds to causes that keep them active or provide them with an alternative financial source.

Domestic violence is also a significant trigger to radicalisation. Women abused and violated are vulnerable to a false sense of security and romanticisation of Jihadi life across borders in Syria and Levant, Yemen, etc. These women are given a way out of their abusive lives and can succumb to indoctrination. The rise of domestic and sexual violence over the last months since the pandemic started makes women further vulnerable to radicalisation. According to a recent survey by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF)[7], a local human rights organisation, at least 4,249 women and 456 children were subjected to domestic violence in 27 out of 64 districts of Bangladesh in April, with 1,672 women and 424 children facing violence for the first time in their lives[8]. Another report showed that from January to June 2020, 107 women were murdered by their husbands, but only 74 cases were filed. The husband's family members murdered 30 women, and their family members murdered 26 women. Among them, only 33 cases were filed by Ain O Salish Kendra[9]. These numbers show how vulnerable women are becoming during the pandemic, which makes them endangered to radicalisation.

8. Recommendation: Countering Radicalization through a Gendered Lens

Women carry half the responsibility of building the society on their shoulders and have the ability to provide the same society with its future generations.

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7 Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) 2020. Amid Lockdown, 4249 Women and 456 Children Became Victims of Domestic Violence in April. URL http://www.manusherjonno.org/latest_stories/amid-lockdown-4249-women-and-456-children-became-victims-of-domestic-violence-in-april-mjf/ (accessed 26 August 2021)

8 Islam, A. (2020) COVID-19 lockdown increases domestic violence in Bangladesh, Deutsche Welle. Deutsche Welle (www.dw.com). Available at: https://www.dw.com/en/covid-19-lockdown-increases-domestic-violence-in-bangladesh/a-53411507 (Accessed: August 28, 2021).

9 Salish Kendra Ain O. 2020. Violence Against Women – Domestic Violence Jan-June 2020. URL http://www.askbd.org/ask/2020/07/06/violence-against-women-domestic-violence-jan-june-2020/ (accessed 26 August 2021)

While gender constructs might make them vulnerable to violence, abuse, and trappings of a false sense of empowerment, women are at the same time capable of leading the way out of such crises. Women are capable of becoming the best solution to female as well as male radicalisation. It is just a matter of acquiring their roles into place and having them lead the change and development, which could usher a better wave of deradicalisation and counter-terrorism.

- Women can contribute better in countering terrorism than they contribute when radicalised. Women have various roles in the family. While their roles are the central cog that moves families and thereby society, it is easier for them to provide counter-narratives and lessons against terrorism.

- Counter-narrative messages should be targeted towards women, as they are the singular impactful individual in a family, as we observed in the discussion of "Family as a Terror Unit".

- Law enforcement agencies and security forces need to be more gender-inclusive; they should hire women to fill a certain quota till gender parity is ensured. As pointed out by Mahfuza Lisa in her interview, there is an acute lack of female officers in LEAs, which results in issues of oversights with female suspects and potential female militants.

- More emphasis needs to be given to the psychological drivers of radicalisation of both women and youth to properly understand how the social and economic roles come into play. Psychological drivers are at the root of most socio-economic choices made by radicals to become hardened radicals or extremists. But these psychological drivers are barely mentioned, researched, or focused on when rehabilitation or deradicalisation is considered, keeping the actors susceptible to future fallback. These drivers have been previously discussed in 'Part I' of the paper in the last issue.

- There needs to be space for research on female radicalisation. Collaboration and transparency between security and terrorism researchers and law-enforcement and counter-terrorism units should be ensured as well. Research collaborations can lead to a better understanding of strategic measures that go behind these outlawed militancies and how women are used as pawns.

- There needs to be more emphasis put on strengthening social resilience to ensure safety and security for women against domestic violence,

sexual violence, and discrimination. Women need to be empowered in all spheres and economic backgrounds, providing better education, training, and religious teachings to enlighten and strengthen them.

- Religious institutions should have a better approach to conveying correct religious teachings and proper interpretations, negating terrorism for all. They should also ensure people dignify women from a religious standpoint, promoting women's safety, education and empowerment, promoting communal fellow feelings.

It is important to understand that recommendations such as these are the bare-minimal needs that can be asked for against terrorism. Women need to be guaranteed safety and security, financially and socially, to become part of the solution. They need to be empowered so that there can be empowered, well-aware mothers and daughters in families who can, in turn, teach their children and other members the negativity of terrorism and violence, denouncing it for good. Women's participation in security forces can also be a strong start in counter-terrorism mechanisms, where inclusivity and proper training can make the overall law enforcement agencies fight more strategically and holistically.

9. Conclusion

The most lethal home-grown militant group of Bangladesh, the Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), has multiple ideologies and operational factions, including the new Islamic State (IS)-inspired JMB and the Al Qaeda-linked Jamaatul Mujahideen (JM) core. In recent years, they have conspicuously recruited and cultivated a network of radical women. Despite the powerful counter-terrorism operations carried out after the Holey Artisan Bakery attack in the capital Dhaka in July 2016, an alarming number of women took part in the cause of the militancy. In recent years, intermittent arrests and incidents involving JMB's female operatives throughout the country and other regions across the border have become a major problem for Bangladeshi security agencies.

In Bangladesh, a slew of militant extremist groups, including the JMB, Ansar al-Islam (previously Ansarullah Bangla Team), and Hizbut Tahrir-Bangladesh (HT-B), have enlisted women operatives primarily for religious instruction and as support members such as couriers and informants. Since mid-2016, a new trend has emerged in which female operators have been identified carrying out brutal combat operations. According to one media report, Bangladesh authorities had captured at least 20 female terrorists from various factions,

including JMB, by December 2016, with evidence of a probable all-women suicide crew[10]. JMB is a pioneer in enlisting women in jihadist activities, which involve suicide missions and supporting roles. They even taught the female cadres how to wield knives and hand grenades. Around 12 female JMB operatives were arrested in Bangladesh between July and September 2016[11]. These numbers show the realisation of a fear and form of hatred deeply rooted in our society, something that not only needs to be addressed but analysed.

Traditional women's roles in Islamic militancy in the country have certainly changed significantly in recent years. In groups like the neo-JMB, young girls have entered the ranks of jihadist organisations and reinvented their position. The increasing trend of female participation in militancy or Islamist Jihad in Bangladesh is likely to take a novel turn in the coming years with effective female combat units along the lines of Al-Qaeda-inspired jihadist sisterhood or Islamic State's "jihadist brides", or even Al-Khansaa brigade for that matter. Jihadist women can be said to provide advantages in combat, such as approaching targets without being suspicious. Women are generally considered weak, fragile, and subject to lax security checks because the security forces are often dominated by men and cannot always carry out strict physical checks on women. In addition, because they do not fit any profile that triggers police alerts, people in the social environment rarely notice their aggressive behaviour. At the strategic level, female assailants receive more publicity and media attention because they have a greater psychological impact on opponents or the target audience. The participation of women as combatants can have serious repercussions on internal security, interreligious harmony, and the moderate socio-political structure of Bangladesh. Since most women in Bangladeshi societies rely on informal sources and traditional institutions such as madrasa schools for religious knowledge, the government should hire Islamic scholars to refute the claims and narratives of jihadists and their ideologies that facilitate recruiting women as suicide bombers and foot soldiers. In addition, more female police officers should be involved in law enforcement and counter-terrorism measures to address gender-sensitive issues effectively. Having female-centric measures in LEAs can culminate in better strategic planning and measures that could prevent and counter terror attacks that could otherwise be another example, much like the Holey Artisan attack, perhaps worse.

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10 Acharjee, D. (2016) Lawmen concerned over 'rising number of women militants,' Theindependentbd.com. Available at: https://www.theindependentbd.com/home/printnews/73780 (Accessed: August 28, 2021).

11 Roul, A. (2018) "The Shifting Narrative of Women's Role in Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh's Islamic Jihad," Terrorism Monitor , 16(22). Available at: https://jamestown.org/program/the-shifting-narrative-of-womens-role-in-jamaat-ul-mujahideen-bangladeshs-islamic-jihad/.

What Sport Tells Us About India- Pakistan Ties

Jitendra Nath Misra[1]

Abstract

This essay frames the India- Pakistan hockey rivalry as a struggle for power. Even as competitive recreation, hockey is politics. This politics is driven by cultural beliefs and economic strength, creating success in hockey. Newly- created Pakistan's cultural confidence made it pursue strategic equivalence with India. In the 20th century, a strong economy and state strengthening helped Pakistan outperform India in hockey. Then, in the 21st century, Pakistan's economic decline degraded its hockey, while India's economic success put it ahead. India- Pakistan sport is hostage to the state of the relationship. When relations were good, the hockey was civil, and when they deteriorated, it became contentious. There is also a love- hate relationship, contributing to phases of reconciliation and conflict. With growing national power, Indian athletes have become hyper- nationalist. But it is not clear they advance government agendas. India's boycott of sport with Pakistan has not altered Pakistani state behaviour. The data used in the essay establishes a connection between state cohesion and sporting success. There is also a link between the state of ties and the state of sport. When relations are stable, sporting ties hold. When they are strained or ruptured, sport becomes a casualty. In the entire 20th century, there were 93 games. Between 2000- 2020 there have been 82. Despite the increase, there is the feeling of politically- induced interruption. Currently neither country tours the other for bilateral series. They play only in FIH

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tournaments, and invitational tournaments in third countries. This relegates the rivalry, dampening fan and media interest. Pakistan's decline could further decrease interest levels. Pakistan for years has been denied the right to host major tournaments. India, with high revenue earnings, earns the right to host elite tournaments. The widening gap in power raises questions about the future of this famous rivalry.

Introduction

Partition is not over yet. The partition of minds between Hindus and Muslims in India and Pakistan continues. New controversies about old gods keep surfacing. Faith collides with inter- state ties. Even with a millennium of co-existence between the two faiths, each nation claims sacred geographies across the border. Thus, we live as strangers and rivals, while sidestepping the mayhem occasionally as long- lost brothers.

Pakistan's role models are Muslims who either conquered India or supported the establishment of an Islamic community.[2] Pakistanis draw upon Islam's heroes and spiritual mentors to the West (the missile *Ghauri*, named after an Islamic invader, pokes Indians in the eye). Indians are rooted in indigenous philosophies and multifarious deities (the *Agni* missile is named after the Hindu god of fire). Remember the battle for minds between the Mughal philosopher prince Dara Shukoh, an admirer of Hindu philosophy, and his brother, the purist Muslim zealot Aurangzeb?[3] Cultural separation makes it difficult to solve doctrinal riddles. Thus, we have different readouts of history.

Pakistanis glory in being "separate and superior [to Indians],"[4] writes Stephen Cohen in his book *The Idea of Pakistan*. True, because Pakistani leaders, in the nation's early decades, were hectoring: "You are a defeated nation," [5] Pakistan's Minister of Industries Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had told India's Minister of Railways, Swaran Singh in talks on Kashmir in 1963. In his autobiography *Friends Not Masters* Khan describes Bengali Pakistanis as inferior because of

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2 See Jitendra Nath Misra, "Paradoxical Pakistan," *World Policy Journal*, 22 (2) (Summer 2005): 96.

3   Jitendra Nath Misra, "The Other War: India- Pakistan Sports Showcase Our Fraught Ties," *The Citizen*, Saturday, July 20, 2019, https://www.thecitizen.in/index.php/en/NewsDetail/index/4/17295/The-Other-War-India--Pakistan-Sports-Showcase-Our-Fraught-Ties.

4 In a video posted by Sana Amjad on YouTube a Pakistani man identifying himself as Bilal says, "Against a mightier enemy we have, we are keeping, we are going on." An unnamed woman: "I'm very biased towards the military." See YouTube, "Which Is The Strongest Country INDIA Or PAKISTAN? | Pakistani Youth Opinion | Sana Amjad," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hx-KerdD6tB0.

5 Jaswant Singh, *In Service of Emergent India: A Call to Honour*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007), 259.

"Hindu cultural and linguistic influence."[6] Nor could Hindus fight: "As a general rule the Hindu morale would not stand more than a couple of hard blows."[7] While doing better sums on Indian power, some Pakistanis still consider their military superior.

How Do Culture and Politics Affect Sport Between India and Pakistan?

So, Pakistani blood- lines are complicated, and their assumptions about themselves rub against Indians. With such cultural DNA why would athletes differ from other Pakistanis? Treating sport as just that is poor science and poorer entertainment. Journalists are trained to entice the consumer without explaining deeper impulses. Fans submit to formulaic phrases like "dead ball situation," "off- the ball running," "defensive structure" and "goal!" But India- Pakistan sport is also cultural carnage. Mushtaq Mohammad described a test series win over India as a "victory of Muslims all over the world over the Hindus."[8] Shoaib Malik thanked "Muslims all over the world"[9] after Pakistan's defeat to India in the 2007 T- 20 World Cup.

India's mothballed militarism is now open. "I get into revenge mode during a Pakistan game and my blood also boils,"[10] said P.R. Sreejesh after India had defeated Pakistan in the gold medal match in the 2014 Asian Games. Home Minister Amit Shah termed India's victory in the 2019 cricket World Cup "another strike on Pakistan." [11] Pakistanis link sport to a supremacist Islam they have gamed into the Partition mythology, while Indians revel in mournful vengeance.

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6 Harris Khalique, "Inhibitions of the downtrodden," *The News International*, March 13, 2013,

7 Mahmud Ahmed, *History of India Pak War- 1965* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 82. See also Tughral Yamin, "An appreciation of the Pakistani military thought process," *Journal of Strategic Studies* XXXII, no. 2- 3 (December 2012): 123.

8 Martand Jha, "India and Pakistan's Cricket Diplomacy," *The Diplomat*, March 15, 2017, https://thediplomat.com/2017/03/india-and-pakistans-cricket-diplomacy/.

9 Rasheed Kidwai and The Telegraph Bureau, "When sport does become a religion - Sorry Shoaib in global gaffe," *The Telegraph*, September 26, 2007, https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/when-sport-does-become-a-religion-sorry-shoaib-in-global-gaffe/cid/973199.

10 Ashish Maggo, "Asian Games 2014: My Blood Boils When I Play Against Pakistan, Says India Hockey Hero PR Sreejesh, " *NDTV Sports*, October 3, 2014, https://sports.ndtv.com/asian-games-2014/asian-games-2014-my-blood-boils-when-i-play-against-pakistan-says-india-hockey-hero-pr-sreejesh-1511912.

11 FE Online, "Another strike on Pakistan: Amit Shah tweets after India extend World Cup record against Pakistan to 7-0," *Financial Express*, June 17, 2019, https://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/another-strike-on-pakistan-amit-shah-tweets-after-india-extend-world-cup-record-against-pakistan-to-7-0/1609841/.

As well as being play, flair and technique, sport is muddied by angry historical conversations. This can make us heroes, or diminish us. Fighting without bullets does not make sport anything less, because this fight too can tear us. To decode an athlete's mind, we need to understand the ire and discomfort. Cultural memory makes sporting rivalries "beyond visual range." Ideally, sport should celebrate skills, but it is "grievance sport," when players seek to avenge the wrongs of history, that counts. Indian or Pakistani athletes protest innocence when asked about politics. This image- building camouflages darker desires and dreams. Players talking peace also brawl and rant on the field, heightening fan enjoyment. Victories teams grind out in adverse situations become less consequential.

Precisely because of the feud over history and culture, the media and spectators assume there will be a fight, even when play gets dull. Such is the allure of this rivalry that even secondary contests make headlines. Just as we love the Joker, master anarchist in the film *The Dark Knight*, our fascination for the disruptive possibilities of sport between India and Pakistan makes the experience special. In cricket and hockey, the rivalry is blood sport. Tennis or *kabaddi* also produce skirmishes.

"Sports diplomacy" is a loose term but is validated by the fact that sport is conciliation to a degree. Ping- pong diplomacy helped Chinese and Americans reset relations in 1971. In 1999 India allowed 10,000 Pakistanis to cross over to Mohali to watch cricket. In 2004 Pakistan issued 20,000 visas to Indians for a cricket series. Soon after Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani attended a World Cup game in Mohali in 2011, an Indian team was allowed into Pakistan to probe the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks.

But sports diplomacy can be menace too. Watching cricket at Jaipur during India's Brass- tacks military exercise in 1987, President Zia Ul Haq is thought to have informed Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi about Pakistan's possession of a nuclear weapon.[12] If sport were just play, why are Pakistani players not invited to the Indian Premier League and Hockey India League? Why would India's Home Ministy ask to clear sport with Pakistan? Why did India withdraw from the 2017 Sultan of Johor Cup?[13]

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12 Soutik Biswas, "The chequered history of cricket diplomacy," *BBC*, March 29, 2011, https://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/soutikbiswas/2011/03/the_chequered_history_of_cricket_diplomacy.html.
13 Dato' Haji Abd. Rahim Md. Ariff, a Malaysian hockey official, told the author that India pulled out to avoid playing Pakistan. This was at the 2017 Sultan Azlan Shah tournament at Ipoh on April 30, 2017.

Cultural Warriors and Strategic Equivalence

With valorisation of its military strategists Pakistan's has resolutely pursued equivalence with India. This is the core tenet of Pakistan's foreign policy, and, by extension, its soft power attributes. Pakistan is not persuaded about Indian ambition, viewing the extended Islamic family as an equaliser.[14] This belief is messianic.

Pakistan seeks the same equivalence in sport. At the 2017 men's hockey Asia Cup in Dhaka, with India 3- 0 up, the former Pakistani player, Hassan Sardar, expressed bemusement that I could fault in India's play. While I worried this Indian team would falter against stronger European rivals, Sardar's thinking was framed in Pakistan's success in the past. For me, Pakistan was no longer the point of reference in assessing India's play, but for Sardar it was. [15] This attitude of being at least the equal of India, if not its superior, is ingrained in Pakistani thinking. Why wouldn't Pakistanis feel honoured by the cosmic fascination Indians show towards them?

Indian athletes consider defeating Pakistan the ultimate prize, binding themselves to that very equivalence. How else can we explain their many meltdowns? Former Indian hockey coach Roelant Oltmans had said that beating Pakistan or winning in Asia was no longer the highest ambition for the Indian team,[16] but Indian players forget that. Coaches need to develop codes that can splinter Pakistan's cultural DNA. Lessons in foreign relations and sports psychology might help.

From Pakistan's point of view equivalence has worked in sport. Pakistan wins 86- 70 in cricket [17] (across all formats- tests, limited overs and T- 20), and 82- 62 [18] in hockey. Pakistan has a 4- 2 record in the Olympics and 12- 6 wins in the Champions Trophy.[19] In October, 2017, Pakistan had more wins in hockey in India (23- 14), Europe (17- 7), Pakistan (16- 9) and the rest of Asia (23- 22).[20]

14 See Jitendra Nath Misra, "The Partition Notebooks, A Review Essay,"*Nação e Defesa* (Nation and Defence), No. 150, 2018, 174- 175.

15 Interview in Dhaka during the 2017 Asia Cup on October 21, 2017.

16 Soumitra Bose, "Beating Pakistan is not enough, says angry Oltmans after Canada defeat," *Hindustan Times*, June 26, 2017, https://www.hindustantimes.com/other-sports/beating-pakistan-is-not-enough-says-angry-oltmans-after-canada-defeat/story-ZokvxydpjOjBjOb3KaX03J.html.

17 Wikipedia, "India- Pakistan cricket rivalry," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India%E2%80%93Pa-kistan_cricket_rivalry.

18 Akbar Wahidi and B.G. Joshi, "India vs. Pakistan: Indo- Pak Tournament- wise Record," *Bhara-tiyahockey.org*, http://www.bharatiyahockey.org/sankhya/indopak/tournaments.htm. The figures were last updated on October 20, 2019.

19 In the World Cup India wins 3- 2.

20 Faizan Lakhani, "The numbers game: Pakistan's edge over India in hockey encounters," *Geo*

Table No. 1
India- Pakistan in Hockey

Played	India	Pakistan	Draws
175	62	82	31

Source: Akbar Wahidi and B.G. Joshi, "India vs. Pakistan: Indo- Pak Tournament- wise Record," Bharatiyahockey.org, http://www.bharatiyahockey.org/sankhya/indopak/tournaments.htm. The figures were last updated on October 20, 2019.

In other sports, India wins. Pakistan's losses in *Kabaddi*, tennis [21] and wrestling do not deter fans because it is enough to just watch two famous rivals.

What Did the Partition do to Sport?

We view Partition in terms of wars, economic blockades, cultural battles, the contestation over the Urdu language, the water war and so on. Seldom do we address Partition's impact on sport. Because of the bitter division of human resource, a sporting rivalry and distance arose, that otherwise may not have been. Hockey and cricket became part of the toxic conversation, and a loss in either was humiliation. Players who left India for Pakistan formed the nucleus of the Pakistani hockey team. Suddenly, athletes who had won Olympic medals together had to battle on the field.

In this putative rivalry hockey had drawn its Radcliffe line. On the field players were careful not to show rancour, because winning requires calm and uncluttered minds. Yet, they had to deal with the new politics. At the 1948 London Olympics "the Indian and Pakistani teams were billeted at different places," says the late Indian player Balbir Singh Senior. "We first met at Wembley Stadium during the ceremonial opening of the Games. Niaz Khan, A.I.S. Dara, Shah Rukh, Mehmood and Aziz saw us, but I was surprised to see that our old friends were deliberately keeping a distance from us."[22]

After the second partition of the subcontinent in 1971 Bangladesh steps into this rivalry as the swing state. In Europe, spectators are in it to enjoy the India-

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TV, October 15, 2017, https://www.geo.tv/latest/162772-the-numbers-game-pakistans-edge-over-india-in-hockey-encounters.

21 Saba Aziz, "Davis Cup: Indian tennis team to visit Pakistan after 55 years," Aljazeera.com, July 29, 2019, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/07/davis-cup-indian-tennis-team-visit-pakistan-55-years-190729145002591.html. Pakistan has lost all six Davis Cup ties. In 1964, Pakistan lost the first tie 0- 4.

22 Boria Majumdar, "1948: When the rulers were conquered," *Economic Times* in *ET Commentary*, July 20, 2016, https://blogs.economictimes.indiatimes.com/et-commentary/1948-when-the-rulers-were-conquered/.

Pakistan contest, and the politics is the backgrounder. It is the consequence of the politics that interests them. Bangladeshis are more deeply immersed in the politics.

The 1985 Men's Asia Cup final in Dhaka still rankles Indian players. At 2- 2 the game was well- poised. Pakistan won in front of 50,000 spectators after a controversial goal awarded by umpire Yabuta. "The entire stadium [was] cheering them [the Pakistanis] on," says Romeo James, an Indian player. "With the fans running onto the pitch, we feared for our safety."[23] Bangladesh's surgical separation from India in 1947, and from Pakistan in 1971, meant that the children of Partition still were still sparring with history. In this phase, a strain in ties with India impacted spectator behaviour.

When Powers Rise and Fall, So Do Their Sport

It may seem paradoxical that India's partition helped Pakistan find its way in sport. In the 1950s and 1960s Pakistan seemed the model state. Gustav Papanek wrote in 1967:

"By the middle of the 1960s the rate of economic growth was more than double the rate of population growth; investment was approaching a healthy 20 per cent, and savings exceed 10 per cent of domestic resources. Prices were stable, foreign exchange earnings were increasing at 7.5 per cent a year, and foreign resources were being used with increasing effectiveness. Pakistan was widely regarded as one of the half dozen countries in the world with the greatest promise of steady development. In the face of the pitiful resources and capital endowment of independence and in comparison with other countries, Pakistan's performance was outstanding."[24]

This trend continued through the 1970s. Between 1977- 1981 the annual average growth rate stood at 6.2 per cent.[25] In 1977-78 GNP grew by 9.2 per cent, agriculture by 4.3 per cent, and industry by 4.7 per cent.[26]

It is no co-incidence that Pakistan achieved its first hockey victory over India

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23 Sundeep Misra, "Hockey Asia Cup 2017: India players short-changed 32 years back pray for current team to bring home silverware", *Firstpost.com*, October 22, 2017, https://www.firstpost.com/sports/hockey-asia-cup-2017-india-players-short-changed-32-years-back-pray-for-current-team-to-bring-home-silverware-4164871.html.

24 Gustav Papanek, Pakistan's Development: Social Goals and Private Incentives (Cambridge, 1969), p. 2.

25 Government of Pakistan (GOP), Finance Division, Economic Adviser's Wing, Pakistan Economic Survey 1980-81 (Islamabad, n.d.), p.11.

26 W. Eric Gustafson, "Pakistan in 1978: At the brink Again", Asian Survey, vol. 19, no. 2, February 1979, as reprinted in Strategic Digest, vol. 9, no. 4, April 1979, p. 249.

in 1960. During its early optimism, Pakistan prevailed 47- 29[27] in hockey (between 1950- 2000).[28] This proves true the axiom that state cohesion brings sporting success.

Hockey's trajectory in Pakistan followed that of the state. With Pakistan's war chest filling, India faced withdrawal. [29] As the neighbours set on a course of hostility, the hockey rivalry became part of a broader mutual animosity. In the 1980s and1990s Pakistan, with an incipient nuclear capability, launched a sub- conventional war against India in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir states. Athletes and fans bare their knuckles when nations find a new wind.[30] So, spectators stoned Indian players at the 1990 Lahore hockey World Cup. Closeted in secure areas, the Indian team choked, finishing 10th of 12 teams, its worst World Cup performance. Later, at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, Indian players did a victory lap after a drawn game with Pakistan. They seemed satisfied at simply not losing, while Pakistani players felt dejected at failing to win.[31]

In the twenty first century, Pakistan got embroiled in internal problems, gradually shifting from being a "development state" to a "security state."[32] From 9 per cent of the GDP in the 1970s, development expenditure declined to 3.5 per cent in the first decade of the twenty first century, and 1.8 per cent in 2018- 2019. Expenditure on education has precipitously declined to 0.17 per cent of the GDP in 2019- 2020.[33] With shifting priorities, how would the government boost allocations to sport?[34] Pakistan declined a wildcard for the 2016 Men's Champions Trophy because of financial difficulties.[35]

The years Pakistan threw terrorism against India were the years when the Indian economy accelerated. According to the U.S Department of Agriculture,

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27 B.G. Joshi, "Indo-Pak Year-wise Win-Loss Record," *Bharatiyahockey.org*. http://www.bharatiya-hockey.org/sankhya/indopak/years.htm.

28 Seventeen games were drawn.

29 Indian goalkeeper Mir Ranjan Negi was destroyed by the 1- 7 defeat to Pakistan in the 1982 Asian Games hockey finals.

30   During this phase Pakistan was the winner. It has a 22- 14 record in the 1980s, and 13- 9 in the 1990s. See B.G. Joshi, "Indo-Pak Year-wise Win-Loss Record," *Bharatiyahockey.org*. http://www.bharatiyahockey.org/sankhya/indopak/years.htm.

31 The author attended the game. See Jitendra Nath Misra, "Indian hockey: The psychology of defeat," *The Indian Express*, August 20, 1996.

32 Tilak Devasher, "Escaping the Kashmir trap," *The Indian Express*, September 5, 2019, 15.

33 Ibid. Tilak Devasher, "Escaping the Kashmir trap," *The Indian Express*, September 5, 2019, 15.

34 Pakistani player Hassan Sardar told the author at the Asia Cup tournament in Dhaka in 2017 that Pakistan has artificial pitches only in single digits.

35 Interview with Negre in New Delhi on December 19, 2016.

in 2019 India's GDP stood at $ 3.02 trillion, and Pakistan's at $ 258.64 billion.[36] In 2030, India's GDP is estimated to reach $ 5.91 trillion, and Pakistan's $ 427 billion.[37] The gap will widen from 12:1 in 2019 to 14:1 in 2030. As India steps up economic performance, its hockey record continues to improve, and the teams are almost equal in the twenty- first century.

Table No. 2
India- Pakistan

Period	Games	India	Pakistan	Draws
2000- 2020	82	33	35	14
2010- 2020	35	19	8	8

Source: B.G Joshi, "Indo-Pak Year-wise Win-Loss Record," Bharatiyahockey.org, http://www. bharatiyahockey.org/sankhya/indopak/years.html.

Body language helps decode morale. A stoop, and having your tails up, tell contrasting stories. At Atlanta the Pakistanis *felt* they were better, and a draw was defeat. The tables have turned. At the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, Pakistan, facing defeat, scored in the closing seconds, earning a 2- 2 draw. Pakistani players in the dugout rushed to the field, as if Pakistan had won. Coach Roelant Oltmans exulted: "mentally the boys felt they were strong to come back and they were so focused."[38] The AFP news agency's aptly- titled story: "Pakistan's late 2-2 draw against India at Commonwealth Games has feel of a win."[39]

Since 2016, India has won 10 games against Pakistan and drawn one.[40] A feeling of invincibility is complacency. By trying to tilt the scale against Pakistan with nationalist fervour, Indian players create false comfort. Would they display the same aggression against their British (and even Dutch and French) counterparts as revenge against colonial rule? The era of blaming

36 United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, International Macroeconomic Data Set, "Real GDP (2010 dollars) Projections," January 3, 2020, https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/international-macroeconomic-data-set/. The figures are based on estimated figures from the World Bank, IMF, HIS Global Insight, Oxford Economic Forecasting and United States Department of Agriculture, combined.

37 Ibid.

38 AFP/ AP, "Pakistan's late 2-2 draw against India at Commonwealth Games has feel of a win," *Dawn*, April 7, 2018, https://www.dawn.com/news/1400154/pakistans-late-2-2-draw-against-india-at-commonwealth-games-has-feel-of-a-win.

39 AFP/ AP, "Pakistan's late 2-2 draw against India at Commonwealth Games has feel of a win," *Dawn*, April 7, 2018, https://www.dawn.com/news/1400154/pakistans-late-2-2-draw-against-india-at-commonwealth-games-has-feel-of-a-win.

40 Wikipedia, "India- Pakistan field hockey rivalry, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India%E2%80%93Pakistan_field_hockey_rivalry.

Europeans for stealing Indian hockey by introducing artificial surfaces is long over. So, why not attack a soft target? [41]

The tilt in India's favour is discernible in management too. Pakistan's feisty nationalism of the 1950s and 1960s was a spur to good management. Nur Khan and A.K. Atif are legendary. To-day, India's hockey managers led by Narinder Dhruv Batra seem to think more strategically [42] than their Pakistani counterparts. Unelected Pakistani managers do not compare well with elected Indian officials.[43]

In a changing world, it is difficult to see how Pakistan's quest for equivalence is sustainable. The world's muted reaction to internal reorganization in Jammu and Kashmir in 2019 is a case in point. Pakistan expressed outrage and sought sanctions against India but got little support. Pakistan might just begin to adjust to the growing gap in capability. Having acquired matching nuclear weapons, Pakistan might feel confident enough to seek a new understanding.

Sport is Tied to the Mood of the Relationship

Since the 1990s' terrorist attacks from Pakistan and Indian retaliatory responses have ambushed sport. The outrage in India following the terrorist attack on the Uri army camp in 2016 was blamed on Pakistan. Before the finals of the Asian Champions Trophy "we don't want to disappoint our soldiers by losing, especially when they sacrifice their lives in the exchange of fire at the borders,"[44] Sreejesh said. Victory was "a Diwali gift to those kins of martyred soldiers who lost their lives in [the] Uri attacks."[45] At the London Hockey Men's World League Semi Finals 2017, Indian players and support staff wore black arm-bands to mourn soldiers killed in terrorist attacks.

If Pakistan fights proxy battles in India through sub-conventional warfare in Kashmir, Indian sports figures wreck retribution in sport. It is as if the Indians

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41 Jitendra Nath Misra, "The peculiar case of Indian hockey where culture opposes hard grind of strategic planning," *Firstpost.com*, January 19, 2019, https://www.firstpost.com/sports/the-peculiar-case-of-indian-hockey-where-culture-opposes-hard-grind-of-strategic-planning-5925001.html).

42 Leandro Negre , whom Batra succeeded as president of the FIH calls Batra "a very good manager." He said this in conversation with the author on December 19, 2016.

43 The president nominates the president of the Pakistan Hockey Federation.

44 PTI, "Will play to beat Pakistan for sake of our soldiers: PR Sreejesh," *The Times of India*, Updated on September 28, 2016, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/sports/hockey/top-stories/Will-play-to-beat-Pakistan-for-sake-of-our-soldiers-PR-Sreejesh/articleshow/54563975.cms.

45 "Indian Hockey Team Captain PR Sreejesh Dedicates ACT Triumph to Uri Attack Martyrs," *Sport.ndtv.com*, November 1, 2016. http://sports.ndtv.com/news/indian-hockey-team-captain-pr-sreejesh-dedicates-act-triumph-to-uri-attack-martyrs-hockey-1599269.

were saying: "You inflict terrorism against us, we'll do this to you."[46] Decode our behaviour, we see a different agency.

The Paradox of Loving and Hating Your Neighbour

Yet, zealotry can transform into conciliation. T.C.A. Raghavan says in his book *The People Next Door*: "neither the extent of goodwill nor the extent of hostility in each country for the other can be underestimated."[47] The same Sreejesh, after dedicating victory to Indian soldiers, also said, "These kind[s] of matches will help get the attention of the public towards the game and get a conversation started about hockey."[48] Islahuddin Siddique claims that G. Vijayanathan, a Malaysian umpire of Indian origin, unfairly awarded a goal to India in the finals of the 1975 World Cup.[49] Yet, he had also asked rival Ashok Kumar to sing a Hindi film song in that very game.[50] Sardar had praised Indian hospitality the day after Pakistan had pulverized India 7- 1 in the 1982 Asian Games finals. But, in 2018, the same Sardar held an Indian umpire responsible for Pakistan's defeat to Japan in the 2018 Asian Games hockey semi-finals.[51]

Are these players delusional? Humans truce up hostilities after tiring. The Iran- Iraq war ended when Iraq employed chemical weapons, degrading the Iranian will to fight. "Off the pitch we are all good friends and we know each other well having played many times and played in various leagues all over the world,"[52] asserts Mohammed Irfan. "We want to concentrate on sports and the

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46 Jitendra Nath Misra, "How Sport Mirrors the India- Pakistan Relationship," *Vivekananda International Foundation*, June 26, 2020, https://www.vifindia.org/article/2020/june/26/how-sport-mirrors-the-india-pakistan-relationship.

47 T.C.A. Raghavan, *The People Next Door: The Curious History of India's Relations With Pakistan*, (Noida: Harper Collins Publishers India, 2017), 303.

48 International Hockey Federation, News,"Pakistan v India: A great sporting rivalry," December 6, 2017, http://www.fih.ch/events/open-series/2017-men-hockey-world-league-semi-final-london-eng/news/pakistan-v-india-a-great-sporting-rivalry/.

49 See his autobiography "Dash Through My Life," and the chapter "The Goal That Wasn't."

50 Sandip Sikdar, "With song on lips, India's 1975 Hockey World Cup hero Ashok Kumar scored a winner," *Hindustan Times*, December 10, 2018, https://www.hindustantimes.com/other-sports/with-song-on-lips-india-s-1975-hockey-world-cup-hero-ashok-kumar-scored-a-winner/story-TPIoEUB3H0Eky6e2lpiQ4H.html.

51 UNI, "Asian Games hockey: Pakistan lose to Japan, blame Indian officials for defeat," *The New Indian Express*, August 31, 2018, Updated on August 31, 2018, http://www.newindianexpress.com/sport/asian-games/news/2018/aug/31/asian-games-hockey-pakistan-lose-to-japan-blame-indian-officials-for-defeat-1865461.html. See also "Green-shirts must now focus on the bronze medal: PHF," *Fieldhockey.com*, September 1, 2018, http://fieldhockey.com/index.php/comments/41706-green-shirts-must-now-focus-on-the-bronze-medal-phf.

52 International Hockey Federation, News,"Pakistan v India: A great sporting rivalry," December 6, 2017, http://www.fih.ch/events/open-series/2017-men-hockey-world-league-semi-final-london-eng/news/pakistan-v-india-a-great-sporting-rivalry/.

situation at [the] LoC (line of control in Kashmir) is not for us to deal with,"[53] states coach Tahir Zaman. But consider the scuffles at an India- Pakistan hockey game in Busselton, Australia, in 2011. Being the ambassador does not resolve the underlying tension. We see the paradox of two co- existing truths.

Thus, there is a palpable sense of friendly, and not so friendly, encounters. As a rule, athletes like to front as self- declared ambassadors. This is to secure a fan base beyond borders. Both sides' sportsmen protest it is only sport, and claim they get along. But denying something means it is happening right beneath you. The Indian emperor Asoka conveys his sermons on the need for harmony from his numerous rock and pillar edicts. As historian Romila Thapar argues, this suggests there were sectarian tensions in the society he led. So, for players to deny tension exists does not hold up.

Exultant Media Helps the Cash Flow

Purely on merit, the great hockey rivalries featuring the more successful Australians and Europeans should earn the headlines. Yet, promoters, spectators and the media remain absorbed in the India- Pakistan contest. Each game remains a "mystery" game with much- anticipated previews and commentary. When neutrals put it right on top the discussion other rivalries face relegation.

When India and Pakistan play, the media is on a romp. Even without bilateral series "an India- Pakistan encounter assumes high importance and it is apparent that the tensions and pressures evolving from the different diplomatic factors will spill on to the sports field,"[54] says *Aljazeera.com*. A game in 1967 at the venerated Lords cricket ground was televised live on BBC, an extraordinary bow to the rivalry. As India fought back from a deficit European commentators at the 2003 Champions Trophy game in Amsterdam exclaimed: "We knew this was going to be special, but not this special."[55] The BBC had said of India's victory over Pakistan in the finals of the 2003 Asia Cup: "As well as being bitter political and military rivals, Pakistan and India are fierce competitors in the sporting arena."[56] When the teams met in the 2017 Hockey

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53 Mohammad Yaqoob, "India's control at FIH, delay in NOC for Jr World Cup worry PHF," *Dawn*, November 16, 2016, https://www.dawn.com/news/1296522/indias-control-at-fih-delay-in-noc-for-jr-world-cup-worry-phf.

54 News, "Spotlight falls on hockey rivalry," News, *Aljazeera.com*, February 28, 2010, https://www.aljazeera.com/sport/2010/02/2010227161641608805.html.

55 Shahid Khan, "India and Pakistan to meet in London after half century of first meet,*" Fieldhockey.com*, June 12, 2017, http://fieldhockey.com/index.php/comments/34529-india-and-pakistan-to-meet-in-london-after-half-century-of-first-meet, June 12, 2017.

56 "India Celebrates Hockey Win," *BBC News*, September 29, 2003, http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/

Men's World League Semi Finals in London, not so long after the Asian Champions Trophy 2016, England Hockey called it a "derby"[57] game. The FIH termed the India- Pakistan game at the 2018 men's Champions Trophy "one of the biggest rivalries in the sport" and a "long-running battle."[58]

We could forgive the FIH and national federations for exploiting the commercial potential of this rivalry, but hockey needs all it can get. The FIH has a film on it, "The Fiercest Rivalry in Hockey." There is no similar comment from Indian or Pakistani commentators on European rivalries. Two roughly equal contestants with a fraught history means this rivalry is generally accepted as hockey's greatest.

The Mind Plays its Games While Victory is Delirium

What does this rivalry actually do to players and spectators? Is it anger they feel? Anger is never enough for sporting success. Hockey is a mind- body contact sport. With emotional layers sewn in this rivalry witnesses jostles, traumas, meltdowns, and other darkly spectacular events that make it legendary. Moments of play oscillate between the sublime and the bizarre, with free falls and redemption. In such a situation, the skills of the players take a back seat.

Success comes during calm. Spectators miss this. Lately, India is stealing the mental space. Both in the 2014 Asian Games finals and the Asian Champions Trophy 2016 India won the battle of minds. Pakistan's *Dawn* newspaper: "The [Pakistani] team, despite showing good form, failed to overcome the psychological barrier in a high-pressure game against its arch-rival."[59]

It is difficult to think of moments where a team won by outthinking the opponent. Usually, it is instinct, luck and determination, rather than tactical understanding, that secures victory. The styles are so similar that we cannot consider the rivalry in sporting terms alone. Teams wanting it more tend to be the ones that win. There is not the investment of intellect.

fr//2/hi/south_asia/3148484.stm.

57 England Hockey, "The Ultimate Rivalry? India v Pakistan heads to London," May 26, 2017, https://www.englandhockey.co.uk/news.asp?itemid=41137&itemTitle=The+Ultimate+Rivalry%3F+India+v+Pakistan+heads+to+London&section= 22, May 26, 2017.

58 International Hockey Federation, "FIH reveals host, line-up and schedule for Rabobank Hockey Champions Trophy 2018," *News*, March 15, 2018, http://fih.ch/events/champions-trophy/rabobank-hockey-champions-trophy-breda-2018/news/fih-reveals-host-line-up-and-schedule-for-rabobank-hockey-cha.

59 "Hockey's Fortunes," *Dawn*, November 1, 2016

Bhubaneswar Triggers a Sporting Ban

The semi- final game at the 2014 Champions Trophy at Bhubaneswar shows the India- Pakistan rivalry at its extremities. After their victory "Pakistani players removed their shirts, started dancing in jubilation, and raised obscene gestures towards the crowd,"[60] says the Pakistani newspaper *Dawn*. Coach Shahnaz Sheikh issued an apology, confirmed by tournament director Wiert Doyer, and the matter seemed resolved. But the International Hockey Federation, under apparent pressure from Hockey India, fearing loss of lucrative tournaments in India, chose to sanction three Pakistani players in a review. Spectators, who had earlier warmly received Pakistan's team, cheered the Germans in the finals.[61] Pakistani High Commissioner Abdul Basit was solitary and forlorn in the VIP enclosure. [62]

Without an apology from the Pakistan Hockey Federation India refuses to play Pakistan except in tournaments sanctioned by the FIH. In April, 2015, Pakistan turned down India's offer of financial support for Pakistani hockey. Infrequent games interrupt the rivalry, creating mystery. Without normalization of the contest, every game becomes a death game.

Do Athletes and Officials Advance the Agendas of Governments?

Athletes train to perform at their best. A moment of brilliance or a mistake could decide outcomes in seconds. In the split second a player must take a decision, all he thinks of is scoring or defending. This is considered patriotic enough. Athletes fall in line when governments cut sporting ties. In making the statement about his blood boiling Sreejesh was expressing emotion but he was also grandstanding. Seeking the government's favour is not new, for it opens doors to funding.[63] But expecting athletes to act strategically is a bridge too far.

Does India benefit from sporting bans with Pakistan? Is this just reflexive nationalism? Should governments ask sports federations to develop policies that advance diplomatic interests? We don't know if the Indian government has assessed boycotts, but they have not altered Pakistani state behaviour.[64]

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60 "FIH bans two Pakistani players for misconduct," *Dawn*, December 14, 2014, https://www.dawn.com/news/1150803.

61 The author was witness.

62 The author witnessed this in the West Stand, VIP area.

63 Jitendra Nath Misra, "Sport as diplomacy in India- Pakistan ties," *Observer Research Foundation*, August 4, 2020, https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/sport-as-diplomacy-in-india-pakistan-ties/.

64 *Ibid*.

A diplomatic boycott targets governments and the policy community but sport touches the citizenry. Bans deprive millions of the joy of sport. Pakistanis will not re- think India just because India punishes Pakistan with boycotts. Rather, these might turn Pakistanis hostile. If "no talks with terror" can be adjusted to seek reconciliation, the same would hold for "no sport with terror." India might try a policy shift.

Pakistani has little incentive to cut sport with India, because a boycott does not denigrate the state ideology. It is not like holding an exhibition of Indian art or allowing Indian classical dance performances in Pakistan, or introducing Hindu sacred texts to Pakistanis. "I have let it be known to the BCCI, that we are always there to play,"[65] Ehsan Mani, chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board asserts. Since cricket has defused crises, Mani likely was speaking for his government.

Conclusion

Sport between India and Pakistan is politics' messenger, and the data proves this. When relations are stable, sporting ties hold. When they are strained or ruptured, sport becomes a casualty. The data also shows the link between state cohesion and sporting success. The 1950s and 1960s was when Pakistan was the West's favourite, a "warrior" race bravely turning the tide of Communism. India in contrast was baffling and muddled. India, in some respects, is no longer the under- achiever (think of spacefaring). Pakistan, by contrast, even with its high accomplishment, has become much that is wrong in a state. Indians have decoded Pakistani zealotry, and Pakistan responds.

This provides the context for the bluster of Indian athletes. Whether it is India's hardline stand on sporting ties, or Batra's sanctions, or Sreejesh's statements on terror, Indians display an assertive mindset, putting Pakistanis on the defensive. Waqar Younis, the Pakistani cricket player, said after Pakistan's loss to India in the 2019 World Cup: "we had good sides in the 1990s, but now I think this India team intimidates Pakistan."[66]

Post- modern Europe is not accustomed to such tactical "war- peace- war" scenarios. Fans can be forgiven for the insomnia they experience switching

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65 TN Sports Desk, "'We are not going to run after BCCI' - PCB chairman on resuming bilateral cricket between India, Pakistan," *Timesnownews.com*, July 23, 2020, https://www.timesnownews.com/sports/cricket/article/we-are-not-going-to-run-after-bcci-pcb-chairman-on-resuming-bilateral-cricket-between-india-pakistan/626050.
66 "Pakistan scared of Kohli's India, laments Waqar Younis," *The News*, June 18, 2019, https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/486158-pakistan-scared-of-kohli-s-india-laments-waqar-younis.

on television to watch the teams play at far- off places in different time zones. This is sport's enduring joy. If two nations from another corner of the planet slug it out, physically and emotionally, and then make up, as if nothing had happened, it is money well- spent for fans. Pakistani and Indian athletes do not sufficiently appreciate this. Players simply seek to take this rivalry, and the emotion it involves, for granted. This is meant to keep off pressure, but pressure is what interests spectators.

What might the future of this rivalry in hockey look like? In the entire 20th century, there were 93 games. Between 2000- 2020 there have been 82.[67] Even with the increase, there is the feel of politically- induced interruption. Currently India and Pakistan play only in FIH and invitational tournaments, not in each other's locations. This relegates the rivalry. Media build- up in neutral venues is limited, and spectators do not show the same passion.[68] Persons not born Indian, or Pakistani do not understand the cultural context.

Contrast this with the England- Australia Ashes rivalry in cricket, an uninterrupted tradition since 1882. Even if England and Australia are not neighbours, the one is the other's cultural hinterland. So, a mystique around the rivalry has built up. Between India and Pakistan, with so many disruptions, it is becoming a bits and pieces story. If anything, because of Pakistan's decline, interest could wane. Cricket and hockey in Pakistan falter because teams are reluctant to tour the country. With promise of revenues, India entices tournament managers and earns the right to host major tournaments. The widening gap in power has had the curious effect of dampening the rivalry. History does not valorise the weak.

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67 B.G Joshi, "Indo-Pak Year-wise Win-Loss Record," *Bharatiyahockey.org*, http://www.bharatiya-hockey.org/sankhya/indopak/years.html.
68 The author has watched India and Pakistan at Dhaka, Atlanta and Antwerp, and there was not the spectator interest that we might have in a home game in India or Pakistan.

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