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Athens Journal of Social Sciences

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Cultural Differences in Children's Recommended Punishment of Moral Transgressions

By Richard L. Miller & Tyler L. Collette±*

The purpose of this research was to examine the severity of punishment recommended by children for moral transgressions. Using Hofstede's (1980) distinction between individualism and collectivism, we examined the severity of punishment recommended by eight to twelve year old children for moral transgressions that violated a cultural value. Participants were children of various nationalities enrolled in a summer camp on the island of Mallorca, Spain. The children were classified as either individualist or collectivist using the Children's Self-Construal Scale (Lewis et al. 2000). Each child reacted to nine moral transgressions, two of which were universal and seven of which reflected transgressions of either individualist or collectivist values. The results indicated that children classified as collectivists recommended harsher punishments for transgressions of collectivist values, whereas individualists did not vary in their recommended level of punishment for transgressions against both collectivist and individualist values.

Keywords: *individualism, collectivism, moral judgments, cultural orientation, moral transgressions*

Introduction

According to Krebs (2008), our sense of morality consists of thoughts and feelings about rights and duties and can be perceived to be the result of good or bad character traits, as well as right and wrong motives. An individuals' moral sense leads us to judge our own as well as others' behavior and to desire that good things happen to those who live up to our moral standards and that bad things happen to those who transgress against our moral standards. That said, many moral standards are not universal and vary from culture to culture (Foot 1982). The study of culture has contributed significantly to our understanding of how individuals develop their moral code, and respond to moral dilemmas (Rachels 1986, Sachdeva et al. 2011). Studies of morality in different cultures have refined our understanding of moral concepts and shown how culture influences our perception of moral standards (Vasquez et al. 2001). Different cultures embody different values, thoughts and ideas that they view as important (Haste and Abrahams 2008). Markus and Kitayama (1991) found that persons of the Western world (e.g., the United States) generally subscribe to strongly individualistic beliefs, emphasizing the uniqueness of every individual and encouraging development of an independent self-construal. The independent self-construal views the self as an autonomous

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entity whose own thoughts, feelings, and actions are of utmost importance. Other people are important largely as a basis for social comparison, and the realization of internal attributes and accomplishment of personal goals are viewed as highly desirable states. In contrast, many cultures categorized as non-Western (e.g., China) are characterized as collectivist, focusing on the inherent connectedness of the individual to others. The interdependent construal of self is derived from this belief, viewing the self as an integral part of the social relationships in which one is engaged, and recognizing that thoughts, feelings, and actions are directly related to those of others with whom the person interacts. Relationships with others are integral to self-definition, as is the ability to maintain harmony in such social relationships (by engaging in appropriate actions, filling proper roles, and promoting the goals and needs of the group/others).

In an individualist society, a person's cultural orientation will include independence, autonomy, self-reliance, and freedom as important values. In a collectivist society, one's cultural orientation will include interdependence, group harmony, consensus, and loyalty to the group as important values. Since individualism promotes the belief in one's unique identity, individualists are more likely to claim the right to express themselves, make personal choices, and strive for self-actualization than are collectivists. Collectivists are more likely to see themselves as an inseparable part of a cohesive in-group and therefore expect and are expected to accord priority to the views, needs, and goals of the group rather than "stand out" as individuals (Yu and Yang 1994).

We develop our sense of right and wrong from the culture in which we live (Shweder et al. 1987, Zha and Kushnir 2019). Individualists and collectivists have been shown to differ in their conceptualization of what constitutes moral behavior (Mascolo and Fischer 2010). For example, individualists differ from collectivists in their attitudes about integration and inter-participation (Fischer and Bidell 2006). Collectivist values are underscored by the inclusion of the social context. Thus, collectivist's perception of an event is dictated, in part, by the amalgamation of the situational and contextual parts. In contrast, individualists' perceptions of situations tend to be atomistic. Events are integrated such that each situational or contextual part is not seen as a pivotal aspect of the event. Furthermore, by growing up in a particular cultural context, children internalize (Cole 1996) or adopt behaviors related to their attitudes, which in turn can affect moral judgments (Rogoff 2003).

In general, people respond negatively to those who violate cultural norms and values (e.g., Miller and Anderson 2003, 2013). Even young children have been shown to react to moral transgressions by engaging in forms of punishment to include shunning moral transgressors and acting pro-socially towards victims of moral transgressions (Vaish et al. 2010, 2011). For example, Fu et al. (2007) found that Chinese children (collectivists) rated lying to help a collective but harm an individual less negatively whereas Canadian children (individualists) did the opposite. The present study examined how individualists and collectivists reacted to moral transgressions that violated either individualist or collectivist values, as a function of the children's cultural orientation. It was hypothesized that children with a collectivist orientation would recommend a more severe punishment for those children who violated a collectivist value and that children with an individualist orientation would recommend more a more severe punishment for those children who violated an individualist value.

Method

Participants

Prior to conducting the study, we obtained permission from the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University-Kingsville. In addition, permission from the Director of the summer program and the Principal at the participating institutions was obtained. Finally, we obtained parental consent for the children to participate in the research and child assent from each of the underage participants.

Seventy participants, thirty-five boys and thirty-five girls, completed the study at the Colegio Internacional de Baleares on the island of Mallorca, Spain. The children were students at a summer camp being held at the school. The ages of the children ranged from eight to twelve years old (*M*=9.23). The study included children from nine countries including Spain, England, Russia, Germany, Denmark, Argentina, United States, New Zealand, and the Ukraine.

Materials

The children were classified as either individualists or collectivists based on their score on the Children's Self Construal Scale (Lewis et al. 2000). This scale was developed specifically for use with young children and has been shown to be reasonably reliable (Cronbach's alpha=0.65). We used the scale to determine whether a child's self-construal was independent (individualist) or interdependent (collectivist). Children rated five statements as to the extent to which they liked each statement on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from a very happy face=5 to a very sad face=1. Statements reflected cultural orientation and included items such as "I like doing things by myself" and "I like working with other students." Thirty-one of the participants were determined to be individualists and 33 of the participants were classified as collectivists. Data from six of the participants were excluded from this study since their scores were not indicative of a clear cultural orientation.

To measure moral decision-making, a questionnaire was created that described nine moral transgressions. Each scenario was prefaced with: "a child like you…" to produce an answer that would reflect their feelings toward members of their own group. Two of the items were classified as universal moral transgressions. These were lying to mother (Scenario 1) and disobeying father (Scenario 2). Honoring one's parents is enshrined across cultures. For example, in China, the Civil Affair Ministry suggested in 2011 that a law be established that would require adult children to regularly visit their parents or face a lawsuit (Hanson 2012). In addition to the Biblical commandment to "honor thy father and thy mother," the Jewish Talmud states that honor of one's parents should continue after their deaths

(Nachum 2012). The "second" commandment in the Quran commands the faithful to honor parents, to obey them, and to respect their opinion. In the United States and approximately 200 other countries, mothers and fathers each have a day of celebration to honor them. As a result, we classified the moral transgressions of "disobeying father" and "lying to mom" as universal and expected that both individualists and collectivists would find these behaviors equally morally reprehensible, although the underlying reasons for obedience may differ for collectivists and individualists. In East Asian collectivist societies, obeying and honoring one's parents is based on Confucian ideas of filial piety (Ho 1994), while in Western, individualist societies, parents may be expected to provide reasons in order to insure children's obedience (Trommsdorff and Kornadt 2003). While both disobedience and lying may be seen as moral transgressions, various studies suggest that under certain circumstance, lying may be seen as less reprehensible than many other moral transgressions (see DePaulo et al. 1996). In the words of Nyberg (1993), lying is "publicly condemned" at the same time that it is "privately practiced by almost everybody" (p. 7). However, it is doubtful that this "sophisticated" view of the value of telling certain types of lies will be evident in children.

Based on a review by students enrolled in a course on cross-cultural psychology at Texas A&M University-Kingsville, the remaining seven scenarios were written from either a collectivist perspective or an individualist one. For example a collectivist moral transgression was "a child like you steals money from a friend to buy candy." The individualist version replaced friend with stranger. Triandis et al. (1988) describe the differences between individualists' and collectivists' attitudes and behavior towards friends vs. strangers. In general, individualists tend to be members of more ingroups, are less attached to any particular ingroup, believe that success is less dependent on group membership, and make fewer distinctions between ingroups and outgroups. Thus. the difference between stealing from a friend or tattling on a friend and stealing from or tattling on a stranger is not as distinct as it would be among collectivists. Collectivists tend to be members of fewer ingroups, are very attached to their ingroups, rely on the ingroup to help them achieve success, and make greater distinctions between ingroups and outgroups. Thus, we expect that for collectivists, Scenario 5-stealing from a friend and Scenario 6-tattling on a friend would be a relatively greater moral transgression than stealing from or tattling on a stranger.

Scenario 3 in which the child cheats for the good of the group or himself is based on the cultural differences related to achievement motivation. Individualist-success motivation is a form of achievement motivation that directs one's attitudes and actions towards the attainment of personal goals and self-fulfillment. As such, it stands in contrast to collectivist-success motivation which encourages individuals to connect with others so that his or her contribution is seen as beneficial to the members of a particular group or society in general (Yu and Yang 1994). Thus, we expect that cheating for the good of the group should be seen as less of a moral transgression by collectivists as compared to individualists.

Cultural differences in the appropriateness of bragging about group success vs. individual success is based on differences in self-effacement vs. self-enhancement, (Church et al. 2014).

Collectivists are more likely to engage in self-effacement, which requires that individuals maintain a degree of humility that promotes modesty, fitting-in, not sticking out, and not bragging. In contrast, research conducted in North America has shown that individualists tend to engage in self-enhancement rather than self-effacement, in part because Western culture encourages individuals to define themselves as unique and separate individuals who are self-confident and responsible to themselves (Heine and Lehman 1997, Bond 1991). Thus, we expect that collectivists will be more likely to condemn bragging for personal gain than bragging about group success (Scenario 4).

According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), collectivists are more likely to possess interdependent self-construal's that emphasize the connectedness of the individual to others. The interdependent construal of self views the self as an integral part of the social relationships in which one is engaged, and recognizes that thoughts, feelings, and actions are directly related to those of others with whom the person interacts. Relationships with others are integral to self-definition, as is the ability to maintain harmony in such social relationships (Parkes et al. 1999). Thus, we expect that exclusion from the group (Scenario 7) will be seen as a more serious moral transgression by collectivists than by individualists.

To further ensure that the scenarios reflected an individualist vs. collectivist orientation, we administered the Singelis (1994) self-construal scale (SCS) that measures individualism/collectivism to a group of students enrolled in an upper-division social psychology coursel. The scale has 22 questions, half of which were individualist examples (IndSC) and half of which were collectivist examples (InterSC). An example of an individualist statement was, "I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects." An example of a collectivist statement was, "Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument." Participants rated each example on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Singelis (1994) reported Cronbach's alpha reliabilities of 0.73 and 0.74 for the IndSC scale and 0.69 and 0.70 for the InterSC scale. in short vignettes, supporting the predictive validity of the SCS. Two weeks later, we provided the students with the list of moral dilemmas that we had prepared for the children. The students were instructed as follows: Please indicate how bad you would have thought each of these issues would be when you were ten years old using a scale of 1 not that big a deal to 11 really bad. Analysis of variance indicated that the statements did confirm the individualist vs. collectivist orientation about the severity of the moral transgressions.

In the study, the children were asked how severe the child should be punished for each transgression using a 5-point version of the Likert scale similar to the one used to measure cultural orientation. The drawings on the scale reflected the degree of harshness ranging from 5=severe to 1=mild. Students were taken out of summer camp activities individually and administered the questionnaires outside of their classroom. The experimenter sat with the children and responded to questions about the meaning of words as needed.

Procedure

Because the summer camp program was taught in English, the scales and questionnaire administered were in either English or Spanish, whichever was more comfortable for the participant. Before administration of the measures, researchers first obtained verbal assent to ensure participants knew that their participation was voluntary, and that they did not have to answer any questions they did not want to. Once assent was verified, we used simple examples to explain how the Likert-type scale was to be used. We explained that a 1 indicated something you didn't really like, whereas a 5 is something you like very much. A couple of practice questions were given to ensure participants understanding of the scale. For example, researchers asked children about their affinity for chocolate. In most cases this was rated a 5. Contrarily, researchers asked how much children enjoyed celery. This varied a bit more. To determine the child's orientation (individualist/collectivist) the children were individually administered the Lewis et al. (2000) I/C scale for children. The scores for the individualist and collectivist items were compared and the children were classified as individualist or collectivist using the scale's scoring protocol. Once their cultural orientation was determined the children were asked to recommend a degree of punishment for several moral transgressions.

Each child judged the two moral transgressions that were considered universal. The next seven questions were similar in nature, but differed on the cultural value that was being violated. Each child answered a different set of these questions, which were randomly sorted to make sure each child received questions that reflected transgressions of both collectivist values as well as individualist values.

Results

The mean "punishment" scores for individualists and collectivists for each transgression were compared using Analysis of Variance. Table 1 shows the means, F scores and probability. Individualists and collectivists did not differ in the severity of their recommended punishment for the two universal transgressions. We expected that collectivists would be more tolerant of cheating for group gain and that individualists would be more tolerant of cheating for personal gain. The results indicated to no difference between individualists and collectivists with regard to cheating for group gain. However, with regard to cheating for personal gain, collectivists recommended a more severe punishment than did individualists. Similarly, we expected that collectivists would be more tolerant of bragging about their group and that individualists would be more tolerant of bragging about their personal success. The results indicated to no difference between individualists and collectivists with regard to bragging about the group. However, with regard to bragging about personal success, collectivists recommended a more severe punishment than did individualists. With regard to stealing, we expected that collectivists would be less tolerant of stealing from a friend and more tolerant of stealing from a stranger. The results supported that hypothesis and indicated that collectivists recommended more severe punishment for stealing from a friend and less severe punishment for stealing from a stranger. With regard to tattling, we expected that collectivists would be less tolerant of tattling on a friend and more tolerant of tattling on a stranger. The results indicated that collectivists recommended harsher punishment for tattling on a friend as compared to individualists. With regard to excluding a child from their group, we expected that collectivists would find that more morally repugnant and the results indicated that collectivists recommended harsher punishment for someone who excluded another child from the group. On the issue of refusing to wear a school uniform, a measure of group membership, we expected that collectivists would be less tolerant of a child refusing to wear a school uniform and the results supported that hypothesis. The one issue that did not conform to our hypotheses was the issue of fighting with either a sibling or a stranger. We expected that collectivists would recommend a more severe punishment for fighting with a sibling but the results indicated the opposite. Individualists recommended a harsher punishment for fighting with a sibling than did collectivists.

Table 1. *Cultural Differences in the Extent of Punishment Applied to Moral Transgressions*

Type of Transgression	***M Ind'l***	***M Coll***	***F***	***p <***	***η2***
Universal Transgressions					
Scenario 1 Lie to Mom	3.38	3.42	0.012	ns	
Scenario 2 Disobey Dad	3.62	3.44	0.418	ns	
Paired Transgressions					
Scenario 3 Cheat (Group Gain)	3.63	3.67	0.008	ns	
Cheat (Personal Gain)	2.65	3.68	7.323	0.01	0.165
Scenario 4 Brag (Group)	3.32	3.38	0.033	ns	
Brag (Individual)	2.90	3.63	4.363	0.04	0.105
Scenario 5 Steal from Friend	3.65	4.42	4.188	0.05	0.102
Steal from Stranger	4.47	3.83	4.045	0.05	0.090
Scenario 6 Tattle on Friend	2.80	3.79	5.319	0.03	0.126
Tattle on Stranger	4.00	4.04	0.017	ns	
Scenario 7 Exclude from Group	3.00	3.89	7.637	0.01	0.171
Refuse to Play	3.21	3.33	0.102	ns	
Scenario 8 Fight with Sibling	4.05	3.25	5.903	0.02	0.126
Fight with Stranger	3.30	3.63	0.633	ns	
Scenario 9 Refuse School Uniform	2.74	3.23	4.392	0.04	0.052

Discussion

From an evolutionary perspective, culturally shared norms and their enforcement seem essential to the survival of the species (Henrich et. al. 2010). According to Schmidt et al. (2013) children by the age of three understand and attempt to enforce moral norms. In fact, the presence of moral norms and values across cultures suggests that morality plays a central role in holding societies together. Previous research has found that both cultural similarities and differences in moral judgments depend on the type of moral transgressions. Some transgressions, such as lying are condemned across cultures (Smith et al. 2007). As expected, our research found that for lying, the punishment was equal for both individualists and collectivists.

Similarly, we found condemnation of disobedience to be equally condemned by individualists and collectivists.

Cultural variations in moral focus affect which behaviors individuals will find morally relevant (Boer and Fischer 2013). We found cultural differences in reactions to moral transgressions between individualists and collectivists that reflected cultural variations in their focus of moral concerns. Consistent with research by Vauclair and Fischer (2011) we found that individualists reacted more harshly to moral concerns that focused on individual rights while collectivists reacted more harshly to moral concerns that focused on communal social duties. Thus, collectivists found it more morally reprehensible to cheat for personal gain, brag about individual accomplishment, steal from a friend, tattle on a friend, exclude others from the group and refuse to wear a school uniform. Consistent with the importance of the ingroup to collectivists, they found it less morally reprehensible to steal from a stranger than did individualists.

Individualists chose to punish fighting with siblings more severely. This is contrary to our central hypotheses. However, Deater-Deckard and Dunn (2002) found that children in extended families were less likely to form aggressive relationships with their siblings than those in nuclear families. In fact, in some collectivist cultures such as India, the term sibling applies beyond ones' brother or sister to include cousins and other related children being raised in proximity (Kumar et al. 2015). Having a larger sibling base can allow for a variety of prosocial relationships to form, and reduce instances of sibling rivalry (Baham et al. 2008). While we expected collectivists to be more distressed by fighting within the family, it may be that sibling fighting is more common among individualists and that these children have been more often warned of serious consequences for this behavior by their parents. The current research was not designed to answer this question fully, and future research is necessary to understand the underlying reason for this finding.

Transgressions against such collectivist norms as offenses against close friends, may be seen as wrong because collectivists' sense of identity is in part determined by connections to friends. For most of the scenarios, the individualistic moral transgression did not elicit more severe punishments by children classified as individualists. This neutral pattern shown by individualists may be an indication that their focus is on the transgression itself, e.g., cheating, and not on who is involved in the transgression cheating, e.g., cheating for the team or the individual. Individualists derive their sense of self not in respect to their social relationships, but their personal qualities independent from others.

This sort of perceptive focus is evident in tasks such as the Michigan Fish Test. When told to describe a simple picture of fish in their environment, individualist Americans were more likely to describe the three focal objects in the picture, the biggest fish. On the other hand, collectivistic Japanese participants described the picture holistically taking into account objects' relationships to each other (Masuda and Nisbett 2001). This is a key delineation between analytic and holistic cognition and perception. While analytic cognition is defined as a process of thinking and decision making that is independent of context, holistic cognition relies on the contextual aspects of a situation to derive understanding and make judgments

(Nisbett and Miyamoto 2005). The current research design relied on context to derive expected differences. This was evident among collectivists, but was not found with individualists. Their underlying cognitive and perceptual differences may explain these results.

Conclusion

The moral status of specific social behaviors can vary widely across cultures (Henrich 2015). The current research suggests that the cultural syndromes of individualism and collectivism play a role in these differences. Furthermore, cultural norms related to the punishment of moral transgressions vary such that punishment for anti-social behaviors are more stringent in collectivist cultures. Thus, our findings support the work of Herrmann et al. (2008) and demonstrate that the attitudes of young children reflect cultural differences related to the relative values and norms that individualists and collectivists embrace.

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Teaching in a Global World: Challenges and Opportunities for Small-Sized Universities - Insights from Italy

By Barbara Zagaglia[*]

Today's academic institutions are strongly involved in the modern globalization process. The aim of the paper is to investigate if small-sized universities face particular challenges and if they obtain some advantages or are adversely affected by the ongoing process. The focus is on Europe and, specifically, on Italy, one of the signatory countries of the Bologna Declaration, that has implemented the European international reform process. Based on official data from the Italian Ministry of University and Research, first we analyse university characteristics and then we calculate performance selected indicators that are informative of a few key aspects, such as teaching quality and internationalisation and look at student satisfaction. Results show that teaching quality in small-sized public universities is similar to that in big-sized public ones whereas small-sized private universities perform better than big-sized private ones. Attractiveness for students abroad is greater for smaller and more specialized universities, and this is especially evident for private universities. Satisfaction as well is higher for students studying in small-sized universities. However, doubts exist for the future due to the possible negative effects of the very complex and strict administrative procedures of the current organization and evaluation system.

Keywords: *universities, small-sized, teaching, performance, Europe, Italy*

Introduction

Globalization has been accelerating rapidly in recent decades and human activities have never been interconnected to such extent as they are today.

Academic institutions are strongly involved in the globalization process, which concerns both their two activity pillars -researching and teaching- but while in researching the process is very advanced, in teaching it lags behind (Taalas et al. 2020).

In teaching, academic institutions are concerned in globalization in a two-fold way. In the first, their current organization has been a progressive adaptation to globalization; in the second, teaching targets students who live and will be employed in a global world by moving in search of the most suitable training and which requires specific competencies.

Academic institutions are heterogeneous in a wide range of ways (for Europe see, for instance, European Commission 2011; for a world perspective see, for instance, Independent Evaluation Group 2017). One significant aspect among others is their size. The aim of this paper is to investigate if size matters in the

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ongoing process of globalization. In particular, we are interested in investigating if small-sized universities face particular challenges and if they have some advantages or, on the contrary, if they are adversely affected by it owing to their dimension. Analysis focuses on Europe and, specifically, on Italy where, as we will show in the paper, small-sized universities are the norm. The paper is oriented to catch strategic development dimensions in higher education.

The paper is organized as follows. First, we present an overview of the literature and the study method used. Then, after briefly presenting the process of international reform of the European Union's higher education system and its current organization aiming to face the challenges of the modern and globalized world, we turn to the characteristics of the higher education system in Italy, an EU country that implemented the reform process. After that, by using data from the Italian Ministry of University and Research, we first analyse size characteristics of Italian universities and then, for each university distinguishing by university type, we calculate a few performance indicators that are informative of key aspects, such as teaching quality and internationalisation. In addition, in order to have a more comprehensive picture of the teaching performance of Italian universities by size, we look at student satisfaction with their degree programmes. Our study does not intend to evaluate the efficiency level of Italian universities but to identify some and possible strengths. Conclusions end the paper.

Literature Overview

Globalization and its impacts in higher education have been widely dealt with in literature (Geuna 1998, de Wit 2001, Spiro 2003, Dewatripont et al. 2009, Teichler 2009, Singh and Papa 2010, Renn 2012, Lemoine et al. 2017, Mense et al. 2018) as well as how to measure performance and efficiency (Higgins 1989, Carrington et al. 2005, Kuah and Wong 2011, Marope et al. 2013, Kapetaniou and Lee 2016).

Performance or efficiency has often been measured for the higher education institution activities (teaching, research, and seldom the third mission) as a whole (Avkiran 2001, Bonaccorsi et al. 2007, Faggi et al. 2018, Johnes et al. 2020) or for research activity only (Aghion et al. 2009, Veugelers and van der Ploeg 2009, Gómez et al. 2009), sometimes for or with a focus on educational activity (Avkiran 2001, Johnes 2006, Aslam 2011, De Witte and Hudrlikova 2013, Leitner et al. 2007).

As regards the size of higher education institutions, it has been investigated from various angles and in different contexts.

In the U.S., the distinction between small and big colleges and universities is quite marked (Hanstedt and Amorose 2004) and the distinction between public and private also matters. Hussar et al. (2020) showed that attending public institutions is on average cheaper than attending private for-profit institutions and especially private nonprofit ones that have the highest average tuition fees, and the highest average total and net costs of attendance (calculated for first-time, full-time undergraduate students attending 4-year institutions). Moreover, private universities tend to be much smaller than public universities (Bridgestock 2021).

Reputation is usually better for larger universities because the most eminent scholars, the largest number of doctorates, the biggest libraries, and the most renowned research centres and laboratories are in large institutions (The Camegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching 1990). However, there are prestigious (and very expensive) colleges and universities, even small ones (Hanstedt and Amorose 2004).

This reputation dichotomy between large versus small universities is repeated to different extents in the rest of the world. Higher or lower reputation is, nevertheless, based on the greater weight given to some characteristics compared to others.

More and more often, opinions about university reputation are based on national and international university ranking. Compilers of general rankings apply methodologies that tend to reward large and research oriented universities but when the different strengths of universities and the criteria where they perform relatively well are taken in consideration smaller (medium sized) universities get better positions (De Witte and Hudrlikova 2013).

Small sized universities are disadvantaged in other settings as well. Bias in research grant evaluation was found for Canada (Murray et al. 2016). Differences in programme supply between small and large private universities were shown for Argentina (Balán 1990).

When efficiency was investigated, variable returns to scale have been found among universities in Australia. Findings also showed that more universities were operating at decreasing returns of scale indicating the opportunity for a downsize (Avrikan 2001).

In India, it seems that the economies of scale in the tuition of both undergraduate and postgraduate students are exhausted while the economies of scale remain unexhausted in researching. Thus, further concentration of research activity could yield benefits, whereas a greater expansion in student numbers could be obtained by stimulating the growth of the smaller universities or by establishing new institutions (Johnes et al. 2020).

In Europe, Finland, Italy, Norway, and Switzerland were considered in a study by Bonaccorsi et al. (2007). It was shown that efficiency gains change by university size and that larger units have more efficiency gains than smaller ones (conjoint teaching and research considered). Gains were found to be rather modest when the university total faculty size is less than 1,000 academics but increase faster when the number is at least up to 6,000. However, university size efficiency gain patterns differ according to disciplines.

Finally, a study on the efficiency of public universities in Italy (teaching and research considered jointly) has shown interesting results (Faggi et al. 2018). The study, which deals with twenty-five of the bigger public universities and economic efficiency (no quality indicator is applied), showed that the medium to small universities have the best efficiency performances. Belonging to this size category, the three best public universities in the whole period analysed (2006-2013) are: "Università degli Studi Gabriele D'Annunzio di Chieti e Pescara", "Università degli Studi di Salerno", and "Università della Calabria". The optimal scale for this subset of public universities resulted to be between 28,000 and 40,000 students enrolled. Over that size returns of scale decrease whereas below 28,000 returns of scale increase. Authors indicate that it is more efficient to start a small sized university which then grows to become medium-small sized. Over that optimal size, coordination costs have a very negative impact on the efficient use of resources.

No study, to our knowledge, simultaneously and explicitly considers the issues of globalization, performance, and university size.

Methodology

Methodologies adopted were: a) review of reforms and characteristics of the higher education system; and b) measurement of performance by indicators that were selected because more indicative of teaching quality and globalization activity. They are explained in detail later in the paper.

The European Union's Higher Education System

In 1954, European countries, aware of their common cultural identity and aiming to achieve a greater unity, signed the European Cultural Convention[1]. The convention states that a unique cultural base exists in Europe, which is interpreted in different nuances in each country or society, and the principle to safeguard and encourage such a culture.

In the following decades, with the strengthening of the European integration process, the enhancement of the intellectual, cultural, social and technical dimensions of the continent followed. In 1998, in The Sorbonne Joint Declaration, the education ministers of France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom asserted the need of creating a union of knowledge in Europe and engaged in the harmonization of the architecture of the European higher education system calling on other European countries to join the project.

The following year, twenty-nine European education ministers met and signed The Bologna Declaration committing themselves to launch convergent national reforms on the base of common key values - freedom of expression, autonomy for institutions, independent student unions, academic freedom, free movement of students and staff. Since then a process of international reform of the European Union's higher education system - The Bologna Process - has developed[2].

The main goal was the creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), a common area for promoting the mobility of students, teachers, researchers, and administrative staff and the mutual recognition of qualification. A further aim of EHEA was to increase the global competitiveness of the European higher education system, at a time when the movement of goods, money, and people was rapidly spreading across the globe. Established in 2010, EHEA should

[1]ETS n.018/1954.

[2]All the declarations related to the Bologna Process are available at: http://www.ehea.info/page-ministerial-declarations-and-communiques.

be accomplished by 2025. At present, the number of EHEA member states is forty-eight and includes EU and non-EU member states[3].

A European qualification framework was set, which consists of three cycles of higher education qualification based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation Systems (ECTS). The system of credits, indeed, calculated on study time, allows students to validate credits acquired in a different European university, thus promoting mobility. The first (undergraduate) cycle usually awards a bachelor's degree and requires 180 to 240 ECTS credits; the second (graduate) cycle usually awards a master's degree and requires 60 to 120 ECTS credits; the third cycle, which awards a doctorate degree, is not provided with a concrete ECTS range[4].

Consistently with the purpose of creating an area of European higher education, the development of comparable criteria and methodologies of quality assurance has been promoted.

The European quality assurance system is based on common standards and guidelines, the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG), introduced in 2005 and updated in 2015[5]. It is founded on a constructive contest between external evaluation (External Quality Assurance) and self-evaluation (Internal Quality Assurance). The bodies appointed to carry out external evaluation activities usually have the nature of agencies, national or international, one or more organizations. The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) established in 2008 lists the quality assurance agencies that substantially comply with the ESG[6].

For detailed information on the European Union's higher education system see Agenzia Nazionale di Valutazione del sistema Universitario e della Ricerca (2018), EHEA official website[7], and European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2018). For a discussion on the Sorbonne and Bologna Declaration see de Wit (2000).

[3]Membership is open to the European Cultural Convention members. Full list of member states is available at: http://www.ehea.info/page-full_members.
[4]A clear presentation of the three cycle system is available at http://www.ehea.info/page-three-cycle-system.
[5]Available at http://www.ehea.info/page-standards-and-guidelines-for-quality-assurance.
[6]https://www.eqar.eu/.
[7]http://www.ehea.info/.

Higher Education System and Universities in Italy

The Italian Higher Education System

Italy is a signatory country of the Bologna Accord. As the Bologna process does not have the status of EU legislation, there is no obligation for signatory states and participation is voluntary. Moreover, when participating in the process, because of the principle of autonomy, states can implement reforms by tailoring their higher education systems to the peculiarities of their society and labour market needs and to their particular objectives. This also occurred in Italy.

In Italy, higher education is divided into three phases in line with the Qualification Framework for the European Higher Education Area from 1999[8].

Beyond a degree course in the first cycle (3 year duration, equivalent to 180 ECTS) and a degree course in the second cycle (2 year duration, equivalent to 120 ECTS), in some universities and for some subjects (law, medicine, pharmacology) there are single-cycle master programmes lasting 5 or 6 years and requiring 300 or 360 ECTS.

A first and a second level specializing master course can also be provided respectively in the second and third cycle, for a minimum of 60 credits each. The first level specializing master course is available in some universities under their autonomous responsibility with the aim of increasing students' professional education. This qualification is not part of the European university system.

A post-graduate diploma course in the third cycle aims to provide the knowledge and skills required for carrying out the functions required by particular professional activities. The course lasts at least 2 years. Finally, in the third cycle the doctorate programme lasts 3 years.

As regards supervision and quality standards assurance, in Italy it is entrusted to a sole body, a national independent agency - "Agenzia Nazionale di Valutazione del Sistema Universitario e della Ricerca" (ANVUR) - established in 2006 (D.L. n.262/2006) and in force since 2011[9].

ANVUR applies the "Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European higher education area" and evaluates all kinds of activities (teaching, research, administration, and third mission) at all levels (degree and doctoral programme, department, university/institute). European standards and guidelines are applied as pre-requisites for the initial and periodic accreditation and together with quantitative indicators for annual monitoring and self-evaluation according to an assurance quality model named AVA[10]. Actually, ANVUR is an affiliate but not yet member of EQAR and it is not in its list. The procedures for accreditation by ENQUA are ongoing.

[8]D.M. n.509/1999. Many further efforts were made to improve and adapt the higher education system. A successive important reform that is worth mentioning is L. n.240/2010.
[9]https://www.miur.gov.it/anvur.
[10]Autovalutazione - Valutazione periodica - Accreditamento (self-evaluation - periodical evaluation - accreditation).

The Italian quality assurance system involves ANVUR for external evaluation, universities for self-evaluation, and also the Evaluation Unit, which is a third party that acts as a liaison between the two and that has no correspondence in the European evaluation system.

At the moment, the Italian quality assurance system has yet to be completed with regard to the non-university side of the higher education system, i.e., AFAM Institutes - the higher education institutes in art sectors - to third mission and to administrative activities.

Public funding to universities and research institutes depends on the agency's evaluation, stimulating higher education institutes to improve quality.

For detailed information see Agenzia Nazionale di Valutazione del sistema Universitario e della Ricerca (2018), Rugge (2019), Processo di Bologna website[11], TREELLLE (2017).

Currently, the Italian higher education system consists of 97 accredited public and private universities and 145 accredited public and private AFAM Institutes (MIUR data[12]). Private universities include distance learning universities, which are simply called and known as "on-line" universities[13].

The Italian Universities

As regards universities, according to the Italian University and Research Ministry data, in a.y. 2018-2019 (at the time of writing the last concluded academic year) the total number of students enrolled was slightly more than 1,700 million. After having witnessed a decrease because of the economic crisis (Agenzia Nazionale di Valutazione del sistema Universitario e della Ricerca 2018), the number has increased in recent years. In particular, in the last triennium it increased by 25,000 from a.y. 2016-2017 to a.y. 2017-2018 and by 26,000 from a.y. 2017-2018 to a.y. 2018-2019.

Students are mostly enrolled in public universities but the greatest increase has occurred in private universities, especially in on-line ones. For the latter, the increase was over 20%, ten times the increase in public universities.

There is a great variability in size. The smallest university has only 81 students enrolled, the biggest slightly more than 100,000.

The average university size is 18,715 students. The biggest universities are usually public, their average size numbering almost 24,600 students whereas the average size of private universities is approximately 7,200, less than one third of the average size of public universities.

Total and average number of students enrolled by university type in recent years is shown in detail in Table 1.

From our calculations, 58 universities out 92 (63%) result as having a below average number of students. These can be defined as small.

[11]http://www.processodibologna.it/.
[12]https://www.miur.gov.it/web/guest/sistema_universitario.
[13]In Italy, e-learning was first regulated in 2003 by an inter-ministerial decree, which has also started on-line universities (Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca 2010).

Small universities are fairly evenly distributed over the national territory, on-line universities excluded. Indeed, accredited on-line universities are a distinguishing group of universities: they are a very small group (n=11), highly heterogeneous in the number of students enrolled (from a minimum of 81 to a maximum of 39,282), and prevalent in Central and Southern Italy.

Table 1. *Students Enrolled by University Type*

University type	**A.Y. 2016-2017**	**A.Y. 2017-2018**	**A.Y. 2018-2019**
	Total number of students enrolled		
Public	1,491,483	1,497,235	1,500,030
Private	179,156	198,493	221,760
Traditional	101,626	104,842	108,096
On-line	77,530	93,651	113,664
All	1,670,639	1,695,728	1,721,790
	Average number of students enrolled		
Public	24,451 (61)	24,545 (61)	24,591 (61)
Private	5,972 (30)	6,616 (30)	7,154 (31)
Traditional	5,349 (19)	5,518 (19)	5,405 (20)
On-line	7,048 (11)	8,514 (11)	10,333 (11)
All	18,359 (91)	18,634 (91)	18,715 (92)

Note: In parenthesis the total number of universities.
Source: Our elaboration on MIUR data (MIUR, Ufficio Statistica e Studi, available at http://ustat.miur.it/).

Performance of Italian Universities

The Italian university system is compulsorily evaluated by ANVUR, the National Agency for Evaluation of Universities and Research Institutes, mainly by a large set of fixed quantitative indicators and complex and strict procedures[14]. The biannual report that the agency prepares does not answer our research questions because the data reported on the different aspects subject to evaluation follow a system perspective.

Individual universities can be evaluated on a voluntary basis by international agencies (THE, QS World University Ranking, and ARWU among the best known). However, they apply different and not clearly defined data, methods, and indicators (De Witte and Hudrlikova 2013, Rugge 2019). As a consequence, the different international ranks do not consider all universities and rankings are not comparable. In this case as well, it is not possible to deduce any robust conclusion on the performance of small-sized universities.

[14]Thirty indicators for the annual monitoring and internal control (Rugge 2019).

To answer the research question, we measured the performance of each Italian university by calculating selected indicators on teaching quality and internationalization. We applied them to official data provided by the Italian University and Research Ministry (MIUR, Ufficio Statistica e Studi, available at http://ustat.miur.it/). Last available data refer to a.y. 2018-2019. High schools, which provide only the third cycle of higher education and have a special organization, are not included either in the dataset or in our analysis.

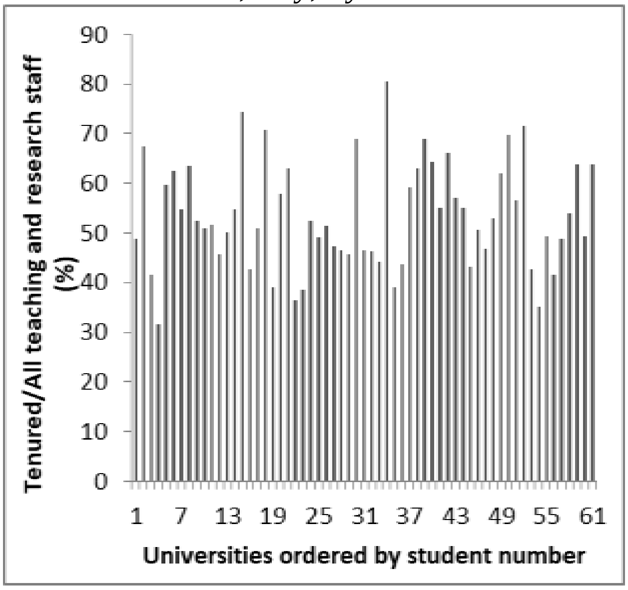
Teaching Quality

A teaching quality indicator we considered is the ratio between the number of students enrolled and the size of the teaching staff. High levels of the indicator can indicate low quality of teaching presuming that students can be followed and supported better in their learning when classes or groups are small. As the teaching staff consists of both permanent and fixed-term teachers and researchers, we calculated two different indicators: one considers only tenured professors[15], the other considers all teachers and researchers[16]. We calculated both indicators distinguishing between public and private universities. We further distinguished private universities between traditional and on-line ones (there are no on-line public universities in Italy).

First, we analysed how universities are staff equipped. Results show that Italian universities are very differently equipped with permanent and fixed-term teaching staff and situations vary by university type. When public universities are considered, the percentage of tenured out of all the teaching and research staff is high, on average over 50% (Figure 1).

[15]Tenured professors' category includes assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors.
[16]The group includes tenured professors, fixed-term researchers, research fellows, contract researchers and contract teachers.

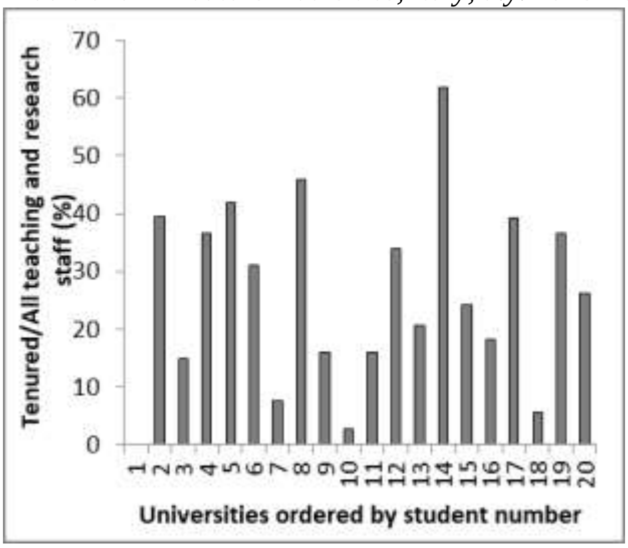
Figure 1. *Percentage of Tenured Professors of All the Teaching Staff Members - Public Universities, Italy, a.y. 2018-2019*



Source: Our elaboration on MIUR data.

In private universities, the use of teaching contracts and fixed-term research staff is widespread up to the point that the smallest traditional and the smallest online universities have no tenured professors. The percentage of tenured professors is lower and the situation is more heterogeneous than in public universities. In the case of traditional universities, the percentage of tenured professors averages 22.9% ranging from 0 to 62% (Figure 2).

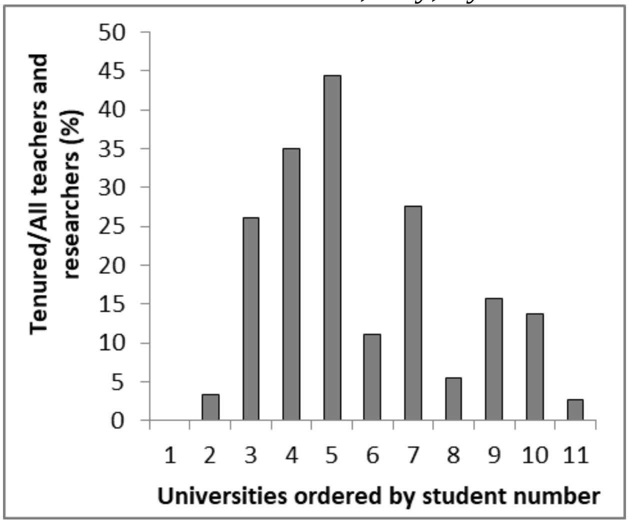
Figure 2. *Percentage of Tenured Professors of All the Teaching Staff Members - Traditional Private Universities, Italy, a.y. 2018-2019*



Source: Our elaboration on MIUR data.

For on-line private universities the situation worsens (Figure 3). Indeed, the percentage of tenured professors is less than in traditional private universities, the average being 14.1%.

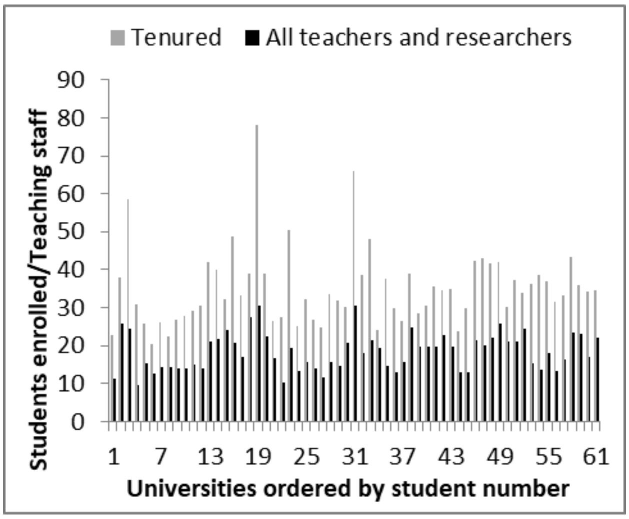
Figure 3. *Percentage of Tenured Professors of All the Teaching Staff Members - On-Line Private Universities, Italy, a.y. 2018-2019*



Source: Our elaboration on MIUR data.

When we analysed teaching performance, we found that, for public universities, it is high whatever indicator is considered: the number of students enrolled for each tenured professor is on average 32.3 and decreases to 18.1 when both permanent and fixed-term teachers and researchers are considered. As regards size, no clear correlation with teaching quality is evident (Figure 4).

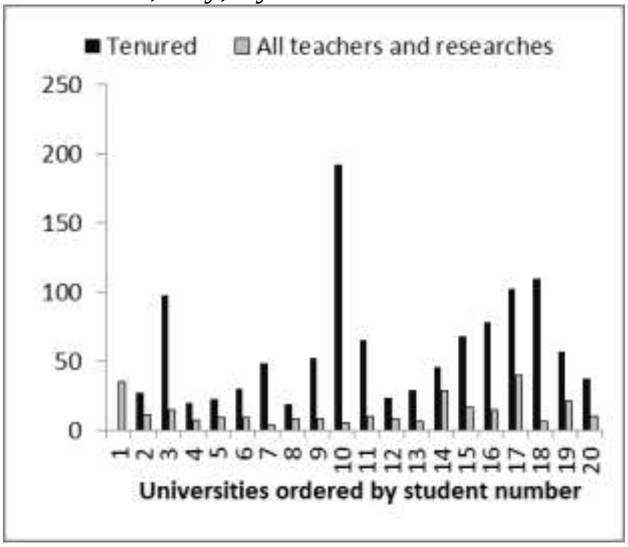
Figure 4. *Number of Students Enrolled to Teacher - Public Universities, Italy, a.y. 2018-2019*



Source: Our elaboration on MIUR data.

When we look at private universities, in the case of traditional universities, with the only exception of a few universities, the indicator shows better teaching quality for smaller-sized universities, whatever staff set is considered (Figure 5).

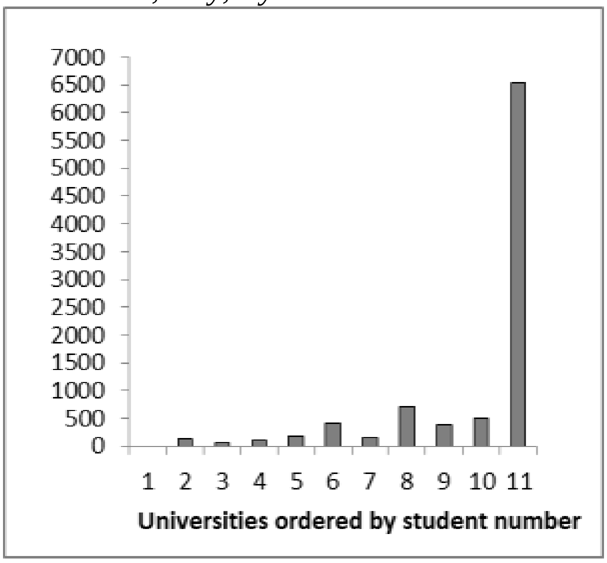
Figure 5. *Number of Students Enrolled to Teacher - Traditional Private Universities, Italy, a.y. 2018-2019*



Source: Our elaboration on MIUR data.

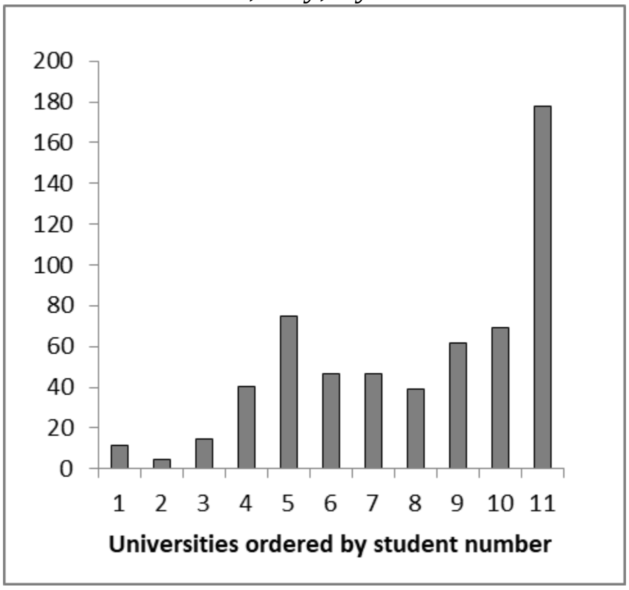
For on-line universities, the number of students enrolled for each tenured professor is very high (on average 472.6 students per professor). Better teaching quality is evident when all teaching staff members are considered (on average 63.3 students for each teaching staff member) and there is a tendency for the number to be lower for smaller universities (Figures 6 and 7).

Figure 6. *Number of Students Enrolled to Tenured Teacher - On-Line Private Universities, Italy, a.y. 2018-2019*



Source: Our elaboration on MIUR data.

Figure 7. *Number of Students Enrolled to Teaching Staff Member - On-Line Private Universities, Italy, a.y. 2018-2019*



Source: Our elaboration on MIUR data.

Internationalization

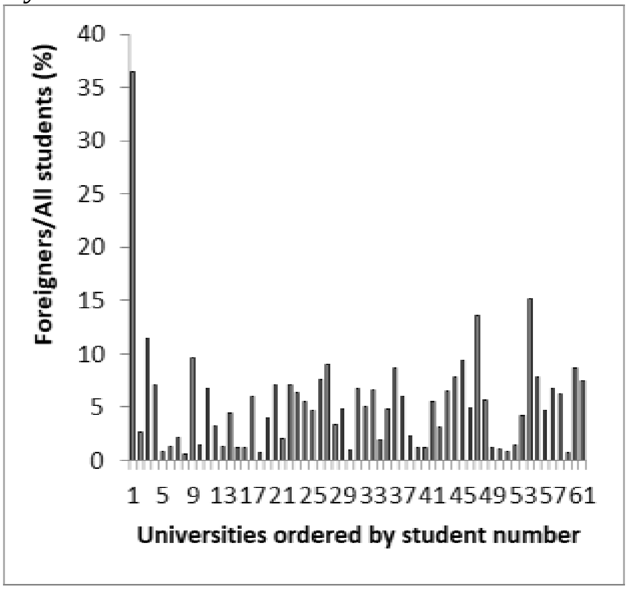
One aspect of internationalization is attractiveness for students from abroad. Since in the case of short-term movements - for the attendance of one or two semesters without enrolling – students' choice of country and university can be strongly influenced by a city's fame, we focus on long-term movements of students for the enrolment in a degree programme. In the latter case, we expect that the universities rather than the characteristics of a place play a major role.

The variable we consider is the number of foreign students enrolled and its ratio to total students enrolled[17].

As a whole, Italian universities are not very attractive to foreign students. When we consider public universities, the percentage of foreign students is on average 5.4 and there is neither a clear positive nor a clear negative correlation between size and attractiveness. However, some universities have high or very high percentages of foreign students enrolled both among small and among big universities (Figure 8).

[17]Available data do not distinguish between resident foreigners and non resident foreigners. Better information would come from the number of students enrolled with qualifications obtained abroad but in this case data are not available at individual (university) level.

Figure 8. *Percentage of Foreign Students Enrolled in Public Universities - Italy, a.y. 2018-2019*



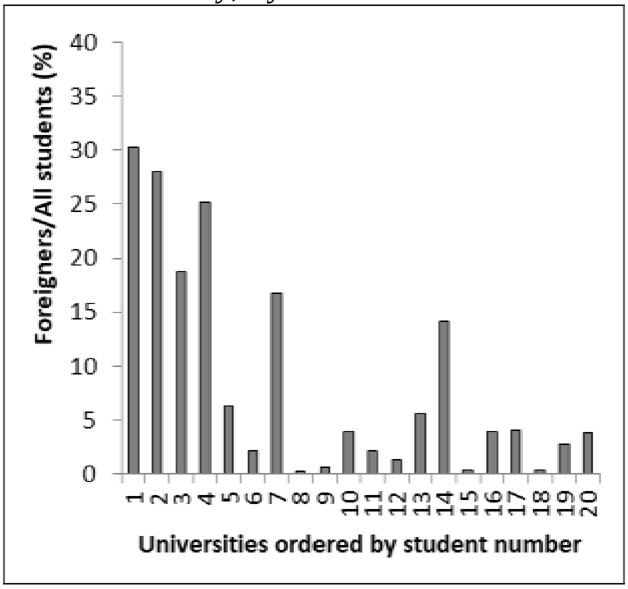
Source: Our elaboration on MIUR data.

The smallest public university, the "Università per stranieri di Perugia", stands out. It is involved in teaching, research activities and diffusion of the Italian language and civilisation and recruits around 1,000 students, 36% of which are foreigners. Another small public university (around 2,200 students enrolled) that has a significant share of foreign students (11%) operates in the same field ("Università per stranieri di Siena"), while the small ancient university of Camerino ("Università degli studi di Camerino") operates in many different scientific fields and has around 6,600 students enrolled and 10% of them are foreigners.

Among the bigger universities two polytechnics have very good attractiveness. They are "Politecnico di Milano" (around 45,000 students enrolled, 15% foreigners) and "Politecnico di Torino" (around 32,000 students enrolled, 14% foreigners).

For traditional private universities the percentage increases slightly to an average of 5.6 and greater attractiveness is evident for small-sized universities. The correlation between university size and the percentage of foreign students enrolled is definitely negative (Figure 9).

Figure 9. *Percentage of Foreign Students Enrolled in Traditional Private Universities - Italy, a.y. 2018-2019*



Source: Our elaboration on MIUR data.

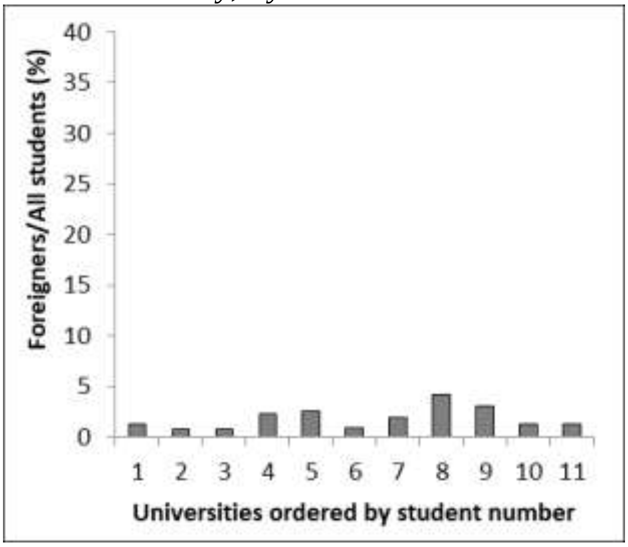
Particularly attractive are two traditional private universities in the field of health and medical sciences (the youngest and smallest traditional private university, "Saint Camillus International University of Health", and the "Humanitas University"), the only university in gastronomic sciences ("Università di Scienze Gastronomiche"), and a university in Italian language and civilization ("Università per stranieri 'Dante Alighieri' di Reggio Calabria"), respectively with 208, 947, 357, and 784 students enrolled and 30%, 25%, 28%, and 19% of foreigners.

Other small traditional private distinguished universities are the "Libera Università Mediterranea Jean Monnet" (17% of foreign students), which operates in law, economics, and management, and the "Libera Università della Sicilia Orientale 'Kore' di Enna"(14% of foreign students), which operates in a vast and varied range of fields.

The situation is different for private on-line universities, the attractiveness of which is very low, without exceptions. The percentage of foreign students enrolled decreases significantly to an average of 1.9 (Figure 10). This is not surprising because of their nature and the students they target (young and adult workers, people with disabilities, and all those who have some kind of difficulty in attending in person)[18].

[18]See Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca 2010.

Figure 10. *Percentage of Foreign Students Enrolled in On-Line Private Universities - Italy, a.y. 2018-2019*



Source: Our elaboration on MIUR data.

Student Satisfaction

Student satisfaction is an additional important factor in assessing the quality of a university and as such it is an issue dealt with in the European standards and guidelines for quality assurance and is considered in the quality system implemented by ANVUR.

Opinions of students, graduands, and graduates are collected for individual courses within each degree programme but the national evaluation system has not provided universities with a standardized procedure and strict indications for the publication of results. This procedure and content heterogeneity is an obstacle in constructing homogeneous and comparable indicators.

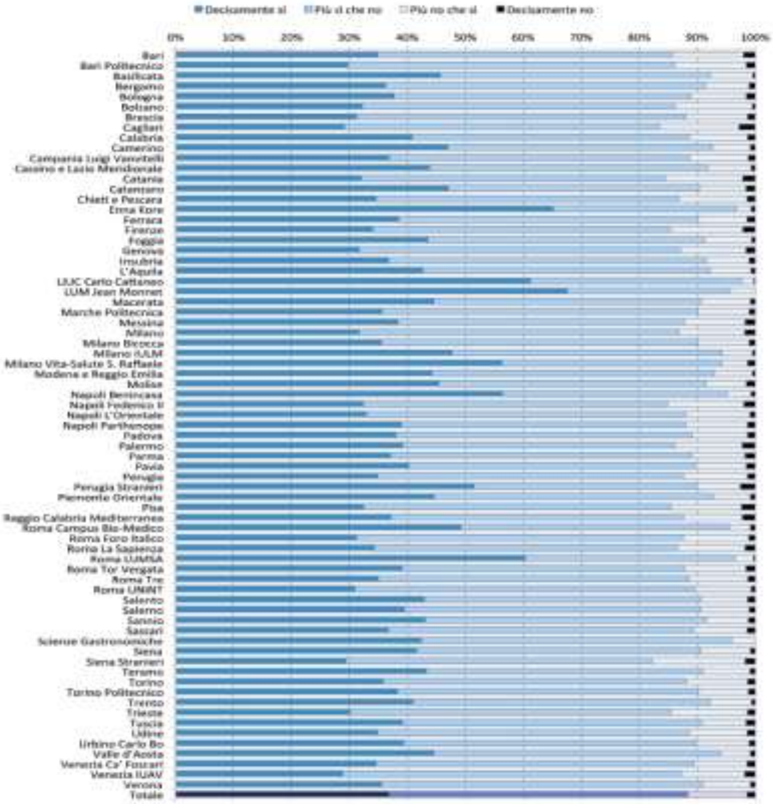
Hence, we refer to data from an annual survey conducted by AlmaLaurea, an interuniversitary consortium supported by the Italian Ministry of Education, University, and Research, as they are provided by ANVUR (Agenzia Nazionale di Valutazione del sistema Universitario e della Ricerca 2018). Data refer to students who graduated in 2017[19].

The questionnaire includes a lot of information about study experience gathered in the imminence of obtaining qualification. In particular, students at the end of their studies were asked about their satisfaction on their degree programme.

In 2017, students answered showing different levels of satisfaction and positive on the whole. The percentage of students who said they were very satisfied is very high, especially in the case of small-sized universities, up to 70% for students who graduated in small but private universities (medium-dark blue bars in Figure 11).

[19]Survey was conducted by AlmaLaura statistical office, which is member of SISTAN, the national statistic system. Survey involved 72 universities and two high schools (the latter are not included in the data) and accounted for approximately 90% of Italian graduates. Respondents were 276,195 and the response rate was 92.4% (Consorzio Universitario AlmaLaurea 2018). On-line universities are not consortium members.

Figure 11. *Graduands in 2017 by Overall Satisfaction on Degree Programme and University (Percentages) - Italy*



Source: Agenzia Nazionale di Valutazione del sistema Universitario e della Ricerca (2018).

To fix the results, we observe that more than 50% of graduands said they were very satisfied with having attended a degree programme in the "Libera Università della Sicilia Orientale 'Kore' di Enna", "Università 'Carlo Cattaneo' - LIUC", "Libera Università Mediterranea Jean Monnet", "Libera Università Vita-Salute S.Raffaele di Milano", "Università degli Studi Suor Orsola Benincasa di Napoli", "Università per stranieri di Perugia", and the "Libera Università Maria SS.Assunta - LUMSA di Roma".

It is a matter of seven very small universities - six private and one public - with 1,000 to 8,200 students enrolled, operating in very different fields of knowledge and geographical areas and that only partially correspond to the outstanding small universities we mentioned in previous paragraphs.

Conclusions

We studied the Italian university system in the context of the international reform of European higher education. We considered all the universities and focused on their performance (not on their efficiency). We measured teaching performance looking at some characteristics that represent key aspects in globalization.

We showed that small-sized universities are a pillar of the Italian university system. They make up the larger part of universities and usually have good teaching performances.

Findings showed that, whereas teaching quality is a standard for public universities, and does not depend on size, small-sized private universities perform better than big-sized ones; attractiveness for students abroad is greater for smaller and more specialized universities, in particular those that operate in the typical Italian excellence sectors, and this is especially evident for the private ones; students' satisfaction is higher when they study in small-sized universities and it significantly increases in the case of private institutions.

In Italy, small-sized universities are integrated in the current learning global market. Their global and international orientation can be a further stimulus for the economic and social progress of the territories in which they are located and which mainly consist of small cities and small firms. Therefore, they have an important role in the cultural, economic, and social development of local, national and international populations. Their key role should be adequately acknowledged and they should be appropriately supported. Appropriate actions should be implemented for the proper promotion of small-sized universities among the potential buyers of their outputs (students, firms, institutions).

Finally, from our study, under the present conditions, some doubts arise about sustainability in the future. Indeed, due to the very complex and strict administrative procedures of the current organization and evaluation system, it is reasonable to think that the workload on teachers, researchers, and administrative staff is heavier for smaller than for bigger universities, given their lower quantitative human resource endowments. This could lead to some negative consequences in the years to come. Corrective actions towards simplification and organizational improvement should be implemented.

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CO_2 Emission from Brickfields in Bangladesh: Can *Ethical Responsibility by Doing* Reduce Level of Emission?

*By Akim M. Rahman**

Recent years' rapid urbanization and then rural to urban migration have created increasing demands of bricks usages in Bangladesh. However, brick industry has been largely using inefficient, dirty technology and burns woods-coal. It injects huge volume of CO_2 in atmosphere. For policy guidance on the issue, this study analyzes the basic issues of CO_2 emission from brickfields in terms of marginal damage (MD) analysis. Findings show that the marginal social costs are higher than marginal private (producer of bricks) costs where brickfields are benefiting with the expense of Bangladeshi society as a whole. As time passes by, rises of brick-prices have been causing upward trends of welfare losses where producers' surpluses are dominating in the total surplus. This economic situation has been causing higher deadweight loss year after year. Addressing the issues, national strategies and policy actions are needed. Reforestation efforts can be achieved in multi-faucets: brick-fields' charity, government policies on planting trees & policies on motivational efforts inspiring citizens of Bangladesh. Motivational policy can be: i) inspiring celebration individual's "Birthday, Having 1st child in family and Event of marriage" by planting trees, ii) forcing to utilize green tech in brick kilns and iii) conducting academic research where financial supports are in need.

Keywords: *brickfields, effluent gases emission, causes social costs & deadweight loss, reforestation, motivational efforts of government policies*

Introduction

From the beginning of civilization, bricks as a product have been playing important roles for construction of houses and other infrastructure and are a major catalyst for economic progress. An estimated over 1,500 billion baked-clay bricks are produced globally every year where Asian countries alone produce 1,300 billion bricks (US EPA 2012). Usages of bricks are common practice in many parts of South Asian Countries, which require a large scale of brick production in many countries in this part of the world. Asia alone per year produces 86.7 percent of world's bricks production in the world (US EPA 2012).

Bangladesh, a South Asian country, is one the second highest brick producer after India. Considering the case of small scale industries, the brick industry is a developing industry because of increase in demand of bricks locally. Here bricks are the most important building material in urban areas. With rising income, it has become a significant building material in rural areas as well. Rapid urbanization

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has created an increasing demand for residential, commercial, industrial, public buildings and other infrastructures. In Bangladesh, it has been contributing over one percent to the country's GDP (BUET 2007) and generating employment for about two million people, despite the fact that vast majority of these kilns use outdated technologies.

However, conventional brick making in South Asian Countries including Bangladesh is a highly polluting, energy intensive and producing a large scale of CO_2. More specifically, burning wood and coal in brick kilns produces mainly high level of CO_2 and other effluent gases. Thus brickfields inject them into atmosphere and deplete atmospheric O_2. In year 2020, Bangladesh emitted CO_2 from brickfields over 9.8million tons (World Bank 2020). Here the percentage in last 10 years of CO_2 emission from brick kilns was 72.784, which is very alarming (Imran et al. 2014).

With high-trends of CO_2 emission from brickfield, besides other policy options, this study raises question: can ethical responsibility by doing reduce level of emission in Bangladesh and beyond?

Addressing the question posed, this study takes on the challenges to layout policy guidance curtailing the magnitudes of CO_2 emission using welfare analysis. It analyzes the basic issues in terms of marginal damage (MD) analysis and the neoclassical partial equilibrium demand and supply theory (Rahman 2000a, 2000b, 2002). It further analyzes the reasons of disparity between social and private cost by conventional marginal damage analysis (Rahman and Edward 2003, Rahman 2019). Thus the findings can be utilized as guidance in policy design in Bangladesh and beyond. Finally, the reforestation techniques are laid out as examples of "ethical-responsibility by doing" in aim to curtail the magnitudes of CO_2 level in atmosphere.

Problem Statement

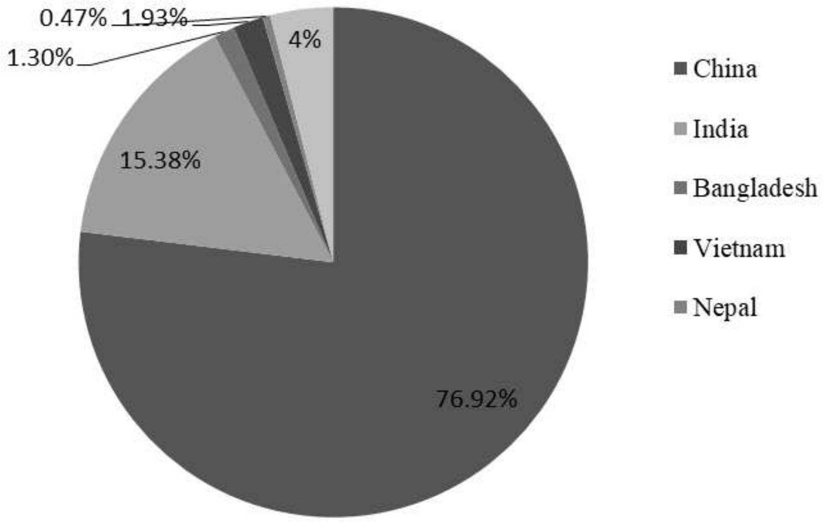
Usages of bricks are common practice in many parts of South Asian Countries, which require a large scale of brick production in this part of the world. Figure 1 shows China and India dominate the brick production level in Asian counties where China alone produces 76.92 percent and India stands second with 15.38 percent of brick production. Bangladesh produces around 17 billion bricks, which 1.30 percent of Asian total brick production (US EPA 2012).

It is undeniable fact that brick industry plays a significant role in economic growth of a nation. However, it becomes a problem when brick industry undermines or fails to marginalize the consequences, in this case, the emission of CO_2 from its production process.

China and Vietnam are the only two countries that have transitioned into mostly using modern and efficient technologies for brick making, India, Bangladesh other neighboring Asian countries are still behind and dominating CO_2 emission from brickfields (US EPA 2012). In brick industry, wood and coal based fuels for brick production; India has estimated 13000 brickfields and Bangladesh has officially 7000 (DoE 2017). There are total 20 natural gas based brick kilns in

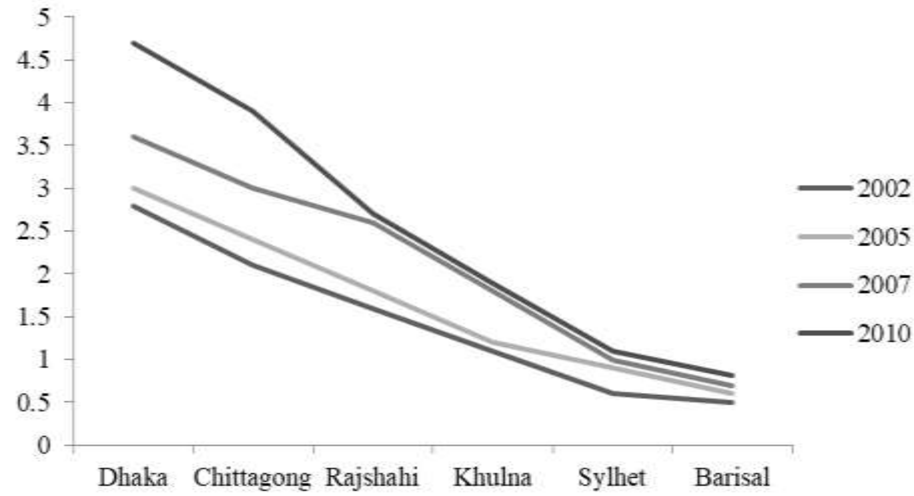
Bangladesh (World Bank 2020). However, news media report, there are estimated 11,000 brickfields in Bangladesh located all over the country where some are not even registered with the government (The Financial Express 2019, DoE 2017). Since data statistics relate to increasing rate of CO_2 emission level are available from six divisions namely Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Sylhet and Barisal, Figure 2 shows that Dhaka stands first and Barisal stands last in Bangladesh (Imran et al. 2014).

Figure 1. *Brick Production in Asian Countries*



Source: US EPA 2012.

Figure 2. *District-Wise CO_2 Emission Level in Bangladesh*



In Bangladesh, brick industry has been playing significant role for construction houses and other infrastructure and is a major catalyst for economic progress in Bangladesh. However, its production process injects a significant portion of CO_2

from brickfields, which is considered as a major contributor of greenhouse gas (GHG). Scientists found that CO_2 emission plays a critical role in the acceleration of global warming trends (USDOE 1993). In Bangladesh, the major source of CO_2 emission is wood and coal burning (DAPA 2015). This study is limited to looking into emissions level only from brickfield in Bangladesh.

The conventional brick making is held responsible for a host of accompanying perils. There is no disputing that amidst the many hazards affecting the environment, traditional brick making is one that not only adversely affects the ecosystem but more damagingly leaves a harmful impact on livelihood means of the masses, including among others cultivation. This is particularly so when it comes to conventional brick making practiced in Bangladesh for ages

Fired clay bricks are one of the most important construction materials in Bangladesh. Bangladesh stands as the fourth largest brick producer in the world. This industry accounts for approximately 1% of the country's GDP.

Figure 3. *Bangladesh Brick Sector at a Glance - Wood & Coal Fired Kilns*

Source: Daily Sun, 20/01/19.

Table 1. *Brick Sector in Bangladesh*

Total no. of coal fired kilns (Ested)	7,000
Annual brick production	23 billions
Value of output	$2.53 billion
Coal consumption	5.7 million ton
Emission of CO_2	16 milion tons
Clay consumption	3,350 mil cft
Total employment	1 millions

Source: DoE 2017.

Bangladesh has a population of 159.9 million and at current growth rate, Bangladesh will require constructing approximate 4 million new houses annually to meet the demand for the growing population and that, in turn, will lead the growth for the brick sector. Table 1 provides a snapshot of brick sector in Bangladesh (Figure 3).

The brick-industry is largely using inefficient, dirty technology, informal seasonal employment methods and haphazard growth that has created a huge environmental problems. It has been impacting on human health, agricultural yields and global warming. Addressing this issue, the authorities concerned put the blame for being unable to efficiently prevent the kilns from emitting black smoke and violating other environmental rules on local influential and dishonest brick field owners. As government claims, despite the existence of laws, many unauthorized brickfields across the country are operating in conventional methods (DoE 2017). These brick kilns are mostly using wood and some cases using coal to burn bricks (The Financial Express 2019). Its emission level has been damaging arable land by cutting earth and polluting the air. The DoE headquarters, however, has no specific data on the number of brickfields currently operating in the country and the extent of pollution -- the amount of emitted smoke and impact of its contents on human, and crops, vegetation and land. However, a World Bank study released last year found that in the North Dhaka cluster, brick kilns are the city's main source of fine particulate pollution, accounting for nearly 40 percent of total emissions during the 5-month operating period. The regulator says the harmful brick kilns operating around Dhaka city and other places across the country had been set up after securing approvals through muscle power. Though the DoE officials conduct drives against the illegal brickfields flanked by law enforcers, they fear reprisal from those affected owners at other times.

In a recent global survey, Bangladesh ranked 131st among 132 countries in controlling air pollution with regard to its effect on human health. India holds the very last position (The Financial Express 2019).

Compliance and Enforcement

The Ministry of Environment and Forest (1995, 1997) outlines the environmental regulatory regime to establish environmental administration in Bangladesh and give the Department of Environment (DoE) mandate for their enforcement. The DoE officials are often engaged in different activities to enforce the provisions of laws and rules as provided in the Ministry of Environment and Forest (1995).

DoE routinely conducts compliance monitoring of industries and development projects to ensure that they have been established or undertaken after having Environmental Clearance Certificates (ECC) from DoE as mandated by DoE 1995). The DoE also enforces environmental quality standards and management of those industrial units and project as stipulated in the Environment Conservation Rules, 1997 and conditions set out in the ECC.

As per section 7 of the Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act, 1995, compensation is realized from polluting, non-conforming enterprise for the environmental damage caused by them. Under this regulatory provision, from June 2016 to June 2017 the Department of Environment carried out enforcement drive against 38 brick fields in which a total of Taka 120 million as compensation was assessed and out which approximately Taka 8.5 million was realized.

In addition enforcement activities were carried out against illegal brick kilns under the Mobile Court Act, 2009 under which penalty is imposed instantly by taking cognizance of the offences. During last year mobile court fined a total of 27 brick fields Taka 8.3 million for operating the kilns without having ECC and Brick Manufacturing Licenses. At the same time, a total of 29 brick kilns established without environmental clearance certificates were knocked down by the Department of Environment. However, may newspaper media reported that a significant number of brick kilns are not registered (The Financial Express 2019, The Daily Star 2020).

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are in two folds. They are: first - to communicate on guidance for policy design curtailing the magnitudes of CO_2 emission from brickfields in Bangladesh using welfare analysis in Bangladesh perspective. Secondly, to communicate and facilitate for laying out reforestation techniques in place underpinning ethical-responsibility by doing it so that CO_2 sequestration can be enhanced in the atmosphere.

Methodology

The basic methodologies used in this study are Marginal Damage Analysis and the Standard Partial Equilibrium Models. This study advances based on assumptions, which are crucial establishing factual arguments for the findings.

Assumptions of the Study

i. CO_2 emission is external. It pollutes environment. In other words environment quality is priced like a regular public good.
ii. There are n competitive markets for the emission free environment
iii. For simplicity both export and import of this good (bricks) are small or nonexistent.
iv. Rivalry exists in case of consumer preferences for better environment.
v. Exclusivity exists.
vi. The changes in production level of emission caused by changing the input (wood or coal) and productivity and the change in demand for improved environmental quality (less pollution) by increasing income, population and life style or preferences over time are ignored. There are empirical evidences that increase in population, income and life style preferences increased the supply and demand for better quality of environment.

What Do These Assumptions Guarantee?

All these assumptions ensure that the aggregate demand for improved environment can be viewed as a negatively sloped schedule of the demand for improved environment at various prices holding income and tastes being constant.

These assumptions also ensure that the aggregate supply curve could be drawn as a positive sloped function, holding other prices, cost and technology unchanged. Given the assumptions, the 'n' demand functions of Bangladeshis for improved environment, are the function of n prices which are completely determined. In other words, Bangladesh can be considered as a single market for quality of the environment.

The concept of consumer surplus is used to capture consumer welfare changes resulting from a price change in bricks. The Marshallian demand curve is used to approximate change although the Hicksian demand curve would be theoretically better. However, the difference between Marshallian measurement and Hicksian measurement is not important if the following three conditions are satisfied (Pindyck et al. 2012, Marshall 1895):

1. Identical consumer when it comes clean air facilitation being a part of the society.
2. There is only one price change in one market.
3. Since bricks are products of manufacturing, the income effect is small. If these conditions are met, then the observed demand behavior can be used to construct a measure of welfare change.

The assumption of n identical consumers is an approximation of Bangladeshis where the "traditional match up behavior" makes consumption patterns more or less homogeneous (Pindyck and Daniel 2012, Marshall 1895).

Therefore, for a single price change, the percentage of error resulting from using consumer surplus (CS) in the order of CY/2M which is likely to be small (CY=consumer income, M=consumer's constant income). So, in the static partial equilibrium model, the size of the inefficiency of the efforts modernizing brick kilns for the improved environment purchase and supply system can be measured by the deadweight loss.

CO_2 Emission from Brickfields in Bangladesh under the Framework

In above sections, we used the concepts of "social cost or abatement costs" and "damages" etc. without explaining in any detail how we might measure their magnitudes in particular situations. In this section, this question is addressed. The focus is on welfare analysis as one of the tools economists use to find efficient outcomes and methods available for estimating benefits and costs that can be used to estimate marginal damages and marginal abatement costs relevant to environmental policy decisions. This section advances with two subsections:

Setup the Problem in-terms of Cost-Benefit Framework

Considering the problem of CO_2 emission in Bangladesh from brickfields into my framework, the problem has been represented in Figure 4. I assume here that brickfield 'A' produces Q_1 number of bricks. This production generates wood, coal and other input costs which are costs for both producer and society. In addition, there is a set of costs attributable to the pollution generated by this brickfield which is borne by Bangladeshis society and not by brickfield 'A'. This situation or *scenario* creates a divergence between private and social costs, which are also shown in Figure 4.

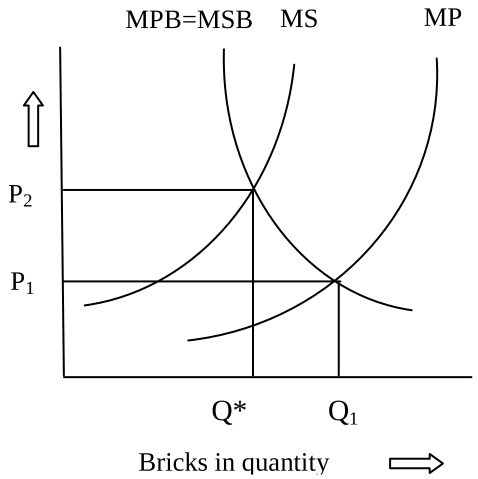
Results and Discussion Underpinning the Setup

Here social cost includes additional costs consisting of the damages generated by effluent gases emitted by the brickfield A while producing bricks. In Figure 4, Q_1 number of bricks is total production corresponding to marginal private cost (MPC) equal to marginal private benefit (MPB). This Q_1 is greater than socially optimal level of output Q^* corresponding to marginal social cost (MSC) equal to marginal social benefit (MSB).

The excess cost (EC) = $(Q_1 - Q^*) * (P_2 - P_1)$ represents the cost to Bangladeshis society for having this higher level of output than optimal level. Considering all brickfields in Bangladesh, the total excess cost is $EC_{BD} = n * (Q_1 - Q^*) * (P_2 - P_1)$. This is considered as the total damages i.e., pollution generates from n number of brickfields by degrading the environment in Bangladesh. In Figure 5, the area e represents total damages in Bangladesh by the brickfields. The total resource costs are examined in Figure 6. Here resource cost associated with Q_1 is area OBQ_1. Area OP_1BQ_1 represents the benefit gained by Bangladesh society from having the resources utilized in 'n' brickfields in Bangladesh. Area OQ_1B represents opportunity cost. Here, net value = area OBE, PS = P_1OB and CS = EP_1B. Considering Figure 4, Q^* pieces of bricks production guarantees Bangladeshis a pollution free environment but they will have to spend as a whole $n * (P_2-P_1)$. The welfare loss for this higher cost is shown in Figure 7.

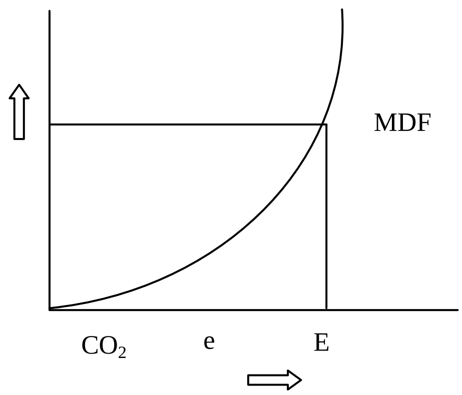
In this case, the changes in price cause changes in CS. Price changes from P_1 to P_2 causes CS drops equal to the area (A+B+C+D). On the other hand, PS increases by area A which directly goes to brickfields' owners. Area B represents variable input cost. Area (C + D) is "deadweight" usages loss because consumers allocate this expenditure away from now more expensive Q_1 number of bricks usages. It can also be represented as Bangladeshi's real income loss for having a pollution free environment. It is noted that the relative size of (C + D) depends on the magnitude of the induced price change and price elasticity of supply and demand.

Figure 4. *Market Failure when Brickfields are Free from Regulation*



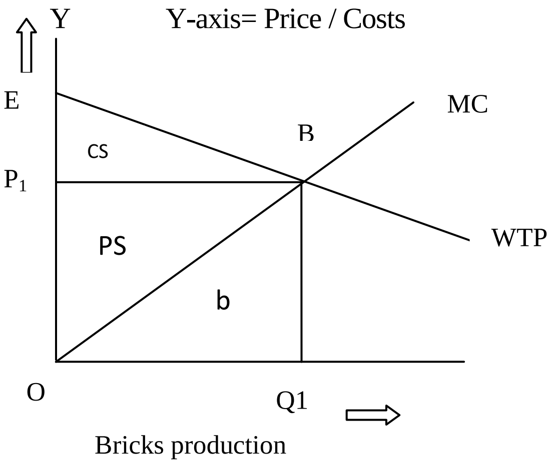
MSC= Marginal social cost
MPC= Marginal private cost
MPB= Marginal private benefit
MSB= Marginal social benefit
Q^*= Bricks production in emission free situation
Q_1= Bricks production with emission

Figure 5. *CO_2 Emission from Brickfields*



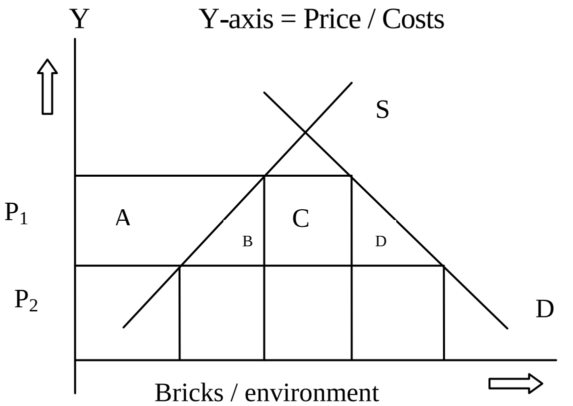
MDF = Marginal damage function

Figure 6. *Resource Cost for Producing* bricks



MCP=Marginal cost for the kiln
WTP = Willingness to pay
CS = Consumer surplus
PS = Producer surplus
B = Resource cost or Opportunity cost

Figure 7. *Welfare Aspect of Producing Bricks with CO_2 Emission*



BS = Brick supply
BD = Brick demand

Feasible Options for CO_2 Emission Reduction from Brickfields in Bangladesh

It is well recognized that policy decisions require information, although the availability of good information does not automatically mean that decisions also will be good, its unavailability will almost always contribute to bad decisions (Rahman 2018). There are a variety of alternative frameworks for generating and presenting information useful to policy-makers, calling for different skills and research procedures. We focus on benefit-cost analysis as one such method of quantifying the theoretical concepts addressed thus far and as a decision tool that governments may use to evaluate policy options and environmental infrastructure investments. On priority preferences, cost effectiveness analysis can be instrumental choosing option in policy-design.

Accordingly, the primary goal of this section is to look for feasible options abating CO_2 emission from brickfields in Bangladesh underpinning Kyoto Protocol requirement. Here each policy-option is cross-examined individually using welfare analysis particularly benefit-cost underpinning assumptions separately for each policy-option.

Reforestation

Reforestation is an act of restoring indigenous or exotic forests to lands originally covered by forest. Many studies found that reforestation is one of the important options in reducing the level of CO_2 in the atmosphere because it significantly mitigates CO_2 emissions (Busch 2019). Plants can be used to control or sequester CO_2 in the atmosphere.

Hence, increasing the number of trees or plants and thus increasing the rate of photosynthesis may increase biological fixation of CO_2 and other effluent gases emit from brickfields. Applying this reforestation idea into welfare analysis which is shown in Figure 8, let us assume brick-kilns or government makes tree planting decision setting MPC = MPB.

Figure 8. *Welfare from Reforestation*

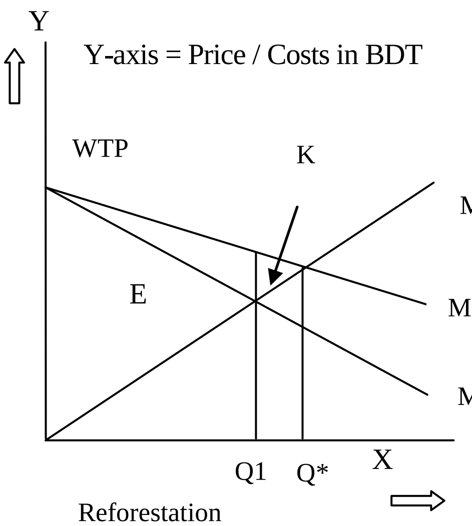
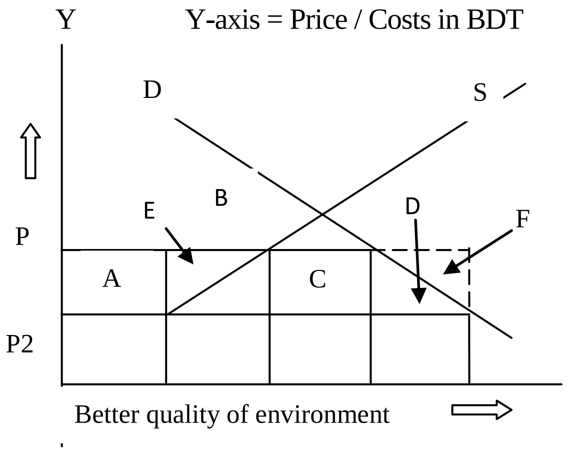


Figure 9. *Welfare Aspect from Better Quality of Environment via Government Subsidies/Company Charity*



The corresponding market level of reforestation planting is Q_1 and optimal level is Q^* (for Bangladeshis) that are generated by reducing soil erosion, higher degree of better environment. Area K represents net social gains that are generated by planting trees. The following three approaches can be considered.

i) If brick-kiln industries are involved in planting, then the companies can pay the planting cost as a charity (public service) to the society where DoE will monitor the actuality.
ii) On the other hand, if government is involved in planting, then government will collect these environmental costs or taxes from the companies responsible for emitting CO_2 from individual brickfield in Bangladesh. In this case environmental clean- up or pollution prevention is a task for the government like any other public infrastructure (road, telecommunications etc.). This dual approach ratifies sharing the cost among Bangladeshis for the better environment.
iii) Government can encourage its populations in different ages to celebrate individual birthday by planting a tree(s) beside roads & highways and near train-lines with the approval of local assigned officer(s) under DoE. In this process, authority(s) can issue Celebration Certificate. This message can be communicated *via* schools, colleges and universities for effective and continuous outcome.
iv) Motivation is to be strengthened that a forestation is a social and moral obligation for every citizen. It should begin with introducing the message in institutional education system i.e., part of curriculum in classroom.
v) Research on identification of fast growing species of trees, having better fuel and timber values shall be strengthened keeping local climate and social condition in view. Also research on utilization the technique of using sugarcane

Welfare Analysis of Reforestation

Considering government subsidies or brick kilns' charity in Figure 9, area (A+B+C+D+E) is consumer surplus. Company pays area (A+E) as charity. Government subsidies are area (E+B+C+D+F) that is collected from Bangladeshis as taxes. Net loss to Bangladeshis is (E+F). Area E reflects a net loss of producer surplus, underutilized resources, subsidies or charity. Area F is deadweight loss that is just lost (Rahman 2018).

Taxation

Taxation is one of the most important means by which the growth of an economic activity can be controlled. This is because the imposition of a tax can act as a catalyst to create incentives for investment in curtailing CO_2 emission (Hahn and Stavins 1991). The basis of taxation may differ. Addressing CO_2 emission reduction in Bangladesh, new taxes can be based on the rate of emission instead of taxes on number of bricks produced. Taxes on bricks usages do necessarily cause a reduction of CO_2 emissions from the brickfields. This study examines only the option “taxes on emission”. The term “taxes on emission” can also be represented as an abatement cost.

Emission abatement level can be determined by setting marginal damages (MD) equal to marginal abatement cost (MAC) as it is shown in Figure 10a. Here, emission level is set at E_1 and it is curtail-able via CO_2 sinks in atmosphere. Brickfield ‘A’ abates E1/n units via regulation.

Assumptions under Taxation Policy-Option

i) Government (the DoE) intensively monitors each brick kiln’s CO_2 emission level.

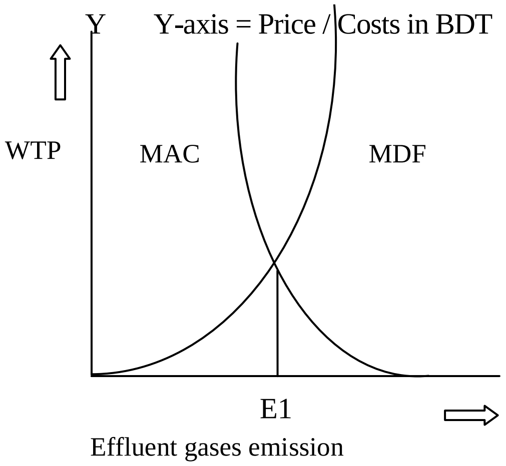
ii) Government does not know brick kiln industries marginal cost (MC). It is ambiguous measuring in BDT of both marginal damages caused for CO_2 emission and marginal abatement cost required for abating it. The idea of optimal level of emission need not be static but may change or be adjusted over time and it assists to overcome this constraint.

iii) Government sets the target at ‘a’ in Figure 10b but brick kiln say A’s emission level is at E_2. As $E_2 > E_1$, therefore, brick kiln ‘A’ pays taxes for $(E_2 – E_1)$ in a certain fashion.

Welfare Analysis of Taxation Policy-Option

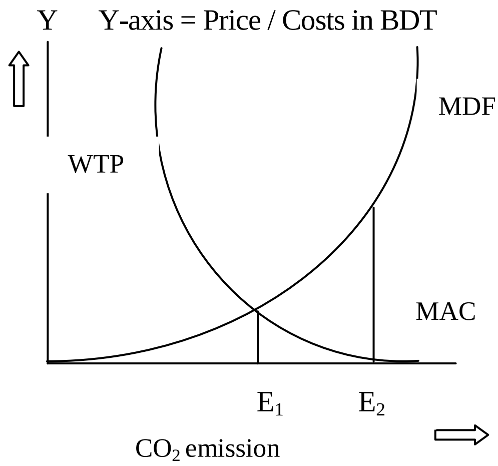
This policy maneuver reduces producer (kiln A’s) surplus by (A+B+C+D) in Figure 10c. Variable inputs in this illustration move into other competitive technology or inputs to improve plant's performance and energy efficiency to minimize the losses of producer surplus. Now the question is: how does PS loss spread throughout economy of Bangladesh. The value (A + B) becomes an increase in CS which can be interpreted as the improvement of environment comparing other environment where “command and control” is not in practice. The value D picked up as tax revenue to the government collected on the volume of $(E_2 – E_1)$. This leaves the triangles C and E to be accounted for. Here C represents loses to the society and it will be equal to zero by adjusting the target level over time. Area E is deadweight loss that can’t be picked up by any economic entity.

Figure 10a. *CO_2 Emissions after Regulations*



MAC= Marginal abatement cost
MDF= Marginal damage function
E_1= Optimal level of emission, which is consistent with protection of health
WTP= Willingness to pay

Figure 10b. *CO_2 Emission under Command & Control*



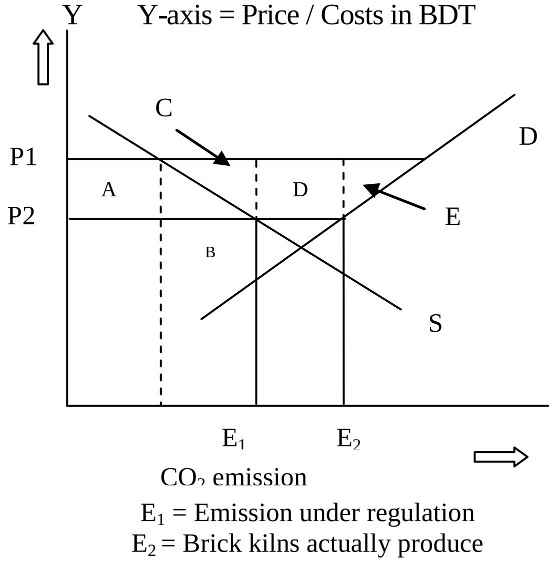
E_1 = Emission under regulation
E2 = Brick kilns actually produce

Usages of CO_2 Emission Control Technology

The Clean Air and Sustainable Environment (CASE) project supports a whole range of activities including introduction of energy-efficient brick making technologies and also is demonstrating the viability of alternative building materials.

Such technologies as Improved Fixed Chimney Kiln (IFCK), Improved Zigzag Kiln (IZigzag), the Vertical Shaft Brick Kiln (VSBK), and Hybrid Hoffmann Kiln (HHK) are substantially cleaner, consume less energy and emit lower levels of pollutants (Sarraf and Croiltoru 2012). In most of the methods, other than HHK, coal is used as fuel to burn the bricks. The regulator also suggests that the production of hollow block bricks needs to be prescribed, even though it is costlier, as the method contributes nothing harmful to the environment. Bricks are made with silt, cement and stone crush, and later are dried in the sun. These bricks are sound proof and earthquake-friendly.

Figure 10c. *Welfare Analysis under Command and Control*



Fuel Switching and Reappearing Power Plants

Furthermore, CO_2 emissions may also be reduced by fuel switching brickfields (Hahn and Stavins 1991). But the question of cost effectiveness is a serious concern in this regard. It is very expensive to "scrub" carbon from combustion waste gases. It was determined, in one study that the collection and disposal of brickfields, the effluent gases emissions would at least double the cost of coal-fired brickfield (Biswas et al. 2009).

Clean Coal Technology

Clean coal technology refers to new and advanced coal utilization technologies, which are more efficient (in most cases), resulted lower cost and are more environmentalism sounds comparing traditional coal burning exposure. The use of quality raw materials may facilitate better kiln firing process in overall. The development of green belt around the brick kiln industries may be an effective mitigation mechanism. Furthermore, with clay, usages of sugarcane bagasse ash have been recommended as brick materials in literature (Tonnayopas 2013). It can be an instrumental curtailing the magnitudes of emission from brickfields in Bangladesh where government's inspirational efforts are important.

Monitoring Number of Brick Kilns and Conducts Mobile Court Drive

Bangladesh Government report entitled: National Strategy for Sustainable Brick Production in Bangladesh (DoE 2017), clearly shows that there are total 7,000 brick kilns in Bangladesh. However, report on total number of brick kilns in Bangladesh varies from government information to private information. Like many private entities, the Financial Express reported that there are more than

11,000 brick kilns that currently in operation in Bangladesh where a significant numbers are not registered with the government (The Financial Express 2019).

To overcome this dilemma along with immediate efforts for curtailing the magnitudes of CO_2 emission level from brickfield, government should play active roles conducting Mobile Court Derives. This policy and effective efforts will be a win-win for the society as a whole where it can ensure generating adequate revenues as well curtailing magnitudes of CO_2 emission, which can be appreciated by the relevant international organizations including UNO where it would not be hesitated granting monetary support underpinning Kyoto Protocol Agreement.

Future Research

If research grants are available, multi-faucets studies can be conducted examining the possibility of utilization of green tech in brick industry using opinion-survey of management & employees in brick kilns in Bangladesh. Factor Analysis and hypothesis development & testing can be carried out so that the expected findings can be educational enhancing the growth of utilizing green tech meeting the challenges. Welfare analysis can be carried out for clean bricks users, brick kilns and the society of Bangladesh. Lastly, cost effectiveness or efficiency cost analysis can be carried out in priority decision when it comes choosing policy option(s) from the recommended ones in this study.

Conclusion

Since the beginning of civilization, bricks have been playing important roles for construction of houses and other infrastructure, which are major catalysts for economic progress in Asian countries where Bangladesh is no exception. In recent years, rapid urbanization and then rural to urban migration in Bangladesh has created an increasing demand of usages bricks. However, brick-kilns largely use inefficient, dirty technology, informal seasonal employment methods and haphazard growth. Thus, it emits huge volume of CO_2 and other gases in environment, which depletes atmospheric O_2. For policy guidance, this study analyzes the basic issues of CO_2 from brickfields in terms of MD analysis and the neoclassical partial equilibrium demand & supply theory. It further analyzes the reasons of disparity between social and private cost by conventional marginal damage analysis. Findings show that because of CO_2 emission from brickfields, the marginal social costs are higher than marginal private (producer of bricks) costs. Brick kilns are benefiting itself with the expense of Bangladeshi society as a whole. Continuation of increasing number of brick production under traditional fuels (woods and coal) in Bangladesh, it results higher welfare loss incurred from higher social costs. Also, because of high rise demand of bricks due to continuation of rising per capita income, prices of bricks are becoming upward trends in Bangladesh, which have been dominating the increases of producer surplus. By using inefficient fuels in brick industry, producers continue generating higher revenues and consumers facing higher prices, which creates higher deadweight loss year after year.

Under national strategies and policy actions for cleaner and sustainable brick production in Bangladesh, few proposals are put forward. Reforestation efforts can be achieved in multi-faucets including brick-fields' charity, govt. policies on planting trees, govt.'s policies on motivational efforts inspiring citizens of this country. These efforts can be in multi-faucets: a) Inspiring celebration of individual's "Birthday, Having 1st Child in family and Event of a marriage" by planting trees b) Forcing to utilize green tech in brick kilns and c) Conducting research in both phases including govt. and academic arena where financial supports are in need.

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The Online Looking Glass: The Study of Self Esteem and Narcissism on Instagram within a Patriarchal and Collectivist Society

By Juliet Dinkha[*], Charles Mitchell[±], Bashar Zogheib[‡] & Aya Abdulhadi[+]

Online social networking sites have revealed an entirely new method of impression management and self-expression. These user-generated social tools present a new and evolving medium of investigation to study personality and identity. The current study examines how narcissism and self-esteem are demonstrated on the social networking application Instagram. To frame our research, we utilized the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which explains why audiences consume mediated messages and how and why authors create user-generated media (UGM). In this research our objective was to understand how and why users of Instagram in Kuwait were using the social media platform and how it related and impacted their self-esteem and how it revealed, if any, narcissistic personality traits. To do so, self-esteem and narcissistic personality self-reports were collected from 79 Instagram users in Kuwait and we also followed and analyzed their Instagram accounts. In our analysis, these participants' profiles were coded on self-promotional content features based on their Instagram photos and captions posted on their Instagram accounts. By probing the relationship between this new medium, we can begin to understand the relationship amongst technology, culture, and the self.

Keywords: *social media, Kuwait, Instagram, self-esteem, narcissism, social networking*

Introduction

The influence of mass media on its audience has been the subject of longstanding debate since the introduction of radio and TV as entertainment and information media in the early 20th century (Dominick 2009). Since this time, media scholars have been looking for ways to study media and to ascertain what detrimental effects they have on their audience including but not limited to the cultivation effect, introducing a young audience to sexual and violent images, presenting unrealistic body images, creating aggressive modelling behaviors and desensitization to violence that can come from mass media consumption of TV, film and even video games (Murray 2008, Perse and Lambert 2016, Dominick 2009). TV has been at the forefront of these studies as statistics indicate that children will spend more time in front of the TV than they will sleep by the time

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they are 18. Furthermore, by the time children are 18, they will have consumed more than 200,000 acts of television violence (Dominick 2009). Along this line, it is often the significance of the influence of mass media on youth that has been the most widely studied and debated. Moreover, early scholars often focused on TV's violent effects with often polarizing conclusions. Most notably, in 1961, Albert Bandura published his seminal work on children's modelling behaviors after they watched adults engaging in violent activities on a video monitor (Black and Newman 1995, Seawell 1998, Murray 2008, Dominick 2009, Fisher et al. 2009, Dinkha et al. 2014). The finding of this study indicated that people learn through imitation, modeling, and observing. Additionally, according to Bandura, people can learn through reward and punishment (Bandura et al. 1961).

Since the rise of the Internet age in early 1990s, scholars have been carrying out research on how the Internet influences its audience given the propensity for television to affect its viewers. During the last several decades, the studies into Internet consumption have centered on political participation, democratic mobilization and the most recently the concept of cyber bullying. For the fields of psychology and mass communications, there remains a gap in the research realm for the study of self-esteem, self-perception; and how these variables relate to the concept of narcissism within user-generated media, specifically social media. In our study, we decided to fill this need and investigate the relationships amongst narcissism, self-esteem and social media because, social media users have been increasingly engaging in excessive and sometimes addictive use of social networking platforms (O'Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson 2011). We opted to focus on the Middle East due to the limited research on this topic in the region and given that the cultural nuances could provide opportunities for additional inquires. Furthermore, we are researchers from Western and Eastern backgrounds who live in Kuwait. Another reason we decided on this topic is because Arabian Gulf countries have some of the highest concentrations of social media consumption in the world; and there remains a gap in the research on this region on the subject matter (Maarefi 2013). Furthermore, the Middle East is comprised of collectivist and patriarchal societies and would allow us the chance to discover if the authentic self is expressed in social networking given the need for individuals in the Arab world to often save face and uphold cultural mores and norms even during times of online engagement (Maarefi 2013). As a country with one of the largest penetrations of social media usage among youth and young adults in the Middle East and the world (Maarefi 2013), Kuwait provides the optimal platform for an interdisciplinary study encompassing mass communications and psychology on the relationships among social media, self-esteem and narcissism.

Moreover, Kuwait being a patriarchal society with different social mores for both men and women would provide additional research opportunities to ascertain if this variable has an affect on how males and females consume and utilize social media, including females being their authentic selves online versus adhering to gender roles proscribed by societal norms (Tétreault and Al-Mughni 1995, Tétreault 2001, Dinkha et al. 2008, Olimat, 2009).

Uses and Gratification Theory

The Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) is the principal paradigm exploited to frame our research. We decided up on this theory as it provides the most robust and relevant model to our key reasons for inquiry which are to understand how and why Instagram users in Kuwait are utilizing the platform and specifically what it says about their self-esteem and narcissism.

UGT was developed primarily for and is employed in the field of the mass communication theory and states audiences choose mediate messages to satisfy their needs. The theory serves scholars as a guide to assess and evaluate audience reasons for consuming and accessing media. Specifically, UGT provides us with the personal motivations as to why and how people use mass media (Rubin 2002, Stafford et al. 2004, Shao 2009, Urista et al. 2009).

Traditionally, UGT has been exploited to study audience behaviors with respect to consumption of radio, television and cable TV. In the digital age, however it has already been exploited as model to gauge audience usage of news media channels because it concedes, acceptance, uses, and creation of recent technologies and messages. In the era of new media, UGT has been purposeful for inquiry into understanding audiences and users' satisfaction with Internet based platforms: those noted for being highly interactive, flexible and constantly evolving. It further helps to understand and study motivations of (User Generated Media) UGM that is endemic in social media platforms (Stafford et al. 2004, Shao 2009).

McQuail (1983) identified four categories for why people select media: information, personal identity, integration and social interaction and lastly, entertainment. Recently however, media scholars have placed UGT into two principal categories that exemplify why audiences typically use the Internet: information and entertainment. Entertainment tells us that people seek messages on the Internet as they do with other forms of media such as movies and TV, often seeking out messages that will lift their mood, scare them or provide sexual arousal. Despite the tremendous benefits of entertainment seeking, information too is vital and is linked to the idea that an individual wants to exploit media to create awareness of themselves, others or the world. More typically and more simply put, UGT suggests that the utilization of media offers some form of gratification and helps us to decipher motivations behind consumption and creation of media, including related outcomes such as consequences or benefits (Shao 2009, Sheldon and Bryant 2016). Matsuba (2006) tell us there is a third category, interpersonal communication, which emphasizes the desires for individuals to utilize the Internet to fulfill relational needs.

Since the purpose of our research is understand what the UGM-framed social media platform Instagram tells us about self-esteem and narcissism, then UGT serves as the most applicable model to guide our research. For example, users routinely monitor their own followers' comments, likes and feedback as an indication of how well they are doing for the goal of receiving positive reinforcement (Gentile et al. 2012, Sheldon and Bryant 2016).

Additionally, research has indicated that a correlation also exists between narcissism and the amount of time spent editing selfies before posting on social media, which confirms desire to be perceived positively by followers. This illustrates that users are seeking out online engagement as a compensatory need to be recognized and to satisfy the need for interpersonal communication (Dominick 1999, Matsuba 2006, Urista et al. 2009, Sheldon and Bryant 2016). Before we progressed with our study; however, it was important for us to explore and to understand the two psychological terms and conditions which we are studying on Instagram: narcissism and self-esteem.

Narcissism

Psychologists describe narcissism as the egotistical preoccupation with the self, personal preferences, aspirations, needs, success, and how one is perceived by others (Lopez De Victoria 2008). Austrian psychoanalyst Otto Rank linked narcissism it to self-admiration and vanity. Psychoanalyst, Heinz Kohut (1968), originated the term narcissistic personality disorder. He suggested that narcissism allows people to suppress feelings of low self-esteem and develop their sense of self. In 1980, narcissistic personality disorder was recognized by the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) third edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III) (Burgemeester 2013).

There is now a comprehensive body of scientific research that focuses on narcissism and it has become a more widely understand phenomenon. According to (Mayo Clinic 2017) narcissistic personality disorder is characterized by dramatic and emotional behavior and a polarizing range of symptoms: The disorder's symptoms may include believing that you are better than others and that you are special, being easily hurt and rejected, seeking constant praise and admiration, and having a fragile self-esteem. A narcissist has trouble handling criticism, and to make themselves feel better, they react with rage and will do their best to belittle others so they would appear to be in the right.

The behavior characterized as narcissistic injury posits that a narcissist is sensitive to criticism and perceives those who disagree with their point of view as a threat and may take criticism itself as some type of form of rejection. They also tend to detach emotionally in fear of another narcissistic injury, and they devalue the person from whom they received the negative critique (Deconstructingjezebel n.d.)

It is argued that narcissistic individuals use social media because they offer a highly controllable environment where users can exhibit complete control over the way they present themselves. Another reason narcissist is attracted to social media sites is due to the capacity to maintain shallow relationships as they would ordinarily prefer over deeper interpersonal ones (Sheldon and Bryant 2016). In contrast to all other social media platforms, the nature of Instagram shifts the focus of individuals toward the self, thus, self-promotion and an identity focus are prioritized over actual face-to-face relationships. On Instagram, posting selfies is commonplace and is an expression of individuality. In comparison to other social media sites, Instagram is relatively more intimate, in which people share personal images such as pictures taken in their homes; whereas with Twitter for example, the user is constrained by a Tweet with limited characters and pictures are not necessary (Bradford 2018).

Self-Esteem

As mentioned previously, the UGT would surmise that some of the reasons why individuals consume mediated messages such as social media because it reinforces behaviors and responses that can build positive self-esteem, including bolstering personal value and self-understanding (Gentile et al. 2012, Sheldon and Bryant 2016). Historically, self-esteem refers to a person's positive or negative evaluation of the self; that is, the extent to which an individual views the self as worthwhile and competent (Coopersmith 1967). According to one definition by Braden in 1969, there are three key components of self-esteem: Firstly, self-esteem is an essential human need that is vital for survival and normal healthy development. Secondly, self-esteem arises automatically from within, based upon a person's principles and consciousness. Thirdly, self-esteem occurs in conjunction with a person's thoughts, behaviors, feelings, and actions. Self-esteem is expressed differently from one person to another, since it is developed through subjective experiences and interpersonal relationships. For instance, failing to meet parental standards during childhood can contribute to lowering the person's self-esteem in the future (Coopersmith 1967).

Those who display low self-esteem view themselves pessimistically. If they experience failure of some sort for instance, in the form of romantic rejections, unsuccessful job experiences, or any form of criticism, they take it personally and feel as if the unfortunate string of events is confirming their opinion of their worth. Experts call this occurrence negative validation. A 2014 study published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* by researchers from the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University, found people with low self-esteem generally do not prefer optimism and would rather believe the negative comments they think about themselves are true (Olson 2014).

Martha Beck is an American sociologist, life coach, best-selling author, and speaker who specializes in helping individuals and groups achieve personal and professional goals. In 2014, she published an article titled *How to Handle the Narcissists in Your Life* for O magazine. Under the section 'How to Tell Healthy Self-Esteem from Narcissism' the author explains that people with a healthy self-esteem seek ways to improve themselves and would invent a long list of attributes they want to improve if confronted with the question: In what ways do you think you need to grow or change? On the other hand, narcissists will claim that they have nothing to change because admitting that they are imperfect is a difficult idea for them to process or express (Beck 2003).

Virtual Communities & Social Networking Sites

Virtual communities such as social networking sites like YouTube, LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram are used as social platforms to establish and sustain friendships, and communicate with friends, colleagues and relatives at long or short distances, which provide users a way to feel connected to other people and as valuable means of self-expression. It has been theorized that people use virtual communities or social networking sites (SNS) because they desire to experience an instant and personal connection to others and as means of seeking approval and support (Urista et al. 2009).

For instance, the popularity of social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube can be correlated to the social interaction and self-gratification these virtual communities provide to the users as public conversations online can deliver a sense of intimacy and often build and sustain and personal relationships. The advantages of these online communities are that they allow like-minded people to find each other and to form ties based on similarities and common interests (Shao 2009, Urista et al. 2009). Likewise, it has been observed that people often engage in virtual communities because it provides them with a sense of fitting in and belonging (Shao 2009). Along this line, a new generation of social media savvy Internet denizens have emerged whose identities are based on content generation and their social media friends, connections and followers (Urista et al. 2009).

Davenport et al. (2014) assert that two types of social networking expressions exist: active usage and passive usage. Active usage is displayed through engaging and creation of content on social media sites or website such as blogs, while passive usage is displayed through browsing and listening to content created by other users. On social media these two dynamics are typically on display where authors (active and frequent users) often create and share content with other followers (passive users) by posting likes, adding comments, saving favorites or sharing on their own accounts (Chan 2006). However, researchers observe that often causal browsers themselves became more active as they move from mere observer to participant by engaging in posting, sharing and liking, which are behaviors typical of active users (Shao 2009).

Given the flexible and customizable nature of social media Shao (2009) identifies UGM as being instrumental to these virtual communities because it enables users an important mode of self-expression. Self-expression on social media communities is offered in the form of videos, blogging, photos and other posts. The UGM allow authors to express and present their authentic selves or to share a side of themselves they see inside. These communities and platforms help the individual to project and craft an image of themselves to a larger audience than those in their immediate physical world (Dominick 1999, Smith 1999, Trammell and Keshelashvili 2005, Shao 2009).

Kuwait, the Internet and Social Media

Kuwait is an Arab Muslim state situated in the Arabian Gulf with a population of around 3.9 million people, with 70% of the populous encompassing expatriate workers. Although Arabic is the national language, English is widely spoken. The urban population of Kuwait is 98% of the total inhabitants (CIA 2021).

Unlike most developing countries, Kuwait has a modern telecommunications infrastructure that is more in line with the standard found in a western European country than what is typically observed in most emerging economies. Kuwait was able to build upon this network because of its immense oil wealth and the need for increased communications following the Gulf War. Through a government commitment to building a modernized electronic communications network, mass communications has proliferated since the early 1990s, leading to a boom in media technologies and media consumption amongst the population (Wheeler 2000, Mitchell et al. 2014). This communications network has had an enormous impact on how the country assimilates and consumes mass communications. The State of Kuwait has encouraged the increase of media technologies in order "to provide for the Kuwaiti people's needs and to encourage their ambitions and aspirations and to develop, renew and exploit all available facilities to promote the well-being of the people" (Wheeler 2000, p. 433). Recognizing the power of mass communications, the state has further mandated the mass communications is necessary for the vitality of society and to promote Islam and Arabic culture to a global audience. Kuwaiti identity is shaped partly from technology and shared with the world through this technology (Wheeler 2000, Mitchell et al. 2014).

Kuwaitis, and especially Kuwaiti youth, were able to capitalize on Internet technology to expose themselves to foreign ideas due to the lack of censorship and the ability to circumvent controls with proxy servers (Wheeler 2003, Kaposi 2014). As Kaposi (2014) notes, the Internet is an important agent of socialization for young people and also provides them with a "sense of empowerment".

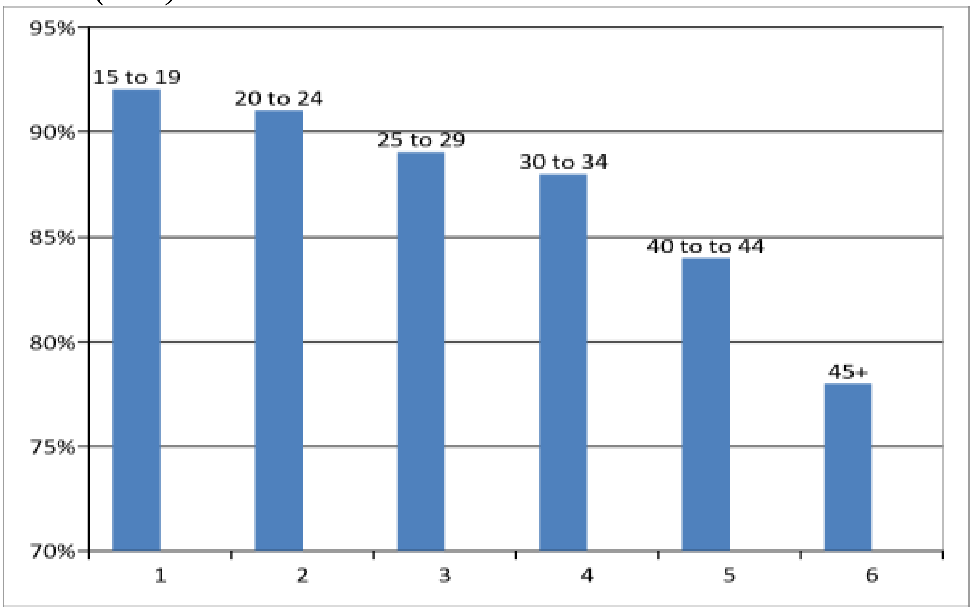
The contribution of the Internet in Kuwait has been revolutionary in that it has been proven to be an essential platform for liberation, personal sovereignty, the ideas of democracy and democratic reforms (Kaposi 2014). The Internet as a tool of social exchange has led to an explosion in blogging activity and as one respondent in Wheeler (2003) surmised at the time, it might have helped women to secure the right to vote.

Today, the Internet, and especially social media, has become the most important media vehicle for socializing with friends and family, keeping up with celebrity fandom, trend watching, gossiping, and exchanging modes of thought (Kaposi 2014, Wheeler 2003). Both Wheeler and Kaposi observed that the Internet is used by the youth to bypass traditional societal norms of dating and gender segregation as the youth readily use the Internet and social media to attract and to socialize with the potential dating partners. Furthermore, when surveyed many youths in Kuwait seemed to signify that Internet exchanges and posts allowed them to 'escape' and to be their authentic selves and they expressed a sense of self-liberation, which may be contrary to the roles they have to play in their everyday lives due to cultural mores (Kaposi 2014, Wheeler 2000, Wheeler 2003). "The more taboo a topic, the more likely it is to show up in chat rooms. The more Kuwaiti society tries to separate the genders, the more likely the Internet will be used to transgress such boundaries" (Wheeler 2003, p. 14).

In Kuwait, the success of social media amongst the youth can be further attributed not only to the personal freedoms it provides but because it is perceived as hip and as an outlet to be fashionable and up-to-date on the newest fads (Kaposi 2014).

In consequence, the virtual social world has led Kuwait to exceptional high rates of usage of social platforms, such as Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram. According to Maarefi (2013) Kuwait is the Arabian Gulf country with the highest social media use per capita. Although no clear data exists about the number of Instagram users from Kuwait, simply searching for pictures hash tagged with Kuwait would present you with 19.1 million pictures. Markedly, that is approximately 1 million less than pictures tagged with USA, a country with ten-fold Kuwait's population, on a search conducted on October 2014. Figure 1 illustrates the penetration of popular social media usage in Kuwait by age group.

Figure 1. *Social Media Penetration in Kuwait by Age Group according to Ipsos MENA (2014)*



In Kuwait, with the popularity of Instagram came a new phenomenon of Instagram celebrities. An example of this is @Ascia. Ascia is popular Kuwaiti-based fashion blogger. With the explosion of Instagram in the country she now has 2.2 million followers when perused on July 2017, and charges upwards of 850 KD (2,550$) for one Instagram post Ascia's following is indicative of the high Instagram penetration in Kuwait when factoring in the country has a population of 3.9 million people (CIA 2021), and even when considering that many of her followers may well reside outside of the country.

Kuwait, Arab Culture, Gender and Social Media

A Saudi study by Stanger et al. (2017) provided invaluable insight into social media habits of an Arabian Gulf country with a comparative cultural landscape to Kuwait. Kuwait is collectivist and patriarchal where family is regarded as a priority, and people define themselves in terms of the context in which they belong, such as by tribes, families from patriarchal lineage, and the country they belong to. Kuwaitis value modesty and honor greatly. Thus, the sharing of information on social media is linked to one's reputation within society. (Dinkha et al. 2008, Al-Jassar 2009, Dakhli et al. 2013, EEAS 2016, Stanger et al. 2017).

Women especially have greater limitations within Kuwait. Although the constitution guarantees equal protection for both men and women, a system of inequality remained intact for women within the society, women didn't receive full political and voting rights until 2005 (Olimat 2009, Donn and Al Manthri 2013). The prevalence of patriarchy is not only evident within the family unit but also extends to the patriarchal form of government. Kuwait has a long history of social controls placed on women, enacted based primarily on tradition and stringent interpretations of religious doctrine. As a result, men are the chief beneficiaries of state benefits that can include greater support and for parliamentary elections and cabinet posts, public sector employment, promotions and housing. Further restrictions on women can include limitations on choice of romantic partnerships and marriage. Additionally, both male and females grow up where education operates within a system of gender segregation, creating different socialization patterns for men and women (Tétreault and Al-Mughni 1995, Tétreault 2001, Dinkha et al. 2008, Olimat 2009).

In her 2006, dissertation that studied gender in Kuwait, Zaha Alsuwailan, noted that historically women in Kuwait were assigned specific gender roles, which meant they were relegated to second class status within society. In these traditional Arab homes, the father rules over the family and can make decisions on whether his daughter or his wife work and the types of education his daughters would receive (Alsuwailan 2006). In contemporary times, Kuwaiti women still face societal and legal obstacles because of gender such as marrying outside of their nationality, because these unions illustrate clear violations of cultural norms in a society where citizens have high social and political currency and children of Kuwaiti women and foreign men would inherent a foreign name and nationality.

In Kuwait, the family wealth, property, and decisions are passed on to the eldest male son. Women are still expected to adhere to social norms and to be deferential to men who are in positions of authority and to help with duties considered feminine such as household matters (Tétreault and Al-Mughni 1995, Tétreault 2001, Alsuwailan 2006).

In a Saudi Arabian study, participants indicated that they try to behave on social media in accordance with what is deemed acceptable by other group members and followers and adhere to social expectations. Moreover, most participants showed no interest in recognition and were uncomfortable revealing confidential information publicly. Participants preferred to keep a vague or secret identity on social media and avoided posting too much revealing information. The concern over maintaining privacy and pleasing other group members can result in the adoption of fake personalities on social media. The fake identity acts as a means for freedom of expression and communication with strangers in a society where mass communications are heavily controlled by the state. It was noted that women prefer fake accounts in order to protect their privacy online (Stanger et al. 2017).

With government restrictions controlling aspects of public media in Kuwait, this has propelled social media into the mainstream (Wheeler 2003). Our research delves into the dynamics of the incorporation of Instagram on a traditional and patriarchal society, namely Kuwait, and aims to investigate social media's influence on the individual's self-expression within this cultural setting. In our research, we explore social media as on online looking glass for self-esteem and narcissistic expression.

Hypotheses

1. The need to fulfill their relational and social needs in a collective society of Kuwait will lead to majority of our sample to qualify as frequent users of Instagram.
2. The activity level of users of Instagram in Kuwait will report narcissistic personality traits and high self-esteem.
3. Due to the patriarchal nature of Kuwait, male narcissistic respondents will outnumber female narcissistic respondents.
4. Narcissistic respondents are expected to self-promote and reinforce positive qualities about themselves through captions, pictures such as selfies, and photos of possessions than those of non-narcissistic respondents.

Research Methods

We utilized a convenient sample of 79 Instagram account owners within Kuwait out of a sample of 100 accounts, who were randomly recruited from Kuwait. The sample included both Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaitis. Their educational level ranged from high school to postgraduate levels. Their ages ranged from 18-25 years. Please see *Criteria* for further explanation.

Procedure

Instagram users in Kuwait were identified and then approached through two different methods: (1) Some participants were identified and contacted through Instagram direct messaging and asked to participate in a study exploring their use of Instagram (2) Student researchers also approached students on campus of a private university in Kuwait and recruited students who had Instagram accounts and who expressed an interest in participating.

The research team created an account on Instagram to gain and gauge participants for the study. We posted four posts including information about the study and who could participate. The selection process was restricted to participants who are in the age group of 18-25, residing in Kuwait, and completed the online survey sent via e-mail. The first post was about the research project with a brief description that we were studying usage of Instagram in Kuwait and encouraged people who were interested in the study to contact us via e-mail if they had questions. The second and third posts were to inform participants to accept our 'follow' requests on Instagram after completing the survey. The fourth post was about what participants need to do to participate in the research. Lastly, some of our research team members used their personal Instagram accounts to inform people about the study.

Criteria

All of those who were interested in participating were identified and selected based on whether they had an active Instagram account. Active users were placed into three categories: 1. High rate of postings (e.g., more than 3 a day, daily) 2. Moderate rate of postings, (e.g., every other day, weekly) 3. Low rate of postings (e.g., biweekly, monthly). We found that the rate of postings did not correlate to self-esteem or narcissism, so all categories were combined in our statistics.

Upon agreeing to participate in this research study, participants were presented with a waiver form to sign if they consented to being followed on Instagram to have their page rated. Participants were also assured that all identifying information would be kept anonymous. Following their consent, participants were administered a four-part questionnaire. Upon completion, participants were immediately followed on Instagram and the process of rating and coding their pages began. The participants were aged between 18 and 25 years; they resided in Kuwait and had agreed and signed the consent form. The participants also completed the online survey sent to them via e-mail. Please see Tables 1, 2 and 3.

For the purpose of reliability and validity six raters (3 males and 3 females) who were in the same age category as our sample were used to evaluate five self-promoting features of participants' Instagram: (a) The biography section, (b) The profile picture (c) The content of the first 15 pictures, (d) The frequency of uploading pictures, (e) Captions under photos.

For the purpose of this study, self-promotion was distinguished as any descriptive or visual information that appeared to attempt to persuade others about one's own positive qualities. For example, facial expression (e.g., striking a pose or making a face) and picture enhancement (e.g., using photo editing software) were coded in the profile picture and uploaded pictures. The use of positive adjectives (e.g., nice, sexy, funny), self-promoting mottos (e.g., 'I'm so glamorous I bleed glitter'), and/or positively descriptive hashtags were also noted.

Users whose native content was edited and enhanced prior to being posted, and frequently post on their native page with carefully chosen captions and elevated tone of voice are more likely to possess the characteristics of narcissism and high self-esteem compared to users who do not spend time to edit their content or self-promote in any measure.

Questionnaire Construction

After agreeing to participate in this research study, Instagram owners were administered a brief four-part questionnaire. The first section required demographic information, including the participant's age and gender. The second section addressed their Instagram activity; it required respondents to indicate the number of times they checked their Instagram page per day and the time spent on Instagram per session. The remaining sections assessed two psychological constructs: self-esteem and narcissism. Prior to administering it to the participants, this questionnaire was distributed to 40 people for trial and feedback purposes.

Table 1. *Categories Formulated to Rate Photos on Participants' Social Media Account, Instagram*

Measure	**Variables**
Biography	-Formal (Similar to CV) -Informal -No bio
Links to other social media sites	-Yes -No
Captions	-Self promoting text -Informal text -No captions
Profile Picture	-Real photo of the user -Picture of other (celebrity etc.) -No photo
Post rates	-Frequent posts (Daily) -Moderate (Weekly) -Infrequently (monthly or more)
Face visibility	-Completely -Partly -Not visible
Type of posts	-Selfies -Portraits -Possessions -Text -Interests -Landscapes -Family, friends and pets
Facial expression/pose	-Model style pose -Picture taken while doing an action (For example playing a sport) -Serious (CV style photo)
Photo edits	-Edited -No Edits
Location	-Yes -No

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was used to measure the participants' self-esteem. The original reliability of this scale is 0.72. This measure has gained acceptable internal consistency and test-retest reliability, as well as convergent and discriminant validity. The Narcissism Personality Inventory (NPI-16) was also used. It is a short, efficient, and a valid mean to measure narcissism. It is composed of 16 questions.

In order to develop our rating criteria, we utilized categories from *The Impression Management 2.0 The Relationship of Self-Esteem, Extraversion, Self-Efficacy,* and *Self-Presentation Within Social Networking Sites* by Nicole C. Krämer and Stephan Winter (2008). The rating of the images was based on the following categories as illustrated below (Table 1). Additionally, a training session was conducted to train the coders for this project on how to apply the rating criteria and examine the profiles for the purpose of the study.

The difference is in our research versus Krämer and Winter (2008) is that we included *Types of posts* which include Selfies, portraits, possessions, text, interests, landscapes, family, friends and pets. These criteria were included due to the diverse types of photos Instagram users post on their accounts. In our research, we also included the post rate which is a measure of the frequency of posts. Captions under photos were also considered. For example, self-advocating hashtags, or self-promoting photo descriptions. In the biography section the raters also looked at whether the users included links to other social media accounts. The similarity between the two scales is that they both examined the criteria for photo edits, location, face visibility, style of profile text, and facial expression pose.

Results

This study was administrated online where 79 participants from Kuwait were involved. Table 2 shows the number of female and male participants were almost identical. The p value of 0.03 of the Chi-Square test (Table 4) showed that males are more narcissistic than females. The analysis found that no difference between genders in the number of bios they post. It was also found in our sample that no difference between people activities on Instagram and whether they are considered narcissistic or have low self-esteem.

Table 2. *Gender Analysis of Participants*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	39	49.4	49.4	49.4
Male	40	50.6	50.6	100.0
Total	79	100.0	100.0	

Table 3. *Educational Level was not Related to Self-Esteem nor Narcissism*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Kuwait	76	96.2	96.2	96.2
	Other	2	2.5	2.5	98.7
	3.00	1	1.3	1.3	100.0
Valid	less than highschool	1	1.3	1.3	1.3
	some highschool	1	1.3	1.3	2.5
	Highschool	26	32.9	32.9	35.4
	some college	40	50.6	50.6	86.1
	College	9	11.4	11.4	97.5
	postgraduate	2	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	100.0	

Table 4. *Chi-Square Tests*

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.255[a]	1	0.039		
Continuity Correction[b]	3.153	1	0.076		
Likelihood Ratio	4.387	1	0.036		
Fisher's Exact Test				0.048	0.037
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.201	1	0.040		
N of Valid Cases	79				

It was found from Table 5 that the number of female participants who scored below 15 was 37 and that of male participants was 33, while those who scored more than 15 were 7 male and 2 female participants. Those 9 participants are considered as displaying high self-esteem.

Table 5. *Analysis of Self-Esteem*

		Self-Esteem		Total
		Below 15	15 or more	
Gender	Female	37	2	39
	Male	33	7	40
Total		70	9	79

Table 6 shows that the number of female participants who scored 7 or above on the narcissistic scale was 8, which indicated narcissism. As for the male participants, those who score 9 or above are considered to have narcissistic tendencies. 12 male participants scored 9 or above.

Table 6. *Analysis of Narcissism*

Narcissism				Total
Gender	Female	Below 7	7 or more	
		31	8	39
	Male	Below 9	9 or more	
		28	12	40

Conclusion

This research looked at the relationship between narcissism indicated in the Rosenberg self-esteem criteria (see Appendix) and the Narcissism Personality Inventory (NPI-16) (see Appendix) and narcissism expressed in the use of the social media web and application platform Instagram. Our results proposed no direct relationship between narcissism and self-esteem with gender on Instagram. However, the results show that respondents may score highly on the narcissism scale in the survey and low narcissism expression on Instagram or low on the narcissism scale in the survey and high on narcissism expression on Instagram. Additionally, results are consistent with the literature on gender differences with men scoring higher on the narcissism scale than woman (see Table 5).

The results of our research may seem on the surface to indicate that there are no correlations between narcissism, self-esteem, and Instagram. However, there could be myriad reasons why our results proved that there was no correlation: for example, Kuwait is a collectivist society and thusly the sense of self is shaped through a socialization process that puts the emphasis not on the self but on the family unit (Kluckhohn and Strodbeck 1961, Gay 1978, Leighton 1982, Al-Jassar 2009, Hofstede 1991, Berns 2013). In a collectivist society like Kuwait, the individual is constantly evaluating themselves based on their relationship to the family unit and to the larger society's collective identity in an effort to conform to group norms and not to stand out as an individual (Phinney 1991, Bernal and Knight 1993, Berns 2013).

As a matter of consequence, there is a strong propensity to confirm to the social mores and not to violate any of these norms even if they are not a true reflection of the authentic self. In Kuwait society, high standards of living and boasting of material wealth is one way in which narcissistic behavior would be apparent. Boasting would be a symptom of narcissism and pictures of material possessions were readily posted on the Instagram accounts across our sample. Nevertheless, narcissism was not widely identified when our sample was surveyed. So, in doing so, our sample may display narcissistic behaviors on Instagram but when surveyed they may fill in the NPI questionnaire with responses that are more aligned to societal norms. On the surface these responses would seem to preclude narcissism and would place emphasis on being humble, altruistic and selfless even if these qualifiqations are not emblematic of our respondents' authentic selves. Our hypotheses proposed that narcissists were expected to post self-promoting photos and post quotes and texts that are self-promoting or indicate high self-esteem; the users in the sample that we examined posted photos of their possessions often which are a sign of narcissistic behavior where prestige is attached to luxury possessions, which was found in Charoensukmongkol's (2016) study on narcissism.

In addition, our hypotheses suggested that narcissist respondents were expected to post more selfies, post more portraits, than non-narcissist respondents. Due to cultural factors such as modesty and cultural shame, certain individuals make their Instagram accounts private and then capitalize on this privacy to express their true self expressions to their close circle of friends, and who may be less judgmental and even supportive of their actions, and which may seem to cultural traditionalists as violating social norms. Congruently, these variables may explain the oddities found in our results.

The Western-centric nature of the NPI test, is also likely a causal factor that negated us finding the results as posited in our hypotheses. The questions on the NPI were composed in a manner in which those who are deemed narcissistic from a Western standpoint would self-identify through their answers. However, the socialization of Kuwait would impel many, if not most, to negate their narcissistic authentic selves and fill in questions that are more aligned with societal norms. For example, question one asks (a) "I would really like to be the center of attention" or (b) "It makes me uncomfortable to be the center of attention." In an individualistic society the standard respondent displaying narcissistic behaviors would check 'a'; however, in Kuwait being the center of attention would be considered a deviation from cultural norms and so the respondent is more likely to check 'b' as their answer even if they are a narcissist. Question 2 asks (a) "I am no better or worse than most people "or (b) "I think I am a special person". Once again, according to the social norms of Kuwait even the most narcissistic person would likely check 'b' as their answer even if it is not reflective of the authentic self.

Accordingly, there is a propensity to abide by the norms, customs and traditions of the Kuwaiti society, even if these are not consistent with the inner authentic self (Dinkha et al. 2008). While our results for self-esteem reported were higher than narcissism, only nine participants scored more than 15, which is considered as displaying high self-esteem, and the rest were considered be within the range of low self-esteem.

We posit that the same phenomenon being that a Western-centric questionnaire encumbered participant from being honest about their true self-worth. For example, statement 1 reads, "On a whole I am satisfied with myself". Respondents may be more apt to choose to disagree or slightly disagree because it is more in line with cultural attitudes towards being humble. Correspondingly, statement 6 reads, "I do not have much to be proud of". Again, the socialization in society towards modesty may impel those to report 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' even if those answers are not consistent with the inner self.

Several informal studies in blogs such as Psychology Today in the west presume that a high rate of selfies and photo editing are associated with an inflated self-esteem. While it may be true in the west, our study proves otherwise in Kuwait (Myers 2013). As we have postulated, our results could be correlated to the nature of the society itself.

Representations of self-esteem and narcissisim on social media could take different forms and shapes, and can evolve in new and emerging digital spaces, enabiling the users to generate different forms of expression. Content examined as part of this study is a reflection of how the users wanted to portray themselves on social media, which may not describe their true self. Therefore, our results did not support our hypotheses, that there would be a correlation between high self-esteem and narcissisitic traits.

Limitations

The Number of Participants

In the preliminary stage of this research paper, over a hundred surveys were disseminated. However, during the survey coding and Instagram rating processes, many of the participants were deemed invalid, due to not accurately completing the survey, or not accepting our 'follow request' during the process of Instagram accounts rating. There was also a challenge in dissemination of the survey because of Instagram doesn't allow links to be sent to other users with the questionnaires linking to a third-party site such as Survey Monkey or Google Docs.

Kuwait has very stringent defamation laws which cover online conversation and spreading of rumors. With recent bombing incident in the region, the government has toughened these measures and has warned both citizens and expatriates of the consequences of spreading rumors online (Duffy n.d., Toumi 2015). This climate leads to increased paranoia among social media users about what information they are sharing and with whom.

Many things might explain why the participants completed the survey but did not grant us access to their Instagram accounts. It could be that their accounts were inactive by the time we were ready to rate, or it could also be due to cultural reasons such as people not feeling comfortable with the idea of anonymous people perusing their personal pictures and posts. Regardless of the reasons, a viable way to counter this limitation in the future is to follow the participant's account concurrently with survey administering. This would be more efficient and would ensure access to the participants' Instagram accounts.

Incorporating a Different Population

When this research was at its infancy, it was attempted to also incorporate Saudi Arabia. However, since the researchers of this study are based in Kuwait, attempting to reach a large number of participants virtually was deemed to be a difficult task. Most of the successful surveys were administered in hard copies in a private university in Kuwait. Additionally, Saudi Arabia's population is even more conservative than Kuwait's, making it even harder to collect data when not residing directly in that country. In the future, when seeking to administer a survey in another country, utilizing a research partner who resides in that country would be a wise strategy.

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Appendix

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

The scale is a ten-item Likert scale with items answered on a four-point scale - from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The original sample for which the scale was developed consisted of 5,024 High School Juniors and Seniors from 10 randomly selected schools in New York State.

Instructions: Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. If you strongly agree, circle SA. If you agree with the statement, circle A. If you disagree, circle D. If you strongly disagree, circle SD.

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	SA	A	D	SD
2. At times, I think I am no good at all.	SA	A	D	SD
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	SA	A	D	SD
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	SA	A	D	SD
5. *I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	SA	A	D	SD
6. *I certainly feel useless at times.	SA	A	D	SD
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	SA	A	D	SD
8. *I wish I could have more respect for myself.	SA	A	D	SD
9.*All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	SA	A	D	SD
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	SA	A	D	SD

Scoring: SA=3, A=2, D=1, SD=0. Items with an asterisk are reverse scored, that is, SA=0, A=1, D=2, SD=3. Sum the scores for the 10 items. The higher the score, the higher the self-esteem.
The scale may be used without explicit permission. The author's family, however, would like to be kept informed of its use:
The Morris Rosenberg Foundation c/o Department of Sociology University of Maryland 2112 Art/Soc Building
College Park, MD 20742-1315 References
References with further characteristics of the scale:

Crandal R (1973) The measurement of self-esteem and related constructs. In JP Robinson, PR Shaver PR (eds.), *Measures of Social Psychological Attitudes,* 80–82. Revised Edition. Ann Arbor: ISR.
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NPI-16

Read each pair of statements below and place an "X" by the one that comes closest to describing your feelings and beliefs about yourself. You may feel that neither statement describes you well but pick the one that comes closest. **Please complete all pairs**.

1	__	I really like to be the center of attention
	__	It makes me uncomfortable to be the center of attention
2	__	I am no better or no worse than most people
	__	I think I am a special person
3	__	Everybody likes to hear my stories
	__	Sometimes I tell good stories
4	__	I usually get the respect that I deserve
	__	I insist upon getting the respect that is due me
5	__	I don't mind following orders
	__	I like having authority over people
6	__	I am going to be a great person
	__	I hope I am going to be successful
7	__	People sometimes believe what I tell them
	__	I can make anybody believe anything I want them to
8	__	I expect a great deal from other people
	__	I like to do things for other people
9	__	I like to be the center of attention
	__	I prefer to blend in with the crowd
10	__	I am much like everybody else
	__	I am an extraordinary person
11	__	I always know what I am doing
	__	Sometimes I am not sure of what I am doing
12	__	I don't like it when I find myself manipulating people
	__	I find it easy to manipulate people
13	__	Being an authority doesn’t mean that much to me
	__	People always seem to recognize my authority
14	__	I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so
	__	When people compliment me, I sometimes get embarrassed
15	__	I try not to be a showoff
	__	I am apt to show off if I get the chance
16	__	I am more capable than other people
	__	There is a lot that I can learn from other people

NPI-16 Key: Responses consistent with narcissism are shown in bold.

1 __ **I really like to be the center of attention**
__ It makes me uncomfortable to be the center of attention

2 __ I am no better or nor worse than most people
__ **I think I am a special person**

3 __ **Everybody likes to hear my stories**
__ Sometimes I tell good stories

4 __ I usually get the respect that I deserve
__ **I insist upon getting the respect that is due me**

5 __ I don't mind following orders
__ **I like having authority over people**

6 __ **I am going to be a great person**
__ I hope I am going to be successful

7 __ People sometimes believe what I tell them
__ **I can make anybody believe anything I want them to**

8 __ **I expect a great deal from other people**
__ I like to do things for other people

9 __ **I like to be the center of attention**
__ I prefer to blend in with the crowd

10 __ I am much like everybody else
__ **I am an extraordinary person**

11 __ **I always know what I am doing**
__ Sometimes I am not sure of what I am doing

12 __ I don’t like it when I find myself manipulating people
__ **I find it easy to manipulate people**

13 __ Being an authority doesn’t mean that much to me
__ **People always seem to recognize my authority**

14 __ **I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so**
__ When people compliment me, I sometimes get embarrassed

15 __ I try not to be a showoff
__ **I am apt to show off if I get the chance**

16 __ **I am more capable than other people**
__ There is a lot that I can learn from other people

Scoring: compute proportion of responses consistent with narcissism.

Background: The NPI-16 items are drawn from across the dimensions of Raskin and Terry's (1988) 40-item measure. Relevant references are noted below:

Ames DR, Rose P, Anderson CP (2006) The NPI-16 as a short measure of narcissism. *Journal of Research in Personality* 40: 440–450.

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Athens Journal of Social Sciences - Volume 9, Issue 3, July 2022 – Pages 297-300

The Use of Primaries by Political Parties: The Case of PASOK - A Comment

By Domenico Fruncillo[*]

This paper comments on Professor Papanikos' recent publication in this journal entitled, "The Use of Primaries by Political Parties: The Case of PASOK". I make a number of observations regarding the argument of the author that primary elections are an application of democracy in the internal procedures of a political party. The question raised is whether primaries enhance democracy, or restrict it, by diminishing the role of party members only in selecting party representatives and have no role in the discussion of policies. Another important issue is the age structure of the participants in the primary elections. Did it matter? More analysis and evidence is needed on this issue to find out whether the relatively younger candidate mobilized more young members and friends to participate in the primary elections of PASOK.

Keywords: *primaries, elections, voting, political parties, PASOK, Greece*

In a special volume of the *Athens Journal of Social Sciences* (see Papanikos 2022a for an introduction to the volume), the issue of primary elections was examined by Papanikos (2022b). His paper is very interesting for its literature review, its theoretical framework and most importantly for the arguments raised.

The specific theme of his paper is the Panhellenic Socialist Party's (PASOK) primary elections since 1996 with an emphasis on the most recent ones of December 2021. This case study allows the author to cut across some extremely relevant general issues: (a) the evolution of the party form; (b) the role of ideology in political-electoral competition; and (c) the generational resource as a lever of political innovation.

To answer the general question regarding the weight of ideology in primary competition—and ultimately in party electoral performance--the author relates the different types of primaries, the role of primaries and the purpose for which they are set up, and the utilization of ideology as a distinguishing characteristic of the profile of different primary candidates. In this comment here, I shall try to make a few observations as far as the organic and coherent text is concerned.

According to the well-known proposal formulated by Kircheimer (1966) half a century ago, the catch-all party, compared to the previous models of the mass party (bureaucratic, integration), had a much less substantial ideological inclination. Progressively, the weight of ideology in the definition of the political-electoral proposal aimed at the formation of consensus among the general electorate has been further reduced for all parties. Even though this is true with reference to the exposure addressed to the electorate at large, the ideological dimension, nevertheless, remains relevant for the traditional parties or their heirs and descendants. PASOK could be counted as belonging to these political parties. In particular, the ideology still plays an important role with reference to the

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definition of the competitive space between the different elites. As Panebianco (2012) argues, it prevents the ruling groups from distancing themselves in a striking way from the cultural tradition of the old parties; it delimits the boundaries to the definition of the internal competitive field.

One of the "ideological" issues of the surviving traditional parties concerns the ideal of democracy, which is more demanding: democracy is not only defined as free competition between parties, but it exits as a competition within the party. In a way it is considered that democracy is better served if it is practiced inside the parties. This idea runs through the entire argument of Papanikos (2022b) paper and is explicitly stated in the conclusion. It deserves some reflection.

According to a rather recurrent and widespread approach, internal democracy in parties is achieved through the opening of procedures for the selection of candidates in general elections and for the identification of the central leadership (Hazan 2002, Katz 2001, Le Duc 2001). Recruitment of political personnel is one of the functions that still seems to be at the disposal of political parties; the possibility that this function be taken away from internal "oligarchies" and put into the hands of partisan party members and sympathizers certainly represents an advancement of democracy not only within parties, but in general. Not surprisingly, the self-referentiality of party elites has been considered a feature of post-democracy (Crouch 2003, 2020) and has been related to the retreat of citizens' ability to influence political choices through elections (Fruncillo 2020).

However, this dynamic political process could also trigger obstructive and unintended effects. Firstly, one of these is recalled in the essay and concerns the role of loyal members who could be disincentivized to militant commitment since it is essentially "equalized" to occasional outside sympathizers. Obviously, this risk is not there if the primaries are closed. However, it should not be underestimated in the case of open, or even blanket, primary elections. PASOK's primary elections were open to all members and friends, but not to other party members.

Secondly, direct election legitimizes the candidate as representing a much wider number of the electorate, which is much less than what the party itself represents. Consequently, once elected, the candidate may feel little responsibility towards loyal party members and more committed to responding to the demands of the general electorate. This is an outcome that some consider desirable, but which entails a further disincentive to political commitment in the parties, which risk becoming more and more only labels available to individuals who see politics as a career and not so much as a place where effective discussions about policies occur.

Finally, the candidate, legitimized by direct investiture, cultivates the relationship with his or her own selectors and feels free from committing to the necessary discussions within the party. In this way, democracy within the party is strengthened at the moment of candidate selection, but risks becoming impoverished and limited only to the selection of political representatives.

It would be useful if the essay, with respect to these possible scenarios, evolutions, and effects described what has happened to PASOK in this now long period of experimentation with primaries. Obviously, it is well understood to me that this is not the main topic of the paper, but some information on these aspects could offer elements that could illuminate the central question, and that concerns the appeal of ideology with reference to the different types of participants in the primaries.

In Italy, the enthusiasm for primaries is present in the experience of the democratic party well known to the author of the essay. The primaries have shown their capacity for party innovation, but they have also proven to be a constraint and a burden on its political and organizational development as I have argued in Fruncillo (2017) published in a special issue of this journal (Maddaloni 2017).

A few particular observations relate to the appropriateness of constructing a single paragraph on previous primaries. With regard to the analysis of the primaries of 2021, it would be useful to make some reference to the capacity of the primaries to allow for occasional or medium-term provisional organizational development and the capacity of the less ideologically connoted leadership as a lever of mobilization to vote in the primaries and as a resource to increase the consensus of the electorate more generally.

With regard to the first question, it would be useful to observe the number of party members even in the years in which the primaries were not held. It would be useful to have some indicator of the mobilization capacity of the candidates who are more ideologically connoted; at least as far as their position on the traditional right-left axis is concerned. In this regard, although very suggestive, the experiment developed with reference to the weak ability to mobilize potential supporters to vote as a reason for his defeat does not appear entirely convincing.

In reference to the second aspect, it could be interesting to expose the relationship between the participants in the primaries and the consensus obtained by PASOK. Obviously, for the 2021 primaries it is not yet possible to have this feedback. Some suggestion comes from the Italian case. In 2019, after the exhaustion of the Renzi experience, the primaries that led to the election of Nicola Zingaretti seemed more ideologically connoted if one considers the orientation of Zingaretti's selectors regarding the issue of migration (Fruncillo 2019).

A final consideration concerns the age aspect. My question is: could the success of the younger candidates be the result of the greater presence among the electorate of young people more inclined and interested in these forms of participation? This hypothesis obviously does not exclude, and does not conflict with, the interpretation offered by the author whereby the electoral shocks have convinced the PASOK base to entrust the objective of returning to power to a candidate who represents the younger generation of PASOK's members.

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Athens Journal of Social Sciences - Volume 9, Issue 3, July 2022 – Pages 301-304

The Use of Primaries by Political Parties: The Case of PASOK - A Rejoinder

By Gregory T. Papanikos[*]

This note is a rejoinder to a comment made by Professor Domenico Fruncillo on my paper published in the previous issue of this journal. My aim here is to respond to his valuable comments. I have selected what I consider as the most important ones, which include the role of primary elections in promoting democracy and a specific one referring to the age effect (young versus old) in determining the result. My point of view is that primary elections should be seen as the first necessary step towards improving the democratic process; the same method can be later used to decide on issues of ideology and policies. My response to the latter important issue is as follows. The real debate in PASOK's case was not between old and young, but between those who were involved in holding government positions in the past (one prime minister and three ministers were running for PASOK's presidency), and those who did not. Of course, this is strongly correlated with age.

Keywords: *primaries, elections, voting, political parties, PASOK, Greece*

Professor Fruncillo's (2022) comment on my paper published in a special issue of this journal (Papanikos 2022a, 2022b) is an important contribution to the debate currently taking place in many European countries and elsewhere in the world about democracy, both by its enemies and its friends. One of the arguments in this debate is the role of political parties in a system of representative democracy, which is a second-best in organizing a contemporary politeia. The first best is a direct democracy. On the other hand, Plato's ideal system lies, for the time being, in the stratosphere of utopianism. My arguments about democracy have been presented elsewhere in Papanikos (2022c, 2022d). I am not repeating them here.

Let me start my response with a question: What is the criticism raised against the system of representative democracy? The most important criticism is the alienation of the voters from the main political decision-making processes, which allegedly take place behind closed doors. Bureaucracy and centralization are two words, which usually characterizes this system. My theoretical argument, not made in the paper, but was underlying it, was something that Professor Fruncillo so astutely pointed out, that democracy is a political system which not only is desirable, but cannot be taken for granted. It needs continuing improvements. Of course, perfectionism is something which might lead, at the end of the day, to undermining democracy itself. I have in mind Plato's ideal politeia and what happened when he had the opportunity to implement it in Syracuse—not by people's demand, but taken the permission (dictation) from a benevolent tyrant. The moral of the story is that democracy cannot be implemented from the top, but

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it requires a bottom-up approach. This is my reading of Professor Fruncillo's comment on my paper.

I think Professor Fruncillo raises an important question: Do primary elections imply more or less democracy? My answer is an unequivocal "yes". Democracy is about choices. If I am faced with an option to select a leader of my party through a process of primary elections or through a party congress, I would prefer the former because I perceive it as enhancing democracy. In relative terms, party congresses restrict democracy. Thus, being an "improvenist" and not a perfectionist (which implies the perfect or nothing else), I consider primary elections as being better than the election of the leader by a party congress. PASOK's experiences with party congresses and primary elections do not reject my hypothesis, but this requires a brand new and long paper to analyze it. I leave it for a future study.

I totally agree with Professor Fruncillo's warnings that primary elections, especially the open system of organizing them, may lead to the alienation of party members and undermine the role of political parties—at least as these parties have been developed in the post-war period. I also agree that electing a leader through primary elections may stifle any discussion and decision on ideology and policy matters.

These are important issues and I want to deal with them here. Firstly, competition between candidates for a party leadership does not necessary exclude the competition on ideas (ideology) and policies. This was definitely the case in PASOK's primary elections of 2021 and it was explicitly mentioned in my paper. The extensive publicity of the primaries gave the opportunity to less-favored candidates to express their ideology and policies and to be heard by a very wide public, political audience, which included many voters of other parties as well. This would never have been possible without the primary elections.

Secondly, I see the primary elections for electing a leader as the first necessary step towards a process of direct democracy. The fear that primary elections may split and dichotomize a political party based strictly on personal characteristics and differences was not realized in PASOK's primary elections. The debate was a very civilized one. It was considered as one of the best in the Greek political history.

The next step towards enhancing democracy is to apply the process of primary elections in selecting leaders to a process which will decide on ideological and policy matters. Then, the justified fear of Professor Fruncillo that the leader of a party becomes more independent from the party itself may be mitigated because the leader will be constrained by the decision taken by an open process of primary elections on issues this time.

Professor Fruncillo raises another important issue, which I think the above-mentioned process may satisfy. He states that would be of interest to examine "… the appeal of ideology with reference to the different types of participants in the primaries." Given the analysis in my paper, it seems that voters selected a candidate whose ideology reflected the core of PASOK. This is not an accident. The new leader is a standard example of a party member who was able to be elected to party positions starting from a rank-and-file member; he was then elected to represent the party's local student union; then the youth of PASOK; thereafter he was elected Secretary General of PASOK, and finally he was elected a member of the European Parliament through direct elections competing with other party members as well. Now, at the age of 42, he emerged as party leader. In that sense, his ideology is almost identical with PASOK's mainstream ideology, otherwise it would have been very difficult for him to climb all the steps of the ladder to the top.

Of course, his big challenge–responding to Professor Fruncillo's comment on what would happen now—is the next general elections scheduled for 2023. As I have argued (Papanikos 2022e) in a working paper (in Greek), if he comes second and not third (as currently is predicted by the gallops), then in the following after the next general elections, quite likely, he will be the next Prime Minister of Greece. If he fails to come second and ends up third, it is quite possible, then, that PASOK will enter into a long period of uncertainty, and the end of it might be the end of PASOK itself.

The last issue raised by Professor Fruncillo is the role of age. This was a really thorny issue, but my explanation is different from many other media commentators. I think PASOK voters (friends and members) chose a younger candidate–not the youngest though–because of his lack of experience with government responsibilities during PASOK's long periods of being the ruling party of Greece. Even though this sounds odd, it quite possibly reflects a wider electorate who believes in the ideology of center-left, but they blame all those who held government positions in the past as either betraying the ideology of the center-left in favor of a right-wing ideology and policy, or they were incompetent in implementing policies which would have reflected their ideology. Professor Fruncillo considers the argument of mobilization of friends and party members to turn out and vote for the ex-prime minister of Greece, who was the second runner-up, as unconvincing, but the numbers of the turnout and his dismal performance–far away from what expected— do not leave much room for another interpretation.

In concluding, I should mention that democracy faces two dangers. A weak one relates to populism, especially in the European countries as was recently demonstrated by Colonescu (2022) among many others, but also in Brazil and Latin America as shown by De Caria Patrício (2022) as well as in the special issue in this journal, see Maddaloni (2017) and Fruncillo (2017). This leads to the dominance of leaders; a good example is given by Buskila et al. (2022) for the case of Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel. This is not a real threat. Since antiquity, democracy cannot survive without populism and demagogues.

On the other hand, what is a real threat to democracy is the extreme radicalization of the youth, who turn into a group of organized violence and crime. If this continues, then many people would accept the solution of all kinds of dictatorships and the abolishment of democracy. A recent study which examines the youth radicalization of a European country was published by Brutovská and Béreš (2022) for Slovakia. As pointed out in Papanikos (2022d), democracy needs education, and of course eligible citizens, who are aware of the issues. The latter is not an easy objective to achieve in a democracy as is demonstrated by Al Marrar and Allevato (2022).

Overall, I really appreciate the comments made by Professor Fruncillo which I think will widen our understanding of the democratic processes in Europe. I am sure many more papers will be published on the issue in the future as more and more politicians reevaluate their positions towards enhancing democracy in countries where it is valued most, i.e., European democracies.

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