RESEARCH REPORT

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (UNGA)

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Meet your Chair!

Hi, I'm Kieran and I'm too old for MUN. Jokes aside, it is my privilege to serve alongside Elisa as your chair for this conference. It's been humbling to watch a new generation of MUNers thrive despite the ongoing circumstances, and I admire you all for your initiative, passion and tenacity in what is a collectively difficult time of our lives. Wax-philosophical aside, as always, I expect you to be responsible in conducting research beyond the resources provided in this research report, as well as to apply yourselves accordingly in council. In turn, it is my hope that we as dais will be able to facilitate an opportunity to gain more knowledge, confidence and friends than when you first enter it.

Feel free to reach out to Elisa and I if you come across any issues throughout your research. I can be reached through Discord (doctor worm#2462) or email (kierannair@gmail.com). I look forward to meeting you all, virtually and in-person should the opportunity ever arise.

Meet your Co-Chair!

Hello delegates! My name is Elisa and I will be your chair for UNGA in MYMerdekaMUN this year. I am coming into my third year of studying Economics at the University of Nottingham (Malaysia Campus).

I want to wish everyone a fruitful conference. I know that speaking up can be daunting but the skills you will learn from delegating in MUN are worth a lot. I certainly have grown more confident and more passionate as I did more conferences. Make the most out of this opportunity to learn about diplomacy, problem solving, public speaking and research skills.

Speaking of research, this research report is just the "starting point" of the issue and you are expected to do further research on the topic and how it relates to your country. Furthermore, I want to emphasize the importance of sticking to foreign policies. Delegates should learn their country's relations with other countries and act accordingly, regardless of their personal opinions. By sticking to foreign policies, council sessions would be more interesting.

The chair and I are friendly and we are always happy to help. So please feel free to contact myself and Kieran if you need help.

My email: elisaf.mfirdaus@gmail.com
Discord: lettuce#0085

Position Paper Guidelines

Your position paper should contain details regarding your nation's stance, foreign policy, and past actions in terms of both topics. Do also include what you would like to put forward as solutions to the council.

Formatting guidelines (do not include anything that is not listed under here, yes this includes decorating your position papers with flags and whatnot, use that time to research instead)
- **Font: Serif (e.g. Times New Roman), 12pt**
- **Spacing: 1.5**
- **Alignment: Justified**
- **Pages: Maximum of 2 pages per topic (excluding bibliography, which has no page limit)**
- **Referencing: No preference, just make sure to include your sources (yes, you can just paste them as links)**

Submission guidelines
- **Save your position papers as a PDF file with the filename of UNGA_[Country].pdf. Submissions as a Google/Word Doc will be disregarded.**
- **Position papers are to be sent to both the chair (kierannair@gmail.com and co-chair (elisaf.mfirdaus@gmail.com).**

An inability to adhere to these guidelines will result in a deduction of your score. Position papers are due 23:59, 27th August (GMT+8/MYT). Requests for extensions will be entertained on a case-by-case basis, please contact your chairs if you require one, or if you have any questions in general. Examples of position papers can be found here, courtesy of Mr Calvin Tang. All the best!

Introduction to the Council: United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

The United States General Assembly (UNGA) (1) is one of six primary organs of the United Nations (UN), as well as the primary deliberative, policy-making and representative organ. It has also established numerous subsidiary organs, of which its six main committees are the Disarmament and Security Committee (DISEC); Economic and Financial Council (ECOFIN); Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM); Special Political and Decolonisation Committee (SPECPOL); Fifth Committee (dealing with administrative and budgetary matters) and Sixth Committee (dealing with legal matters).

Among its jurisdiction is the following functions:
- supervise the budget of the UN
- appoint non-permanent member nations to the Security Council
- designate the secretary-general of the UN
- receive reports from other components of the UN
- make recommendations on international issues in the form of GA resolutions

The UNGA currently gathers under its president or secretary-general annually at the headquarters of the UN in New York City. It can also reconvene for (emergency) special sessions should it be necessary. Currently all 193 members of the UN serve as member nations of the UNGA, with the addition of the Holy See and Palestine as observer states.

1General Assembly of the United Nations: https://www.un.org/en/ga/

Topic 1: The Rise of Police Brutality in the Modern Day

Background

Law enforcement officers are an integral part of a society. They represent safety, security, and public order. As such, they have the ability to detain and use force on suspects. This great power comes with an even greater responsibility because the repercussions of their actions affect the communities they serve. The security sector functions more productively on the basis of integrity and legitimacy, rather than brute force; which requires a certain level of public trust. (2)

Introduction

Police brutality is a long-standing issue all over the world. Global news coverage and social media highlights the issue, and exposes a rising trend in instances of police brutality in the modern day. It occurs when there is use of unwarranted/excessive force by law enforcement to a point where it injures or kills the victim(s). This is a systemic issue with causes and catalysts that differ from country to country. Despite that, there are several similarities that can be drawn and addressed. The common factors include lack of accountability, excessive power, corruption, inadequate training, and lack of trust between civilians and authority. (3) Dissatisfaction in the Covid-19 response has eroded public trust in government bodies–including police.

Key Issues

1. Accountability and Punishment

Accountability can manifest itself in many ways. Some examples of holding a police officer accountable include suspension of service, demotion, resignation, community service, and imprisonment. Ideally, instances of police misconduct should be brought to justice and result in some form of accountability on the perpetrator. Accountability ensures that law enforcement are not incentivized to abuse their power, establishes a level of transparency to the civilians, and maintains the integrity and legitimacy of the police force as a whole.

2. Handbook on Police Accountability, Oversight and Integrity:
https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Handbook_on_police_Accountability_Oversight_and_Integrity.pdf

3. Core Factors of Police Corruption Across the World:
https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/publications/core_factors.pdf

2. Excessive Power and Power Imbalances

Furthermore, unchecked excessive autonomy given to law enforcement can become ground for abuse of power. Therefore, it is important to give a level of agency to the public, such as an outlet to file complaints in the event of misconduct. The Handbook on Police Accountability, Oversight and Integrity lists 3 ways in which complaints are beneficial to the policing system:

- It initiates investigations into misconduct
- It helps identify potential areas of improvements
- It is a step to prevent impunity within the department

3. Corruption

When police officers act in self-interest, it opens up avenues for corruption. According to UN Office on Drugs and Crime, corruption generally occurs in 4 areas:

- Recruitment, training and promotion
- Resources
- Systems and accountability within departments
- Cultural traditions that inhibit the development of professional police standards

4. Inadequate Training

Moreover, inadequate training can result in police misconduct. What is considered inadequate may vary from place to place, however, the guidelines to follow are stated in the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials in the 'Past Precedences' Section

5. Reduce trust in the government and authorities

Declining trust reduces cooperation between parties. In the face of political, social and economic turmoil, there is a decline in trust in the police. Offe and Patterson stated that 'those whose lives are more insecure can less afford to trust'4. This essentially presents the idea that those that are more likely to distrust the police are those who do not hold a high socio-economic position and those who are more at risk in any form of political, social and economic instability. Police officers who do not trust the communities they serve are more likely to use excessive force when policing. (4)

Case Studies

1. ## United States of America and the Black Lives Matter Movement

4. Police Reform and the Problem of Trust:
http://www.slcdocs.com/ODHR/Website/Right%20to%20Safety/Literature/PoliceReformAndTheProblemOfTrust.pdf

The death of George Floyd sparked protests in 2020 regarding the prevalence of police brutality and the role of race in the issue. Police brutality affects everyone in the US, but it is especially fatal to black people. Despite making up only 13% of the population, black Americans are more than twice more likely to be a killed by a police officer. (5)

One of the direct causes of these instances is inadequate police training. The US does not have a federally mandated minimum requirement to become a police officer, leaving the decision to individual states. The duration averages to just under 6 months. This ranks the US in the lower end of 100 countries in terms of training requirement. (6) Within the already short training requirement, they are trained to see elevated levels of threat and to respond to the threats with combat and tactics. (7)

On top of that, implementation of policies that give excessive power can hurt communities. This can be exemplified through the "Stop-and-Frisk" policy. Enacted by the Mayor of New York from 2002 to 2013, "Stop-and-Frisk" is a tactic used by any police officer to stop and search suspicious individuals on the streets. It has been heavily criticised for being counter-productive and racist. (8) Implicit bias by the police resulted in Black and Hispanic Americans being searched more often than their white counterparts. The secondary impact of this policy is that it creates a social divide between communities. Black and brown people being searched in public reinforces the prejudice and imagery of non-white Americans being criminals, and thus increasing racial tensions.

In addition, police officers in the US have qualified immunity. Implemented in 1967 by the Supreme Court, qualified immunity grants government officials and civil servants– including police officers– immunity from personal liability unless they have violated "clearly established statutory or constitutional law". In essence, this absolves police officers of punishment for misconduct unless there was another officer that had previously been charged with the same offence. (9) This loophole in the judicial system allowed officers to be let off the hook with minor to no punishments. It hurts victims and signals to the public that the police are capable of abusing their powers without significant repercussions.

These factors have diminished the integrity of the system altogether, reduced public trust in authority, and created racial division amongst communities. The racial undertone should not be ignored. The African-American community is more heavily policed than any other ethnicity, resulting in disproportionately more arrests, incarceration, and death at the hands of police; the roots of which are embedded from slavery.

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5. Statistics on Rate of Killing: https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/
6. Not Enough Training: https://www.trainingreform.org/not-enough-training
7. The Wrong Training: https://www.trainingreform.org/the-wrong-training
8. Stop-and-Frisk: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/17/nyregion/bloomberg-stop-and-frisk-new-york.html
9. Qualified Immunity: https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/qualified-immunity-legal-practical-moral-failure

2. Nigeria and the #EndSARS and #EndSWAT Campaign

A viral video of a man being fatally shot by a SARS operative sparked the online campaign #EndSARS. The Special Armed Robbery Squad (SARS) was a police division that was tasked with investigating violent crimes, such as armed robbery. As such, they have access to heavy weaponry and almost complete autonomy. (10) This combination created a breeding ground for abuse of power. Civilians reported being profiled based on clothing, accessories, phone models, and gender. Displays of wealth through appearance are the most common grounds for "suspicion of robbery". Furthermore, SARS has been accused of commiting human rights violations such as torture, extortion, assault, robbery, and extrajudicial killings. (11) These turned the online campaign into street protests all over the world.

Seeing the uproar of the protests, President Muhammadu Buhairi dissolved SARS. However, he announced the formation of a Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team to replace SARS. SWAT was strongly rejected by the public due to fear of being a repetition of SARS. (12) The street protests eventually ended on October 20th 2020 when unarmed protesters were fatally shot by police officers and military in Lagos. Since then, the movement has now become an outlet for citizens to express their discontent towards the government.

Past Precedences

The UNGA adheres to the following guidelines of police conduct and police reform:
Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials
Guide to Implementing the Code of Conduct for Law enforcement Officers
Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials

The following documents are readable material:
Human Rights Standards of Practice for the Police
Handbook on Police Accountability Oversight and Integrity

QARMAs

1. How should law enforcement officers be held accountable?
2. What improvements can be made to police training?
3. How to improve relations between civilians, law enforcement, and government?
4. Should police use excessive force during times of violent social unrest (riots)? Why or why not?
5. Are there methods to give some power back to civilians?
6. Are there any loopholes in the current judicial systems that enable police brutality? What can be done to address them?

10. EndSARS Movement: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-54662986
11. EndSARS: https://www.theafricareport.com/85309/nigeria-has-the-endsars-movement-come-to-an-end/
12. EndSWAT: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-54531449

Topic 2: The Issue of Neo-Colonialism
Introduction to the Topic

Colonialism remains a dark legacy among the human race. Stanford's Encyclopedia of Philosophy describes colonialism as "a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another". (13) In layman's (and contextual) terms, it is a practice of control over certain areas or people by establishing colonies, typically for economic reasons. Many developing nations today have an extensive history of colonialism, largely from European nations and the United Kingdom, dating all the way back to the 15th century. Colonial powers have largely retreated in the aftermath of World War II, when colonised countries gained independence, and the concept of colonialism itself has since evolved into wider definitions. Part of this evolution is into neo-colonialism.

How, then, does neo-colonialism differ from colonialism? Neo-colonialism is typically an extension of soft power—in contrast to hard power (colonialism), which is an aggressive and coercive means of leveraging political power from other states (such as through economic or military means), soft power aims to co-opt other states through vested interests (such as through cultural, political values, or foreign policy means), eventually creating a dependency or financial obligation towards the neocolonialist country.

The term "neo-colonialism" itself was coined by the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre during 1956, however such a maneuver has been described prior to this, namely by Kwame Nkruman, the first Prime Minister of Ghana, during decolonisation efforts in Africa (a region deeply affected by colonialism). You will have likely heard of neo-colonialism as its wider-known descriptor, imperialism, or its lesser-known imperialist studies theoretical concept, *dependency theory*. (14) Should you have trouble visualising the concept, debt trap diplomacy (read more under the Current Practices of Neo-Colonialism section) is the most succinct example of neo-colonialism.

Many countries who were once under colonialist rule continue to face long-standing impacts from this time, from cultural, to economic, to health impacts. It is also described as a result of imposing colonialist values upon "foreign" ones outside of their defined norms. This is known as colonialist legacies. Ché Guevara describes as much during his speech "Cuba: Historical exception or vanguard in the anti-colonial struggle?" in 1961 (15):

13. Colonialism: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/colonialism/
14. Dependency theory: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dependency_theory
15. Cuba: Historical exception or vanguard in the anticolonial struggle?: https://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1961/04/09.htm

"We, politely referred to as "underdeveloped", in truth, are colonial, semi-colonial or dependent countries. We are countries whose economies have been distorted by imperialism, which has abnormally developed those branches of industry or agriculture needed to complement its complex economy. "Underdevelopment", or distorted development, brings a dangerous specialisation in raw materials, inherent in which is the threat of hunger for all our peoples. We, the "underdeveloped", are also those with the single crop, the single product, the single market. A single product whose uncertain sale depends on a single market imposing and fixing conditions. That is the great formula for imperialist economic domination."

This is all to say that, while neo-colonialism stands as a notably relevant concept in modern times, it is by no means a new one to behold.

Decolonisation rather self-explanatorily describes the dismantling of colonialism. Given the intricacies of the aforementioned concepts, it is difficult to achieve a complete decolonisation, if nary entirely impossible. Even beyond these nuances however, colonialism has not entirely been eliminated. These colonies are now known as Non-Self Governing Nations (NSGSs), "territories whose people have not yet attained a full measure of self-government", in order words a contemporary definition of colonialism within the UN Charter. (16) While not necessarily the focus of the topic, this is useful to bear in mind throughout debate. Below are areas still listed as NSGs:

Year Listed as NSGS	Administering Power	Territory
1946	United Kingdom	Anguilla
1946	United Kingdom	Bermuda
1946	United Kingdom	British Virgin Islands
1946	United Kingdom	Cayman Islands
1946	United Kingdom	Falkland Islands
1946	United Kingdom	Montserrat
1946	United Kingdom	Saint Helena
1946	United Kingdom	Turks and Caicos Islands
1946	United Kingdom	Gibraltar
1946	United Kingdom	Pitcairn
1946	United States	American Samoa
1946	United States	United States Virgin Islands
1946	United States	Guam
1946	New Zealand	Tokelau
1963	[i]	Western Sahara
1946-47, 1986	France	French Polynesia
1946-47, 2013	France	New Caledonia

[i]: "On 26 February 1976, Spain informed the Secretary-General that as of that date it had terminated its presence in the Territory of the Sahara and deemed it necessary to place on record that Spain considered itself thenceforth exempt from any responsibility of any international nature in connection with the administration of the Territory, in view of the cessation of its participation in the temporary administration established for the Territory. In 1990, the General Assembly reaffirmed that the question of Western Sahara was a question of decolonization which remained to be completed by the people of Western Sahara."

16. United Nations Charter, Chapter XI: Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories: https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-

Additionally, it is of absolute pertinence to note that neo-colonialism poses a very real danger towards the encroachment of a nation's sovereignty, of which interference is a direct violation of UN core principles. Should you need a refresher, sovereignty is generally predicated on the principle that each state is free to pursue its internal affairs without outside interference. It essentially means that the government of any state has supremacy over the people, resources, and all other authorities within the territory it controls. Do bear in mind how this factors into the topic as a whole.

Current Practices of Neo-Colonialism

Debt trap diplomacy

Debt trap diplomacy is the act of leveraging another country for numerous interests (ranging from economical, political, trade, and so forth) by means of lending, and then wielding, enormous debt over said country. Essentially, actors who partake in this are predatory lenders. In recent times, this has been primarily used to characterise China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI); where, beyond a general lack of transparency and supposed poor coordination, China has been claimed to further its geostrategic interests through nations who are unable to fulfil their economic debt by having them stake alternative resources. The most notable example of this being the establishment of China's very first foreign military base in Djibouti, as well as the relinquishment of the Sri Lankan port of Hambantota as a collateral.

As with all things however, there are multiple perspectives to this issue—the aforementioned examples have been criticised as a result of internal mismanagement as well as Western powers' politicking, beyond an increasingly prevalent biased or Sinophobic global narrative. Chatham House, an independent policy institute located in London, had also released a notable research paper in 2020 refuting claims of BRI's debt trap diplomacy, which you are highly encouraged to peruse. (17) Whether these reasons absolve one party or another of responsibility, or reveals another layer of agendas, is up to your own critical interpretation.

Interestingly, this (as well as the general notion of neo-colonialism) has also been a long-standing criticism of Bretton Woods Institutions—the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and, later on, the World Trade Organisation (WTO). During its initial establishment, these organisations served the purpose of rebuilding the shattered postwar economy and promoting international cooperation. Despite this cause, they were criticised for being heavily catered towards the needs of developed countries rather than developing ones, thus committing exploitation towards developing countries; from voting rights being biased towards developed nations (as they were knowingly able to contribute more towards the institutions as compared to developing nations, thus having more leverage to further their own agendas) to manipulating the economies of developing nations through aid conditionalities;

17. Debunking the Myth of 'Debt-trap Diplomacy': https://www.chathamhouse.org/2020/08/debunking-myth-debt-trap-diplomacy

Once the country was stabilised, the USAID refused to give aid until the government privatised cement and flour mills for the benefit of wealthy Haitians and foreign investors. Additionally, foreign-owned businesses received electricity subsidies, while local businesses could not receive any form of subsidies as it was prohibited by the IMF.

Today, in the midst of the (preferably unspoken of, but alas) COVID-19 pandemic, similar criticisms have also been posed, the provisional aid of Bretton Woods Institutions being said to cause more harm than good through necessitating the adoption of austerity measures among developing nations (austerity being strict economic policies that a government imposes to control growing public debt, defined by increased frugality), which poses to place them into a worse economic state compared to pre-pandemic conditions. (19)

Foreign military bases

The existence of foreign military bases have long since been a point of contention. These bases are established for a wide number of reasons, including but not limited to hosting a foreign country's military personnel, storage and testing facilities for military weaponry, covert or intelligence operations, extra-judiciary transport and imprisonment, and counterterrorism efforts.
An existing list of foreign military bases is easily accessible (20), but the biggest and most notable perpetrator of this is the United States, largely for the purpose of military intervention towards various global crises. Accusations of neo-colonialism, or at bare minimum intentions towards imperialism, in this regard is not baseless, having previously leveraged this in order to maintain geopolitical relationships, such as providing military weaponry to support the Uzbekistan dictatorship. (21)

Globalisation

It is notable that some academia criticise globalisation as a means of extension towards neo-colonialism (merits of such claims are up to you to discern). Globalisation as a concept became relevant during the post-colonial era, where it is characterised as the decay of national boundaries and state institutions in favor of transnational economic activity. (22) That being said, in this sense, globalisation became a foundational aspect of neo-colonialism—various such academia have argued that globalisation has caused more harm than good, particularly for non-European countries, in other words most nations which were partially decolonised post-WWII, developing a homogeneity of social spaces and subsequent erasure of local or heterogeneous identities. Beyond this, it has also been argued that neocolonialism and the control of the economy through foreign actors (the aforementioned Bretton Woods Institutions) is a regular feature of today's economy.

19. Over 80 per cent of IMF Covid-19 loans will push austerity on poor countries: https://reliefweb.int/report/world/over-80-cent-imf-covid-19-loans-will-push-austerity-poor-countries
20. List of countries with overseas military bases: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_with_overseas_military_bases
21. The Obama Administration Is Gifting War Machines to a Murderous Dictator: https://newrepublic.com/article/120911/obama-administration-gives-uzbekistans-karimov-military-machines
22. Globalization: https://www.lehigh.edu/˜amsp/eng-11-globalization.htm

Considering the examples listed prior to this have largely been Sino- and Western-centric instances of neo-colonialism, here a unique instance of modern day colonialism will be highlighted: Indonesia's influence over West Papua, to which originated from withdrawal of the Dutch's colonial powers and the subsequent implementation of Indonesian administration. The occupation has been ongoing since 1969, and is said to have been facilitated by the UN's Act of Free Choice, where a referendum on Papua's integration with Indonesia successfully passed. Despite operating largely as a straightforward act of colonialism, Indonesia's acts of political coercion bears elements of neo-colonialism as well, such as the selection and coercion of Papuans to vote for the integration. The fight for West Papuan's independence remains ongoing until today, headed by the Free Papua Movement (OPM).

Past Actions

It is difficult to describe past actions taken towards resolving neo-colonialism due to the nature of the issue as well as the powerful players it engages. Nevertheless, some tangential efforts have been listed below.

Actions from the UN

The 1986 UN Declaration on the Right to Development addressed the concern of neo-colonialism, calling for the elimination of human rights violations which come with it:

"Considering that the elimination of the massive and flagrant violations of the human rights of the peoples and individuals affected by situations such as those resulting from colonialism, neo-colonialism, apartheid, all forms of racism and racial discrimination, foreign domination and occupation, aggression and threats against national sovereignty, national unity and territorial integrity and threats of war would contribute to the establishment of circumstances propitious to the development of a great part of mankind..."

Under the almighty UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Goals 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) among others address efforts to alleviate the effects of neo-colonialism, such as the need for decent jobs and for infrastructure building to spur African prosperity. Of course, the effectiveness of SDGs as a whole varies per your mileage, but it is important to note that they have also been subject to criticism towards enabling neo-colonialism, which is discourse you are encouraged to read up on during your spare time.

QARMAs

23. Declaration on the Right to Development: https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/RightToDevelopment.aspx
24. The UN Sustainable Development Goals and Neo-Colonialism: https://www.sci-hub.ren/10.1007/978-3-319-58571-0_7

1. What factors drive actors to (on occasion, knowingly) partake in predatory debt practices?
   a. How can these actors be more aware of predatory debt practices?
   b. What sort of actions or reforms are able to mitigate (the need for partaking in) predatory debt practices?
2. Are there solutions that benefit both parties to the aforementioned scenarios?
3. What can be done to ensure that aid does not encroach the receiving nation's authority?
   a. How can we further reaffirm developing nations' sovereignty?
   b. How can we better facilitate the economic growth of developing nations?
4. Is there a way to facilitate total decolonisation in the long run?

A Note From the Chair

You are obviously not expected to be able to solve this issue in its entirely. Instead, you are encouraged to direct your resources and solutions towards what can be done to mitigate these issues. Think on the nuances which surround this issue: consider the outstanding, recurring actors within the scenarios depicted above and their motives, as well as the priorities of actors who end up colonised—it is a fair assumption, after all, that no existing nation wishes to adopt that particular moniker.

Further Reading

All footnotes should be considered further reading material (that they also double as bibliography materials). Further reading is not mandatory but highly recommended, especially where it is indicated in-text.

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