

LETTER FROM OUR MANAGING EDITOR

Oxford, May 2017

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the May 2017 edition of STAIR!

Risk and uncertainty have shaped the international political scene over the past few decades. The pieces in this issue deal with these subjects from a variety of angles and methodologies, reaffirming STAIR's commitment to topical matters, academic quality, and intellectual pluralism. As I wrote before, at STAIR we are confident that scholarly knowledge can play a positive role in society and see our search for excellence in sourcing and publishing articles as part of that role. STAIR not only provides an opportunity for graduate students at Oxford to hone their skills in editing a high-level academic journal, but is also a forum of serious intellectual debate in its own right.

Our website (www.stairjournal.com) contains details of our upcoming issues, events, and special features. If you or your institution are not currently subscribers, we have attractive subscription packages. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like more information.

This is my last issue at the helm of STAIR, and I would like to thank certain persons and bodies for the privilege that it has been to lead it for the past year. My sincere thanks to the editorial board of STAIR for their hard work in putting this edition together and to our institutional homes at Oxford—St Antony's College and the Department of Politics and International Relations—for their ongoing support.

Above all, I would like to send special thanks on behalf of STAIR to Professor Margaret MacMillan, our Senior Member and Warden of St Antony's College, who will be leaving Oxford later this year. Throughout her tenure at St Antony's, Professor MacMillan has been a staunch supporter of STAIR, and her guidance and encouragement have been invaluable to generations of students at our college and at our journal. We owe her a great deal. We are profoundly grateful for her generosity and friendship, and wish her the very best in her future adventures.

Thank you, and all my best,

Marco Moraes
Managing Editor

I. Theme Section Editors *Nick Blanchette, Heather Byrne, and Kira Huju*

II. General Section Editors *Robert Gorwa, Anton Peez, and Yuan Yi Zhu*

III. Book Review Editors *Claire Dale, Tim Epple, and Giulia Garbagni*

I. Theme Section

Security is a field that trades in uncertainties. In a now infamous 2002 speech before NATO, then US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld unwittingly captured the centrality of uncertainty:

The message is that there are no “knowns.” There are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say there are things that we now know we don’t know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don’t know we don’t know ... And each year, we discover a few more of those unknown unknowns ... It isn’t a riddle. It is a very serious, important matter.¹

The social sciences, if they wish to remain committed to academic rigour and critical analysis, ought to treat such statements as cautionary tales about what happens when a discourse gets flooded with big words and concepts that have not been meaningfully contextualized and interrogated. New and ambiguous dangers—from the rise of malevolent non-state actors to environmental decline—are challenging the foundations upon which traditional security policy has been built. The nature of security and risk is ambiguous, and becoming ever more so in the last several decades—yet this need not mean that our research yields to ambiguity as a result. In a world caught in a constant state of flux, it is the task of the social sciences to critically examine stasis, change, and evolution. This is what the Theme Section of this issue seeks to do.

The Theme Section concerns itself with the uncertain frontiers of security in the twenty-first century. It both reflects and elaborates on a cogent contribution of risk society theorists: the standards by which we measure our security have changed in fundamental ways over the decades.² Perfect security is no longer attainable, as potential “risks” have replaced material “threats” in the state’s calculations of a rational response to securing its interests—from George W. Bush’s “preemptive war” to environmental policy’s

“precautionary principles.”³ The twenty-first century state is in a position of perpetual anxiety, attempting to predict and prevent events long before they occur. Responding to the spectre of terrorism, the United States launched its Global War on Terror, sinking some \$1.7 trillion into the management of further terror attacks. At home, the “vigilant homeland security citizen” is being asked to treat their everyday environments, from commutes to the office, as spaces for detecting and reporting potential threats. Meanwhile, the state is embroiled in an effort to contain “agentless” dangers, from the melting Arctic ice caps to novel and evolving pathogens. Our special issue seeks to interrogate such trends, and to provide a medium for weaving together seemingly separate developments—from the economic to the cultural to the political—into larger frameworks of security and risk.

While the articles of the Theme Section venture into varied directions, they grow out of an academic corpus that roots the analysis back into fundamental questions and definitions of security analysis. Reflecting upon the “cultural grammar” of the present age, one can isolate the processes of modernity as central in the continued direction of global society. Echoing a wealth of academic thought, the current age, according to Lord Anthony Giddens, resembles one of late modernity: the embrace of a world open to human intervention and dominion of nature, capitalism and mass-industry, the rationalization of decision-making, and the nation state as the prevailing political institution.⁴ Theorists of modernity, including Giddens, are quick to note the many benevolent changes brought in by the age of modernity—the proliferation of human rights and the relative alleviation of global poverty, for example. Yet, like any age, modernity also carries its own “nightmares”—particularly the Holocaust and the continued degradation of the planet’s environment.⁵ Major components of modernity’s relentless industrialization and capitalization of the world, modernization and globalization have profoundly shaped the direction of global politics and security, emboldening the interconnectivity, vulnerabilities, and insecurities of states.⁶

Globalization as the driving principle of the prevailing age of modernity has profoundly influenced the relationships between states and non-state actors, and subsequently the nature of international security itself. Some scholars have tied this process to benign outcomes of increasing cooperation. Famously, Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane argued that the modernization of global society and the globalization of trade has led to a condition of hyper-connectivity in which countries are engaged in a state of complex interdependence, the fates of various actors inextricably tied together.⁷ Yet while economic interdependency and liberalization

have habitually been understood as fostering enduring peace among nations, the notion of complex interdependence also illuminates the changing nature of challenges faced by the modern state.⁸ For in a world marked by the interdependence of states, those living in America, for example, become more vulnerable to threats faced across the world in China. To illustrate the implications of interdependence, in a globe of connected markets and ease of travel, a virus in Hong Kong “can be carried to Southeast Asia in four hours, to Europe in twelve, and America in eighteen.”⁹

As a consequence, the security game has changed. States no longer practice war and security in methods denoted by the great power conflicts and threats of the Cold War, approaching security instead from a position increasingly defined by uncertainty, globalized dangers, and the management of perceived risks.¹⁰ This necessarily involves a conceptual shift in our thinking. Increasingly, we are dealing with the management of globalized security risks, rather than their obliteration—and even less with any “deterrence of a monolithic threat from another state.”¹¹ As theoretical concepts, the notions of risk and risk society were brought to light by German Sociologist Ulrich Beck in his groundbreaking 1992 work *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*.¹² Attempting to explain how states might respond to an increasingly globalized and modernized world, Beck argued that “risk may be defined as a systematic way of dealing with the hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself.”¹³ Thus, if the risk society is one predominantly interested in risk, this involves a fixation on the question of how exactly these risks and hazards of globalization “can be prevented, minimized, dramatized, or channeled” by the state.¹⁴ Here, the language and nature of risk differs significantly from that of threat, a term more easily identified within the security logic of the Cold War. Relative to risk, the concept of threat is one fundamentally predicated on power and knowledge: the examination of military capabilities and intentions within the international system.¹⁵ According to Mikkel Rasmussen, threats entail “a specific danger which can be precisely identified and measured on the basis of the capabilities an enemy has to realize a hostile intent.”¹⁶ While a threat-based system is quantifiable “because of assessment in terms of capabilities which one either possesses or not,” a risk-based system involves much more uncertainty and difficulty in attempting to calculate the potentiality of danger, forcing policymakers to operate with less concrete information.¹⁷

Amidst the flux and uncertainty, academia must grapple with ever more complex notions of space and time. Firstly, the question of space finds novel dimensions in an age of globalization. Risk

becomes difficult to localize. The increasingly globalized character of security has presented challenges starkly different from those of the Cold War, with dangers no longer emanating solely from the military actions of other states, but also from agentless sources (think the environment, or contagious disease) that operate with extreme unpredictability.¹⁸ Secondly, the academic engagement with security must adjust its understanding of appropriate time frames. While the logic of threats largely occupies the realm of the present, risk is predominantly concerned with futurity. Since risk societies are geared towards tackling and preventing unknown dangers, the risk framework is often operationalized as a way of controlling the future. As a result, events that do not yet exist end up strongly influencing our present affairs and policies, as risk societies go to great lengths to position themselves against risks.¹⁹ To illustrate this point, the American decision to invade Iraq, an event seen as a strong case of risk management, was largely predicated upon anxiety over future development of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and the use of WMDs in the region.²⁰

Risk and insecurity are imagined—and this bears great consequence for how we might try to study it. Because of the focus upon the probability of future events, risks and insecurity are by nature constructed and never real, constantly shifting to embrace new potentialities. As Joost van Loon argues:

As soon as risks become real, say an act of terrorism destroying the financial heart of New York, they cease to be risks and become a catastrophe or at least an irritation. Risks have already moved elsewhere: to the anticipation of further attacks, economic decline or worldwide war.²¹

Consequently, perception also ends up playing a crucial role. Whereas threats are quantifiable and finite in nature “because they emanate from a specific actor, with a limited amount of resources to support capabilities,” risks are infinite in nature.²² As possible scenarios, they are only confined by the extent of human insecurity and perceived dangers to security. In this sense, specific risks are created as a result of prevailing anxieties over the ‘unknown,’ with a state’s risk calculus very much conditioned upon the particular insecurities of the state.²³ As an emerging framework for understanding the practice of contemporary international security, the theory of risk serves to demonstrate the means through which we have come to conceptualize danger in the twenty-first century, isolating the environment as a central cause for concern.

Certain problematic patterns tend to emerge in tandem with any proliferation of risk discourses. The first major consequence of risk as a dominant framework for analysing security can be seen in what is known as the boomerang effect, a variation of the law of unintended consequences. The boomerang effect, as applied to risk, essentially holds that in attempting to manage a future risk, unforeseen risks proliferate, creating a never-ending process of risk management and insecurity.²⁴ Whereas a threat-based system is finite in that an actor can essentially eliminate the capacity of an enemy to pose a military threat and bring about stable security, the precautionary nature of risk-based systems cannot provide the same security of a threat-based system as their policies simply change the composition of risk as opposed to eliminating it.²⁵ Although it is important to note that the law of unintended consequences is not unique to risk and can also be applied to threat-assessment, the hyper-connectivity and globalized nature of security challenges in the age of risk presents a uniquely difficult situation for the risk society, in which poor policymaking is felt more heavily across the globe, and good decisions are harder to come by in an age defined by a lack of certainty. This throws up the question of society's incapacity to accurately gauge appropriate levels of response to risk.²⁶ This is especially the case since the emergence of a risk-centred ethos allows policymakers relative free rein in managing risk. In the risk society, non-events are regarded as success for policymakers. Thus, regardless of the policies put in place to manage a potential risk, as long as that risk does not materialize, policymakers have succeeded in their role. This model of success proves problematic, as states are essentially incentivized to be as heavy-handed as possible in their risk management policies in order to guarantee risk aversion.

The second major consequence involves the societal ethos that accompanies the logic of risk societies: one built on a culture of anxiety and fear-construction. Risk serves as a construct and is limited only by the extent of human insecurities and fears. The extent of human insecurities and fears, however, seems not to be limited by external conditions. In today's complex international system of politics and security, risk is inescapable. In focusing upon notions of the 'unknown,' risk societies are perennially positioned towards the next risk, and thus the next anxiety. Since constructed risks heavily influence both the public psyche and political action, the very reality of risk can be brought into question. Because the risk society acts on potential danger in the same way as actualized danger, the line between the two blurs. It is these blurred lines, intersections, and ambivalent categories that the contributors to the Theme Section seek to tackle, reconceptualise, and put in the

context of various fields of security.

The feature interview with Professor Lord Anthony Giddens, one of the most preeminent sociologists of our time, adopts a broad perspective, discussing the development and contradictions of risk throughout time. Lord Giddens cautions analysts both against academic optimism and pessimism: Optimists underestimate risk, while pessimists weigh risk above opportunity. In the interview, Giddens touches upon his recent work, arguing that the West has both largely overestimated opportunities, and downplayed the risks of modernization. The “return of geopolitics” serves as an inflection point at which this disconnect is becoming clearer, and more dangerous. Giddens’ work on risk, reflexivity, and modernity directly concerns international affairs, while also allowing for a broader perspective and an academic vocabulary that reaches beyond orthodox international relations. Our interview engages his sociological contributions with some of the most pressing immediate questions of security today: Brexit and the future of Europe, the digital revolution, climate change, and the peculiar return of great power politics.

Incorporating security spheres that only a few decades ago seemed unthinkable, the Theme Section takes a look at the issue of cybersecurity. One of the important features of the increasingly complex and uncertain international environment is the rise of confounding technological developments. Among a range of emergent technologies, those emanating from cyberspace continue to attract particular attention from concerned strategists, policymakers, and publics, who remain challenged in their efforts to securitize the rapidly changing cybersecurity environment. In his article, “Proxy Actors in the Cyber Domain: Implications for State Strategy,” Jamie Collier examines the unique challenges of cyberspace for state security, focusing specifically on state efforts to forge relationships with non-state actors in efforts to enhance their cybersecurity capabilities. Where conventional notions of state security that centre the state and military often fail to usefully apply in the case of cyberspace, this article engages with recent trends within global politics towards enlarged roles for a wide range of actors—whether non-governmental organizations or private institutions—in the production of state security.

The environment is another sphere in which security studies has tried to make sense of changing dynamics of risk and insecurity. The issue of climate change highlights a largely overlooked actor of risk and security studies: the non-state advocate. In “At Your Own Peril: Climate Change as Risky Business,” Tim Pfeifferle takes a look at how risk and uncertainty are discursively and strategically used by the fossil divestment movement. Much of

the risk literature has tended to zone in on policymakers, whose attempts at predicting, preventing, and adapting to environmental dangers have dominated the analysis. Pfefferle suggests that the pool of relevant actors is larger, and that a nuanced analysis of risk ought to involve conscious efforts by non-state activists to use the language of risk to their own advantage. In many ways, this type of research also goes against the idea, articulated by scholars like Joshua Bushy, that climate change is a type of harm that lacks intentionality.²⁷ By portraying certain companies and industries as directly liable for the proliferation of environmental risks in the twenty-first century, non-state actors are both shifting the focus from state to non-state actors, and bringing a degree of intentionality (and therefore malleability and manageability) of risks back into the picture.

More conventional spaces of security may also develop novel features in response to changing realities. In “Complex Humanitarian Crises in Uncertain Times,” Francesca Pusterla contributes to this discussion by examining how not only states but also multilateral institutions seek to respond to crises in the form of humanitarian aid. She argues that humanitarian crises that are both diffused geographically and urgent temporally are more likely to initiate a multilateral EU response rather than unilateral aid flows from member states. Humanitarian crises have increasingly transnational effects, for example in the form of refugee flows, and actors seek to contain both the initial threat of contagion and resulting instability. Rationality is often seen as the pretext for intervention and aid, and the transnational character of humanitarian crises has increased the likelihood of intervention being considered a rational response to a distant human catastrophe. Furthermore, the way the state and multilateral institutions perceive of international security has, in some ways, transformed since the turn of the century. The UN Security Council in its resolutions increasingly classifies humanitarian crises as threats to international peace and security. Frameworks adopted internationally recognize that the international community must not be passive in the face of humanitarian crises, with new norms such as the Responsibility to Protect instilling a moral obligation upon states to reduce suffering of all individuals despite the borders that separate them.

Finally, the Theme Section considers the changing dynamics of war and conflict. Caroline Varin’s article, “Flying Without Risk: The Norms on Warriors and their Application to Drone Pilots,” analyses the relationship between technological innovation and twenty-first century warfare, isolating in particular the growing reliance of highly advanced militaries upon unmanned combat

aerial vehicles (UCAVs) and the effects of that reliance on contemporary norms of conflict. In navigating the political and military challenges of twenty-first century warfare, the desire to wage war more remotely becomes especially pronounced, with predominantly Western militaries seeking to limit political, economic, and physical risk by employing advanced technological solutions. However, in doing so, important normative dilemmas arise. As this article argues, the transition towards remote warfare has challenged traditional Western conceptions of the ‘warrior,’ courage, and just war theory, unduly leaving drone pilots outside of these traditional notions.

Every age fights and contains threats in its own manner, and must be judged in terms of its own “peculiarities, its distinguishing features, its preoccupations, even nightmares,” as Clausewitz noted.²⁸ In approaching security from this angle, it is precisely in discovering and unpacking the “distinguishing features” of our time that this Theme Section seeks to contribute to the conversation.

II. General Section

The journal’s General Section publishes timely and relevant articles with an international focus from a variety of disciplines. In this issue, the main foci are environmental politics and Arctic security. With a climate change denier having recently taken up residence in the White House, research on the earth’s environmental health has become more important than ever. But it is not only those working in the environmental sciences that will need to step up in coming years: in their article “Political Science and Severe Climate Change: A Case for Transformational Research into Adaptation,” John Barkdull and Paul G. Harris outline some potential steps that social scientists (especially political scientists) should take to help advance public understanding of climate change. In particular, they focus on “transformational research into adaptation,” and go beyond traditional conceptions of environmental politics to propose a forward looking research agenda for political scientists interested in providing meaningful contributions to our current (and future) understanding of global climate disruption.

Climate change also lurks in the background of Nicole Bayat Grajewski’s article “Russia’s Great Power Assertion: Status-Seeking in the Arctic.” By opening up new sea routes and hydrocarbon deposits, the melting polar ice cap has increased the strategic importance of the Arctic for its neighbouring states. Among them is Russia, which has been among the most aggressive in asserting its claims in the Arctic. However, as Grajewski argues, Russian

polar assertiveness cannot be solely explained through its material interests, but has much to do with the role that the Arctic plays within Russia's self-identity as a great power. By drawing on neo-realist and constructivist literatures, Grajewski illustrates that current Russian Arctic policy can be understood in terms of status signalling designed to advance a mix of material and subjective perceptual interests on both the domestic and international levels. The article demonstrates the importance of historical memory and symbolism in shaping foreign policy, and provides an interesting look into twenty-first century Arctic security.

III. Book Reviews

Nathanaël Chouraqui's (London School of Economics) review of Marc Sageman's *Misunderstanding Terrorism* seamlessly ties into this issue's theme. In his book, Sageman takes issue with what he perceives to be "the West's" disproportionate response to a constantly overestimated security threat: Islamist terrorism. Chouraqui skillfully guides the reader through the book's key arguments and incisively unpacks Sageman's characterization of the West's "overreaction." At the core of Sageman's book is the argument that the West's misinterpretation of Islamist threats leads it to adopt excessive and misplaced counterterrorism tactics. Furthermore, based on a survey of Islamist terror plots and attacks, Sageman calls into question conventional wisdom by showing that the threat posed by al-Qaeda has decreased in recent years and that Islamist leadership has equally waned. While Chouraqui praises Sageman's empirical contribution to the field, he aptly criticizes the author's conceptualization of radicalization. According to Chouraqui, Sageman's radicalization model fails to incorporate the cultural dimension of radicalization, as well as underestimates the potential impact of ideology. Nonetheless, Chouraqui commends Sageman for his critical examination, noting that the book manages to turn the weapons of positivist analysis against itself, challenging the mainstream discourse that is largely responsible for the way that we are *Misunderstanding Terrorism*.

Echoing Chouraqui's contribution, which highlights some of the shortcomings of current scholarship in terrorism studies, the book reviewed by Engy Moussa (University of Cambridge) distances itself from "traditional" security studies to advance a sophisticated network approach as an alternative analytical lens for the study of international politics. Edited by Deborah Avant and Oliver Westerwinter, *The New Power Politics: Networks and Transnational Security Governance* aims at demonstrating the methodological flexibility and explanatory power of network analysis in the field

of security studies. As pointed out by Moussa, the strength of the book lies in its focus on the relational, rather than material, nature of power. This focus allows it to provide a fresh and convincing insight into the complex interactions that characterize global security governance. Another remarkable feature of *The New Power Politics* is the impressive array of case studies offered by its contributors, ranging from US-Georgia relations during the Bush administration to the Movement to Ban Antipersonnel Mines, counter-piracy in the Indian Ocean, and collateral damage control—making it almost impossible for anyone interested in security studies not to find their field revisited through network analysis. Combining both conceptual and empirical richness, it is a book highly recommended by our reviewer.

Notes

1 Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld responding to a question from a reporter on WMDs and Terrorism, during his press conference before NATO Headquarters, 6th of June, 2002, <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s020606g.htm> (accessed May 2 2017).

2 Rasmussen, *Risk Society at War*, 1.

3 Ibid., 6.

4 Anthony Giddens, *Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making Sense of Modernity*, 94.

5 Ian Goldin and Mike Mariathasan, *The Butterfly Defect: How Globalization Creates Systemic Risks, and What to Do about it*, 9 and 141; Christopher Coker, *War in an Age of Risk*, 67.

6 Ian Goldin and Mike Mariathasan, *The Butterfly Defect: How Globalization Creates Systemic Risks, and What to Do about it*, 9.

7 Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane, *Power and Interdependence*, 7.

8 Ian Goldin and Mike Mariathasan, *The Butterfly Defect: How Globalization Creates Systemic Risks, and What to Do about it*, 10.

9 Christopher Coker, *War In An Age Of Risk*, 88.

10 M.J. Williams, *(In)Security Studies, Reflexive Modernization, and the Risk Society*, 57.

11 Ibid, 57.

12 Christopher Coker, *War In An Age Of Risk*, 63.

13 Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, 22.

14 Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* 19.

15 M.J. Williams, *(In)Security Studies, Reflexive Modernization, and the Risk Society*, 65.

16 Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, *The Risk Society at War: Terror, Technology and Strategy in the Twenty-First Century*, 1.

17 M.J. Williams, *(In)Security Studies, Reflexive Modernization, and the Risk Society*, 66; Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, *The Risk Society at War: Terror, Technology and Strategy in the Twenty-First Century*, 2.

18 M.J. Williams, *(In)Security Studies, Reflexive Modernization, and the Risk Society*, 66.

19 Ulrich Beck, *Politics of the Risk Society* in Jane Franklin's *The Politics of the Risk Society*, 11.

- 20 Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, 'It Sounds Like a Riddle': Security Studies, the War on Terror and Risk, 384.
- 21 Joost Van Loon, Risk and Technological Culture: Towards a Sociology of Virulence, 2.
- 22 M.J. Williams, (In)Security Studies, Reflexive Modernization, and the Risk Society, 66.
- 23 Ibid, 66.
- 24 M.J. Williams, (In)Security Studies, Reflexive Modernization, and the Risk Society, 66.
- 25 Ian Goldin and Mike Mariathasan, The Butterfly Defect: How Globalization Creates Systemic Risks, and What to Do about it, 126.
- 26 Christopher Coker, War in an Age of Risk, 17.
- 27 Ibid, 471.
- 28 Christopher Coker, War in an Age of Risk, vii (preface).

FEATURE INTERVIEW: LORD ANTHONY GIDDENS IN CONVERSATION WITH STAIR

For this issue, *The Politics of Uncertainty: Security, Risk and the State in the Twenty-First Century*, STAIR Theme Editors Nick Blanchette, Heather Byrne, and Kira Huju, and Managing Editor Marco Moraes sat down with the eminent sociologist and Member of the House of Lords, Lord Anthony Giddens. The conversation touches on and expands upon Lord Giddens' work on "high opportunity, high-risk societies," the digital revolution, and how academia ought to approach the ever-expanding scope of risk in the twenty-first century.

A sociologist with interdisciplinary interests and a Labour peer in the British House of Lords, Lord Giddens was trained in sociology at the universities of Hull, the LSE, and Cambridge. He has taught sociology at the universities of Leicester and Cambridge, and served as Director of the LSE from 1997 to 2003. A co-founder of Polity Press, Lord Giddens came to be known by the wider public through his role as political advisor to Prime Minister Tony Blair, whose "third way" politics Lord Giddens' thought initially shaped. In the world of academia, Lord Giddens is most known for his work on the theory of structuration, and the relationship of globalization and modernity to social and political life. In recent times, he has worked on the contemporary challenges of globalization and modernity, publishing *The Politics of Climate Change* in 2009 and *Turbulent and Mighty Continent: What Future for Europe?* in 2014. Both works elaborate on the emergence of a "high opportunity, high risk society," upon which our discussion focuses.

STAIR: With such seemingly novel concepts as globalization, risk, and mass communication at the core of much of the security conversation in the twenty-first century, it often seems as though the debate lacks a sense of historical continuity. Some streaks of the social sciences have an ahistorical tendency to depict emerging security phenomena as unprecedented, when in fact the developments of today are inextricably tied to a long lineage of societal evolutions. Could you begin by outlining the broader picture against which you situate your work on changes in the

"Lord Anthony Giddens in Conversation with STAIR," *St Antony's International Review* 13 no. 1 (2017): 14-24

Lord Giddens: In my early work I emphasized the connections between communication, time, space, and power. I always saw them as intrinsically connected to one another, and as giving us a comprehensive framework for analysing different kinds of societies. The early civilizations emerged on the basis of the invention of writing. Writing was crucial to the development of cities, and cities in turn were vital for the development of early civilization. You have to remember that the bulk of human history is hunter-gatherer communities, for about half a million years. It is only then that you get to the early civilizations, some seven or eight thousand years ago.

The reason that writing was so important is that it functioned as a storage device. Levi-Strauss wrote about societies that existed before communication and a fixed notion of time, and he suggested that they lived in what he called “reversible time.” Their sense of time was not linear, since they had no clock or calendar to trace the flow of time. That is why they lasted relatively unchanged for so long. We, today, are very accustomed to our calendars, and with that to linear progress. Yet there is really no intuitive reason why one would need to think of time like that whatsoever. The concept of “reversible time” fascinates me, because it relates in my mind to what quantum mechanics today is telling us: time has no intrinsic meaning. It is not necessarily flowing forward in any meaningful sense.

And so, when you get the invention of writing, you also get the invention of calendars. This gave society dates, and we could then begin to have *history*. Once you get history, you also get a linear narrative of the self, and a linear narrative of the development of society. Writing, at this point, becomes a storage device for power. Power is rooted in the ability to store knowledge, keep track of developments, and grasp reality through facts and figures, and to envision a future based on that. It is against this backdrop that I wrote *The Nation-state and Violence*. Violence, similarly, relies on the skilful organization of time and space. Organized violence only emerges with writing. The rise of cities coincides with the rise of organized military capability. Large-scale violence then became almost the basic condition of the early city state. Unlike in the biological domain, there are no analogies to natural selection and gradual evolution. Human development is by necessity discontinuous, non-linear, with multiple fits and starts. It goes in jumps, with periods of relative stability in between episodes of rapid change and radical instability.

The emergence of the early modern nation state in Europe

was closely interrelated with the invention of printing. Printing becomes a way of coordinating time and space. The early inventions around printing that took place in China were what propelled China to such a high civilizational status. Once you can distribute knowledge through the art of printing, you also get the rise of mass education. The next massive leap takes place only centuries later, with the emergence of electronic communication. You can communicate with people across time and space. You know longer had to move across time and space to reach others. In the American Civil War, the battle of New Orleans was fought about three months after the war had been formally concluded. The news took that long to arrive from Ghent, where the peace treaty was signed.

The first telegraph message was sent in 1844. That message was the origin of the electronic age, which to me foreshadows the onset of globalization in its modern form. Morse code was a massive breakthrough. It promoted a fundamental reorganization of time, space, and power. It also transformed the nature of war. The efficient organization of a war effort requires strict and reliable time frames. In the beginning, time was local. Obviously, there is no single reference point when globalization began. A crucial step was taken when standardized time zones were established in the late nineteenth century. For me, globalization is about the transformation of time and space, and the shrinking in their relative importance, or the barriers they pose on transactions. Today, we obviously have a massively integrated global market. Especially in the latter part of the nineteenth century, we see this acceleration. But I don't think it is right to see globalization as merely economic, because the compression of time and space reconfigures all spheres of human activity. Globalization is about rapidly increasing interdependence, intensifying everywhere today.

This becomes ever more evident with the digital revolution, which I have spent the last few years studying. I am particularly fascinated by the interplay between the internet, robotics, and supercomputers. What emerges from this complex is unprecedented algorithmic power. The smartphone in your pocket stores just about all of human knowledge. In a sense, we become part of a massive machine without realising it. To me, this is reforming everything from sexuality to personal identity to our global futures—not this knowledge revolution on its own, but when it interacts with society, with time and space with violence. We are not in charge of this revolution in any meaningful sense of the word. We are being plunged, as it were, into these changes without readily being able to assess the consequences.

This is both massively liberating and massively worrying, but since we have no prior experience of it we can't easily make risk calculations about it all. If you bet on a horse race, the bookie will beat you most of the time because he's got the data on all previous horse races. In the case of some of the major changes affecting our world today, we just don't know the true level of risk, just as we don't know the true level of opportunity.

This has given rise to two kinds of literatures: those of the optimists and the pessimists. I would highly recommend Martin Rees' book *Our Final Century*. Martin's book, as the title indicates, is about whether we will survive this century, which is not, I am afraid, a joke. He is not a pessimist necessarily, but he says it's a real question. He talks about the possibility of large swathes of humanity being wiped out. I refuse to identify either with optimists or pessimists. You can be an optimist if you underestimate risk, and you can be a pessimist if you do the opposite, so I refuse these labels, given we don't know the true level of risk or opportunity.

STAIR: How do these optimist and pessimist literatures help us understand the current state of risk and opportunity?

LG: If I can bring the discussion towards geopolitics, my next book is on the topic of the "high opportunity, high risk society"—my rather clumsy name for the world we live in at the current moment. For the last forty years, we have probably had an overestimation of opportunity and underestimation of risk due to relative geopolitical stability under the aegis of American power. This period might be coming to an end with the return of geopolitics. Take for example, the Russia-Ukraine situation. Both sides lay absolute claims to Crimea. They are busy insulting each other, while Russia is armed with nuclear weapons far more destructive than those of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and so is the United States. We have always assumed that these will never be used, but if the world becomes unstable then I do not think you can say that with such clarity. President Trump, whatever you think about him, has no experience in politics in the conventional sense, or international relations. Some people compare the period we are in now to the 1930s, but the reality is much more dangerous I'm afraid, at least at the outer edge of risk, because of the extraordinary destructive power of the weaponry involved. We have to hope that those risks will never materialize. But we cannot say it is impossible.

STAIR: Do you think the analogy to the 1930s in Europe is relevant, or potentially overblown?

LG: I think there are certainly analogues. For example, you had the rise of populism before the 30s, the polarization of politics and partial dissolution of the political centre. I would not go further than to say there are some similarities. The risks then were huge and millions lost their lives, but nuclear weapons did not exist. Climate change was much less advanced. The world population was nowhere near the levels of what it is today. All I mean is that we have to look again—which I do in the book I am working on—at whether we are in a new world and how we are going to cope with its opportunities and risks at a point where we have maybe been too complacent about the huge unknowns. I sound like a pessimist, but I am not, for the reasons I gave.

You have to include global capitalism in that. There has never been a global system of capitalism remotely close to what we have today. A lot of this is from the digital revolution, as money has become electronic. People are now used to it, but what it means is that your money no longer exists in the physical world, it is just digital. It is immediately transferred around the world; you can use a credit card in any country in the world. The proportion of cash held in hand is shrinking all the time. What is money now? Almost as elusive as time. Mind you, philosophers have never been able to define what money is.

STAIR: How do the digital revolution and the global system of capitalism relate to previous sociological transformations?

LG: The digital transformation mirrors previous ones in some ways: that is, it is a system of geopolitical power that emerged in war. It is still very much a matter of global geopolitics. The other side of it is commercial capitalism. The influence of global advertising markets now is huge. These advertisements are everywhere and many are done by robots on a global scale. The global dominance of advertising is a means to funding all of this. Advertising is so ubiquitous these days. I was born near Tottenham, and have always been a Tottenham supporter. I never thought I would see a day where all the teams have got the name of a company on their shirts, but that is the world we live in. You cannot open your computer without being exposed to the world of mass advertising.

STAIR: Where does this lead to? This erasure or blurring of the lines between the personal and the public, which is what underpins this idea of global advertising, draws parallels to Hannah Arendt's definition of totalitarianism. She said totalitarianism was not an all-powerful state, but rather a deletion of the boundary between the personal and public life, in that you do not have the refuge of

the private anymore.

LG: I would push back on that—all of this is a medium of personalization. You find your identity in what you interact with others about online in a much deeper sense than others have done before. You forge an identity, you construct a narrative of self.

STAIR: How does this forging take place? In many senses, we are forging our identities online, but perhaps we are in fact buying identities that have been made ready for us instead. What does identity creation look like in this context—is it a process of creating, or perhaps subscribing?

LG: I see the point, but I would tend to disagree because the multiplicity of things you do every minute of every day online are redefining the nature of personal identity as it is. There is a constant process, I do not think that totalitarianism as described by Arendt is exactly the same as the dominance of commercial capitalism, even though it obviously overlaps. For example, if you consider the body, the body is now a cultivated object instead of one that is taken for granted. You are bombarded with advertisements about this. You are defining your life more through a constant personal interaction with the whole corpus of knowledge of which you have hardly any understanding yourself. If you think about sexuality, for better or for worse, it is being redefined and restructured in so many different ways. And advertising is one core part of it, I would absolutely agree, but I wouldn't call it a version of totalitarianism.

STAIR: In this case, what is the role of advertising in terms of how it affects human identity?

LG: Advertising supports the whole system, and of course it has intrusive aspects, it shapes tastes and so forth, you are bombarded with advertisements consciously and subconsciously. They influence you in that you have to resist, adapt, or shape your personality. But the important part is not merely how it affects our identities, but its intrinsic connection to global capitalism. The world is now one in which global companies dominate the economy. We are somehow a part of that, but we are not just a product that is shaped by it. In some sense you can have heightened reflexivity. You can look up anything about yourself immediately. I think your readers should at some point take a look at the literature on the finitude of human beings. The advance of artificial intelligence is so rapid, so universal, that this could lead at some point to the end of the human being. Here, I would certainly recommend Ray

Kurzweil's book *The Singularity is Near*. Singularity refers to the point at which intelligent machines become part of us, so that human beings are changed, or simply surpass us.

STAIR: What are the implications of such a transformation?

LG: Obviously, the whole process, well under way, will have huge implications for jobs, for the future labour market, education, and many, many other areas. They were created in a Foucauldian world, and we are experiencing a partial reversion to a pre-Foucauldian world. The world has reintroduced what Foucault had said disappeared; that is—exemplary violence, public beheadings, etcetera—those things, he argued, had been replaced by disciplinary power, and I think that one of the things that the digital world does is to recreate all of us being part of a kind of close community, so that things that we thought were not part of modernity have come back again. ISIS is twenty-first century terrorism, and world migration is twenty-first century migration—many migrants use smartphones to track their progress. A member of ISIS could behead someone, and then could watch a debate in parliament about terrorism on BBC iPlayer that same day. That is our world. No one has ever lived in a world like that. There's the reintroduction of shame, because of the public nature of the internet. Foucault thought that shame was disappearing and would be replaced by guilt. But there seems to be a hyper-modern version of what we had before. And I think you have to recognize that education might become just as transformed as the workplace, and lectures might seem more and more marginal. The campus-based university no doubt will still exist, but if you look at EDX and other initiatives by Harvard and MIT, and forums like Khan Academy, millions of people all over the world are already educated online.

Similarly, the emergence of tutorials as a form of education can be seen as a sort of adaptation, if you like. They cannot be commoditized, although they can be done online, because they are smaller. But traditional lectures are quite Foucauldian. It is funny now when you give lectures, as everyone is looking down, and you do not know whether they're typing notes or sending texts to their friends. Half of the audience is looking down and not at you.

STAIR: This throws up questions about the links between technology and power. In many ways, it seems that the digital revolution could be seen as being on a quest to democratizing evolution. On the other hand, many of the applications of digital capabilities function as direct outlets of geopolitical power. The

hype around global democracy through technology seems widely overblown.

LG: It's not one or the other, these things are symbiotic. There are so many different angles on it all that you can't answer such a question with a simple remark. The digital revolution certainly completely changes many aspects of day to day life, but through many channels: the introduction of individual websites and the democratization of digital products is certainly one effect, but the digital revolution has sweeping implications for traditional forms of power as well. It has shifted how corporations and states act, as well as holds implications for war. Russia, for example, uses these aspects of the digital revolution as part of its hybrid war strategy. Perhaps this is the future—perhaps not. The weight of the subject resists easy generalization.

STAIR: The example of Russian hybrid warfare is quite interesting here, in terms of understanding how states might be responding to both the complexities of their new security environments and the intrinsic opportunities of uncertain international systems. It seems like, in the twenty-first century, the state that is most flexible and most adaptable holds the advantage. With Russia and hybrid warfare we see a state reacting quite quickly relative to other global powers, notably the United States and European nations.

LG: Maybe, maybe not. Of course, Russia, despite its adaptability in this sense, remains very vulnerable. Russia may have been able to take a temporary advantage because it could use a quasi-totalitarian state, but I would expect a strong reaction from the United States and other global powers. Remember, Russia is a vulnerable oil-based economy, and spends vast funds on its military. It has high-technology capabilities in its military, but virtually nowhere else. Structurally, this does not seem to bode well for its “dominance” in hybrid warfare.

STAIR: Relatedly, in tying the concept of high opportunity, high risk systems to the digital revolution, how might we understand the particular implications of increasingly democratized means of power and violence?

LG: The question makes me think immediately of the issue of fake news and the diffusion of control over information and ‘facts.’ Of course, the issue of fake news has important connections to hybrid warfare tactics, and also resembles certain historical

trends of doublespeak and totalitarianism. It is also, however, an artefact of the digital age. With so many sources of information, it becomes more difficult to know whom to trust. The problem of echo chambers, I think, is a real one: people seek out information and news sources that confirm their beliefs. This problem is partly structural given the historical growth of media sources over the last several centuries, and—as has been demonstrated during the US presidential election—is a worrying sign. Especially when you consider that sources like CNN that have, in the past, been viewed as an analogue to the BBC, have been labelled “fake news” by a sitting president, which is quite disturbing if he can be successful. But I do not think it’s likely that he will be successful, as the other side of the internet and the digital revolution produces an opposite effect. If you are capable, you can fact check anything and have access to a profusion of information, with a heightened access to rationality.

STAIR: Is it that no one predicted it, or rather that nobody really listened to the people who were predicting it?

LG: No credible economist really predicted it. The media tends to rush for explanation after any unanticipated event. Almost the next day after the financial crisis, for instance, journalists were explaining it as though they had known about it all the time. I think our individual lives are somewhat like that in an information saturated environment. It is a world of 24-hour media in which the media rush for explanations, and so you sometimes end up with simplistic narratives. These are complex stories. The rise of populism has certainly been partly fuelled by the financial crisis—and the causes of it, which were due to financial speculation. Ordinary citizens had to pay for the costs in their taxes.

A second factor in the rise of populism is ideological. The book I’d recommend on this is Arlie Hochschild’s *Strangers In Their Own Land*. She’s a Berkeley liberal, and she goes to Louisiana, the heart of Tea Party country, and she gets to know people and becomes quite sympathetic to them at a personal level. She says they are “stay-at-home migrants:” they can’t move because they’re too poor, and the world is changing too fast around them. The idea of “strangers in their own land” applies to people in the deindustrialized areas in the north of the UK as well. Of course, the attitude of many of them is not what a liberal person would support—hostility to migrants, to foreigners, racism... Interestingly, in the last chapter of that book, Donald Trump makes an appearance: he flies in in his plane—that’s before he won the election—and gets an ecstatic reception.

The third cause is what we've discussed; the rise of digital media. A further factor is simply contingency. Take the examples of the British Brexit vote, or the election of President Trump in the United States. You could have got a different result, referendums, like presidential elections, are one-off decisions which can be affected by many contingent factors. When you have contingent factors playing a role in your life, you rewrite it to make it seem as though it *had* to happen that way, searching for explanations. Imagine it in your personal life: one day, you sit at a bar, meet someone, fall in love, but your whole life could have been different if you'd never gone into that bar.

STAIR: Regarding Hochschild, and touching on your point about high opportunity, high risk societies: you said that you might not want to be a pessimist, but do not want to be an optimist either. Much of the existing literature on risk is very totalizing—it makes these grand statements like “risk is increasing” or “opportunities are increasing,” but in reality not everybody is exposed to the risks and the opportunities in the same way and equal measure. This is why Hochschild's latte-drinking habits look so out of place next to the people she is interviewing: globalization is not some totalitarian structure that imposes equal risks and opportunities. Risks and opportunities differentiate themselves along various rather predictable lines—including class, nationality, race, and gender.

LG: Of course. When I speak of high opportunity, high risk, I don't mean it's a simple calculus. Take a conflict like Crimea—someone makes a mistake, and it can be the end of a large chunk of the world. That's contingency. In the First World War, what would have happened if Archduke Franz Ferdinand had not been shot? The important thing is not to rewrite retrospectively as though it was a natural process, or develop an inevitability.

STAIR: Against this backdrop, is it feasible at all to seek to tweak policy in ways that distribute risk and opportunity more equally? Or is globalization always going to have an overriding impact, whose effects will inevitably fall unequally across societies? Much of the globalization literature seems to build on a solid footing of determinism, and the space for contingency, policy, and human agency seems rather limited.

LG: Of course not. I would rather think of globalization literature as an analytical backdrop in a world saturated by context. We certainly have to try to mitigate some of the uneven effects. The

threats of a failure of global governance around the world are enormous. Global governance is much more than just economic management. The reason why I'm a pro-European is because I think European countries can do far more at a global level acting collectively than they would ever be able to acting individually. And—this is an unorthodox view—I think the EU has a big role in reducing bureaucracy: the UK will find that multiple trade deals with other countries will be far more bureaucratic than the existing situation.

STAIR: One last question—perhaps this is something you'll write more about in your upcoming book. How can these ideas apply to the rest of the world, for example to states which have not experienced to the same extent the effects of the digital revolution, artificial intelligence, and so on? A lot of the risk and globalization literature seems to be responding to challenges in the global North, and specifically to the American and European context. How does the rest of the world feature in these narratives and developments?

LG: I don't think it would be accurate to claim that these developments have not reached other parts of the world as well. We've never had a point in history, ever, where the most advanced technologies have gone straight to the poorest countries of the world. I have a friend who is eye surgeon, doing work with people in Africa at risk of losing their eyesight through cataracts. Some four million people are at risk. New technologies, drawing on digital innovation, can treat them very rapidly. With smartphones, you can communicate at a distance and do diagnoses of eye problems. In many African countries, people have skipped telephone lines and have gone straight to mobile. Globalization and the shrinking of time have made perhaps even a more of an impact here.

PROXY ACTORS IN THE CYBER DOMAIN: IMPLICATIONS FOR STATE STRATEGY

Jamie Collier

Abstract

States are increasingly compelled to work with non-state ‘proxy’ actors in the cyber domain. Within this nascent security domain, states have important strategic decisions to make, being able to use and interact with proxies in a diverse range of ways. This has led to a complex environment where the absence of doctrine has led to uncertainty going forward. This paper provides a taxonomy on the phenomenon of states using proxy actors in the cyber domain, outlining the proxy actors available to a state, the reasons proxy actors appeal, and the nature of state-proxy relations. It is argued that proxies are an increasingly important component of state strategy in the cyber domain. However, whilst proxy actors can bolster the capabilities of a state, they can also undermine a state’s autonomy and security. States must therefore proceed with caution in working with a crucial, albeit risky, resource.

Introduction

States have long mobilised non-state actors for their own strategic gain. The trend of states using proxy actors has continued in the cyber domain, yet the phenomenon remains severely under-analysed.ⁱ This paper seeks to provide clarity on the issue by outlining a taxonomy of states’ use of proxy actors in the cyber domain, the intention being to provide a framework for future analysis. A number of facets are explored, with focus on: the nature of proxy actors available to a state; the reasons why states turn to proxies; and the types of interaction that occur between states and proxies. In all of the aspects of state-proxy relations examined, a lack of uniformity is a consistent theme throughout.

The lack of uniformity in states’ use of proxies highlights the complex challenges facing states at a tactical, operational,

ⁱ For papers that have considered this trend, see Alexander Klimburg, “Mobilising Cyber Power,” *Survival* 53, no. 1 (February 2011): 41–60; Christian Czosseck, “State Actors and Their Proxies in Cyberspace,” in *Peacetime Regime for State Activities in Cyberspace*, ed. Katharina Ziolkowski (Tallinn: NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence, 2013), 1–30; Florian Egloff, “Cybersecurity and the Age of Privateering: a Historical Analogy,” *Cyber Studies Programme, Working Paper Series* 1, no. 1 (4 March 2015): 1–14.

and strategic level: both as to how states can defend themselves against the proxy actors used by others and as to how states should mobilise proxies themselves. This paper will focus on the strategic or political aspects, discussing the high-level implications for states. The uptake in the use of proxies within the cyber domain represents a nascent security concern for policymakers. As conventional armed warfare is increasingly perceived as risky and expensive, the appeal of cyberattacks continues to grow in the gap between peace and all-out war. It is therefore important for international relations, as an academic discipline, to develop a full understanding of this emerging trend in the cyber domain.ⁱⁱ The academic community has largely neglected the strategic aspects of cyber security thus far.¹ To continue to do so risks undermining the role of international relations as an academic discipline that remains current and capable of informing policymakers.²

The findings of this paper show that states use proxies for different reasons. They may be used to avoid a state being implicated in an attack, or at least so that a state can reasonably claim plausible deniability. Alternatively, the use of proxies may reflect a lack of sophistication within a state's own capability, or demonstrate the advanced skill-set and capacity to innovate amongst non-state actors. Proxies are used by states to secure systems within their own borders, as well as to project power far beyond them.

A variety of proxy actors are available to states that include private sector firms, organized crime and hacker groups, and civilian-led militias. Proxies offer a breadth of functions including the coordination of cyberattacks, (e.g., denial of service attacksⁱⁱⁱ and advanced persistent threats^{iv}), as well as less offensive assistance, such as providing states with expertise in defensive situations or access to threat intelligence. There is a spectrum of relationships that exist, with proxies ranging from recalcitrant to cooperative in their interaction with states.

Although many actors in the cyber domain are clearly either 'state' or 'non-state' actors, there are also several shades in between. The use of proxies therefore highlights a disconnect between the rigid distinctions deployed in international relations literature and the blurry distinctions observed empirically. Such

ii Although the nature and the level of threat at hand is contested, there is a consensus that further scholarly attention is required in order to develop understanding and enhance debate.

iii A denial of service attack is a malicious attempt to overwhelm a server or network with traffic in order to make it unavailable to users.

iv An advanced persistent threat is a system intrusion where an unauthorized user infiltrates a network, typically in order to continuously monitor and steal data.

an observation applies to proxy actors throughout the ages, yet is arguably more applicable to the cyber domain, given the greater ambiguity of actors' intentions and allegiances. Instead of a rigid separation between 'state' and 'non-state', state-proxy interactions should instead be conceptualized on a spectrum that captures the variety of relationships and levels of involvement between states and proxies that exist.

The discussion in this paper proceeds in five further sections.^v The following section outlines the various types of proxy actors that exist. The focus then moves onto the reasons why proxies appeal to states, and states' interaction and relationships with proxy actors. The future outlook is also considered where it is argued that states' use of proxies is a trend set to continue for the foreseeable future. Finally, conclusions drawn from the discussion are outlined.

Proxy Actors in the Cyber Domain

This section provides an overview of the types of proxy actors that exist in the cyber domain. As shown below, a variety of proxy actors may be utilized by states.

Private Sector Firms

Many states maintain close relationships with private sector firms from a diverse range of industries. These firms offer several useful functions to states including security services, access to networks and intelligence, and knowledge of technical or system vulnerabilities.

Technology firms are frequently used by government intelligence agencies. The release of National Security Agency (NSA) documents by Edward Snowden has shown that many US technology companies, such as Facebook, Google, Apple, and Microsoft, have granted the NSA direct access to their servers under the government programme Planning Tool for Resource Integration, Synchronization, and Management (PRISM).³

Telecommunication firms have also assisted states in gathering intelligence, with BT, Vodafone, and Verizon all assisting GCHQ in accessing undersea cables.⁴ Likewise, China enjoys a close relationship with many of its quasi-state businesses. Even Chinese firms that seem to have a high degree of autonomy, such as telecom firm Huawei, have been prevented by both Australia and the US from bidding on national contracts, due to fears that 'back doors'

^v Many of the sections of this paper are based on the questions posed in Andrew Mumford, *Proxy Warfare* (Cambridge: Polity 2013).

will be installed, granting Chinese government officials access to sensitive systems and data.⁵

States also work with security companies. The UK collaborates with BAE Systems and QinetiQ in its Defence Cyber Protection Partnership.^{vi} GCHQ clearly envisages outsourcing will continue in the long-term: in March 2010, GCHQ, along with private sector firms, purchased a new £40 million site in Cheltenham to house contractor staff.⁶ Specialist cyber security firms are also a useful resource. There is close collaboration between Israel's military intelligence agency arm, Unit 8200, and Israeli private sector technology firms. Israel is even building a new 'cyber park' in Beer Sheva to encourage further tech start-ups and to develop relationships with private sector firms.⁷

The private sector supplies online services to states. Vupen, a French firm that sells knowledge of software vulnerabilities, claims to earn 80 percent of its revenue from the US government.⁸ Italian-based Hacking Team has previously sold its surveillance technology, capable of infecting a target's device to steal files, read emails and record conversations, to a number of states with questionable human rights records, including Russia, Ethiopia, and Sudan.⁹

Militias and Civilian Volunteer Networks

States have also sought to utilize the expertise of civil society, engaging via civilian-based militias and volunteer networks. Although interaction with militias and volunteer networks is an often-favoured course of action taken by states, the organization of these groups varies significantly.

One often-adopted model is for states to house a volunteer cyber 'reserve unit' within their military reserve force. This has been implemented most successfully in Estonia where, as will be discussed in the following section, a number of national characteristics facilitate the participation of volunteers and civil society in the provision of national security. The Cyber Defence League (CDL)^{vii} contains volunteers with a variety of specialties including computer science, cyber law, and crisis management strategy. The unit has a broad remit to provide assistance in developing cyber security practices and protecting

vi The Defence Cyber Protection Partnership is a partnership between the Government's primary defence departments, including GCHQ, the MOD and the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) along with thirteen private sector firms including BAE Systems, BT, Hewlett Packard, and QinetiQ amongst others participating.

vii The official name of the unit is the Defence League Cyber Unit, based in the Estonian Defence League. See <http://www.kaitseliit.ee/en/cyber-unit>.

critical national infrastructure. CDL members are organized on a voluntary basis and only paid when formally called up. They are also placed on standby in high-risk situations^{viii} and have previously run exercises for cabinet ministers, ensuring interest and preparedness in cyber security amongst the highest levels of Estonian government.¹⁰ Other states, such as the UK and the US, operate more constrained cyber reserves forces that are focused exclusively on the protection of military assets.

China provides a contrasting approach: students joining a technical university are required to participate in a militia as a *de facto* condition of enrolment.¹¹ This has given Beijing access to potentially thousands of highly-trained IT specialists that have expertise in software design, cyber security, and possibly even offensive espionage techniques.^{ix} This also demonstrates the emerging relevance of non-traditional actors in the cyber domain, such as universities and technical academies that possess unique pools of knowledge and talent that states can tap into.

Militias have also provided a more offensive capability. The Iranian cyber-militia *Iz a-Din al-Qassam Cyber Fighters* launched cyberattacks on a number of US banks. The attacks were described as military grade and were considerably larger than the 2007 Russian attacks on Estonia. Such sophisticated capability for a civilian group seemed extremely unusual but was subsequently explained: it was later concluded that the group acted as a front organization to screen Iranian attacks on the US financial system.¹²

Hacker Groups

As states seek to enhance their offensive capability, cooperation with specialist hacker groups becomes an increasingly appealing option.

The Syrian Electronic Army (SEA) was established in 2011 and maintained close links to the Assad government, with several founding members having worked on previous government IT projects.¹³ The SEA proved a useful tool for Assad in its early years with its activities ranging from producing a pro-Assad online narrative, to more destructive cyberattacks, and forms of online

viii For example, the CDL was on standby in the 2011 general election. Given that many Estonians vote online, an attack on the voting system during an election would be an obvious target for a potential aggressor.

ix The link between Chinese militias and offensive operations remains unclear. See Robert Sheldon and Joe McReynolds, "Civil-Military Integration and Cyber-security: a Study of Chinese Information Warfare Militias," in *China and Cyber Security*, eds. Jon R Lindsay, Tai Ming Cheung, and Derek S Reveron (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015). 188–222.

exploitation directed at anti-Assad groups.¹⁴

Russia Business Network (RBN) is a cybercrime group which has been linked to a variety of criminal activities including botnet hire^x and the production of malicious exploits and fake anti-malware. RBN has been suspected of involvement in the attack on Georgian websites at the same time Russia invaded the country.¹⁵ Suspicions of RBN's links to the Kremlin are given additional credence by the fact that the creator of RBN is the nephew of a powerful and well-connected Russian politician.¹⁶

States also work with individual hackers directly. When the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) discovered that Tan Dailin, a graduate student at Sichuan University, was attacking Japanese sites, he was subsequently invited to participate in a PLA cyber invasion methods training course. Dailin eventually formed his own group called Network Crack Program Hacker that went on to target US government agencies.¹⁷

Organized Crime Groups

States also collaborate with traditional organized crime groups that operated before criminal hacking opportunities arose. This is most clearly observed in Russia where hacking groups have grown out of mafia organizations. These mafia organizations are loosely connected to the government through a web of corruption, and indirect and intermittent ties to military and intelligence agencies.¹⁸ Many of these mafia organizations, along with other hacking groups, conduct cybercrime operations worth billions of dollars each year. Given the low cost to the state, the Kremlin turns a blind eye when the victims are based outside Russian borders, whilst harshly punishing those that target Russian political actors.¹⁹

Along with the variety of proxy actors mentioned above, it is possible that other actors^{xi} are used, or will be used in the future, by states including hacktivist^{xii} groups, terrorist cells, private military contractors, and possibly even other nation states. It is also possible for the different classifications of actors outlined above to overlap: for example, a corporate employee serving in a botnet is a large collection of computers that, unbeknown to their owners, have been set up to forward transmissions, including spam and viruses to other computers.

xi For an overview of the major actors in the cyber domain, see Gregory J. Rattray and Jason Healey, "Non-State Actors and Cyber Conflict," in *America's Cyber Future Security and Prosperity in the Information Age*, eds. Kristin M Lord and Travis Sharp (2011), 65–86.

xii Hacktivism is used to describe many forms of online activism, where computers are used to promote a political agenda or principles such as free speech or human rights.

volunteer defence unit. Having established that states use, or are able to act through, a wide range of proxies in the cyber domain, it is now appropriate to explain why the use of these actors has particular appeal to states.

The Appeal of Proxy Actors

Proxies in the cyber domain appeal to states for a variety of reasons. In a broader context, proxy actors have appealed to states throughout history. For example, the Roman, Turkish, and European colonial empires all used conquered peoples to assist their expansion, and volunteers were used on a large scale during the Sino-Japanese and Spanish civil wars.²⁰ Indeed, parallels have even been drawn convincingly between states' use of proxies in the cyber domain today and states' mobilisation of navies, mercantile companies, pirates and privateers during the sixteenth and seventeenth century.²¹

This historically ubiquitous trend²² raises questions over the significance of the appeal of proxies in the cyber domain: specifically, whether states' use of proxies represents an altogether new development, or merely a continuation of an existing trend in a contemporary context.

The argument that proxy actors are an important component of state strategy and therefore appeal to states is contentious. As proxy actors outside of the cyber domain have become less centralized and formalized, they have become increasingly likely to defect against their state sponsors, highlighting the risk of blowback.²³ Further, previous literature has made convincing arguments that states remain the dominant actors in the cyber domain, given their unparalleled ability to inflict physical damage.²⁴ For example, the most physically destructive cyberattack, Stuxnet, which compromised an Iranian nuclear subterfuge, was orchestrated by the US and Israel. Such state-centric arguments may therefore dismiss the appeal or impact of proxy actors. Whilst it is not disputed that states remain the most capable actors in inflicting physical damage in the cyber domain, it is argued that it is wholly inappropriate to measure power and capability solely through the lens of physical harm. The cyber domain requires a conceptual rethink towards notions of security. This is in order to include the vast array of types of damage such as economic, psychological, and cultural. When consideration is given to this full spectrum of activities in the cyber domain (ranging from financial crime and espionage, to acts of political suppression and the distribution of propaganda) the landscape is drastically varied with states being merely one of a number of actors. When cyber power is considered in this broader sense, traditional international relations

approaches (such as realist theories that stress the power of nation-states) offer a perspective that is markedly less relevant. Instead, the growing popularity of proxies demonstrates the importance of a diverse range of actors in the cyber domain.

This paper now turns to examine the reasons why states use proxies in the cyber domain.

Power Diffusion

The most significant reason that the use of proxies appeals is due to an ongoing process of power diffusion in the cyber domain.²⁵ The power diffusion process involves two interrelated trends: nation-states struggling to adapt to the challenges in the cyber domain and the emergence of a number of non-state actors.

Certain characteristics of the cyber domain have challenged the traditional monopoly held by states on the provision of security. There is currently a severe lack of skilled workers in a number of technical disciplines, such as computer science, cyber security, and software engineering. Therefore, those with such skills can command high salaries that governments struggle to afford.²⁶ This is a worry for the UK intelligence agency GCHQ, with the parliamentary Intelligence and Security Committee recently raising concerns over the agency's inability to retain a suitable cadre of internet specialists to respond to the threat at hand. Many GCHQ employees are able to earn over three times their salary when they move to technology firms such as Google, Microsoft, and Apple.²⁷ Such an exodus has led to suggestions that GCHQ will have to alter its strategic thinking in the future.^{xiii} Further, the underlying infrastructure of the cyber domain is largely outside state control—for example, it has previously been estimated that 98 percent of US government communications, including classified communications, travel over civilian owned and operated networks and systems.²⁸

Government and regulatory timelines have struggled to keep up with the fast pace of technological change: US Congress failed to pass a single piece of major cyber security legislation between 2002 and 2014, and it took the US Federal Risk and Authorisation Management Program six months to approve its first contractor. Although six months was regarded as fast within government, given the relevant

xiii Former GCHQ Director Iain Lobban suggested that the agency might have to reconsider its requirement that it only hires British nationals (see *ibid*). It has also been proposed that the agency creates programs that seek to attract employees for a short-term period (around two years) before going on to other careers. See Oliver Wright, "GCHQ's 'Spook First' Programme to Train Britain's Most Talented Tech Entrepreneurs," *The Independent* (1 January 2015), <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/news/gchqs-spook-first-programme-to-train-britains-most-talented-tech-entrepreneurs-9953516.html>.

bureaucratic hurdles to be negotiated, the pace was regarded as sluggish amongst the wider cyber security community.²⁹

Characteristics of the cyber domain have also empowered non-state actors. Unlike traditional military domains, the skills required to succeed in the cyber domain are entrenched in the civilian sector. The reduced cost of online technology has made it possible for a variety of actors to distribute large quantities of information. Reduced costs also lower the barriers to entry, enabling new actors and increasing the potential for civil-military integration. Unlike the significant capital required to build fighter jets and naval vessels, sophisticated tools in the cyber domain can be developed by small businesses and start-ups.³⁰ Further, given that barriers to entry are particularly low, non-state actors have little to lose from exit and re-entry, making them inherently more flexible and adaptable to change when compared to states.³¹ Given these advantages held by non-state actors, states have a natural incentive to work alongside them.

The global scale of the cyber domain can also naturally benefit multinational corporations. Technology monopolies possess a global outreach to the envy of even well-resourced intelligence agencies. For example, Cisco's dominance in the router market allows the firm to see and analyse a significant proportion of global Internet traffic. Google and Microsoft's respective dominance in the search engine and desktop operating system markets are likely to yield similar levels of access. In addition, software exploit and vulnerability markets^{xiv} offer a valuable resource for states that are able to access a global marketplace, as opposed to the capability of government employees alone.

Since World War II, the most powerful states have rarely used proxies to compensate for deficiencies in national capabilities. In the Cold War, superpowers used proxies not due to weaknesses in their own militaries, but, because direct war against another nuclear power was deemed too risky. Today, the leading Western powers use proxies due to a realization that direct wars represent a significant political and electoral risk. Since the electoral backlash against the War on Terror, states such as the US and UK are learning that many of their citizens do not have the appetite, nor are willing to foot the bill, for protracted military campaigns.³² The cyber domain is perhaps unique, as a contemporary domain, with non-state actors possessing some of the finest minds, most sophisticated infrastructure and advanced capability.

xiv For further information on these markets, see Lillian Ablon, Martin C. Libicki, and Andrea A. Golay, "Markets for Cybercrime Tools and Stolen Data," RAND (14 March 2014), http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR600/RR610/RAND_RR610.pdf.

Plausible Deniability

Plausible deniability is frequently referred to as a reason why proxies are used in the cyber domain, particularly for offensive purposes. This is consistent with how proxies have been used in the past. As discussed above, the use of proxies appealed in the Cold War era when direct war against a nuclear power was considered too risky. Yet, if states attacked via proxies, they could claim plausible deniability, reducing the risk of retaliation. Likewise, proxies in the cyber domain are also able to muddle blame attribution.³³ For example, before and during the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008, Russian cyber militias disabled key portions of Georgia's communication system. It made sense for attacks to be conducted by militias as opposed to state-owned actors—in order to compromise Georgian systems, civilian systems in third-party states also needed to be attacked. Had a Russian state actor been implicated, the attack would have violated laws of armed conflict regarding the principle of distinction between military and civilian targets.³⁴ Further, assuming the Russian government was involved in the 2007 Estonian cyberattacks conducted by patriotic hackers, the Kremlin was able to respond whilst circumventing accountability and avoiding at least some of the diplomatic costs of direct action. This illustrates the argument that it is more difficult to deter a state from attacking in the first place if it is doing so under the cover of a proxy.

Although the conventional wisdom that proxies are used to allow states to claim plausible deniability certainly applies in the cyber domain, the benefits have been overemphasised for two reasons. First, as previously discussed, circumstantial evidence is increasingly used in the attribution process. For example, the 2007 Estonian cyberattack was in response to a Russian war memorial being relocated from the centre of Tallinn, the Estonian capital. This political context went some way to implicating Russia in the cyberattacks. Healey has argued that states should more readily place blame on other states for cyberattacks that originate from their territory.³⁵ As the use of circumstantial evidence in the attribution process gains traction, the marginal benefit of using proxies is reduced—especially for proxies known to maintain a close relationship with a particular government. Second, the supposed difficulties in attribution are themselves contested. Rid and Buchanan have argued convincingly that, contrary to the arguments that the state has been in perpetual decline in the cyber domain, sophisticated state agencies, in fact, have the necessary resources to attribute actors with a high degree of certainty.³⁶ If such agencies can attribute the perpetrators of cyberattacks with confidence, establishing a link between proxies and their state sponsors would also appear feasible. Conversely, there is

little incentive for an aggressor state to act via a proxy actor against targets that do not possess sophisticated attribution capabilities: if an aggressor state can conceal its identity independently, working with proxies only entails additional risk: both through the loss of state autonomy in the operation of an attack, and the danger that such proxy actors will reveal information about their state sponsor, either advertently or inadvertently. The appeal of proxies, for the purposes of an aggressor state being able to claim plausible deniability, therefore amounts to situations in which a target state is able to attribute an attack to an actor, but unable to prove a link between such an actor and a state sponsor. Although plausible deniability remains a valid reason why proxies appeal to states, the real benefit is considerably more marginal than often claimed, highlighting the fact that other factors are at play in explaining the appeal of proxies.

Cost Saving

Proxies have historically been used by a state to reduce costs, especially when a state lacks task-specific knowledge and expertise. Delegation to proxies also allows states to benefit from the efficiency gains of specialization.³⁷ Outsourcing is a popular model in the cyber domain, particularly in certain Western states such as the US and UK.³⁸ A state often only requires assistance from proxies on a short-term basis. By outsourcing, a state is able to access expertise and capability as and when it is required without the additional costs associated with permanent employees such as pension plans, sick leave, and training. The prospect of a return on investment in training is particularly low: training for technical jobs can take a long time and as agencies such as GCHQ have found, many employees, once trained, will only stay for a short period before going to work for the private sector. Further, as previously discussed, power diffusion has lowered the barriers to entry in the cyber domain for a number of actors. With many private sector firms able to bid for national contracts, costs should theoretically be driven down.

Avoidance of Direct Intervention

Proxies often provide a convenient tool for states to pursue their foreign policy agenda. This can be observed through US interaction with proxies. Although eager to assist anti-Assad rebels, the US was reluctant to intervene directly in Syria. Instead, the US diverted financial aid to provide technical assistance and equipment as well as training for networks of Syrian journalists, bloggers, and cyber-activists, to enable them to document and

disseminate information on developments in Syria, and to protect Syrian activists.³⁹ In addition, the US Office of Foreign Asset Control directed American technology company Network Solutions LLC to seize more than seven hundred domain names associated with the Assad government, forcing the regime to adjust its online presence.⁴⁰ This is consistent with US support for political dissent in the past. The US government has previously asked Twitter to maintain its service in Iran in order to help facilitate the organization of demonstrations.⁴¹

Reinforce State Authority

Sometimes, states' use of proxies is significantly shaped by broader strategic goals. China, which is less expansionist than its Western counterparts, is more concerned with maintaining domestic order. It has previously been argued that China has encouraged China-based hackers to attack others, in part to keep them from targeting Chinese assets or undermining the Chinese government.⁴²

Russia appears willing to turn a blind eye to cyberattacks that target victims abroad, but will harshly punish citizens that attack Russian political figures.⁴³ The Kremlin also uses proxies in its propaganda campaign, adding hundreds of operatives to counter the Western narrative of its invasion of Ukraine. Internet 'trolls' are employed by Internet Research, a Russian firm financed by a holding company headed by a friend of Putin.⁴⁴ The online operatives work twelve-hour shifts, using social media accounts to spread propaganda as well as leaving comments on various websites and videos online.⁴⁵ As previously discussed, the Syrian Electronic Army, established by the Assad government, has conducted similar activities online.

The suggestion that states use proxies to reinforce state authority might seem to contravene earlier arguments about power diffusion (where states turn to proxies due to deficiencies in their own capability). Yet these two trends do co-exist. While the power diffusion thesis asserts that states' cyber capabilities are relatively less powerful given the empowerment of non-state actors, the point made here relates to how states can then utilize the capabilities of non-state actors in various ways to either discourage dissent or to actively shape narratives that promote the state.

State Security

Proxies are vital in the provision of state security. As well as using contractors to protect government infrastructure, states have also

established information-sharing partnerships where states and private sector firms share information in a mutually beneficial arrangement. However, state power is constrained when the private sector owns large sections of critical national infrastructure. In states such as the UK, the government struggles to regulate these firms partly due to the strong property laws that protect private sector firms from state interference. Nonetheless, states are eager to work closely with the owners of critical national infrastructure to ensure adequate security standards are maintained.

Likewise, proxies are essential in the provision of intelligence for a state. Documents leaked by Edward Snowden show that organizations such as the NSA and GCHQ work closely with a number of private sector firms. States are also the majority customer in the global surveillance products market, estimated to be worth \$5 billion. This involves the selling of tracking, monitoring, and eavesdropping technology. Whilst these products can prove vital tools for national security, they have also been used to support despotic regimes and to prevent peaceful political dissent.^{xv}

National and Cultural Characteristics

States often work with proxies due to cultural connections. Estonia provides a good example where the participation of civilians in groups such as the Cyber Defence League grows out of national characteristics.^{xvi} Estonia operates a Total Defence model where it is expected, given the small size of the state, that civilians contribute to Estonian national security efforts.^{xvii} In addition, having only regained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, and with Russia still posing a viable threat, there is a deep sense of patriotism and a recognition that Estonian citizens must unite in order to secure their borders. With technology having played a decisive role in Estonia overcoming the legacy of the Soviet Union,⁴⁶ there is also a close association between cyber security and national security more broadly. A combination of these cultural, political, and historical factors mean that it is natural for the Estonian government to utilize willing civilian-based groups in the cyber domain.

xv Sari Horwitz, Shyamantha Asokan, and Julie Tate, "Trade in Surveillance Technology Raises Worries," *The Washington Post* (1 December 2011), https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/trade-in-surveillance-technology-raises-worries/2011/11/22/gIQAFFZOGO_story.html.

xvi Jamie Collier, "Strategies of Cyber Crisis Management: Lessons from the Approaches of Estonia and the United Kingdom," eds. Mariarosaria Taddeo and Ludovica Glorioso, *Ethics and Policies for Cyber Operations* (Cham: Springer, 2016).

xvii Ants Laaneots, "The Estonian Defence Forces – 2000," *Baltic Defence Review* 1, no. 1 (1999): 1–7; Milton P Davis, "An Historical and Political Overview of the Reserve and Guard Forces in the Nordic Countries," *Baltic Security Defence Review* 10 (18 August 2008): 171–201.

Proxies appeal to weak or small states in unique ways. Cyber militias in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan have all threatened to retaliate against future Russian cyber- or kinetic attacks.⁴⁷ As previously discussed, Iran has also been able to use militias as an effective tool to attack US financial institutions. Whilst weaker states are typically unable to pose a substantial kinetic threat to stronger states, they are potentially better placed to retaliate in the cyber domain given the low barriers to entry. Although cyberattacks have failed to prove as destructive as kinetic weapons,⁴⁸ proxies may nonetheless help weaker states balance the odds against more powerful adversaries.

As demonstrated above, the use of proxies appeals to states for a number of reasons. This leads to challenges in interpreting and understanding the phenomenon. The logic that the incidence of cyberattacks would lead to a nuclear retaliation seems dubious, casting aside Cold War paradigms. More recently, the War on Terror has left a legacy of a public distaste for direct wars in the West. Whilst this logic may explain why cyberattacks would be used (instead of direct war), they do not explain why they would be conducted via a proxy: cyberattacks are not as politically sensitive as direct war so there is arguably less need to conceal actions via proxies. Likewise, proxies with extensive local knowledge and experience have previously appealed to states that do not possess the same level of expertise.⁴⁹ Yet, such local knowledge is not a prerequisite for successful attacks in the cyber domain.

The use of proxies in the cyber domain is a novel phenomenon. Previous understanding on the use of proxies has not had to account for aspects of the cyber domain, such as the ongoing power diffusion process where even great powers use proxies due to deficiencies in their own capability. Thus, it is difficult to interpret and understand the use of proxies given the diversity in their use—ranging from political hacktivists, to criminal syndicates, to civilian militias.

State Interaction with Proxy Actors

Whilst the use of proxies appeals for a number of reasons as discussed above, states must still understand how to develop relationships with proxies in order to best garner their assistance and cooperation. Similar to the conclusions in previous sections, on this matter there is a lack of uniformity in opinions on the most suitable approach, with a variety of strategies currently exhibited by states.

States' interaction with proxies comprises two dimensions: states must decide on the type of relationships to form with proxy actors, as well as establish the degree of state involvement in the activities of a proxy.

State-proxy Relationships

A variety of relationships exist between states and their proxies, ranging from active cooperation to coercion. There is even significant variety within just one state-proxy relationship: the Chinese government has interacted with militias in at least four different forms including formal procurement relationships, formal outsourcing, transactional and coerced outsourcing as well as operational outsourcing.⁵⁰

Certain proxies are reluctant to assist states. States are therefore required to coerce some actors in order to gain their assistance. The US used coercive tactics in its pursuit of the hacking group Lulzsec. Lulzsec grew out of the group Anonymous and conducted a number of disruptive attacks. Lulzsec also claimed responsibility for an attack on the public-facing website of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).⁵¹ Hector Monsegue (known by the online pseudonym Sabu) was one of the co-founders of the group. When Monsegue was caught by the FBI and threatened with a heavy jail sentence, he became an FBI informant, working with the agency to identify fellow hackers and help overthrow the group.⁵²

Other proxies maintain inconsistent relationships with states, perhaps only working together when there is a mutual interest. The Syrian Electronic Army (SEA) has maintained an episodic relationship with the Assad government. Whilst the SEA started out as a state-sponsored group, when the Assad government became further besieged with domestic turmoil and civil war, the SEA changed its methods and membership. It gradually became more of a loose hacking collective, as opposed to a state-sponsored brigade.⁵³ The SEA maintained links with Assad, yet as the group was not an official government entity, the relationship between Assad and the group began to wane.

States also work with proxies through more mutually beneficial agreements. Outsourcing is one area where proxies work with states for financial reward. For example, in 2009/10, GCHQ spent £43.1 million on contractors.⁵⁴ In Israel, the Office of the Chief Scientist based in the Ministry of Economy dispenses risk-free government loans to technology start-ups and demonstrates that financial assistance can be used to foster close relationships with private sector firms.⁵⁵ Other public-private partnership agreements are voluntary and perhaps begin to move away from a state-proxy dynamic. For example, the UK's Cyber Security Information Sharing Partnership (CISP) acts as a portal where both private sector firms and government agencies can view and exchange information on threats and vulnerabilities in real time.⁵⁶

Other proxies enjoy close relationships with states. In 2010,

when Google withdrew its business from China, the firm worked closely with the US government, informing them before their public announcement. The US government benefitted from Google's withdrawal, using the incident to push for the adoption of Internet norms supported by the US.⁵⁷ The 2014 Sony data breach demonstrates how the concerns of a non-state actor can spill onto government agendas. Whilst the breach occurred at a private sector media company, the event soon became embroiled in a broader narrative as an attack on US First Amendment Rights of free speech.⁵⁸

Some actors are so closely aligned with state interests that the interaction between the two is paradoxically minimal. Parallels have been drawn between ideologically motivated proxies and the political action committees (PACs) that operate in US election campaigns.⁵⁹ Proxies have defended the interests of their state with minimal coordination, much like a PAC that directs efforts towards a political campaign without working directly for a candidate. Russian and Chinese citizens regularly act in the interests of the state without direct coordination, often to allow the state to maximise its ability to claim plausible deniability. With these proxy actors proactive in defending state interests, it is clear that some proxies are motivated predominantly by ideology and loyalty to a state, as opposed to financial gain.⁶⁰

States therefore have a number of tools available to them in interacting with proxies (such as regulatory powers, law enforcement, its own purchasing power, etc.). Yet, the relationships states form are often linked to broader political, cultural, and historical factors. For example, Russia has been able to extend its links with criminal groups into the cyber domain. But, for Western states, interaction with criminal groups is politically unviable; they have alternatively developed close relationships with predominantly private sector firms. As shown in the Assad regime's interaction with the Syrian Electronic Army, states may look to create or instigate the establishment of proxy groups when no current state-proxy relationships exist.

Whilst states' relationships with proxy actors are largely dictated by broader political, cultural, and historic variables, states potentially have more leverage over their level of involvement in the activities of proxy actors. As demonstrated below, in addition to the different categories of relationship that exist between states and proxy actors, the level of state involvement in the activities of proxy actors also varies significantly.^{xviii}

Level of State Involvement

xviii For detail on spectrum of state involvement in cyberattacks see Healey, "Beyond Attribution"; Jason Rivera, "Achieving Cyberdeterrence and the Ability of Small States to Hold Large States at Risk," 7–24.

When proxies act in the state's interest without direct coordination, the state has, by definition, minimal involvement. States may simply be aware of the actions of other actors but choose to ignore them (or at least do nothing to prevent them). This possibly occurred in the 2007 cyberattacks on Estonia. Alternatively, proxies may be gently encouraged by states. Third parties will still conduct the attack, but their actions are supported by national governments as a matter of policy. For example, in 2007 Iran created the Basij Cyber Council to organize Iranian civilian hackers under the supervision of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps.⁶¹

Further up the spectrum of involvement, actions may be state-ordered where national governments direct proxies to attack on their behalf. States can get further involved in the actions of proxies through state-rogue-conducted attacks, where supposedly rogue government departments conduct cyberattacks. For example, in 1999 after the accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, rogue hackers from a number of government departments in anti-Western states such as Russia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Serbia conducted anti-NATO cyberattacks.⁶²

The line between states and their proxies becomes increasingly blurred in state-integrated actions. This may occur when governments integrate both government departments and external proxies in order to conduct cyberattacks.

The Continuing Appeal of Proxy Actors and Future Implications

Although the difficulty in predicting the future of conflict is acknowledged,⁶³ state use of proxies appears to be a trend that is set to continue.

Crucially, many of the reasons proxies appeal in the current environment are likely to endure in the future. Given commercial incentives, the private sector will continue to invest in research and offer an advanced capability. Businesses and people are being attacked on a regular basis in the cyber domain, creating a significant private market for security solutions that has not existed in other security domains. Likewise, the use of organized criminal gangs and hackers will continue to enable states to act in ways perceived as illegitimate by the international community. While it is therefore likely that states will continue to use proxies, it is less clear how international relations literature will interpret their role. One school of thought would present the phenomenon as an example of state power, with proxies acting as an extension of a state's capability. Conversely, it could be argued that proxy actors are often used precisely because of the deficiencies in a government's own capability. States are thus

partly dependent on actors that are not compelled to work with them, thus highlighting the frailties of state power.

It is acknowledged that there are reasons why the use of proxies may decline in popularity. Many states use proxies due to the current skills gap that may not continue in the future as education initiatives in technical disciplines continue to develop. Further, whilst states are able to enhance their capability through the use of proxies, they potentially forfeit a degree of their own autonomy and control in the process. The Syrian Electronic Army's turbulent relationship with the Assad regime shows that state-proxy relations can prove unstable. Further, for states to convincingly claim plausible deniability, they must reduce evidence of state control. However, reducing evidence of state control often requires reducing actual state control.⁶⁴ For states to viably claim plausible deniability in their association with criminal groups, they will have to tolerate a degree of cybercrime that is damaging to their economy and which threatens state interests. Whilst the benefits of using these groups currently outweigh such costs, states may increasingly search for less harmful solutions.

Implications for Proxy Actors

Proxy actors are faced with ethical and foreign policy decisions, previously outside their purview. For example, Google's withdrawal from China and collaboration with US intelligence agencies demonstrates that their actions increasingly have political implications. Further, whilst some proxies remain loyal to specific states, others have chosen to work with a range of states. For example, Italy-based Hacking Team has been willing to sell its spying tools to a variety of states with questionable human rights records such as Russia, Ethiopia and Sudan.⁶⁵ Whilst a UN arms embargo would prevent firms from selling weapons to such states, as spying tools do not count as weapons, private sector firms are currently able to sell such products and services with fewer restrictions.⁶⁶

Private sector firms are increasingly faced with a dilemma in working with states. States represent a potentially valuable client base and it is vital for firms to retain their business. However, working with states, or even just appearing to work with states, can lead to mistrust amongst other states and consumers. For example, there was clear public anger when the NSA documents leaked by Edward Snowden revealed technology firms had worked closely with intelligence agencies. Likewise, although respected in the cyber security industry, many Western organizations are wary of cyber security firm Kaspersky, given alleged ties with the Kremlin. Even if such allegations are unfair, it is often perceptions that matter more than facts.

Given this tension, states may seek to portray “separation theatre”⁶⁷ where efforts are made to create a public perception that firms are distancing themselves from states, whilst in fact maintaining close relations behind closed doors. This process is arguably already occurring: firms such as Google and Apple have worked hard to distance themselves from the US government since the Snowden leaks, yet the measures they have implemented have had arguably only a limited effect. For example, whilst Apple now encrypts devices by default, there are a number of ways intelligence agencies such as the NSA can potentially still access data.⁶⁸

There is also a danger that the relationships between proxies and states, or at least the perceptions of such relationships, will foster mistrust. Iran has accused the firm Siemens of colluding with the US and Israel in creating the Stuxnet virus that sabotaged an Iranian nuclear centrifuge that ran Siemens software, despite the lack of evidence of Siemens involvement. States could therefore become increasingly inward looking, working as much as possible with domestically based actors (e.g. Iran working predominantly with Iranian firms, Brazil with Brazilian firms, etc.). Whilst many of these non-state actors are responsible for the extensive globalization process brought by the digital sector, they themselves risk becoming increasingly isolated in the world.

Conclusion

In examining states’ use of proxies in the cyber domain, there is wide variation on a number of fronts. Many different proxy actors exist; proxies appeal for a variety of different reasons; and there is a spectrum of state involvement in the activities of their chosen proxies. This lack of uniformity is largely due to the different strategies and objectives being pursued by states. However, it also reflects the range of functions proxies can offer, ranging from offensive cyberattacks, to the provision of cyber security solutions.

It is argued that the use of proxies will continue to hold appeal in the future as the reasons proxies are used today are likely to remain in the future. Further, as the barriers to entry in the cyber domain remain low, new actors will continue to develop and become viable proxies for states.

Given that this is a trend set to continue, there are challenges going forward—both for states and proxy actors. There remain open questions on how states can protect themselves from the aggressive actions of proxies mobilised by other states. States must optimise their own strategy by establishing what proxies are available to them and which actors are most appropriate to work with—taking into account their capability and reliability. The lack of uniformity that

currently exists reflects the sheer breadth of different strategies being pursued by states. Yet, it remains unclear which strategies are the most successful. For example, whilst the proxies with the most advanced capability are arguably Western private sector firms, they are much more constrained, in offensive terms, at a political level when compared to organized crime and hacker groups whose relationship with a state is perhaps more ambiguous, enabling more aggressive action to take place.

Theoretical understanding needs to be developed in order to explain the reasons why proxies appeal in the cyber domain. Wider examples of states using proxies outside the cyber domain as well as existing international relations theory that has sought to explain this trend are both useful indicators that can provide lessons, at a strategic level, in the cyber domain. Yet, wider examples and previous theory do not fully capture the dynamics of the cyber domain. Some of the historical motivations for using proxies do not translate neatly into the cyber domain. Conversely, there are also more novel reasons why the use of proxies appeals specifically in the cyber domain. For international relations theory to remain relevant and capable of informing policymakers, greater understanding of states' use of proxies in the cyber domain needs to be developed. This may take the form of analysis regarding the costs and benefits associated with working with proxies or examining how traditional international relations concepts (such as deterrence or signalling) apply to proxy actors.

Given the importance of a range of actors, traditional ideas of the state's monopoly on the provision of security need to be rethought. The appeal of proxies also demonstrates that it is wholly inappropriate to seek to militarize the cyber domain, with many of the skills and capability entrenched in civil society. With a spectrum of relationships and multiple levels of state involvement in the actions of proxies, it is also vital to examine state-proxy dynamics with sufficient nuance. Crucially, whilst states are compelled to work with a range of non-state actors in the cyber domain, in doing so, the boundaries of statehood become increasingly blurred.

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AT YOUR OWN PERIL: CLIMATE CHANGE AS RISKY BUSINESS

Tim Pfefferle

Abstract

The future is uncertain. That means it serves as a blank canvas ready to be appropriated by political entrepreneurs for particular purposes. This article provides a snapshot of how risk and uncertainty are used discursively by the nascent fossil fuel divestment movement. In order to penetrate the world of financial players, the movement aims to redefine the nature and meaning of risk with regard to climate change as an economic phenomenon. Having originated in 2011, fossil fuel divestment aims to pressure investors to withdraw funds from the fossil fuel industry. Based on the notion that international climate targets are subject to a remaining carbon budget, the divestment movement has thus argued that a large percentage of fossil fuel assets are economically worthless investments. The contention of this study is that fossil fuel divestment represents to some extent a new form of climate activism. In employing particular discursive practices and narratives, the movement aims to make both a business as well as a moral case. The focus here will lie on how risk serves as a central narrative underpinning the political strategies employed. The implication is that the risk of inaction is associated with concrete investor losses, which runs counter to more traditional conceptions of the macroeconomics of climate change. This strategy therefore represents a departure from other forms of climate activism which focus on pressuring governments or are based on immediate cooperation with business actors.

Introduction

When we think about risk today, there is hardly a shortage of issues capturing the public's attention. From the Islamic State and global terrorism to job automation and artificial intelligence, one can run the gamut of potentially risky phenomena that require both scholarly research and policy action. Among the political dynamics that are associated with political risk, perhaps none is more pressing and consequential than climate risk. The social, economic, and political risks associated with climate change are of such a potentially transformative nature that it becomes difficult to unpack what they mean in concrete terms for current political

choices.

Despite widespread agreement on its potentially disastrous implications across the spectrum of scientists and economists,¹ business,² and the public,³ the looming climate catastrophe continues to elicit relatively mute policy responses. Moreover, while scientists raise questions of an existential nature, social mobilization around climate change is also low.

By contrast, since the 2008 financial crash the world has been marked by the reappearance of social movements. From Occupy and the Tea Party in the United States to the resurgence of right-wing groups in Europe—and indeed the Islamic State in parts of the Middle East—social movements have become central players, either significantly influencing policy or in some cases even dictating it. In many cases, such movements were tied to conscious articulations of risk, such as the financial system in the case of Occupy, and immigration in the case of right-wing political groups.

In climate politics, by comparison, social movements have not dominated headlines to the same extent. While a plethora of climate justice movements exist, truly paradigm-shifting change—and subsequent translation into political action—has not taken place.⁴ Although environmental regulations are becoming more stringent and countries are reducing energy intensities, an analysis of the pledges made at the Paris Climate Conference indicates that national policies are inconsistent with even modest climate goals.⁵

Skocpol found that the failure to implement meaningful climate legislation in the US is associated with the absence of a significant climate movement that would bring about the requisite political pressure to effect change.⁶ Such a movement would have to be broad enough to involve a host of stakeholders. Presently, advocates for climate legislation have to compete with highly organized and politically connected “merchants of doubt”⁷ for control over policy agenda and media portrayal. Thus, rather than a technological problem, climate change appears to be much more a social and political challenge.⁸

In this context, this study sets out to examine the nascent fossil fuel divestment movement as a response to such social and political challenges. Born in the United States in 2011, the movement offers a competing interpretation of responsibility for climate change and solutions to it. Fossil fuel divestment means selling stocks in publicly traded fossil fuel companies. By continuing to extract large quantities of oil, gas, and coal from the ground, these companies are seen as representing the most significant roadblock towards achieving actual climate change solutions. As a result, a movement has been growing to call on investors to sell fossil fuel

stocks.

A central effort of this movement is a reinterpretation of how the business community should think about climate risks. This move centres on associating continued investment in fossil fuel extraction and production with future portfolio losses. Reinterpreting climate risks in this way calls into question a central tenet of the fossil fuel industry: its viability as a profitable asset. Previously, industry risk framings were confined to environmental and social concerns. By casting fossil fuel investments as highly risky, the divestment movement disrupts traditional patterns of co-optation and confrontation in climate policy making. Moreover, risks are transferred from the future and inserted into the present, which means that they are translated into specific cues for political action. Such dynamic developments within climate risk framings could transform the way powerful political actors are incentivized and motivated with regard to climate action.

Risk, in the context of this article, refers to choices associated with potential future losses of a financial nature, both at the individual investor level as well as the aggregate macroeconomic level. The production of this particular risk discourse around the economic value of fossil fuels reorients climate discourse as a whole. It calls into question not only the extent to which current patterns of production and consumption can be considered environmentally sustainable, but also financially viable.

Fossil Fuel Divestment: A Short History

Divestment as a tactic to support climate change mitigation is a relatively recent phenomenon. Yet, historically, social movements have made use of divestment on a number of occasions to support activist work, pressure companies and governments, and generate publicity for the given cause. Previous divestment targets have included the arms trade industries,⁹ tobacco,¹⁰ Sudan,¹¹ and, most widely recognized, South Africa under Apartheid.¹² In general, activists aim to put pressure on investors to sell their stocks in the targeted companies or institutions.

Fisher suggests that, in the case of tobacco divestiture in the United States, four distinct phases of activity can be observed.¹³ Divestment began with public health organizations, followed by divestment decisions made by major universities, and subsequently public pension funds, as well as, finally, individual US states. In the case of fossil fuels, activists have followed a similar trajectory. The movement emerged in the context of student activism in US universities, and has subsequently moved on to include

philanthropic organisations, faith-based institutions, NGOs, as well as, to a limited extent, the private sector.

Within the context of fossil fuel divestment, the internationally agreed 2°C goal represents a central concept. It describes the maximum warming permissible in order to avoid dangerous anthropogenic interference in the climate.¹⁴ Originally conceived as a heuristic device to guide climate policy, it was formally adopted at the Copenhagen Climate Conference in 2009, although criticism of its relevance and usefulness has been expressed.¹⁵ Meinshausen and colleagues calculate that, for a 50 percent chance to remain within the 2°C limit, less than half the oil, gas, and coal reserves proven economically recoverable can be burned before 2050 (at the time of writing in 2009).¹⁶ Allen and colleagues suggest that the 2°C limit is approximately commensurate with total anthropogenic emissions of one trillion tons of carbon.¹⁷

Subsequent scholarship has spelled out what these estimations imply with regard to global fossil fuel reserve stocks. McGlade and Ekins find that, in the absence of carbon capture and storage, 35 percent of oil, 52 percent of gas, and 88 percent of coal are unburnable before 2050 as a percentage of current reserves.¹⁸ Recent analysis suggests that no new emitting electricity infrastructure can be built after 2017 in order for 2°C to remain feasible.¹⁹ Hence, scientific scholarship appears to indicate a reasonably clear scenario: without a rapid phaseout of fossil fuel based emissions, climate targets will soon become infeasible. Heede and Oreskes emphasize that, based on the distribution of fossil fuel reserves, immediate action should be focused on investor-owned companies, whose reserves account for 16 percent of the world's remaining carbon budget, given the inability of many governments to extract their large state-owned reserves in the near term.²⁰ In particular, they suggest that on-going exploration for new fossil fuel stocks should be ceased.

This basic analysis has spurred inquiries into the financial ramifications of these findings. The Carbon Tracker Initiative underscores that up to 80 percent of listed fossil fuel companies' reserves are unburnable.²¹ As a result, these assets are likely to become stranded, as, past a given point, they will not be able to generate economic returns commensurate with their investment value. Given that the valuation of fossil fuel companies is significantly tied up in the valuation of their assets in the form of reserves, this evaluation has led to the identification of a possible 'carbon bubble'—the idea that, given possible future public policy choices, the valuation of companies operating in the fossil fuel industry is subject to inflation. Johnson and colleagues further highlight that, for coal power plants, "stranded capacity

and its associated cost increase as near-term policy becomes less stringent.”²² In the absence of emissions-constraining measures, more generating capacity will be built, leading to a higher quantity of stranded assets. Thus, further investment into fossil fuels could be worthless, given the imperative of phasing out fossil fuel use in order to stay within the agreed boundaries.

Empirically, fossil fuel divestment faces significant obstacles. In a study on the financial effects of divestment from South Africa, Teoh and colleagues have found a negligible effect on stock prices.²³ Patey suggests that the US-led Sudan divestment campaign has failed because business has been overtaken by Asian investors instead.²⁴ Likewise, Griffin and colleagues find that, subsequent to the first scientific publications on the potential for long-term asset depreciation in the fossil fuel sector, only limited negative stock market reactions could be observed.²⁵ A study conducted by Kiyar and Wittneben on the impact of divestment considerations on decision-making at Germany’s big utility companies likewise concluded that divestment did not figure prominently as a concern for management.²⁶

Nevertheless, while divestment from fossil fuels appears questionable as a substantive measure, the divestment movement has been able to generate resonance. As of December 2015, investors officially committed to divestment representing a total value of US\$3.4 trillion, up from US\$50 billion in September 2014.²⁷ Moreover, several high-profile backers include former UNFCCC head Christiana Figueres,²⁸ World Bank President Jim Yong Kim,²⁹ South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu,³⁰ and former US President Barack Obama.³¹

In general, pressure for divestment is coming from a loose coalition of university activists, church-affiliated groups, ethical investors, and traditional climate advocacy organizations. In addition, other actors such as a number of pension funds and investment and asset managers have started to join the fray, while the UK newspaper *The Guardian* ran a divestment media campaign throughout 2015.

Below, I will spell out how divestment is constructed as an intellectually coherent argument. Within this construction, risk plays a central role in shaping a compelling divestment narrative.

Divestment as Rational Choice

Assumptions play a powerful role in determining policy choices. They influence which policies find themselves on the agenda as well as the likelihood for successful policy adoption and

subsequent implementation. Divestment's working assumption rests on the power of the 2°C goal. Apfel explains the logic in a nutshell: "[B]ecause we must transition from fossil fuels, it makes sense to invest on the premise that we will."³² The world can only burn so much carbon to remain within the established boundaries. However, the argument put forward by the divestment movement appears inconsistent at face value. Premise and conclusion are identical: Since the 2°C goal will not be breached, the conclusion follows that deep emissions cuts are guaranteed as a result of government policy. Subsequently, this necessitates divestment. The point about climate change, however, is that not enough is being done. If significant action were guaranteed, there would be little need for a divestment movement in the first place.

In this context, the axiom is therefore that national climate policies will deliver on the globally agreed climate goals. Divestment advocates make use of science in order to corroborate this central argument for divestment. The divestment message attains its credibility through its grounding in a "terrifying math"³³—the fact that there is an absolute and quantifiable global limit above which fossil fuels cannot be burned. To some extent, such framing reflects the scientization of politics,³⁴ given the way in which climate change is reduced from a political question to one characterized by seemingly technical calculations. Climate science often serves to legitimize activism in order to claim rational authority.³⁵ In the first instance, math is objective, and can conceivably be plugged into financial models to calculate returns and losses.

However, within the divestment context, the role that science plays should be differentiated. Science is being employed in an explicitly instrumental sense, as a framing device, rather than strictly as a device of authority. What this means in concrete terms is that scientific findings can be applied to highlight the possible ramifications for everyday decision-making in a business context. Such framings deviate from conventional alternatives based on what frequently seem ostensibly grander notions of justice or fairness, highlighting what climate science means for investor portfolios in particular.

Divestment derives a specific range of solutions that exist within the basic frame of reference of the financial sector. This is necessary because government climate policy appears to require a higher burden of proof than other policy areas.³⁶ Scientific evidence alone is insufficient. It matters, too, who communicates that evidence. Thus, if internalized by the financial community, the policy message becomes exponentially more powerful.

As a result, financial language often dominates discussions around divestment. "Stranded assets" is a term that appears

to generate particular resonance in the media. 42 out of the 397 articles published in UK media publications featuring fossil fuel divestment made reference to stranded assets; roughly one in eight.ⁱ Hence, from the business perspective, the problem is understood to be one of asset preservation, rather than alternative interpretations related to environmental degradation, socio-economic decline, or development in general. By extension, a narrative around divestment focusses on defining an asset class as risky.

The rationale for action therefore centres on the self-interest of investors and businesses to maintain the value of assets. The argument cuts through the complexities associated with global climate change politics, simplifying the message for the target audience. While politics can often be perceived as messy and lacking in clear-cut direction, operators within financial markets appear to make decisions based on rational thinking, at least in their self-conception. Therefore, divestment must be seen as a rational business act in order to succeed. Currently, from an investment perspective, fossil fuel companies in general generate good returns, are hard to avoid, and are thus widely held.³⁷ The suggestion that such investments might be subject to a bubble, however, reverses that logic, as bubbles are inherently irrational.³⁸ The question what is and is not rational good business hence feeds into what decision-makers perceive as a business risk. This will be explored below.

Risky Business: Fossil Fuels as a Portfolio Threat

Finance is inherently complex. Yet its basic operating principle is relatively straightforward. Investors try to maximize rewards while minimizing risks. Fossil fuel investments have tended to generate fairly high rewards at comparatively low risks. In many ways, when risk has been associated with this asset category, it has been couched in social rather than financial terms.

Climate change obviously bears potentially gigantic risks. However, most discussions of risk within the climate change context have focused on the physical risks implied by climate change. Floods can make coastal areas uninhabitable. Droughts can destroy crops. Declining glaciers can decimate fresh water supply. To a certain extent, scientific analysis can quantify such risks and the possible impacts.

Hence, risk assessments have become an established part of climate policy,³⁹ while efforts have been made to estimate risks

ⁱ Results generated by LexisNexis; search terms “fossil fuel divestment” and “stranded assets,” May 2011 to May 2016.

for specific social aspects such as health.⁴⁰ Dietz and colleagues furthermore identify potentially colossal asset depreciations associated with the effects of climate change.⁴¹ Potential damage to both public infrastructure as well as private holdings—imperilled seaside properties, higher operating costs for companies, and so on—will drive down the value of such investments.

By contrast, the narrative put forward by fossil fuel divestment advocates differs in nature. Rather than talking about physical infrastructure or potential liability risks incurred by insurers, the central reference point are so-called transition risks. These represent the risks that emerge as a result of the transition away from fossil fuels towards a zero-carbon energy system. Here, risk arises when individual investors, companies, or societies as a whole hold on to a particular economic model that no longer fits other policy preferences. By holding on to an asset for too long, they run the risk that it loses its value, leading to future losses.

In order to understand how risk is being used as a frame by advocates of fossil fuel divestment, it is helpful to revisit the work of Ulrich Beck. According to Beck, “risks are always events that are threatening.”⁴² Further, “risk does not mean catastrophe [but the] anticipation of catastrophe. Risks exist in a permanent state of virtuality, and become ‘topical’ only to the extent that they are anticipated. Risks are not ‘real’, they are ‘becoming real’.”⁴³

Advocates of divestment consciously use risk as a narrative device precisely in line with this definition. Risk is understood as distinct from danger in that it is associated with potential losses, rather than actual ones.⁴⁴ Here, risk is employed as a vocabulary of motive to reflect the lifeworld of business and finance, with references to “risk to financial markets’ instability,”⁴⁵ “financial risk from climate change regulation” and “risks involved in the ownership of fossil fuel stocks,”⁴⁶ and “carbon bubble [...] risks.”⁴⁷ Thus, divestment is scripted as a way to mitigate risk. Such tactics gain strength from the notion of Loss Aversion developed by Kahneman and Tversky,⁴⁸ who found that people react more strongly to the risk of potential losses than they do towards potential gains.

As Beck points out, the definition of risk reflects a power game.⁴⁹ Divestment advocates aim to instrumentalize the financial sector in order to frame this game to their advantage. Terms such as “stranded assets” and “carbon bubble” are embedded in terminology familiar to financial managers, and are negatively connoted. In this context, Beck suggests that “the expectation of the unexpected requires that the self-evident is no longer taken as self-evident.”⁵⁰ The central notion of contemporary economic models is that fossil fuels are an asset, not a liability. It requires

a new risk vocabulary in order to break down this notion. Hence, divestment discourse produces a propulsion to act, and creates a business imperative to reduce portfolio exposure to potentially catastrophic and unmanageable risk. In this vein, Alexander and colleagues quote climate activist and former coal executive Ian Dunlop as emphasizing that “divestment [be] presented as a hard-nosed business imperative primarily.”⁵¹ The implication is that for business executives to adjust their choices, they must be incentivized accordingly.

Framing is essential to generate such an imperative, as fossil fuel assets are presently generating sizable financial returns. Ewald states that “nothing is a risk in itself; [...] [yet] anything can be a risk; it all depends on how one analyses the danger, considers the event.”⁵² Fossil fuels are not by themselves self-evidently a risky investment. Rather, concrete risks depend on a set of assumptions associated with business and policy environments. Risk is not always managed in a rational process, as managers often evaluate risks on the basis of personal perceptions in context-specific ways,⁵³ as do people in general.⁵⁴ Actors’ responses to risk furthermore depend on their own risk constructs and images.⁵⁵ Therefore, risk is framed as potentially catastrophic in order to call into question the economic viability of fossil fuel divestments. Against this background, McKechnie and Ratcliffe advise that:

“potential economic costs related to continued investment in and by fossil fuel companies should be framed in the context of an increasingly imminent policy and regulatory environment that will ultimately render carbon assets unburnable and therefore valueless.”⁵⁶

It is increasingly easy to find similar language embedded in advice being given to investors by financial analysts on the potential impact of technology and policy risks associated with climate change.⁵⁷ Famously, former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has translated this risk principle into layman’s terms: “I don’t want to be the last investor in Blockbuster as Netflix emerged. That’s exactly what is going to happen to fossil fuels.”⁵⁸

Discourse is thus imperative in turning the tables on previously accepted wisdom regarding the investment risks of fossil fuels versus clean energy alternatives, which have generally suffered from being associated with high risks.⁵⁹ Definitional power over what is and is not a risk can therefore be a potent tool in facilitating paradigm shifts.

The redefinition of what constitutes a risk vis-à-vis the fossil

fuel industry is significant because it squares the circle—at least rhetorically. Previously, climate activists have found themselves in a catch-22 situation. Solutions are only possible if business can spring into action. This realization is the foundation underlying the green growth principle. Yet, at the same time business activities are also the quintessential driver of emissions growth. To a certain extent then, relying on business to implement climate solutions involves the proverbial deal with the devil.

Divestment is an attempt to avoid this deal. While its risk frames speak to a business context, they do so in a way that seemingly circumvents the problems associated with business engagement. Instead of going down the beaten path of increased energy efficiency or renewable energy generation, divestment argues for the dismantling of an entire economic sector. The paradox such a risk construction must attempt to solve is the fact that it goes about this mission on the basis of explicitly financial arguments.

In that sense, divestment introduces a new risk construct into the world of climate change governance. It constitutes a new way to think about the trade-offs between moral purity and mainstream influence. Divestment builds on the realization that business must be a central access point through which long-term solutions can emerge. While this is by no means a novel insight, divestment's careful recalibration—and redefinition—of the financial risks associated with climate change opens up new discursive spaces to attack the source of the contemporary challenge: the fossil fuel industry itself.

In order to attack the industry from within, fossil fuel divestment relies on a strategy of business division. This involves an internalization of the above outlined risk discourse on the part of business actors themselves, which will be outlined below.

Strange Bedfellows: The Business Case for Industry Shutdown

In 1983, economist Bruce Yandle referred to the Bootleggers and Baptists phenomenon as an example of a situation in which regulation is favoured both by groups that support its underlying motive as well as those which seek to profit by undermining it.⁶⁰ During the prohibition era in the United States, restrictions on the sale of alcohol found support among both religiously conservative groups and salespersons on the black market, producing a strong political incentive to maintain prohibition as a policy. Hence, unholy coalitions within the worlds of business and regulatory politics can and do emerge.

Part of the divestment strategy is to win over business actors to push for stricter environmental regulations. In order to do so, the divestment movement separates out “good” businesses from “bad” businesses. A key question to ask in this context is this: What should be the role of business? Milton Friedman is often—perhaps mistakenly—attributed with the response that “the business of business is business.” Friedman implies as much in an essay on the social responsibility of business.⁶¹ In 2000, Hansmann and Kraakman likewise announced the “end of history for corporate law,”⁶² suggesting that profits constitute businesses’ sole purpose. According to proponents of deep ecology, however, environmental protection is incommensurate with an economy predicated solely on profit maximization.⁶³ By extension, any sort of business engagement appears problematic.

Notwithstanding, collaboration between business actors and activists is a common phenomenon.⁶⁴ Desombre’s work highlights that business and environmental actors cooperate in order to internationalize environmental norms and standards, obtaining mutual benefits on their respective terms.⁶⁵ Hence, both businesses as well as environmental organizations seek to derive benefits within the context of their own frame of interpretation. In a similar vein, divestment adopts interpretive frames derived from the business world in order to build critical coalitions. However, rather than efforts to make certain business practices more sustainable, which constitute the mainstream of NGO-business partnerships, divestment aims for a more transformational strategy.

Fossil fuel divestment as a tactic builds on the notion that an entire industry should be defunded. As such, its appeal to the business community appears limited. However, the recognition that partnerships with business are key rests on insights generated by authors such as Lindblom, who noted that “businessmen occupy a privileged position” in liberal democracies.⁶⁶ Such neo-pluralist frameworks recognize that actors have differing levels of access to the state, and can thus control agenda setting and perhaps even facilitate the development of certain hegemonic notions. To some extent, big business actors have persuaded decision-makers that what is good for them is good for society at large.⁶⁷ In the context of climate change politics, business has therefore often capitalized on its political clout, influencing the direction of climate regulation—at times pre-emptively—in response to changing political circumstances by establishing “carbon coalitions.”⁶⁸

Rather than challenging this notion, divestment seeks to instrumentalize the privileged access enjoyed by business actors. Falkner’s work highlights the potential for business conflict to emerge.⁶⁹ Disagreement among businesses can create space for

policy change. Here is where divestment drives its wedge. The movement recognizes that not all businesses are created equal. In fact, its strategy toward business is based on the notion that some businesses may have interests congruent with the vision put forward by fossil fuel divestment. Even within the fossil fuel industry, companies adopt differing policies towards climate change due to factors associated with interests, management structures, and nationalities.⁷⁰ So far, the private sector accounts for three percent of divesting institutions, with large insurance companies such as Axa and Allianz as the most significant supporters. Yet, the insurance industry by itself will not transform the energy system. More powerful coalition partners are required.

Established environmental organizations such as Greenpeace have already recognized the power and influence of technology companies, for instance, whose own interests and self-image as innovators align with the vision of the new energy economy.⁷¹ In the US, Amazon, Apple, Google, and Microsoft have recently shown support for environmental regulation in the form of the Clean Power Plan (CPP), whose constitutionality was being challenged in court. In a statement to the court, these cutting edge technology companies indicate that they see the low-carbon economy as the future, arguing that the CPP “will help businesses of all sorts invest and benefit from clean energy.”⁷²

It is therefore incumbent on divestment advocates to develop the narrative that both sides are converging towards the same trajectory. Thus, innovation is highlighted as “central to sustainable growth,” but also requires a “strong policy signal from government” as well as an “enabling policy framework.”⁷³ Hence, regulation favouring clean energy is produced discursively as a good thing by both divestment advocates as well as certain business actors. Such regulation will accelerate processes already under way. Continued cost reductions in the renewable energy sector have led banks such as HSBC to highlight that fossil fuels may be left “stranded by energy innovation.”⁷⁴

Implicit here is the question where business risk will emerge in the future. Naturally, technology companies are much more amenable towards adapting to new economic paradigms than a fossil fuel company would be. For these actors, moving towards a zero-carbon system could indeed represent business opportunities. In order to navigate this risk game, advocates of divestment thus have to approach businesses in a differentiated matter.

Self-identity becomes key in building coalitions to influence the energy transformation. More progressive climate regulation is not only in the interest of innovation- and technology-focused businesses. It is also aligned with what they perceive should be

their image within the new economy. In this context, Keohane⁷⁵ has suggested that an approach based on the idea of the economy of esteem⁷⁶ could be applied to climate change problems associated with collective action. Such an approach builds on the notion that businesses—and business leadership in particular—wish to be seen as acting in a socially responsible manner, even in the absence of an innate sense of such responsibilities. As emphasized by Chayes and Chayes, “even in the absence of material inducements, the threat of exposure or shaming is a powerful spur to action.”⁷⁷ One analogy to better understand this phenomenon is the way in which many companies have tried to position themselves on the right side of civil rights issues such as same-sex marriage in order to avoid reputational damage. What Duggan describes as the “new homonormativity”⁷⁸ in the case of same-sex marriage may at some point occur within climate politics as well: spurred by characterizations of fossil fuels as both economically risky and environmentally damaging, the aim is to produce a new normativity around fossil fuels as a good to be avoided.

Famously, for a long time Google’s operating motto was “don’t be evil.” In a new world, where the fossil fuel industry is just that, the lines of division become clear. The divestment movement thus appeals to the “role neurosis” of modern corporations.⁷⁹ To operate in the long-term, companies need to balance responsibilities towards shareholders with their role as corporate citizens, as they need to be seen to fulfil their obligations both to their immediate contractual partners as well as to society at large. In this context, maintaining investments in the fossil fuel sector may come to be seen as inconsistent with business actors’ own self-conception, as risks emerge both at the reputational level as well as for the bottom line.

As with the fossil fuel risk construction itself, these notions rest on an active redefinition of what is and is not considered a business risk in this new economy. Yet, for divestment advocates, these discursive practices also serve a different purpose. For divestment to work at meaningful scale, it has to make inroads in affecting policy. While the architecture of climate change governance is increasingly globalizing, states remain the key source of regulatory power in this realm. Therefore, the following section deals with how the narrative construction of fossil fuel investment risks is being used to signal particular messages vis-à-vis the state.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, in an encounter with activists who sought support for legislation, supposedly once quipped: “You’ve convinced me. Now go out and make me do it.”⁸⁰ For policy change to take effect, a sense of urgency and crisis is of the essence. However, on its own, fossil fuel divestment is faced with considerable structural and institutional barriers, given the political and economic costs often associated with it. It is therefore unclear how to proceed from conviction to political action.

Other environmental campaigns have come to the realization that direct state lobbying may prove inconsequential, and have thus aimed to establish private environmental governance instead.⁸¹ Nevertheless, as Rosewarne and colleagues argue, the key challenge for the climate movement is to “define a radical programme for government action.”⁸² In fact, divestment relies on state power to a large extent to ensure the long-term coherence of objectives. Unlike many environmental NGOs, however, it does not immediately lobby for legislation. Nevertheless, divestment is a political project. Driving forward political change requires the broadcasting of certain moral positions to be translated and reflected in policy.

Activists engaged in divestment from South Africa were particularly intent on emphasizing the moral dimension of the movement. One campaign guide addressing campus activism offered the following interpretation:

“Arguments for divestment are based, first, on moral grounds. Along with churches, colleges and universities are expected to reflect in their actions a concern for social values and basic human rights. Thus, responsible investment policy should preclude an investor’s profit at the expense of its moral convictions.”⁸³

Moral scripts are particularly conspicuous in the divestment movement’s early appeals to audiences characterized by certain ethical properties. Hence, the two social institutions most frequently pressured to divest so far are universities and faith-based organizations. The adjustment of vocabularies to reflect moral concerns has been shown to be effective in communicating climate change to Christian communities, which respond most positively to framings of conservation and social justice.⁸⁴ Moreover, certain institutions are significantly constrained by social norms. Some social customs which may lead to financially adverse consequences

are nevertheless maintained, given the possibility of sanctions for disobedience of the custom.⁸⁵ Normatively constrained institutions under pressure of certain moral customs are therefore more likely to hold socially responsible investments.⁸⁶

Such institutions can be seen to represent proxies for the state. The same moral demands made towards normatively constrained institutions are required in order to catalyse political shifts at the level of state and government. Such shifts have to be more than mere “lawmaking moments.”⁸⁷ Such shifts necessitate a more fundamental transformation of taken-for-granted paradigms, such as the natural legitimacy of a carbon-based economy.

A report by divestment activists at the University of Glasgow makes the case that:

“injurious activities of fossil fuel companies frustrate the enforcement of rules of domestic and international law intended to protect individuals against deprivation of health, safety and basic freedoms [including] the violation of specific domestic and international statutes [...] and the frustration of international diplomatic efforts.”⁸⁸

Hence, the moral foundations of the current carbon-based economy are being challenged. For one, divestment activists highlight the illegitimate political power of the fossil fuel industry itself. As Geels notes, domestic resistance to more stringent climate legislation can in part be attributed to the political influence of the industry.⁸⁹ In its communications guide, GoFossilFree suggests that the “fossil fuel divestment movement will help take away the social license of the fossil fuel industry, weakening their political power.”⁹⁰ Taking away an industry’s license to operate is an act based on fundamental moral considerations. The moral arbiter to decide over social licenses is society at large, represented by the state. This notion rests on insights introduced by Emile Durkheim, who highlighted that contracts’ obligatory power is based on accepted norms and values within society.⁹¹ In this context, divestment seeks to shape the “morality of law.”⁹² This step is necessary in order to go beyond merely securing individual divestment commitments by foundations, universities, or faith-based institutions. It is also necessary with regard to the classification of fossil fuels as comprehensively risky, as opposed to simply particular fossil fuel investments carrying particular idiosyncratic risks.

Tobacco companies serve as the obvious point of reference here. Tobacco divestment efforts focused on labelling tobacco products

as “‘dirtier’ than other sources of profits.”⁹³ However, fossil fuels are a different animal. While the power of “social pressure”⁹⁴ may have spurred BP to rebrand as “Beyond Petroleum,” it cannot compel it to become “no petroleum at all.” Hence, divestment must advocate for more fundamental change at the political level. As pointed out by Gunningham and colleagues, the removal of social licenses is generally facilitated by government regulation.⁹⁵ McKechnie and Ratcliffe add that “efforts to address climate change demand powerful leadership, political and moral courage and a refusal to be swayed by vested interests.”⁹⁶

Thus, the mobilization of political leadership, the lack of which has arguably been one of the main factors behind policy apathy, constitutes a key aspect of the divestment strategy. As Young and Schwarz emphasize, targeting corporations can be a “primary strategy for achieving progressive reforms in government policy.”⁹⁷ Such indirect strategies appear to be pursued by the divestment movement. Crucially, they depend on the notion that an economic system based on the fossil fuel industry is financially risky. It is only when both moral and financial imperatives merge in a symbiotic relationship that transformative change emerges.

In the absence of more far-reaching structural objectives, divestment would be faced with the overwhelming moral problem of worse actors.⁹⁸ That is, it would have to face the challenge of explaining away what happens to divested stocks whose ownership may have perhaps been passed on to shareholders who are even less environmentally scrupulous and will therefore exacerbate the problem. Thus, divestment is unlikely to advance on utilitarian grounds alone. Divestment works on the basis of instrumental logic in its dealings with business and the financial community. Investors are dissuaded from continuing to fund fossil fuels by reference to the adverse outcomes associated with such investments, employing the narrative strategies around risk discussed previously. By contrast, in its moral frame, the divestment movement grounds itself in the logic of appropriateness. Hence, the suggestion is that it is not only financially problematic to maintain fossil fuel investments, but, more importantly, unethical.

Why does the divestment movement opt for this two-pronged strategy? For one, fully shifting narratives to market-based solutions contradicts the movement’s message with regard to necessary regulations. In general, divestment runs the risk of entrenching the neo-liberal governmentality of climate change.⁹⁹ NGO governance in the area of biodiversity conservation has been criticized as selling out to neo-liberal governance, for instance.¹⁰⁰ By relying to a significant extent on frames drawing on profit-oriented analysis as well as scripts characterized by

market language, the divestment movement perhaps contributes to governance paradigms which may potentially undermine its fundamental goals.

While Ayling and Gunningham argue that divestment represents a radical approach towards mitigation,¹⁰¹ a financial framing in isolation would suggest a closer alignment with green growth frames. Playing the game of “techno-economic knowledge”¹⁰² in itself is unlikely to move the needle beyond achieving success around the margins. Such suggestions should also be seen within the context of findings by MacNeil, who posits that market environmentalism cannot work in liberal market democracies due to the ease with which measures such as carbon pricing can be framed as a tax on the poor.¹⁰³ Moreover, recent research indicates the underappreciated role of political factors on emissions.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, a conscious grounding in explicitly ethical arguments and language is necessary to underpin more fundamental political transformation.

On factual grounds, the state also remains as a key driver behind the kind of transformation sought by divestment activists. The market alone will not generate this transformation. The state will need to do more to fund basic science, to set more stringent environmental and business regulations, to act as a key procurer of renewable technology, and to adopt a different set of indicators to measure sustainable economic activity. Previous energy transformations have demonstrated the significant role played by the state in enabling and supporting rapid transitions. In the United States, for example, the establishment of the Rural Electrification Administration led to the wholesale electrification of the entire United States.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, studies suggest that effective governing capacity both at the local as well as the national level is key to a substantial transition towards renewables.¹⁰⁶

The financial community can serve as the vanguard, a key constituency to widen access to decision-makers and to demonstrate a certain sense of rational validity. However, if divestment wants to become the civil rights movement of climate change, its nets have to be cast wider, and its frames adjusted accordingly. A representative of the Australian arm of campaigning organization 350.org, for instance, comments that “if you achieve divestment without building a movement you’ve squandered part of the possibility of it.”¹⁰⁷ Moral scripts are more effective in movement building. The public is unlikely to be mobilized by references to company bottom lines. Therefore, transforming discourse within society towards moral culpability and the responsibility to punish unethical behaviour is key.

The transformation of the general social and political

environment is important on several levels. Tjernström and Tietenberg have found that public attitudes translate into policy action.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, grassroots actions at lower level can ultimately lead to change at the level of central government in order to homogenize policy and regulations, particularly in federal systems.¹⁰⁹ Bottom-up efforts could set the stage to generate political pressure and build support to ultimately drive policymaking at the national level.¹¹⁰ Moreover, Skjærseth and Skodvin suggest that differences in corporate climate policies between ExxonMobil, BP, and Shell can be traced to the different domestic political environments in which these companies operate.¹¹¹ Hence, ExxonMobil, as a company subject to US law, has been able to largely ignore climate change as a business-relevant issue due to a belief—perhaps correctly—that the prospects for genuine climate legislation are relatively low.

In turn, the nature of the domestic political climate also allowed ExxonMobil to lobby heavily against the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, having to fear no public backlash.¹¹² Thus, for divestment to work at scale, it is insufficient to change individual business calculations. Rather, a shake-up of the political environment is required. In other words, it demands a “redefinition of interests.”¹¹³ Once explicit or implicit political protection of the fossil fuel industry—subsidies, insufficient regulation, extraction rights, etc.—becomes morally unacceptable, business interests may then turn away from it. As such, penetrating the state from both the business as well as the moral perspective is a dialectic and mutually reinforcing process.

In appealing to both the business community as well as the state, divestment seeks to overcome the political conflict over risk interpretations identified by Douglas and Wildavsky.¹¹⁴ Conventionally, such conflict is based on different cultural conceptions attached to risk and regulation. While egalitarian collectivists highlight the need for restrictive regulation to curb environmentally destructive behaviour, individualists see real risk emanating from exactly such interference in the market. In compartmentalizing its discourse, the divestment movement can to some extent paper over the stark differences between these two camps, and pursue both an egalitarian moral as well as an individualist financial strategy. To that end, it employs business actors as potentially powerful supporting actors in order to help the state to legitimize climate policy. Thus, business can serve as an auxiliary to get the state to listen and internalize the logic of divestment.

To an important extent, this helps to establish the connection between movement interests and state imperatives, an aspect

regarded as crucial in environmental political transformations.¹¹⁵ Carter highlights that previous environmental policy progress has occurred in situations in which economic and environmental concerns were seen as complementary, for instance.¹¹⁶ My suggestion in this context is that, in the case of fossil fuel divestment, such complementarity is established via the recruitment of business actors as supporting players. Business imperatives are thus crucial in order to generate access, while moral imperatives serve to underpin structural economic and political transformation.

In that sense, one has to cast a wider net and think in systemic terms. What is being communicated is that the financial risks associated with continued fossil fuel extraction are not only the concern of publicly held corporations, but can threaten the financial and moral viability of the state as such.

Conclusion

The preceding pages have outlined the ways in which divestment advocates proceed in articulating what amounts to a redefinition of climate risk. The two recipients of this message are the business community on the one hand, and the state on the other. While business is an important auxiliary in order to facilitate access, moral framing is crucial to support the ambitious transformative nature of the divestment project. Maintaining both narratives effectively represents a challenge. However, such a discursive strategy predicated on indirect targeting also makes for the novelty of the divestment movement from a governance perspective.

The divestment movement faces a struggle between the frames of morals and markets. To some extent, this reflects the deep-seated clash between advocates of liberal environmentalism and proponents of deep ecology. There may be some veracity to Latour's claim that "[p]olitical ecology is quite clearly not soluble in the gastric juices of political economics."¹¹⁷ The scope of the transformation required cannot be underestimated, and may require a clean break with industrial society.¹¹⁸ Real questions exist whether the supposed subversion of the carbon-based system via the financial market can be more than what some, like Bourdieu, see as the fetishization of monetary values.¹¹⁹

Yet, the divestment movement seeks to have its cake and eat it too, employing different logics that in many instances appear to clash on a philosophical level. Central to that quest is its discursive strategy, tailoring messages to different recipients. Hence, such oscillation between financial and moral frames holds opportunities, but also potential pitfalls.

This is one articulation of how climate risks are starting to pervade more and more facets of society. Given that virtually the entire global economic system is built on a fossil fuel foundation, the significance of a potential disruption to these centuries-old extraction and production patterns can hardly be underestimated. The uptake of such alternative interpretations of climate risks among large enough sections of political and financial decision-makers will determine whether we will see a transformation in the political economy of climate change. To that end, I have outlined the mechanisms by which such developments could emerge.

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COMPLEX HUMANITARIAN CRISES IN UNCERTAIN TIMES: THE CHALLENGE FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION HUMANITARIAN AID POLICY

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Abstract

Humanitarian crises have become increasingly complex in their management as they are characterized by high uncertainty in their origin, nature, and geographical diffusion, thus representing ambiguous threats to the national and international security environment. Setting up precautionary or coordinated policies with other states to manage such crises has become increasingly crucial, yet challenging. This paper contributes to the debate about the complexity of state intervention in humanitarian crises by examining the institutional framework of European Union (EU) humanitarian aid policy. EU member states can either decide to intervene independently from or in collaboration with the EU. This article argues that two characteristics of crises influence the likelihood of intervention within the EU framework as opposed to unilateral action: the *diffusion* and *urgency* of the crisis. Diffusion concerns the tendency of a crisis to become widespread over national boundaries, while urgency puts temporal pressure on the structures of crisis response. Using a quantitative approach, the article's findings corroborate its hypotheses by showing a higher inclination of EU member states to delegate to the EU when the crisis is widespread and requires an urgent intervention. Partial delegation is preferred when the crisis is urgent, yet circumscribed.

Introduction

The EU humanitarian aid policy is designed to intervene in international humanitarian crises.¹ In line with the domain of intervention, a flexible institutional arrangement has been designed, allowing the member states to decide—intervention by intervention—between intervening unilaterally, partially, or totally in terms of delegating the intervention to the EU. Crises are per se complex and require flexible responses, particularly in a global interdependent context.² The characteristics of humanitarian crises and their impact on the transaction costs of policymaking are supposed to influence the expediency of the intervention alternatives. Several studies have been conducted

in order to address the questions concerning the definition of humanitarian intervention, the reasons for it, its legitimacy, its goals, and the main actors involved.ⁱ

Humanitarian aid is part of the broader debate on foreign aid. Interesting insights in this sense are offered by studies investigating the legitimacy and reasons for humanitarian aid, as well as its goals and possible impact on the domestic politics of donors and recipients.³ In line with the same direction that this article takes, many research studies have discussed the rationality of the allocation of humanitarian aid both bilaterally and multilaterally, and the formation of states' preferences depending on their internal characteristics and on the characteristics of the crisis itself. The selection between bilateralism and multilateralism is extremely complex, and the choice is not straightforward.⁴ In discussing the choice between bilateralism and multilateralism, some studies focus on economic and political considerations,⁵ while others are centred on aid conditionality⁶ or on common colonial heritage between donors and recipients.⁷ Nonetheless, the topic is still under debate and recent studies challenge these findings and show that no significant difference exists between bilateralism and multilateralism in what concerns conditionality or common historical heritage.⁸

This article seeks to contribute to the debate on foreign and humanitarian aid, but at the same time, it assigns a specific tone. Accordingly, it questions how the geographical and temporal dimension of any humanitarian crisis influences the intervention strategy within the institutional framework of the EU humanitarian aid policy. An interesting recent body of literature exists discussing the greater or lesser efficacy of multilateral European foreign aid in comparison with aid provided by the individual member states. Of particular relevance is the discussion on the division of labour and coordination between the EU institutions and member states, as well as the costs and benefits of acting bilaterally and multilaterally within the EU institutional context.⁹ For this reason, even if the question pertaining to the impact of the geographical and temporal dimension of any crisis on the humanitarian intervention strategy goes well beyond the borders of the EU, the specific institutional characteristics of the EU render it an ideal field of study for this article.

Accordingly, the specific legal arrangement of the EU humanitarian aid policy implies a different involvement of the

i The debate on humanitarian aid is extremely broad and complex, and, consistently, many contributions have been differing in their theoretical approach, methods, and perspectives (from economics to law, politics, and international relations). Some examples of this huge variety and complexity are offered by Seybolt, Scheffer, Dorman and Otte, Roberts, and Holzgrefe.

EU institutions and member states in terms of decision-making, cost-sharing, and presence in the field. The Treaty of Lisbon legally settled the institutional configuration characterising EU humanitarian aid policy for the first time in 2007 by providing shared competences. Accordingly, “the Union shall have competence to carry out activities and conduct a common policy; however, the exercise of that competence shall not result in Member States being prevented from exercising theirs.”¹⁰ In other words, the EU member states are confronted with two alternatives. To begin with, they have the possibility to allocate aid in a bilateral manner through the signing of bilateral agreements with the recipient countries. They thus act independently, or outside the institutional framework of the EU. Otherwise, they can totally or partially delegate the competence of the intervention to the EU, and thus intervene within its institutional and legal framework. As a result, it can be observed that the majority of humanitarian interventions are undertaken within the EU context (delegation). Nonetheless, the EU member states still actively enforce bilateral agreements with countries affected by humanitarian crises, thus acting outside the institutional framework of EU humanitarian aid policy (unilateralism).¹¹ This flexible institutional arrangement may have interesting and important theoretical implications and, being specific to EU humanitarian aid policy, it seeks to explain the EU member states’ choice between intervening within or outside the EU institutional context.

With the aim of providing as conclusive and convincing an answer as possible to this question, this paper commences by illustrating the institutional context in which the EU is called to intervene and by discussing the reasons why the context of the intervention is supposed to influence the choice between the two intervention alternatives. The paper outlines the details of the impact that the contextual factors may have on the governance between supranational institutions and the member states within the framework of an international organisation, and within the EU more specifically. In particular, the impact impinges on the delegation and sharing of competences between EU institutions and the member states. Then, the paper more specifically discusses the costs and benefits for rational actors, as the EU member states are expected to choose between the three alternatives in coping with humanitarian crises. This should then allow for an understanding as to whether and—eventually—how the issue-

areaⁱⁱ of the intervention impacts on, and consequently changes, the costs and benefits of choosing between unilateralism and delegation. Finally, with the aim of discussing how humanitarian crises may influence the expediency of the two different strategies of intervention, two specific dimensions characterizing any humanitarian crisis are delimited, namely the geographical and the temporal dimension. They are thus expected to potentially influence the choices of the EU actors. Accordingly, the formulated hypotheses suggest that large diffusion (geographical dimension) of a crisis and high urgency for intervention (temporal dimension) lead towards a consolidation of cooperation in favour of the delegation of competences. Inversely, limited diffusion and scarce urgency encourage unilateralism. The theoretical discussion is then followed by the empirical analysis of 2,687 humanitarian interventions in crisis contexts between 2004 and 2010, which on the basis of multinomial logistic regressions, tests the impact of the temporal and geographical dimensions of the crises on the intervention strategies endorsed by the EU actors.ⁱⁱⁱ

Delegation and Sharing of Competences in the EU

This paper investigates the patterns of interaction between the member states and the European institutions within the framework of EU humanitarian aid policy. Such a discussion theoretically refers to the process of delegation and sharing of competences within an international organization. Within this context, delegation is thus defined “as a grant of authority by

ii Despite being rather broad, the concept of the issue-area (i.e., the contextual characteristics represented by the humanitarian crises) is essential for the theoretical framework of this article. Accordingly, it founded the theoretical roots of this article on the debate on the fundamental role played by contextual characteristics in the formation of the preferences of actors. For this reason, once this link is established, in the phase of operationalization, this article clarifies that the issue-area to which it refers is constituted precisely by the contextual characteristics of any humanitarian crises in which the EU member states intervene.

iii The interventions are collected through the “14 points query” form (ECHO, *HOLIS 14 Points Online Help* (2011), <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/hac/HOLIS14OLH/HolisOLH.htm>). Through this report system, the member states and the European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) encode about any funding devoted to interventions in humanitarian crises. Clearly reporting which actor funds the intervention, the system indicates whether the intervention has been undertaken within the framework of the EU (delegation) or by one or more member states outside the latter (unilateralism), possibly coordinating their actions, or by ECHO jointly with one or more member states (partial delegation). The information provided by the system includes donor, recipient, amount of money, reason for the intervention, period and length of the intervention, and type of aid. The data have then been encoded in the statistical software SPSS.

two or more states to an international body to make decisions or take actions.”¹² Indeed, the process of delegation is legally formalized within an institutional context through the signature of agreements implying a high degree of precision, commitment, and obligation for the member states. More specifically, the latter partially or totally give up their authority (and autonomy) on specific issue-areas either partially or totally through a shift of national competences in favour of multilateral organizations.¹³ According to the principal-agent model, the process of delegation implies four different steps through which *principals* delegate national competences to an *agent*, which thus gains discretion, autonomy of action, and authority.¹⁴ In the first step, principals decide the competences to delegate and the extent to which the delegation ought to be carried out by weighing up the benefits of delegation with the costs it entails in terms of decreasing national sovereignty and increasing supranational discretion. States thus rationally balance the costs and benefits of delegation in order to negotiate the form and extent of delegation in which benefits best counterweight costs. In the second step, mechanisms of control are put in place with the aim of reducing supranational discretion and keeping a residual autonomy in order to avoid negative effects, such as shirking and slippage.¹⁵ The results of delegation are then estimated in the third step and, as a result, states may decide, in a fourth step, between the continuation or end of delegation in case the results were not the expected ones and in case the costs outweighed the benefits.¹⁶

Within the institutional and legal framework of EU humanitarian aid policy, the choice in favour or against delegation is not formalized in the treaties,¹⁷ and member states can decide intervention by intervention whether to allocate humanitarian aid bilaterally or whether to delegate the competence of the intervention to the EU.¹⁸ The decision on how to intervene thus resides in the implementation, rather than in the negotiation phase of the policy process.^{iv} Thus, it becomes particularly important to discuss how member states decide and form their preferences on the type of intervention to carry out, and which factors may influence this choice.

Preferences Formation, Rationality, and Issue-Area

The preferences of the member states in terms of the form of humanitarian intervention call for an investigation of the impact ^{iv} According to Heywood, the policy process is characterized by four distinct phases: initiation, formulation, implementation, and evaluation, where the first and the second phases refer to the negotiation process (Heywood, *Politics*: 430–437).

of both the issue-area^v (or, more specifically, in this article, the characteristics of the humanitarian crises) in which the member states intervene and the institutional context in which the decision is taken. Accordingly, member states are called to decide in favour or against delegation within the specific institutional framework of EU humanitarian aid policy. Nonetheless, having the choice deferred to the implementation rather than the negotiation phase of the policy process, member states may flexibly decide humanitarian intervention by humanitarian intervention between the two alternatives. This consideration suggests questioning which factors influence, and may eventually determine, the final choice. In this context, it is hypothesized that the context of the intervention, namely the specific humanitarian crises to be addressed and its characteristics, has a major impact on the expediency of both delegation and unilateralism. On this point, the influence of the institutional framework and of the issue-area of the intervention on decision-making is addressed by the theories of multilevel governance and neo-institutionalism. For the purpose of understanding how member states decide in favour or against delegation, both theories thus provide useful theoretical tools. The former focuses on the patterns of interaction endorsed by the EU actors and then allows for an understanding of the institutional dynamics governing the intervention choices of the EU member states. Moreover, it claims that political interaction is susceptible to changes due to the issue-area of the intervention.¹⁹ Accordingly, multilevel governance is particularly useful given the specific institutional framework of EU humanitarian aid policy where “the competencies of EU Member States and EU institutions sometimes overlap, and outcomes are the result of political interactions between the two levels of governance, their inputs and their preferences.”²⁰ For this reason, multilevel governance can provide the theoretical tools to discuss how the decisions on how to intervene in any humanitarian crises within EU humanitarian aid policy are taken. Moreover, it also perfectly describes and catches the fluidity and complexity of the

^v Before entering the discussion about the relevance of the issue-area in explaining the patterns of interaction, a clarification needs to be formulated concerning the definition itself of the term issue-area. “An ‘issue-area’ is a group of issues that share one or more traits and can, therefore, be classified as belonging to the same category” (Thomas Brewer, “An Issue-Area Approach to the Analysis of MNE-Government Relations,” *Journal of International Business Studies* 32, no. 2 (1992): 300). A common distinction is, for example, marked between “domestic policy issues and foreign policy issues or between economic policy issues and social policy issues” (Brewer, “An Issue-Area Approach,” 300). The different issue-areas are characterized by different institutional set-ups. For example, EU foreign policy issues, such as security and defence, are less centralized than economic issues, such as trade and internal market.

competences which characterize any issue-area and which may significantly vary from one issue-area to another,²¹ or—as in the specific case of this article—may vary depending on the contextual characteristics of any humanitarian crisis.

Multilevel governance thus takes an important role as it allows taking account of the interaction between national and EU institutions.^{vi} Accordingly, in order to understand how political interactions develop within the EU political and institutional framework, it is even more important to consider all the relevant actors because their sometimes diverging or overlapping inputs and preferences may influence the political outcomes. The case of the institutional context with regard to EU humanitarian aid policy is particularly interesting considering that “authority is dispersed between levels of governance and amongst actors, and where there are significant sectoral variations in governance patterns,” which range from unilateralism to a full delegation of competences.²²

Neo-institutionalism lays the theoretical foundations on which multilevel governance underpins²³ and seeks to explain the reason why the issue-area and the institutional context of reference influence the patterns of interactions between multiple actors.²⁴ Accordingly, such a theory allows bridging the gap between domestic preferences and political outcomes within the framework of an institutional context. It tackles the topic of how actors form their preferences and how the latter influence their interactions.²⁵ To this end, it provides a twofold theoretical contribution.^{vii} Firstly, the rationalist approach claims that the

vi “Governance is usually defined as being about the exercise of authority with or without the formal institutions of government,” Ben Rosamond, *Theories of European Integration* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2000), 109. Governance allows considering the interactions, and their political effects, between all the actors involved in the policy process. Accordingly, “governance can be seen as the pattern or structure that emerges in socio-political systems as a ‘common’ result or outcome of the interacting intervention efforts of all involved actors. This pattern cannot be reduced to one actor or group of actors in particular. No single actor has all the knowledge and information required to solve complex, dynamic and diversified problems, no actor has sufficient overview to make the application of needed instruments effective, no single actor has sufficient action potential to dominate unilaterally in a particular governing model,” Jan Kooiman, “Social-Political Governance: Introduction,” in *Modern Governance: New Government-Society Interactions*, ed. Jan Kooiman (London: Sage, 1993), 4).

vii Sometimes, the body of literature distinguishes between three, instead of two, approaches and marks the difference between the sociological and the historical approach. See, for example, Peter Hall and Rosemary Taylor, “Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms,” *Political Studies* 44 (1996), 936–957) and Rosamond, *Theories of European Integration*. Nonetheless, the theoretical elements relevant in this paper are common to the two approaches and, as a consequence, they are treated together herein.

domestic formation of preferences is immutable and exogenous and mainly depends on the member states' attempt to minimize the transaction costs of the policy process.²⁶ In the case of EU humanitarian aid policy, member states are therefore prompted to choose a specific form of intervention as long as it provides the best ratio between the costs and benefits of the intervention.²⁷ The attainment of the optimal ratio is the ultimate political goal regardless of the policy context. Differently, but in this case, complementarily, the sociological/historical approach does not deny the rationality of actors,²⁸ and underlines how their choice is determined by the institutional context in which it is taken.^{viii} Preferences are therefore endogenous and change as a function of context.²⁹

In this case, the decision is taken during the implementation phase of the EU humanitarian aid policy (according to the institutional framework of reference). The EU humanitarian aid policy intervenes in a specific issue-area, namely humanitarian aid, which thus seems to play an essential role in determining the transaction costs of the policy process,³⁰ and, consequently, the ratio between the costs and benefits of the two intervention alternatives.³¹ Humanitarian aid is thus the context, or as previously discussed, the issue-area of the member states' intervention. For this reason, the theoretical discussion seeks now to determine which of—and how—the contextual characteristics of the humanitarian crises may influence the context of the intervention and, consequently, the member states' intervention preferences.

Accordingly, changes in the issue-area might dramatically impact on the expediency of the three intervention alternatives.³² As a consequence, two aspects of the decisional process need to be analysed in order to understand how actors choose between unilateralism and delegation: firstly, the rational costs and benefits of behavioural alternatives, and secondly, the impact of

viii The rational and the historical/sociological approaches can, despite their differences, coexist, according to Aspinwall and Schneider, "Same Menu, Separate Tables," 3. They similarly aim to provide an explanation for the process of European governance. Moreover, the rationality leading state preference formation and ordering is never denied, as well as their need to reduce transaction costs and solve collective action problems (Aspinwall and Schneider, "Same Menu, Separate Tables," 22–23; Ostrom, "Rational Choice Theory and Institutional Analysis," 237–243; Norgaard, "Rediscovering Reasonable Rationality," 31–57. Finally, actors' rationality is framed within the European normative and institutional context in which the EU member states have bounded action, Ostrom, E. "Rational Choice Theory and Institutional Analysis," 237–243; Jörgen Weibull, *Evolutionary Game Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995). By doing so, the sociological/historical need of adopting an institutional rather than an economic perspective is perfectly satisfied.

the issue-area on such costs and benefits.³³ Only by giving serious consideration to the characteristics of the crisis to address, it is possible for member states to rationally weigh up the costs and benefits of both delegation and unilateralism, and to choose the most suitable alternative.

Delegation and Unilateralism: A Rational Perspective

The Treaty of Lisbon provides EU humanitarian aid policy with a flexible institutional arrangement allowing member states to decide intervention by intervention between three alternatives: full delegation, partial delegation, and unilateralism.^{ix} They are called to primarily decide between any kind of delegation and unilateralism, and then—in case they leaned towards delegation—to choose between full and partial delegation.

The first choice implies an estimation of the costs entailed by any political interaction and the benefits the delegation may entail. According to the rational approach, the interaction between states implies potential transaction costs, such as lack of communication and divergence of preferences, disputes on relative gains and capabilities, and uncertainty.³⁴ In the specific context of humanitarian aid, an additional cost refers to the relation donor-recipient³⁵ and can be *ex-ante* or *ex-post*: “The *ex-ante* transaction costs for the donor to obtain information about the deprived [...] and effectively carry out the transfer [...]; The *ex-post* uncertainty about the recipient’s intentions concerning the use he is going to make of the transfer [...]”³⁶ Delegation may help to reduce transaction costs, and it is preferable to unilateralism as long as its benefits outweigh the costs of the entailed autonomy loss.

The first contribution provided by delegation concerns the convergence of heterogeneous preferences, which is even more problematic if the interaction addresses a collective good, such as foreign aid. Accordingly, delegation helps to “coordinate solutions and [thanks to reiteration to] make running policy decisions so that states do not have to continually renegotiate.”³⁷ The coordination of solutions and the reiteration of actions generates an arena of discussion in which states can negotiate an agreement in relation

ix Flexibility is theoretically justified by both the rational and social/historical approach as being the best solution to tackle the challenge of coping with humanitarian crises. Rationalism states that institutional flexibility allows EU member states to optimise the ratio between the costs and benefits of delegation (Pusterla, *The European Union and Humanitarian Crises*). The historical/sociological approach maintains that flexibility allows the institutional framework to quickly and spontaneously evolve in line with the changes occurring in terms of the EU member states’ preferences (DiMaggio and Powell, *The New Institutionalism*, 10; Shepsle, “Studying Institutions,” 131–147).

to divergent preferences.³⁸ Martens, referring to Rodrik,³⁹ claims that once the convergence of preferences and the coordination of actions have been attained, delegation further “avoids the spillover of this conflict [conflict of preferences] to donors (who may prefer to maintain a privileged relationship with the recipient) and prevents blame falling on the donor if a risky programme goes wrong”⁴⁰ and speeds up the decision-making procedure.⁴¹ Concretely, in the specific context of the EU, the decision-making procedure is much quicker and efficient within the institutional context of the European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO)⁴² than within the context of the Council,⁴³ where long-lasting negotiations and extensive discussions between the representatives of the member states delay the decision-making.⁴⁴

A second transaction cost is represented by the difficulty to get and manage information,⁴⁵ especially in a humanitarian aid context,⁴⁶ because information constitutes a collective good. Delegation favours the collection of more and better information in what concerns the monitoring of both the actions undertaken by partners and the respect of conditionality of aid by recipients.⁴⁷ As a consequence, accountability is improved, while egoism and mistrust are reduced.⁴⁸ Moreover, the acquisition of information at the supranational level enables EU institutions to build policy-relevant expertise and to reduce the information costs and the uncertainty of preference, thus increasing the efficiency of decision-making.⁴⁹ Accordingly, ECHO—as an expert and efficient information provider which can count on an apparatus of officials competent in logistics and technical issues—has developed a set of methodologies to cope with humanitarian crises, and has a permanent and widespread representation in the field.⁵⁰ Conversely, member states only have a temporary and geographically limited presence in the field and largely rely upon the officials of national embassies instead of humanitarian crises experts.⁵¹

Thirdly, delegation helps to solve disputes on relative gains and capabilities and to increase the efficiency of intervention. It avoids the overlapping and redundancy of actions undertaken unilaterally by single actors. It thus favours the optimal distribution of resources and enhances the comparative advantage in intervention.⁵² As a consequence, other than being more efficient, interventions also entail fewer costs for single donors.⁵³

Finally, delegation reduces politicization and enhances the credibility of commitment⁵⁴ both concerning the intervention of the member states and the donor-recipient relation.⁵⁵ Accordingly, ECHO enforces monitoring mechanisms, which inhibit states

from evading their commitments⁵⁶ and consequently prevent member states from using humanitarian aid as a foreign policy tool in order to put their goals before victims' needs.⁵⁷ "This in turn endows multilateral agencies with an advantage in the exercise of conditionality, that is in lending that is conditional on changes in government policies."⁵⁸

Despite the undeniable benefits, delegation entails costs represented by the loss of authority and autonomy suffered by member states when transferring competences to supranational institutions. As a consequence, delegation is more expedient than unilateralism only as long as its benefits counterweigh the cost of loss of autonomy. Such a cost may be more or less expensive depending on the degree of obligation, precision, and commitment entailed by delegation. In this sense, a substantial difference exists between partial and total delegation. As a consequence, the discussion about the costs of delegation is analysed in more detail when addressing the choice between the two forms of delegation. Partial delegation may become particularly expedient in terms of reducing the loss of autonomy because states maintain the competence of intervening autonomously despite the competences acquired by the EU. Differently, when the delegation is total, the member states do not share the costs of action with ECHO, but lose any autonomy of intervention. The loss of autonomy is particularly expensive if the preferences of the member states and ECHO diverge.⁵⁹ In this case, they need perfect and symmetric information, other than control mechanisms in order to avoid ECHO's "residual non-compliance"⁶⁰ and guarantee the accountability thereof. On the contrary, if member states have imperfect knowledge of ECHO's actions and scarce monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms, "the best they can do often is to agree to limit the agency's discretion so that it cannot adopt a policy that is worse for any principal than the initial status quo."⁶¹ In the EU humanitarian aid policy's institutional framework, the decision-making procedure prioritising the majority vote without power of veto and the imperfect system of monitoring do not make it possible to exclude the divergence in preferences, thus reducing the expediency of the total delegation.

What emerges clearly from this discussion is that unilateralism and delegation, as well as full and partial delegation, involve costs and benefits. As such, no intervention alternative can be considered as the most suitable in itself by the member states, but, as previously discussed, the preference for one or another significantly depends on the contextual characteristics of the intervention, namely the characteristics of the humanitarian crises. The latter characteristics are susceptible to changes

and such changes influence the ratio costs/benefits of the three intervention alternatives. The aim here is to define some contextual characteristics supposed to be particularly relevant in order to influence this ratio and, consequently, the expediency of unilateralism, partial, and total delegation. What can thus be stated is that the choices between unilateralism and delegation and subsequently between partial and total delegation are not straightforward and mainly depend on both the effective contribution of the delegation to reducing transaction costs and on the real risk of loss of sovereignty in a scenario of divergent preferences.

Given that the issue-area in which member states are called to intervene is expected to influence such choices, it is now necessary to discuss whether and how the characteristics of humanitarian crises may impact on the twofold intervention choice. In this context, two dimensions are taken into consideration as particularly relevant to investigating the member states' intervention preferences: the geographical and the temporal dimension.^x

Intervention Alternatives and Humanitarian Crises Characteristics

EU humanitarian aid policy aims to address humanitarian crises. For this reason, the intervention choices endorsed by actors may be fully understood only by discussing the costs and benefits associated with intervention alternatives in the light of the specific crisis characteristics. Humanitarian crises have been differently

^x Some considerations can be formulated concerning the possible inclusion of other independent or control variables into the model. Three types of variables can be considered: (1) variables at the actor-level; (2) common historical heritage between donors and recipients; and (3) other crisis characteristics. Firstly, it is interesting to investigate whether differences exist among the member states with reference to the allocation of foreign aid depending on national differences across countries. For a recent insight into this topic see F. Pusterla and E. Pusterla, "The 2015 Migrant Crisis and EU Member States: The Relation between State Fragility and Solidarity" *European Political Science* 16:59 (2017). Nonetheless, this is not the aim of this article, which adopts the opposite perspective and investigates differences in the allocation of aid depending on the crisis characteristics. Secondly, additional analyses have been conducted in order to test the influence of a common historical heritage on the member states' inclination towards the provision of aid. No significant results have been found. Thirdly, an extensive discussion about the impact of the crisis characteristics on the EU member states' intervention preferences is provided by F. Pusterla, *The European Union and Humanitarian Crises: Patterns of Intervention* (London: Ashgate, 2015), also including additional explicative variables at the crisis level to the model (such as the nature of the crisis—natural or man-made—, its mediatization, etc.).

defined over the years⁶² and the definition adopted herein seeks to be as inclusive as possible by defining crises as “a serious threat to the basic structures or the fundamental values and norms of a social system, which under time pressure and highly uncertain circumstances-necessitates are making critical decisions.”⁶³ This definition thus includes natural or man-made disasters, financial breakdowns, health and environmental threats, civil and urban disorders, etc.⁶⁴ According to the ECHO statute, ECHO and the member states are committed to intervening in any humanitarian crisis threatening the civil population of countries external to the EU and a strong link is recognized between the context of the intervention and the alternatives of intervention.

Robinson⁶⁵ considers crises as “occasions for decisions.” The decision-making is particularly complex given that crises are usually unscheduled events with unprecedented implications⁶⁶ and are difficult to handle unilaterally, given that they involve a significant number of actors and are no longer delimited in time and space.⁶⁷ They are often geographically unconstrained, cross national borders, and have a negative and prolonged impact on pre-existing problems.⁶⁸ Moreover, due to interdependence, even regions which were traditionally relatively spared from crises and disasters are now less and less immune. They are either directly concerned by crises, or affected by the crises erupting in other regions. It does seem that two specific dimensions of crises, namely the temporal and geographical dimension, may influence the decision-making when coping with crises. Delegation may appear more expedient than unilateralism⁶⁹ because “coordination is pivotal to prevent miscommunication, unnecessary overlap, and conflicts between agencies and actors involved in crisis operations. Coordination is not a self-evident feature of crisis management operations.”⁷⁰ As anticipated, thanks to delegation, the member states are able to reduce the short- and long-term costs of actions and the risk of failure in response.⁷¹ Nonetheless, delegation is not always easy to achieve. “The international arena unfortunately abounds with examples of states, as members of international organizations, or as independent multilateral actors, failing to cooperate in the face of serious challenges to peace and in humanitarian disasters.”⁷² Crises are highly stressful⁷³ and three specific difficulties may emerge: (1) informational pathologies in the communication within the organisation and between institutions and citizens; (2) coordination of several actors simultaneously having the competence of decision and action; and (3) decision-making in sharing competences and authority.⁷⁴

Given that it is not possible to conclusively decide which intervention alternative is the most expedient, the contextual

characteristics which make it possible to discriminate between the various types of crises deserve to be duly taken into consideration. It is thus necessary to understand how the temporal and geographical dimensions of humanitarian crises may influence the expediency of unilateralism, partial, and total delegation.

Temporal Dimension: Urgency and Intervention

The temporal dimension concerns the urgency that the actors may face when intervening in any humanitarian crisis.⁷⁵ The structure of the intervention may be significantly influenced by a higher or lower degree of urgency.⁷⁶ Accordingly, the more urgently a response is required,⁷⁷ the less the intervention can be planned and formalised.⁷⁸

In decision-making terms, urgency jeopardizes the effectiveness of the collection and sharing of information, and of the coordination and division of labour,⁷⁹ because both of them require time—especially if the number of actors involved is high. Thus, urgency may influence the expediency of delegation and unilateralism. Although certain publications seem to suggest that high urgency encourages the autonomous intervention of national governments considering that national agencies are more inclined to coordinate and cooperate than supranational institutions,⁸⁰ the empirical evidence seems to refute such a claim.⁸¹ Accordingly, national agencies are often numerous and their coordination is problematic since the competences are widespread instead of being formally shared and attributed. As a consequence, unilateralism per se does not seem to be sufficient to solve the problem of information sharing and division of labour. For this reason, the expediency of delegation deserves to be reconsidered, given that, “with respect to time pressure, a multi-actor perspective accommodates diverging perceptions of the necessity for prompt action”.⁸² Delegation to ECHO may help the member states to avoid the problems of domestic coordination and overlapping of competences between multiple national agencies. At the European level, competences are attributed to a unique institution, in this case ECHO, which is formally appointed to intervene.⁸³ A good example of the EU’s commitment to increasing efficiency and effectiveness in crisis contexts requiring urgent intervention are provided by the competences attributed by the European Council to the Commission after the tragedies in Pakistan in 2005 and Haiti in 2010. The Commission has been charged with the control and evaluation of the division of labour between ECHO and the member states, and between the member states themselves.⁸⁴ The amount of bureaucracy and the number of donors involved

in an intervention dramatically decreased and the intervention procedure significantly sped up.^{xi}

Moreover, the decision-making is sped up by delegation because ECHO is an executive body basing its decisions mostly on already predefined guidelines. It can rely upon fast and coordinated emergency decision-making procedures particularly apt to manage time pressure⁸⁵ and favour the convergence of interests.⁸⁶ In contrast, member states take decisions on the basis of a long forward-looking legislative procedure, which is unfit for coping with crises requiring effective regulation and rapid response.⁸⁷ Indeed, “a time-consuming process of decision-making is a luxury in a situation of extreme urgency in which large numbers of people are at risk of being killed.”^{xii}

In view of the choice between partial and total delegation, urgency seems to suggest the expediency of the former. As anticipated, partial delegation allows any member state to intervene autonomously in addition to ECHO intervention. Consequently, the number of potentially involved actors and overlapping interventions increases. Thus, coordination becomes more difficult and the risk of coordination failure increases⁸⁸ because of the lack of a formal centralised authority, the high number of involved actors, and a long process of negotiation.⁸⁹

To conclude, by taking into consideration both the costs and the benefits incidental to the three intervention alternatives and the temporal dimension of humanitarian crises potentially impacting on the latter, the following hypotheses may be formulated:

xi S. Booth and S. Herbert, “EU External Aid: Who is It For?” 2011. <http://openeuropeblog.blogspot.ch/2011/04/eu-external-aid-who-is-it-for.html>, 14.

14. “It is widely acknowledged that greater co-ordination of member states development programs is crucial to increase aid effectiveness. The role of the EU should be to provide a forum for coordination between donors [...]. This would allow it to provide a resource for small member states with limited diplomatic networks to coordinate their spending, and divide up responsibilities if they wish. It would mean large savings on administration costs. A common EU framework for aid conditionality and the objectives of member state aid could ensure high standards of aid effectiveness are met. In terms of financing, it should be the EU’s role to act as a forum for member states to decide where their aid is best spent, and by which donors, in a specific recipient country, rather than acting as banker managing a central pot of money” (Booth and Herbert, ‘EU External Aid,’ 23).

xii A. Roberts, “The So-Called ‘Right’ of Humanitarian Intervention” Yearbook of International Humanitarian Law 3 (2000), 38. The UK Minister for Europe through its Select Committee on the European Union recognized how it “was impressed by the speed of the EU’s reaction to the crisis in Macedonia and to the events in Montenegro. The Council Secretariat also emphasised the speed at which the EU was able to respond to the crisis in July 2002 when the US threatened to withdraw from the International Police Task Force (IPTF); it is clear that the current committee structure does not lend itself to fast decision-making” in, House of the Lords — Select Committee on the European Union. EU — Effective in a crisis? 2003, 16.

H1: when the crisis is highly urgent, the inclination towards delegation, instead of unilateralism, increases.

H2: when the crisis is highly urgent, the inclination towards full delegation, instead of partial delegation, increases.

Geographical Dimension: Diffusion and Intervention

The threat posed by a crisis increases in line with the level of needs of the affected country or region. In other words, the danger entailed by a crisis is linked to the number of actual victims, the number of potential victims if the crisis is expected to expand, and the possible threat entailed for countries which are not directly affected by the crisis, but which could suffer the political, social, and economic consequences. In particular, this last aspect, the potential diffusion of a crisis, is expected to play a role in deciding the type of intervention with the purpose of circumscribing the crisis and thus limiting the threat.

Accordingly, a crisis can be geographically circumscribed to a single country or region, or a crisis can potentially propagate outside the borders of the initially affected country and thus affect other regions. Such an example is constituted by the crises associated with refugees or internally displaced people. They are simultaneously representing a danger for the country from which they are moving, but can also represent a potential danger for the country they are moving to.⁹⁰ Widespread or potentially diffused crises increase the level of threat given that due to their progressive diffusion they may entail an increasing number of potential victims. As a consequence, as the diffusion thereof may change the nature of the crisis, it can also modify the contextual circumstances the intervening actors have to cope with, and ultimately the expediency of the structure of the response to the crisis. Accordingly,

National governments and public agencies will find it particularly difficult to keep up with crises that originate outside their own borders and wreak havoc within. Cascading problems and insidious knock-out effects may outstrip local coping capacity and defy unilateral responses. Individual countries' abilities to deter new problems and to cope with crises when they occur will depend largely on how well they cooperate with their international patterns.⁹¹

The perception of the threat, as well as the successive formation

of preferences, may thus influence the first intervention choice between unilateralism and delegation. Accordingly, as previously stated, the diffusion of a crisis increases the level of threat, and as a consequence, the level of need. The intervention entails an additional degree of urgency because it is in the general interest to reduce the threat and to limit the high risk of diffusion as quickly as possible. Inversely, if the crisis was circumscribed and the risk of diffusion was kept to a minimum,⁹² the intervention would be less pressing.

As long as a crisis is highly diffused or disseminated, the member states share the same perception of the need of an imminent intervention. Consequently, the risks of shirking and slippage seem to be prevented and delegation appears to constitute a good solution given that the member states could share the costs of the decision and action and implement a more effective and coordinated plan. This is particularly important in a scenario of highly threatening crises because the costs of intervention are dramatically higher. Moreover, the delegation to ECHO would also rely upon the specialization of the EU institutions and the internal division of labour. Inversely, if a crisis is not widespread and the risk of diffusion is low, delegation becomes less expedient, and member states could prefer to act unilaterally without autonomy and authority bargains, or to partially delegate to ECHO only the competences in which they do not have a specialization and which do not entail autonomy costs. Thus, depending on the domestic preferences thereof and comparative advantage in intervention, any member state can decide for a different extent of delegation including different competences.

Starting from these considerations, the following hypotheses can be formulated:

H3: when the crisis is widespread, the inclination towards delegation, instead of unilateralism, increases.

H4: when the crisis is widespread, the inclination towards full delegation, instead of partial delegation, increases.

Methods and Data

In order to test the hypotheses and find a convincing answer to the main research question, this paper collected 2,678 interventions in crisis contexts undertaken by ECHO and/or the EU member states

between 2004 and 2010.^{xiii} The main source is the EDRIS ⁹³ report system—previously “14 points query” form⁹⁴—providing detailed information about the donors, recipients, amount of money, reason for the intervention, period and length of the intervention, and type of aid. In particular, it provides a concrete measure of the geographical and temporal dimension of the crises in this manner. Concerning the first aspect, the dichotomous variable “diffusion” indicates whether a crisis is circumscribed to a single country or widespread to an entire geographical region.^{xiv} Then, a second variable, “continuum” explains the temporal dimension of the crisis by clarifying whether the crisis requires an urgent intervention or whether its temporal dimension leads to a lasting and less urgent intervention, namely the rehabilitation, care and maintenance, development, or prevention of a crisis.^{xv} In accordance with the previously formulated hypotheses, the expediency of delegation—and more specifically full delegation—is expected to be higher in a scenario involving an urgent and widespread crisis. Conversely, in a scenario involving a circumscribed and non-urgent crisis, the expediency of full delegation—compared to unilateralism and partial delegation—is expected to increase.

The 2,678 crises are then encoded in PASW and multinomial logistic regressions are run with the aim of testing, on the one hand, the expediency of full delegation, partial delegation, and

xiii In this context, a clarification can be useful in order to explain how the dataset is structured and what the unit of analysis refers to. The potential ‘crisis’ needs to be characterized by an easily-determinable degree of urgency and diffusion, which makes it possible to distinguish one crisis from another. In other words, any unit of analysis should differ from the others in terms of urgency and diffusion. Accordingly, “Treating each [crisis] as one case would make it impossible to code, as there are multiple issues and types of intervention and outcomes within one [crisis]” (J. Kelley, *Ethnic Politics in Europe: The Power of Norms and Incentives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 22). More precisely, in terms of diffusion, this study enters the crises in the dataset at the country level. As a result, if a crisis affects more than one country, then it is included into the dataset as many times as the involved countries are, given that the characteristics of the crisis may potentially vary from one country to another. In other words, each affected country may experience different types of intervention. For this reason, the crisis is split into different units of analysis and as such treated and analysed individually. What has been said about diffusion is also valid for urgency. The relief at the beginning of a crisis is certainly more urgent than the following operations which become less urgent year after year in F. Piccin, *The European Union Humanitarian Aid Policy and the Management of External Humanitarian Crises – Crises Characteristics and Intervention Strategies* (DPhil thesis, University of Geneva, 2013), 150–152.

xiv The variable “diffusion” has been encoded in the following way: (1) widespread and (0) circumscribed.

xv The variable “continuum” has been encoded in the following way: (5) urgent relief, (4) rehabilitation, (3) care and maintenance, (2) development, and (1) prevention.

unilateralism in respect to the level of urgency characterising a crisis, and the level of diffusion and the two dimensions taken simultaneously on the other.

Diffusion, Urgency, and Intervention Alternatives

Concerning the temporal dimension of the crisis, urgency seems to have a positive effect on the expediency of delegation.^{xvi} The results of the logistic regression are reported in Table 1 and suggest that the continuum of the intervention explains between 18.9 percent and 23.9 percent of the inclination of the EU member states towards a specific intervention strategy, which is a medium effect.

Table 1: Unilateralism, partial, and full delegation: the impact of urgency

	95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)					
	B (SE)	Wald	df	Exp(B)	Lower	Upper
Partial Delegation						
Intercept	-1.028 (.072) ***	202.481	1			
Continuum(1)						
Continuum(2)	-3.479 (.585) ***	35.365	1	.031	.010	.097
Continuum(3)	-3.366 (1.009) **	11.136	1	.035	.005	.249
Continuum(4)	-3.474 (.508) ***	46.788	1	.031	.011	.084
	-3.526 (.455) ***	59.954	1	.029	.012	.072
Full Delegation						
Intercept	-.665 (.064) ***	109.102	1			
Continuum(1)						
Continuum(2)	-1.009 (.165) ***	37.269	1	.364	.264	.504
Continuum(3)	-1.427 (.341) ***	17.500	1	.240	.123	.468
Continuum(4)	-2.452 (.263) ***	86.760	1	.086	.051	.144
	-1.861 (.180) ***	106.668	1	.156	.109	.221

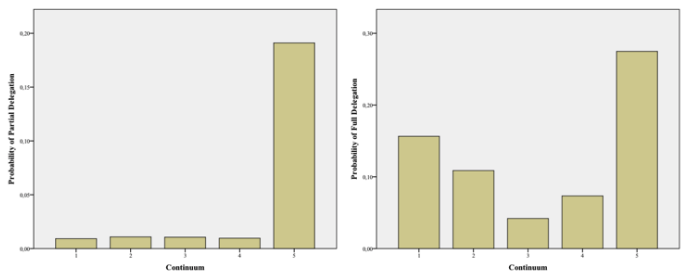
Note: R = .189 (Cox & Snell), .239 (Nagelkerke)²⁴. Model χ^2 = 560.124 (8).

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001, ¹p<.1.

Chart 1 provides extensive details about the expediency of the three intervention alternatives depending on the urgency of the crisis.

^{xvi} There are no outliers that can negatively influence the interpretation of the findings. This is true for all the analyses run in this article.

Chart 1: Unilateralism, partial, and full delegation: the impact of urgency



In particular, the temporal dimension seems to not only strongly influence the expediency of full delegation, as was already the case for the geographical dimension, but to also impact on the expediency of partial delegation, compared to unilateralism. Delegation is thus by far the preferred intervention strategy to unilateralism when a crisis requires an urgent intervention. In particular, the expediency of partial delegation compared to unilateralism goes from 1 percent in case of an intervention of prevention to 19 percent in case of urgent relief, whereas the expediency of full delegation goes from 4 percent in case of care and maintenance to 27 percent in case of urgent relief. The results seem thus to corroborate both H1 and H2.

The second multinomial logistic regression tests the impact of diffusion on the choice between the three intervention alternatives. As reported in Table 2, diffusion seems to have a medium effect on the choice (between 21.9 percent and 27.6 percent. In particular, changes in the diffusion of the crisis significantly impact on the choice in favour of unilateralism (changing from 32 percent to 83 percent) partial delegation (from 10 percent to 12 percent) and full delegation (from 8 percent to 56 percent).

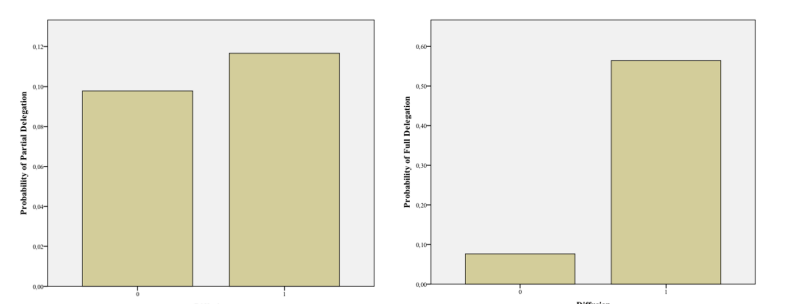
Table 2: Unilateralism, partial, and full delegation: the impact of diffusion

		95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)				
	B(SE)	Wald	df	Exp(B)	Lower	Upper
Partial Delegation						
Intercept	-1.006 (.142) ***	50.419	1			
Diffusion(0)	-1.127 (.160) ***	49.701	1	.324	.237	.443
Full Delegation						
Intercept	.570 (.092) ***	38.648	1			
Diffusion(0)	-2.951 (.123) ***	571.277	1	.052	.041	.067

Note: R = .219 (Cox & Snell), .276 (Nagelkerke). Model χ^2 = 660.764 (2).
* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001, †p<.1.

Chart 2 illustrates the changes in the strategy of intervention due to the changes occurring during the diffusion of a crisis.

Chart 2: Unilateralism, partial, and full delegation: the impact of diffusion



It can be observed that diffusion does not have a dramatic impact on explaining the choice between unilateralism and partial delegation. The expediency of partial delegation changes is of only 2 percent. In contrast, the geographical dimension has an important effect on the expediency of full delegation in that—compared to other alternatives of intervention—the latter increases from 8 percent to 56 percent when the crisis is widespread. This result seems to corroborate H3 and H4 and confirms that the diffusion of a crisis may encourage the member states to take advantage of the benefits of delegation and bear the autonomy costs of a centralized intervention.

The results reported herein allow for testing and drawing some conclusions about the impact of diffusion and urgency on the choice between unilateralism, partial, and total delegation. Nonetheless, it is also interesting to further investigate the intervention choices of the EU member states in crisis contexts on the basis of a third multinomial logistic regression analysing the impact of urgency and diffusion simultaneously. The main results are reported in Table 3.

Table 3: Unilateralism, partial, and full delegation: the impact of diffusion and urgency

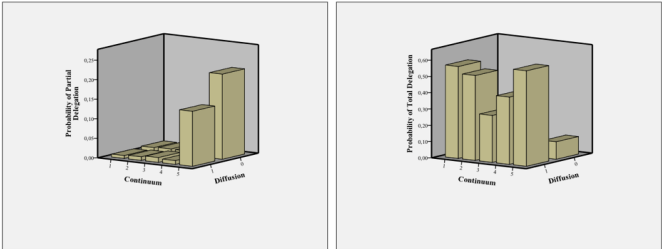
95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)						
	B(SE)	Wald	df	Exp(B)	Lower	Upper
Partial Delegation						
Intercept	-.660 (.147) ***	20.191	1			
Continuum(1)	-3.421 (.585) ***	34.138	1	.033	.010	.103
Continuum(2)	-3.289 (1.009) **	10.618	1	.037	.005	.270
Continuum(3)	-3.394 (.509) ***	44.499	1	.034	.012	.091
Continuum(4)	-3.448 (.456) ***	57.151	1	.032	.013	.078
Diffusion(0)						
	-.470 (.167) **	7.961	1	.625	.451	.866
Full Delegation						
Intercept	.767 (.098) ***	60.800	1			
Continuum(1)	-.490 (.190) *	6.684	1	.610	.422	.888
Continuum(2)	-.663 (.372) †	3.168	1	.515	.248	1.069
Continuum(3)	-1.655 (.279) ***	35.267	1	.191	.111	.330
Continuum(4)						
Diffusion(0)	-1.103 (.198) ***	31.034	1	.332	.225	.489
	-2.609 (.129) ***	410.108	1	.074	.057	.095

Note: R = .320 (Cox & Snell), .404 (Nagelkerke). Model $\chi = 1.031E3$ (10).

* p<.05, ** p<.01, ***, p<.001, †p<.1.

The model including both explicative variables reports a predictive power between 32 percent and 40 percent, thus providing better results than before. In particular, it indicates that the inclusion of both diffusion and urgency changes the expediency of partial delegation compared to unilateralism from 1 percent to 22 percent, while in the case of total delegation the expediency changes from 3 percent to 59 percent. Chart 3 illustrates the distribution of the intervention preferences among EU member states in further detail depending on the level of urgency and diffusion.

Chart 3: Unilateralism, partial, and full delegation: the impact of diffusion and urgency



The chart illustrating the expediency of partial delegation clearly shows how the impact of the continuum is preponderant compared to the impact of diffusion. Accordingly, in case of urgent relief, the expediency of partial delegation compared to unilateralism increases dramatically. Then, more surprisingly, such expediency decreases when the crisis is widespread, while it reaches its apex in the scenario involving an urgent intervention in a circumscribed crisis. Differently, the choice in favour of full delegation compared to unilateralism seems to depend more on the diffusion than on the urgency of the intervention. Accordingly, as hypothesized, the expediency of full delegation is maximal when the crisis is widespread and requires an urgent intervention. Nonetheless, if the impact of diffusion makes a remarkable difference in the expediency of full delegation from a widespread to a circumscribed crisis, the urgency of the intervention does not seem to impact as much on the choice between unilateralism and full delegation.

Conclusion

This paper questioned the intervention strategies adopted by EU member states in terms of addressing external humanitarian crises. EU humanitarian aid policy provides member states legally and institutionally with the flexibility in terms of deciding intervention by intervention between delegating the intervention to the EU, intervening independently from the EU, or in collaboration therewith. This paper thus addressed this choice by considering both the rational considerations on the basis of the domestic formation of preferences and the specific characteristics of the issue-area, which could potentially influence such preferences. It suggested that the geographical and the temporal dimension characterizing any humanitarian crisis may have an impact on the expediency of the intervention outside or within the EU institutional context. The statistical analyses seem to corroborate such a claim by reporting a higher inclination of the EU member states to delegate the competence of the intervention to the EU when the crisis is widespread and requires an urgent intervention. Inversely, the expediency of unilateralism increases in the opposite scenario. Finally, a third option, partial delegation, envisages a collaboration between member states and the EU institutions, which becomes increasingly expedient as the crisis is circumscribed and requires an urgent intervention. Such results thus further suggest the specific characteristics of the humanitarian crises to be powerful explicative variables of the EU member states intervention strategies and, more generally, to be an incentive for negotiations within the EU humanitarian aid

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FLYING WITHOUT RISK: THE NORMS ON WARRIORS AND THEIR APPLICATION TO DRONE PILOTS

Caroline Varin

Abstract

For the technologically advanced militaries of modern states, the intrinsic risk of waging war has been greatly reduced. This process is perhaps no clearer than in the case of military robotics and armed drones, technologies that greatly distance the soldier from the battlefield. Not only have these technological innovations wrought important changes on the battlefield, but, as this paper argues, the use of armed drones has increasingly transformed contemporary notions of warriors and risk, and, in turn, states' approaches to warfare. Because drone pilots participate in a distanced warfare and are not exposed to the same dangers as other soldiers, they fail to be tested in traditional martial virtues such as courage and sacrifice. Thus, they are neither celebrated nor recognized by our increasingly risk-averse society, leading to a certain disenchantment of drone pilots. This article first traces normative debates over warriors and the position of drone pilots within such conceptions. It then advances a normative argument in favour of more clearly including and accepting drone pilots within popular narratives and understandings of modern warfare.

Introduction

Technological innovations, particularly in the twenty-first century, have reduced human intervention to a minimum. This is especially disconcerting in warfare, which Thucydides called "the human thing." Indeed, besides ants, we are the only species that exercises violence on a massive scale and in a collective manner. Technology, however, has created new opportunities to progressively mechanize war in a way that could make human combatants increasingly remote and arguably redundant. The very appellation of 'unmanned combat aerial vehicles' (UCAV) suggests that our role will erode further in the future. Christopher Coker argues that in fifteen years, robots won't even require pilots and joysticks: "the future of war is autonomous systems, not semi-autonomous, certainly not people on the loop or in the loop."¹

This does not mean that humans will be entirely factored out of the military equation. Boots on the ground will always be required for certain jobs the machines cannot do. This was a big part of the "Hearts and Minds" campaign in Iraq for example, in which

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military personnel were mandated to broker transactions with local communities to win their support for the American mission. Even the increased use of UCAVs has not removed the army's reliance on humans. To the contrary, more personnel are needed to manage the robots of war—an estimated thirty people are necessary to operate a Predator or Reaper drone for instance, with another eighty people required to analyse the data. The Air Force initially pushed for drones to be called “remotely piloted aircrafts,” highlighting the continued vital role of pilots in the system. The focus of this article however is on the pilots of combat-enabled unmanned aerial vehicles, referred to here as drone pilots.

Today, the United States is so reliant on the use of drones that it would seem difficult, if not impossible, to go to war without them. Yet despite the importance of drones, and therefore drone pilots, in America's wars, these combatants are looked down upon by their peers and the population at large. Indeed, drone pilots are not considered as ordinary warriors, operating from a perceived ‘risk-free’ environment without setting foot on the battlefield. Norms regarding the role of the ideal Western warrior remain anchored in the wars of the twentieth century, when martial values such as courage, loyalty, and sacrifice were necessary to meet the existential threats facing society. The new realities of war, particularly in a risk-averse age, have yet to drive a change in the norms concerning warriors. This has affected the army's treatment of drone pilots and society's perception of them as legitimate combatants.

This article explores the tension between the requirements of warfare on the one side and the legitimacy of those who fight on the other. I first trace the current norm on warriors and examine how it manifests itself in the perceived lack of legitimacy of pilots of combat drones. I argue that these drone pilots face some of the same normative objections that used to plague mercenaries. A strong norm against mercenaries as warriors existed throughout the twentieth century:² a perceived lack of courage and reliability fuelled this anti-mercenary norm until the massive use of private military contractors during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq mainstreamed the use of foreign and private military agents.³ Likewise, norms that relegate drone pilots to sub-optimal warriors will need to adapt to the new American way of war: where combatants are strategically more effective operating remotely than facing unnecessary risks on the ground. I make a normative argument in favour of change towards greater acceptance of drone pilots. This article contributes to the literature on drones, the norms of war and the role of technology in warfare. On a topic dominated by the debate on just war theory and whether drones

are a legitimate means of waging war, I focus on the normative angle, concerned with the acceptance of drone pilots as the warriors that war, and society, need today.

Physical Risk and the Ideal Warrior

Warriors throughout history and around the world have developed codes of combat that reflect their society's expectations of the ideal combatant. These standards to which the warrior is held are often linked to religious beliefs or cultural practices and can be "connected to elaborate and frequently death-defying or excruciatingly painful rituals and rites of passage."⁴ Such codes of honour have been developed over time, leading to a "warrior ethos" that, according to Christopher Coker, holds a set of beliefs and values that define the warrior and his engagement with the enemy, society, and other members of the armed forces. The warrior ethos in the West, for example, is comprised of "honour, duty, courage, loyalty and self-sacrifice" because these values are perceived to "bind soldiers (and sailors and airmen) to one another and to the society they serve."⁵ Embodied in the Achilles, the "archetypal hero and *sine qua non* of the Western warrior,"⁶ the combatant must be willing and able to sacrifice himself for his comrades and his country, which inevitably means taking physical risks.

Indeed, throughout the history of war, since at least Homer's Iliad, the highest military ranks have been reserved to actual combatants; a combatant is defined as someone who partakes in battle and is thereby exposed to some degree of physical risk.⁷ This has been particularly true in the Air Force, and pilots who took the highest risks in the early days of mechanized flying were perceived as "daredevils."⁸ The military historian Martin van Creveld argues that danger is the "raison d'être of war."⁹ In a society where courage is valued, those who are exposed to high levels of danger, such as combat pilots, are portrayed as 'supermen' with nerves of steel and superior physical and intellectual prowess. On the other hand, mental health has long been a taboo in society and afflictions such as PTSD are often still considered a weakness in the military.¹⁰ As a result, only exposure to physical risk and the possibility of imminent death or maiming are perceived as evidence of courage in combatants and valued by their peers.

The drone pilot as a new 'warrior' prototype is a dramatic shift from Plato's ideal warrior class, a breed of citizens he called "Auxiliaries" who exhibit characteristics such as "temperance and courage." Aristotle argued that only "in warfare, where the danger is greatest and most glorious" could the virtue of bravery truly

be found—although this does not exclusively limit such virtue to combatants, as civilians can also display great courage in the face of death.¹¹ Not so for the drone pilot. The perceived risk-free nature of piloting a drone from a cubicle means that the operator need not exhibit the virtues that have historically distinguished the warrior from an assassin. The safe environments in which training and war both take place further prevent drone pilots from developing the close bonds of military camaraderie that ultimately drive the warrior to sacrifice his well-being in the interest of his society.¹² The aversion to drone pilots therefore is rooted in the martial values that society continues to demand from its warriors, despite the changes technology has brought to war.

Drone warfare not only disturbs Western notions of the ideal warrior. By providing a weapon that cannot be matched by the adversary, it has tipped the scales of war to unprecedented and arguably morally intolerable levels. The Western way of war has always tolerated and even encouraged a certain amount of asymmetry through the development and use of advanced technology. Insurmountable odds characterised the colonisation of Africa through the use of the Maxim gun and contributed to the end of the Second World War when the United States dropped two nuclear bombs on Japan. The risks to the aggressors were relatively minimal in both cases. However, there was still some exposure to death that normatively justified the warrior's excessive military advantage. Despite these historical precedents, the West's military doctrine actually does not tolerate excessive asymmetry and therefore it requires from combatants a certain degree of risk and honour to justify the act of war.¹³ This is ironic considering the investments that Western societies have made towards military technology to increase the asymmetry of warfare and protect their soldiers from harm. Kahn explains that "the paradox of riskless warfare arises when the pursuit of asymmetry undermines reciprocity."¹⁴ Indeed, for Kahn, combatants are only justified in injuring or killing the other as long as they themselves are exposed to physical risk, which drone pilots are not.

The Problem with Drone Pilots

Normative objections to drone pilots lie not only in the martial values that Western society holds dear, which these men cannot display away from the battlefield. The problem also lies in the 'gamers' profile of drone pilots that creates an image of reckless untrustworthiness, not dissimilar to the image many people continue to nurture about mercenaries. Furthermore, the questionable tactics, such as 'double-tap,' that drone pilots have

been asked to implement has brought about moral condemnation that outweighs the strategic relevance of their work. In this section, I show that the profile of drone pilots has made them outliers in the West's warrior tradition. I highlight how society's condemnation of drone pilots as warriors has created high levels of stress that has fuelled their disenchantment with their role, leading to high levels of PTSD. This only makes matters worse, as the mental condition, achieved without taking physical risks, is frequently scorned by the military and civilian establishments.¹⁵ Finally, the morally and legally contentious practices in drone warfare provoke established traditions of warfare, further entrenching drone pilots as objectionable warriors.

The demand for drone pilots has exploded since the war in Afghanistan: in 2013 "the Air Force increased the number of its pilots flying RPAs (remotely piloted aircrafts) from approximately 400 in 2008 to about 1,350."¹⁶ But these drone pilots, who are contributing significantly to the war effort, are finding the adjustment of becoming America's next generation of warriors rather challenging. The perception of an 'easy' job operated from the base has led to split military-civilian identities, under-appreciated missions, and subsequently, obstacles to military advancement. This has inevitably affected the recruitment efforts for drone pilots, with the US Air Force increasingly considering a pool of recruits made up of adolescent hackers and gamers. According to a 2014 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, Headquarters Air Force officials "considered the use of enlisted or civilian personnel"¹⁷ and sent its first ten enlisted airmen to drone pilots training in October 2016, although they will only be flying unarmed drones at first.¹⁸

Currently, both the US Air Force and the Navy assign officers to fly RPAs, while enlisted personnel operate the aircraft.¹⁹ The Air Force has also created an RPA career track for officers not qualified to fly manned aircrafts. These pilots work in eight active-duty bases around the United States and undertake a ten month specialized training program to fly the UAVs. Revealingly, RPA training costs a fraction of the expenses that go into instruction for manned aircrafts, which is \$65,000 dollars and \$557,000 dollars for each pilot. Most of the men operating UAVs—and they are nearly all men—are between the ages of nineteen and twenty-one.²⁰ There is a striking difference therefore in the profile, treatment of, and investment in pilots in the air and that of cubicle pilots.

America's young 'warriors' have reported that, while they find their mission as RPA pilots rewarding, they are often treated like robots and suffer from the stressful and unappreciated conditions of their work.²¹ Drone pilots are expected to work twelve hour

shifts, six days a week, without being fully briefed about the purpose of their mission. They clock in around 900 to 1,100 flight hours per year, compared to an average 200 to 300 flight hours for the average pilot in manned aircrafts.²² These demanding work conditions have the inadvertent result of jeopardizing the pilots' ability to perform their task: drone pilots who operate behind a screen for eight to twelve hours a day can easily become bored, especially as "90 percent of the time nothing is happening."²³

A study by MIT professor Cummings concludes that gamers would make the best drone pilots because of their ability to concentrate over prolonged periods of time. While video games have long been used as a recruitment and training tool by Western armies, only recently have gamers been specifically targeted for recruitment into the military.²⁴ Beyond having basic knowledge of military hardware gained from playing "Call of Duty" or "Battlefield," gamers have developed skills that are increasingly relevant, in particular to address the army's huge need for drone pilots. Cummings also suggests that operations resemble the world of video games in order to stimulate these young pilots throughout the mission.²⁵ This idea has its critics, of course, who maintain that war is not and should not resemble a game. Likewise, gamers are not accepted militarily as warriors, despite their growing role in modern warfare. Recruited from game rooms and working remotely from the battlefield, drone pilots do not fit the image of the West's traditional warrior, and therefore are not treated as such. However, technology has changed drone warfare into a very real experience creating a sense of proximity to the battlefield and the enemy. According to Caroline Holmqvist, "the video streams from the UAV are shown to have the same immersive quality on the drone operator—they produce the same "reality-effect," which explains the level of PTSD among drone pilots equal to that of actual pilots."²⁶

As mentioned above, drone pilots operate remotely and take no obvious physical risks in the performance of their tasks. Critics of drone operations suggest it is "a risk-free activity more akin to the practices of video-gaming joystick jockeys than of combat soldiers," and therefore "unlike more traditional forms of soldiering, the virtue courage can be neither developed nor exercised by drone operators."²⁷ To make matters worse, drone pilots require a "retention bonus" to keep doing their job, even though numbers are low and their skills are in high demand.²⁸ This makes them seem more like mercenaries, paid "by the kill."²⁹ In this context, courage seems irrelevant and national service is self-serving.

On the other hand, drone pilots exhibit alarmingly high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder, equal to the pilots of manned

vehicles.³⁰ This may be because the average age of drone pilots is significantly below twenty-three years, which is allegedly the ideal age for coping with stress on the battlefield.³¹ There is also still little understanding of, and empathy for, mental health disorders, particularly when exhibited by soldiers who are expected to be above such weaknesses; but it is perceived as unjustifiable for soldiers who take no risks to fall victim to this condition. PTSD has been dismissed by some scholars as a myth and society has historically shunned and isolated returning warriors traumatized by their experience.³² In fact, it is precisely the lack of separation between home and the stage of war that has been cited as a principle cause for increased PTSD in drone pilots, “because pilots are able to operate RPAs from Air Force bases in the United States and are thus able to live at home—what is known as being deployed on-station—their dual role juxtaposes stress related to supporting combat operations with the strains that can occur in their personal lives.”³³ This validates Plato’s argument that soldiers must be kept separate from other citizens so as to devote themselves entirely to the military effort. In addition, these young drone pilots are part of a generation that, research suggests, finds it difficult to cope with stress and is sensitive to what it sees on screens, whether it be a violent movie or a video game, all of which diminishes their value as warriors in the eyes of the society they must serve.³⁴

Drone pilots therefore suffer from a lack of recognition, exemplified by low promotion rates and the army’s reluctance to reward their contribution to military operations. A Brookings Institution report found that long work shifts hindered RPA pilots from pursuing educational and training opportunities, “resulting in a 13 percent lower promotion rate to the rank of Major over the last five years.”³⁵ Furthermore, when former Defence Secretary Leon Panetta unveiled the Distinguished Warfare Medal (DWM) in 2013 to recognize military achievement in cyber warfare and drone operations, US war veterans and infantrymen were outraged, nicknaming it the “Nintendo medal.” Several combat units criticized the medal—which only survived for two months—for undermining the values of heroism and sacrifice among their warriors.³⁶ US Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel argued that drone pilots specifically should be excluded from receiving combat medals on the grounds that these should be reserved to “those who incur the physical risks and hardship of battle,” emphasising the norm that drone pilots were not warriors by virtue (or lack of) of not taking physical risks.³⁷ The perception of drone pilots as ‘armchair warriors’ who commute between their homes and their cubicles fails to take into account the importance of their contribution to the war effort—with or without a demonstration

of physical courage.

According to Shannon French, soldiers have a psychological need to have the “profundity of their sacrifice” acknowledged. She explains that soldiers “are not mere tools; they are complex, sentient being with fears, loves, hopes, dreams, talents and ambitions.”³⁸ If they are regarded as a mere means to an end, they risk losing faith in the society they are protecting and their performance on the battlefield (or in the cubicle in this case) will be adversely affected. This has already been exemplified in the elevated attrition rates, which are three times higher for RPA pilots than for traditional pilots. But drone pilots also make sacrifices: they operate long hours, aware that their actions are killing people, and are expected to go home at the end of the day to a life of normality and anonymity, with little empathy from their loved ones or specialized psychological institutional support. In an increasingly automatized age, drone pilots are not (yet) recognized in terms of the warrior values praised by their societies, and their unacknowledged human suffering is evidence, says Coker, that war does remain “the human thing.”

Just War and Drone Pilots

Just war theory developed out of a tradition of normative principles that determine it is legitimate to exercise military force (*jus ad bellum*) and how said force should be deployed (*jus in bello*).³⁹ Drone warfare goes against both principles in a number of ways and in turn affects society’s perception of drone pilots.

First, with regards to *jus ad bellum*: drone strikes have been used by the American government outside of active combat zones. Indeed, a significant proportion of drone attacks takes place in countries that are not in a declared war with the United States⁴⁰: of the 500 above-mentioned drone attacks, 238 strikes, nearly half, have taken place in Pakistan.⁴¹ Yemen and Somalia, two other countries that have internal dilemmas but no conflict with the US, have also been the target for multiple drone attacks. This is particularly problematic from the warrior’s perspective; society’s mandate to go to war legitimises the murderous actions of soldiers and puts a moral stamp on killing. Coker argues that “to be legitimate, killing has to be programmed, disciplined and directed and it must above all conform to the social construction of an enemy. For it is society which determines when a soldier kills, whom he kills, and even how he kills.”⁴² The approval of civil society therefore absolves the soldier of his actions. But only fifty-eight percent of US citizens support the drone programs in the three above-mentioned countries, according to a 2015 Pew poll.⁴³

This number drops to three percent if you ask people in Pakistan.⁴⁴ Outside of a context of warfare, these targeted killings cannot be legally or morally justified.

Jus in bello is primarily concerned with who is a legitimate target and what level of violence is acceptable. This refers to the two principles of distinction between combatants and non-combatants and proportionality. Despite advances in technology that can effectively improve adherence to *jus in bello*,⁴⁵ drone strikes have disproportionately and indiscriminately killed non-combatants, raising concerns as to their legality. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, “the United States has conducted 500 targeted killings (approximately ninety-eight percent of them with drones), which have killed an estimated 3,674 people, including 473 civilians.”⁴⁶ The human rights organization Reprieve adds that 1,147 people have been killed “during attempts to kill just 41 men.”⁴⁷ If these numbers are accurate, they suggest a very high tolerance for collateral damage from attacks led by risk-free warriors. Collateral damage is of course a part of military activities, and the United States Department of Defense legitimizes this type of damage “so long as it is not excessive in light of the overall military advantage anticipated from the attack.”⁴⁸ However, the follow-up strikes and repeated targeting of mourners at funerals, reported by Amnesty International, further transgress the principle of distinction and equally undermine the warrior tradition of a code of honour, reinforcing the perception that drone pilots are not conventional combatants. The human rights group stated in 2013 that it was “deeply concerned about reported incidents of drones carrying out follow-up strikes on wounded survivors of initial strikes, killing not only the intended targets but also anyone attempting to rescue the injured.”⁴⁹ International humanitarian law clearly stipulates that attacking persons who are injured and hors combat constitutes a war crime and Christof Heyns, the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial killings has denounced the practice, saying it threatens over fifty years of progress in international law.⁵⁰ Furthermore, the Geneva Conventions give protection to those who collect and care for the wounded and respect for medical personnel is also included in military manuals of a large number of states. Public perception and military tradition put this use of double-tap at the height of cowardice, yet it has been a repeatedly used strategy in drone warfare.

Just War theory legitimises war when it is proportional. This can only be successfully achieved if a number of rules, or norms, define the environment in which this act takes place. For a war to be ‘just’ it has to involve a degree of physical risk on both ends,

known as the principle of reciprocity.⁵¹ Drone pilots are described as ‘post-heroic’ precisely because they do not enter a reciprocal relationship of risk with their enemy and cannot display any heroic behaviour. The lack of reciprocity and the absence of physical exposure creates a moral dilemma for American society involved in drone warfare since this choice of weapon and warrior simply does not fit into their Western-influenced martial traditions.

While drone pilots have been fighting for recognition and legitimacy both within the armed forces and in the eyes of the public, they will continue to face an uphill battle, as accusations by activists of “untenable” collateral damage amounting to “war crimes” are contrasted to the perception of a risk-free military career.⁵² In particular, the documented instances of follow-up strikes suggest that drone warfare is not only cowardly it is also dishonourable and potentially illegal. Drone pilots therefore continue to be perceived as morally stained. As society condemns mercenaries and pirates as guileless opportunists who do not follow the laws of war, they equally categorize drone pilots as undesirable warriors, regardless of whether the order for such strategies comes from high up the military and political hierarchy. Profiled as gamers, accused of cowardice and forced to carry out questionable strikes outside of a state of war, drone pilots have acquired an image that is normatively reprehensible. Ironically, society’s rigidly ungrateful attitude could potentially prompt drone pilots to move to the private sector or work for non-state actors: perfectly mobile and operating in the grey zone of war and unrecognised by their compatriots, these warriors could easily make the jump to mercenarism, working for the highest bidder.

Drone Technology and the Experience of War

The norms regarding who qualifies as a warrior according to the standards of Western society remain anchored in the past. I argue that war in the twenty-first century has already undergone significant changes and drone pilots are just one of the outcomes. Drone technology has transformed the experience of war in several ways.

For one, despite its reputation of being ‘remote,’ drone technology has shifted war from the impersonal to the intimate. Drone pilots spend days remotely tracking their targets. During this time, they witness their victims in everyday activities, with their families, performing mundane tasks, thereby creating a paradox of proximity with a nearly intimate knowledge of the person who will soon be killed.⁵³ War has historically depended on the state’s demonization of the enemy to allow and justify

his death.⁵⁴ The anonymity of killing the opponent allows the combatant to overcome his moral objections while maintaining his humanity. By removing this feature from the battlefield, drones risk dehumanizing pilots while ironically humanizing the enemy. Certainly, drone pilots do not encounter their targets in the same manner that soldiers do, nor do they have the same the sensory experience of killing.⁵⁵ But their knowledge of the target exceeds that of any soldier, including snipers.⁵⁶ Sophisticated imagery technology has made killing real “in all its gory detail,”⁵⁷ and drone pilots have reported mixed feelings about pulling the trigger on a target that they now know so well, a phenomenon that has contributed to the aforementioned high levels of PTSD.⁵⁸ However, this intimate knowledge of the enemy is now part of the job and is indeed necessary in order to reach the target without causing excessive collateral damage.

The intimacy of modern warfare is an unexpected effect of drone wars and is part of the transformation of the Western way of war. It is also more akin to espionage and intelligence gathering, which are important elements of warfare, but still considered inferior in the hierarchy of martial skills and virtues. Going hand in hand with this new phenomenon of intimacy is ironically anonymity. Drone pilots remain remote, anonymous, and unrecognized. While they know their target, nobody knows them. “On the one hand, we have the most intimate form of violence,” writes John Sifton on drone strikes, “while on the other hand, the least intimate of weapons.”⁵⁹ Far from being an anonymous videogame experience, drones have made warfare deeply intimate, and subsequently take a significant personal toll on the pilots behind the trigger. This anonymity is also inevitable for the pilots who conduct drone warfare, and is very much part of modern war, as is evidenced in the growing relevance of cyber warfare, where hackers conduct their strikes from the shadows of the Web.

Dealing with this new intimacy and anonymity in drone warfare takes its toll, morally and psychologically, and it is precisely for this reason that Kirkpatrick argues drone pilots do display courage. Drone pilots are aware of these risks and face them nonetheless in a role that is often thankless. The definition of courage has evolved historically as new weapons enabled soldiers to be more mobile and increasingly remote from the act of killing. As such, the existence and spread of drone technology may change society's expectations from its warriors.

Conclusion

Who society views—and celebrates—as warriors is important, for it legitimizes the act of killing. Just as the norm against mercenaries has adapted, attitudes towards drone pilots will likely change with the advent of new technology. The use of drones, the non-existential nature of existing threats, and Western society's risk-averse attitude to warfare have transformed conflicts and consequently the type of warrior that is required to fight these wars. But the norms that normalize and legitimize the warrior have yet to adapt to these changes.

UCAVs are becoming vital to air operations and the US army, for one, depends on their use. Seventy-six countries are presently also investing in drone technology and even non-state actors such as Hezbollah and Hamas have been known to use drones in a military context.⁶⁰ These drones continue to depend on human agency and the role of and demand for drone pilots is increasing quickly. Ideals regarding what constitute a warrior, how courage is defined, and how war should be conducted will need to change to encourage talented individuals to become drone pilots and perform their duties loyally, competently, and consistently.

In order to perform their duties and defend their countries, drone pilots, just like other warriors, depend on the recognition of their peers and the society they serve. Yet despite the normative shifts that are validating drones as an acceptable weapon, society continues to deplore the pilots behind these killing machines. Honour and glory are important to the warrior as it is the hope of being welcomed home after the war that enables him to fight as his country requires: "it is important for them to conduct themselves in such a way that they will be honoured and esteemed by their communities, not reviled and rejected by them."⁶¹ The soldier's craving for honour and glory has been manipulated by governments and military institutions and is used to drive these combatants to risk their lives on the battlefields or sacrifice their emotional and psychological well-being at home. When drone pilots not only exercise violence from the safety of a cubicle thousands of kilometres away from conflict, but are also given mandates from their government that are historically paradoxical to the warrior code, it inevitably de-legitimizes the role this warrior plays in contemporary warfare and consequently affects his own self-image. It does not help that drone pilots are participating in conflicts that are not viewed as legitimate by the populace, further tarnishing their image in the eyes of society.

If present wars are already being fought by remote warriors, then it makes sense that the skills and values required from these

‘combatants’ may be different from those expected from warriors with boots on the ground. Taking physical risks and demonstrating courage are not so necessary in this new virtual battlefield and it is unlikely that wars will revert back to what they used to be. On the other hand, psychological and moral risks are increasingly prevalent and have undeniable effects on many drone pilots. Their acceptance of this risk and persistence in battle is an act of courage, unrecognised as it may be. In the future, drone pilots will need to be mainstreamed into military hierarchies, valued, and nurtured in order to maintain their morale and motivation to continue serving the societies that need them.

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GENERAL SECTION

POLITICAL SCIENCE AND SEVERE CLIMATE CHANGE: A CASE FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL RESEARCH INTO ADAPTATION

John Barkdull and Paul G. Harris

Abstract

The failure of governments to mandate the greenhouse gas emissions cuts necessary to avoid serious climate change means that adaptation strategies will be essential. The more serious the climate change, the more robust adaptation will have to be. Political scientists should strive to understand and anticipate the likely political and policy challenges of climate change and the necessary adaptation measures. This article identifies avenues by which political science research can contribute to understanding what can and should be done as global climate disruption intensifies. It briefly reviews changing official conceptions of adaptation, describes the likely level of adaptation required, and highlights additional contributions that political scientists could make to understanding obstacles and opportunities for adaptation to severe climate disruption. Because of potential catastrophic impacts from climate change, the politics of adaptation is among the most important problems that political scientists can address. Critical analyses may be essential.

Introduction

Climate change is the most serious and difficult long-term problem facing humanity. Its impacts, such as sea-level rise, chronic droughts, increasingly frequent and severe forest fires, acute super-storms, devastated fisheries, and the widening spread of dangerous pathogens threaten hundreds of millions of people around the world.¹ As the impacts increase, poor states and communities will be hit the hardest because they are often in vulnerable locations and they lack the wherewithal to cope.² Affluent states and peoples will also suffer the effects, as

John Barkdull and Paul G. Harris, "Political Science and Severe Climate Change: A Case for Transformational Research into Adaptation," *St Antony's International Review* 13 no.1 (2017): 120-140

evidenced by deadly and costly forest fires in Australia and the United States, damaging floods and storms across Europe, and the increasing vulnerability of the West to diseases that were, until recently, relatively isolated in the tropics.³ These adverse events, whether caused by climate change or exacerbated by it, have not gone unnoticed by the world's governments. In December 2015, nearly all of them joined in signing the Paris Agreement on climate change.⁴ Most of them agreed to implement new policies that will limit national emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other harmful greenhouse gases (GHGs).⁵ While these policies are welcome, they will not be enough to prevent significant global warming and other manifestations of climate change.

Until relatively recently, international agreements and domestic policies geared toward addressing climate change mainly focused on mitigation of the problem: how to reduce CO₂ and GHGs emissions.⁶ Political scientists studying climate change have tended to follow suit by focusing on the politics of mitigation. For example, at the international level, they have examined climate diplomacy and cooperation among governments to limit GHG emissions, with much of this work focused on about three decades of negotiations to create and implement the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).⁷ Similarly, at the national level, political science research has tended to focus on struggles within national governments to create and implement policies that encourage or require cuts in national GHG emissions, or similar efforts by local governments and nongovernmental actors to foster such cuts.⁸ Research by political scientists has helped to explain why realizing international cooperation and national action to substantially reduce GHG pollution is painfully difficult. Internationally, reaching agreement to mitigate climate-related pollution is a prototypical collective action problem complicated by the extreme complexity of the issue, the great number of actors involved, and the multigenerational causes and effects. Nationally, it is extremely difficult in most states to overcome vested interests that might be harmed by action. This experience with mitigation suggests that efforts to realize effective adaptation to climate change could be equally inadequate if alternative schemes for addressing the issue are not considered seriously.

The focus on mitigation has been logical: the best way to solve a problem is to stop whatever is causing it. Indeed, many of the states that are most vulnerable to climate change have supported aggressive mitigation, and they have often acted nationally to implement mitigation policies. For example, several developing island states have put in place policies to limit greatly their national GHG emissions, no doubt in part to set an example for

more affluent states.⁹ However, mitigation policies have been inadequate globally: enormous GHG emissions continue apace even as rapid reductions in them are vital to avoid extremely painful impacts in the future. Due to past emissions, the consequences of climate change are already being felt, making the problem more immediate, especially for those most affected. At the same time, scientific predictions of greater and more severe future impacts have been issued more frequently and have become more precise. It has become much clearer that more widespread and dangerous effects of climate change cannot be avoided in coming decades.

Because of these developments, the attention of diplomats and officials has increasingly turned from mitigation toward adaptation: how to prepare for the inevitable negative consequences that will result from higher temperatures and other manifestations of climate change.¹⁰ Conventional examples of adaptation include strengthening infrastructure along coastlines to resist rising seas, improving early warning systems in storm-prone regions, and developing drought-resistant crops. As the severity of climate change increases, imposing ever-greater costs on societies, the political challenges of achieving effective and equitable forms of adaptation will become more acute. To be sure, adaptation has been on the global agenda since international climate negotiations began. It has always been the biggest concern of developing states because they are least responsible for historical GHG emissions and they are the most vulnerable to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. Nevertheless, in the first decades of climate negotiations the policy and politics of mitigation overshadowed the problem of adaptation, not least because mitigation was a bigger concern for the most powerful states.¹¹

Political scientists are potentially well equipped to describe, explain, and offer policy suggestions on the political factors pertaining to adaptation. However, while political scientists have devoted enormous attention to questions of mitigation, vigorously sharing ideas within their discipline, they have been relatively slow to direct their attention toward adaptation and to move it up their discipline's agenda. This was demonstrated empirically in an analysis of political science journal articles conducted by Debra Javeline. Her analysis revealed that "political scientists have been largely absent from the conversation [about adapting to climate change], despite the importance of the topic and the need for their contributions."¹²

Given repeated failures of governments to mandate the GHG emissions cuts needed to avoid very harmful climate change—and the potential of this failure to create crises in societies—¹³more political scientists should join scholars of development, geography,

ethics, and other fields to better understand struggles at all levels of analysis—international, national, and local—so as to actualize effective adaptation to climate change. The more severe that climate change might be, the more crucial such research becomes. This is not to say that efforts to mitigate GHG pollution and to understand the politics of mitigation should be discounted; mitigation, while too late to stop climate change altogether, can reduce future impacts and thus potential adaptation challenges. Still, the inevitability of climate change, and very possibly severe climate change, requires that far more attention should be given to adaptation.

Political science as a discipline should increase its research effort, using tools of analysis appropriate to the challenge, and thereby develop a community of scholars within the discipline devoted to the study of climate change adaptation. To encourage more work in this direction, in the remainder of this article we identify some of the avenues by which political science could contribute to a better understanding of what can and should be done as climate disruption intensifies. We briefly review changing official definitions of adaptation, summarize some of the existing political science literature, consider the level of adaptation likely to be required, and highlight some potential contributions that political scientists can make to understanding robust adaptation to severe climate disruption. Even as the prospect of severe climate change continues to be debated by some politicians, notably in the United States, the potential for catastrophic impacts, and thus profound human suffering, means that the politics of adaptation is among the most important problems political scientists can, and should, address.

The Necessity of Adaptation

International negotiations to address climate change have been underway for three decades. In the last decade, a consensus was reached among governments that global warming—the average global temperature rise above the historical norm—should not exceed 2°C.¹⁴ Presumably, holding global warming to less than 2°C “would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system,” the stated objective of the UNFCCC.¹⁵ This objective was affirmed in the 2015 Paris Agreement, which also acknowledged that 1.5°C would be a safer objective, as it might avoid severe consequences for the most vulnerable communities, such as low-lying island states.¹⁶ Limiting global warming even to 2°C or less would require rapidly transitioning the global energy system away from its current reliance on fossil fuels toward

widespread use of alternative forms of energy, coupled with significant energy conservation.¹⁷ According to Michael Mann, the burning of fossil fuels would have to fall to net zero carbon emissions immediately to stay below the 2°C threshold.¹⁸ However, despite expected increases in energy efficiency and greater reliance on renewables, the International Energy Agency has forecast that energy-related emissions will actually increase by 8 per cent by 2030.¹⁹ Thus, staying below the lower 1.5°C limit would require immediate and radical changes to the global industrial system.

However, commitments embodied in recent negotiations fall well short of stated goals. Assuming full implementation of pledges made by governments in the context of the Paris Agreement, the result is likely to be at least a 3.5°C increase in global average temperature by 2100.²⁰ Global warming can be limited to the internationally agreed threshold only if subsequent actions are taken to reduce GHG emissions far beyond what governments have agreed to do so far, and even then probably only if technology is developed and deployed very quickly and widely to remove CO₂ from the atmosphere.²¹ Nothing in three decades of climate negotiations suggests that this is at all likely to happen, and recent political developments indicate that the goal is becoming more remote. Worryingly, some analysts argue that even 1.0°C of global warming, which has occurred already, invites disaster.²² Consequently, as former President Barack Obama's science advisor noted, "we're not really in the business any longer of trying to avoid dangerous climate change—we're already in dangerous climate change. We're trying to avoid catastrophic climate change."²³ Meanwhile, Obama's successor has begun to dismantle the programmes that would enable the United States to meet its Paris commitments.

What might be the consequences of 3.5°C or more of global warming? The World Bank forecasts that a 4°C rise would mean "unprecedented heat waves, severe drought, and major floods in many regions, with serious impacts on human systems, ecosystems, and associated services" by the end of this century.²⁴ Importantly, higher temperatures would not be distributed equally across the planet; temperature increases over land would range from 4°C to 10°C, with 6°C or more in the Mediterranean region, North Africa, the Middle East, and the United States.²⁵ Sea-level rise could reach several meters by the end of the century, continuing to rise as much as eighty meters in ensuing centuries.²⁶ A 4°C temperature rise could "substantially undermine" global food security.²⁷ The magnitude of the social impact of severe climate change leads some observers to ask whether civilization could survive 4°C of global warming.²⁸ For example, Raymond Pierrehumbert argues

that “there is a severe risk civilization will collapse, leaving our descendants with few resources to deal with the unbearable environment we will have bequeathed them.”²⁹ Even if such predictions overstate the threat, impacts far short of that would be extraordinarily challenging for states and communities, not least the poorest among them.

Given the likely inadequacy of efforts by governments to limit GHG emissions sufficiently to avoid dangerous climate change and possibly much worse—what we might call severe climate change—adaptation could be vital in future decades and centuries. Consequently, policy makers and climate activists are increasingly turning attention to whether and how the world can adapt to the inevitable social, economic, and environmental impacts of substantial global warming.

Conceptualizing Adaptation

What does it mean to adapt to climate change? The precise definition of adaptation has been widely debated in academic and policy circles.³⁰ By necessity, much of the work to develop and implement adaptation policies occurs at the local level and is geographically distant from the international negotiations and organizations where the problem is debated and defined. Adaptation will vary in scale and time, meaning that reaching agreement on what needs to be done next year is much easier than defining what will be required several decades or more in the future. On examination, even the official definition agreed upon by governments at the international level has been malleable and politically fraught. As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has noted, adaptation has lagged mitigation “both in research and in climate negotiations [partly because] specialists, governments, NGOs, and international agencies have found it difficult to clearly define and identify precisely what constitutes adaptation, how to track its implementation and effectiveness, and how to distinguish it from effective development.”³¹

In 1992 the UNFCCC stated that there was a need to stabilize GHG concentrations in the atmosphere “within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened, and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.”³² A few years later, the IPCC, which was formed by governments under the auspices of the United Nations to provide objective and authoritative scientific assessments of climate change, offered a definition of adaptation: “any adjustment—whether passive, reactive, or anticipatory—that can respond to anticipated or

actual consequences associated with climate change.”³³ The 1997 Kyoto Protocol, containing the first concrete GHG emissions objectives for implementing the UNFCCC, included provisions for assisting states in adapting to climate change by facilitating “the development and deployment of technologies that can help increase resilience to the impacts.”³⁴ But even the Kyoto Protocol was mostly about limiting GHG emissions, specifically from developed states, and the objective up to that time was to focus on preventing or greatly limiting the problem of global warming. However, with the release of the intergovernmental panel’s third assessment report, issued in 2001, it became clear to negotiators that significant climate change would be unavoidable.³⁵ Adaptation would be essential. Consequently, at the start of the new century adaptation “finally emerged as a legitimate—and in some cases urgent—policy priority, prompting action within and outside the climate negotiations.”³⁶ Momentum grew to integrate adaptation into the climate change regime, and to work toward practical implementation. By the time of the 2015 Paris climate change conference, the need for adaptation alongside mitigation was widely accepted, and the Paris Agreement calls for “increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience.”³⁷

Over two decades, the IPCC’s definition of adaptation remained largely unchanged: “The process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects . . . to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.”³⁸ However, the IPCC now distinguishes between incremental and transformational adaptation, and, going a step further, points to transformational change. Incremental adaptation is about maintaining “the essence and integrity of the existing technological, institutional, governance, and value systems, whereas transformational adaptation seeks to change the fundamental attributes of systems in response to actual or expected climate and its effects, often at a scale and ambition greater than incremental activities.”³⁹ Incremental adaptation includes actions such as strengthening infrastructure so that it can withstand extreme weather events. Such actions are likely to be inadequate to address severe climate disruption. As the IPCC notes, if the impacts of climate change become intense, transformational adaptation will be necessary.⁴⁰ Transformational adaptation would require some changes to social practices, such as shifting to alternative agricultural crops and methods, for example shifting away from rice as the staple crop in much of Asia as paddy fields desiccate due to lack of precipitation. Moving away from large-scale industrialized agricultural systems, which rely on massive inputs of energy and water, to small-scale farming

with substantially more human input, would be a more radically transformational approach to adaptation.

If climate change becomes extremely severe—if global warming approaches or exceeds about 4°C—even transformational adaptation could be insufficient. In that case, it could be necessary to go further to implement what the IPCC has called transformational change.⁴¹ Doing this would involve radically changing institutions and longstanding ways of life, including “challenging the systems and structures, economic and social relations, and beliefs and behaviours that contribute to climate change and social vulnerability. When current development pathways are considered to be root causes of climate risk and vulnerability, transformation of wider political, economic, and social systems may be necessary.”⁴² The IPCC suggests that adaptation to severe climate change may require social transformation that uproots current national and international political and economic institutions. The “current development pathways” to which the IPCC refers are preoccupied with economic growth, which historically has involved growth in material throughput and consumption of fossil-fuel energy (which remains by far the largest source of energy globally). The IPCC is suggesting that economic development will have to be divorced from material growth.

Although the IPCC rarely refers to capitalism, its reports imply that adapting to severe climate change may require transformation away from global capitalism.⁴³ It stands to reason that going to the root causes of climate change, and specifically to failures to prevent it and prepare sufficiently for its inevitable impacts, entails significant transformation of a global order that is premised on constant economic growth and rising energy consumption. This may require sweeping, radical change in global economic and political systems, the economic and political theories on which they are based, and the behaviours of consumerism and profit-seeking that characterize current development pathways.⁴⁴ To be sure, “change at the margins is perhaps the most common response to environmental threats,” with adaptations “limited to those that do not threaten core attributes of the dominant system as defined by the elite.”⁴⁵ However, if a body such as the IPCC, which is generally restrained in its pronouncements (because it operates by consensus and governments influence appointment of its membership), is hinting at radical social and institutional change, surely it is time to interrogate dominant paradigms. The IPCC does not specify what is to replace today’s systems, beliefs, and behaviours, nor does it reveal a clear pathway toward realizing those replacements. Political scientists can help to do this.

Some observers may not accept Javeline's notion that political scientists have failed to contribute sufficiently to the literature on adaptation. However, searching journals specializing in environmental issues, in addition to political science journals, confirms Javeline's argument of a relative absence of political scientists from the adaptation dialogue.⁴⁶ Instead, as Javeline observes, "this new critical field, climate change adaptation, is currently populated by climate scientists, ecologists, NGOs, environmental lawyers, urban planners, engineers, computer scientists, development experts, resource managers, and policymakers."⁴⁷ Javeline's search of the JSTOR digital library revealed only one article (as of 2013) in a political science journal (among 152 such journals in the database) that went beyond mere mention of climate change adaptation.

To find much work on adaptation by political scientists requires going beyond journals dedicated to political science. Doing this reveals work such as that by Roger A. Pielke and co-authors supporting the argument that adaptation should receive as much attention from policy makers as mitigation because vulnerability to climate variability is partly due to social developments, meaning that merely reducing GHG emissions will not suffice.⁴⁸ Heiko Garrelts and Hellmuth Lange find that the state can alter policy pathways toward effective adaptation.⁴⁹ Adis Dzebo and Johannes Strippel postulate a shift in the governance of adaptation from the national and local to the transnational.⁵⁰ Bronwyn Hayward and co-authors explore how resilience thinking affects the way that actors view social relationships.⁵¹ Martin Sjøstedt addresses resilience and how it relates to political institutions.⁵² Oran Young et al. examine the effects of globalization on resilience, vulnerability, and adaptability.⁵³ Young employs a systems model to understand when environmental and resource regimes undergo changes, including collapse.⁵⁴ David Ciple, J. Timmons Roberts, and Mizan R. Khan analyse adaptation finance.⁵⁵ If the definition of adaptation were to be drawn broadly to include unplanned maladaptation, then the work on environmental stress and conflict of Thomas Homer-Dixon would be pertinent.⁵⁶ Homer-Dixon has also joined with others to study underlying patterns that lead to crisis, which is relevant for adaptation to future climate impacts.⁵⁷

These and other interdisciplinary projects show that political scientists have made useful contributions to the discussion of climate change adaptation. That said, much of this work appears in specialist journals where most of the authors' political science colleagues never see it, and no sustained dialogue among political

scientists is in evidence. This means that political scientists, while not quite as absent from adaptation research as Javeline's search of JSTOR would indicate, are relatively disengaged from analysing one of the most important problems facing the world when compared to scholars in other fields. A community of political scientists working on adaptation issues has yet to form. If such a community were to develop, its members could draw on the more extensive work underway in related academic disciplines. For example, geographers have been well represented in adaptation research. One prominent geographer is Neil Adger, an author of IPCC reports and other publications on adaptation to climate change.⁵⁸ Among sociologists, Mark Pelling and co-authors have produced important work that explores the meaning of adaptation as well as how it works in practice.⁵⁹ The extensive work done within other disciplines means that political scientists need not reinvent the wheel as their own research on this topic develops and expands. Indeed, other disciplines engage in extensive policy and political analysis without necessarily drawing on relevant political science research. Political scientists have many opportunities to apply the concepts and methods of their field to adaptation.

Beyond producing more political science research on adaptation, the question arises as to what kind of research is most needed. As hopes recede for mitigation that is sufficient to restrict global warming to 2°C, research will have to consider approaches that address circumstances not yet experienced by humanity.

From the Incremental to the Transformational

At the outset of international efforts to address climate change, adaptation was largely a variable to consider when determining how much mitigation might be needed: the more societies could adapt, the less mitigation would be needed. However, the concerns of particularly vulnerable states pushed adaptation up the international political agenda. This was possible because developing states had a bargaining chip: without their support, it would be impossible to successfully negotiate a globally inclusive international agreement to address climate change. The risk of undermining long-term mitigation efforts was worth taking for many developing states because they simply could not adapt to many of the impacts of climate change without help in the medium-term. As adaptation gained prominence, policymakers saw it as a means for poor and less-developed states to reduce vulnerability to climate change.⁶⁰ Recently, adaptation's role has grown, involving questions about fundamental global institutions and practices. As adaptation has gone from being a largely technical problem to a

wide-ranging social challenge, the importance of politics has risen significantly. Thus, as Javeline argues, political scientists “are all relevant to the climate change discussion and all have something to contribute, and we arguably have responsibilities to make those contributions.”⁶¹ With severe climate change becoming more likely, what might those be?

Consider political science’s possible contribution to understanding adaptation relating to incremental adaptation, transformational adaptation, and transformational change. If the Paris pledges are greatly strengthened and effective carbon removal technologies are widely deployed soon, the world might achieve the objective of limiting global warming to 2°C. In such a relatively rosy scenario, incremental adaptation could be adequate, and historical experiences would provide useful insights into how communities, states, and international society can adapt to climate change. For example, historical experiences of long-term droughts, natural disasters, and changing climate can provide guidance for policymaking.⁶² If global warming is kept below 2°C, regional and local impacts could still be severe, but current global social, political, and economic institutions should be tenable. Staying within the “safe zone” of 2°C of global warming should mean that, while costly, adaptation to climate change would not entail overturning most established ways of life—assuming, of course, that the global temperature limit could be maintained indefinitely.

If this optimistic view of the future were likely, political science could draw on historical responses to prolonged environmental changes to develop models and hypotheses on how societies might adapt to future climatic variations. Empirical studies employing statistical and other standard tools could be illuminating and useful for policy purposes. With such studies, political scientists could investigate which legislative processes, regulatory approaches, or national-local relationships lead to more effective adaptations to climate change.⁶³ Empirical studies could, for example, investigate the politics of efforts to adapt to severe, prolonged drought. They might compare experiences in the 1930s Dust Bowl that devastated American agriculture, recurring drought in the Sahel over the last century that has resulted in widespread famines, and environmental decline in present-day Syria contributing to social upheaval, all cases which display disparate responses—internal migration, famine, and (arguably) civil war, respectively—to analogous environmental changes.⁶⁴ Relying on observed behaviour, studies along these lines could provide valuable insights into how societies adapt to droughts and other environmental stresses that will become more common as

global temperatures rise. For studies such as this, what Robert Cox terms “problem-solving” theory, which is premised on existing structures and agents, may be quite helpful in identifying factors that could enable successful incremental adaptation to climate change.⁶⁵

However, such approaches would be unlikely to encompass essential aspects of transformational adaptation necessary for more dangerous climate scenarios. While regional droughts, severe weather events, torrential downpours, and other effects of climate change have been common historically, humanity has never experienced such events with the frequency, severity, or range that will occur if global warming surpasses 2°C. Consequently, the past may not be an adequate guide. An alternative approach for future-oriented political science could be to create and analyse plausible scenarios of dangerous climate change.⁶⁶ “Scenario analysis” combines “quantitative biophysical models and qualitative storylines of social and political trends [that are] explicitly interventionist,” thereby aiding policymakers in more accurately predicting, planning for, and coping with future events.⁶⁷ Indeed, the IPCC, the US Global Change Research Program, and the UK Climate Impacts Programme have used this approach.⁶⁸ As Pulver and VanDeveer argue, “greater attention to scenarios clearly offers an additional area for research on the relationships between politics and policy, the construction and distribution of scientific and technical knowledge, and action for social change.”⁶⁹ However, research and policy advice based upon such scenarios, which often question existing political and social institutions, have not had much traction among social scientists.⁷⁰

Empirical political science could be fruitful for exploring options for incremental adaptation, and scenarios can envision more disruptive climatic effects requiring transformational adaptation. To understand transformational change, however, political scientists should go further. They should premise more of their research on the assumption that climatic impacts will be so severe that current social, political, and economic institutions will be stressed to the breaking point and beyond. Toward this end, problem-solving theory may have to give way to, in Cox’s terminology, critical theory: “theory of history in the sense of being concerned not just with the past but with a continuing process of historical change.”⁷¹ Critical theory is about normative choices, albeit while recognizing that choices are limited to feasible transformations of the real world. Being “critical” in this sense requires that the analyst identify potential for changing the prevailing order to produce an alternative order. Critical theory was exemplified by Karl Marx’s analysis of capitalism,

whereby he described and explained capitalism's attributes while also identifying its emancipatory potential to produce an alternative social order.⁷² Periods of instability arguably invite this kind of critical thinking; the potential for catastrophic social consequences of severe climate change may create just such a period of instability. A task for political scientists is to "be critical" long before extraordinary instability arises.

Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway, historians of science, suggest possible narratives that take as their central concern adaptation to severe climate change.⁷³ Oreskes and Conway consider significant social and economic impacts resulting from unchecked global warming: heat waves, droughts, crop failures, extreme weather events, and other effects forecast by scientists. They posit that the social effects of these impacts could include widespread rationing of water and food, imposition of a global one-child policy, depopulation of heavily affected regions, and extensive and rapid spread of deadly diseases. They speculate that governments will fall, martial law will be imposed in democratic states, and radical political reorganization will be contemplated to increase the capacity to cope.⁷⁴ Such forward-looking analysis has precedent in scholarly dialogue. For example, Thomas Malthus argued in 1798 that population growth would eventually outstrip agricultural output, with human population inevitably limited by famine, pestilence, and war.⁷⁵ Although Malthus failed to anticipate rising agricultural productivity, "neo-Malthusians" have argued that his general warning about ecological limits will be valid in a future world of growing scarcities brought on by population, consumption, and climate change.⁷⁶ Drawing on this tradition, political scientists could add their voice to the work of demographers, economists, futurists, ecologists, and others on the implications of rising human demand for natural resources amidst severe climate change.

Political Science Innovation for Severe Climate

How might a political science scenario of adaptation look critically at institutions and paradigms that have contributed to the climate change problem? The subfield of international relations is an obvious place to start given the transnational attributes of climate change. A scholar of international relations might, for example, look at climate change through the prism of "democratic peace theory."⁷⁷ According to this approach, democracies do not go to war against one another, even when their national interests diverge significantly. The stresses of severe climate disruption would heighten tensions that contribute to interstate conflicts.

Would democracy be a bulwark against violent conflict, thereby preventing adaptation from becoming more problematic? Or might climate change upend the democratic peace altogether, with violent conflict among states making adaptation much more difficult? If peace is essential to effective adaptation to severe climate change, is democracy necessary? Or will severe climate change engender environmental conditions so radically different that authoritarian governance becomes more conducive to peace amidst adversity? Drawing on studies of past climatic impacts and those anticipated in the future, and by estimating the national interests at stake, the political scientist could specify which states are likely to experience heightened conflicts of interest and thus be more likely to resort to force.

Another subfield of political science, international political economy, can address one of the most important problems in climate change adaptation: how it will be financed. Adaptation is primarily a problem of externalities. States, industries, and individuals responsible for the climate change impose costs on others, especially communities and people in poorer parts of the world least able to cope with the effects. Wealthier states can finance their own incremental adaptation, and likely most transformational adaptation, but poorer states will struggle to do so. Successful global adaptation will depend on transfers of funding from states with the means and responsibility for creating the problem to those lacking the means or culpability. The international community recognizes this, having established the Adaptation Fund and other mechanisms to finance poor states' adaptation. However, funding falls far short of projected need. The Adaptation Fund secretariat reports that \$358 million has been allocated to climate adaptation activities since 2010,⁷⁸ but estimated costs are \$300–500 billion per year.⁷⁹ In 2009, developed states pledged \$100 billion annually by 2020, but whether that pledge will be fulfilled is an open question.⁸⁰ Imperatives of predominant global economic institutions could thwart effective, efficient adaptation finance. This raises a question that is central to transformational change: what kind of global economic system would provide an adequate financial response to the challenge of adaptation? This leads in turn to asking whether there is potential for transforming economic institutions to make them adequate to the challenge, and what can be done to guide them toward that transformation.

The international relations subfield of international security also has much to offer to research on transformational change. For example, policies that have emerged from the UNFCCC process, including the Paris Agreement, assume a degree of prolonged international stability that the world has rarely seen. Pledges by

states to reduce carbon emissions and move toward renewable energy are very unlikely to survive if a major global conflict erupts. This suggests that the militarized interstate system may be fundamentally incompatible with achieving the ambitious climate goals that states have adopted. A task for international security scholars is to identify the potential for transformative change in global politics that would actually move away from traditional security conceptions toward prioritization of global environmental sustainability. Scholars of critical security studies have compiled an impressive body of scholarly work, but direct focus on the relationship between security and adaptation to climate change is scarce, and the number of political scientists involved is scarcer.⁸¹

One possible way to pull these fields of international relations together, and to link them to studies of domestic politics, might be to focus on climate “hotspots”: areas where a “strong climate signal and high concentrations of vulnerable people are present,”⁸² such as semi-arid regions, and glacier- or snowpack-dependent river basins. For example, by focusing on particularly vulnerable countries and regions, the impact of climate change and various adaptation strategies could be observed in their early stages. Research on such cases could suggest likely impacts and responses for other locations later this century when they might become hotspots. Research into these areas might expose the limits of incremental and transformational adaptation, highlighting the need for transformational change. They might suggest whether there is real potential for the latter, and reveal barriers to it. Analyses of hotspots might also identify the limits of local and regional responses to severe climate change. Problems that remain localized to some extent may not challenge global institutions, but as hotspots come to characterize most or the entire world, global economic, cultural, and political institutions might begin to break down. Forward-looking theory on hotspots would have to envision the potential for global transformational change. So far, political scientists are largely absent from this type of research. For instance, a special journal issue devoted entirely to hotspots included scholars from economics, agricultural sciences, geography and various natural sciences, but no identifiable political scientists despite every topic addressed involving political dimensions that are squarely in the field’s domain.⁸³

Conclusion

Climate disruption could become so severe that it threatens to break social systems, even to the point of precipitating the collapse of modern civilization. Addressing this challenge has involved

international negotiations aimed at reducing GHG emissions. Despite some progress in these negotiations, including the 2015 Paris Agreement, and many independent actions locally around the world, it is very unlikely that the internationally agreed goal to limit global warming to 2°C will be achieved. Consequently, avoiding the worst social effects of climate change will require robust adaptation. Adaptation will have to occur at varying levels of intensity depending on future climate. Incremental adaptation entails the least social change; it does not overturn existing economic, political, and cultural institutions. Empirical political science aimed at solving problems as they arise within accepted institutions can help to identify roadblocks to, and opportunities for, better adaptation policy. Transformational adaptation would by definition require substantial changes to entrenched ways of life wherever it is implemented, affecting many millions of people. To illuminate these changes, political scientists can paint useful scenarios, drawing on comparable experiences in the past, such as extrapolating from past regional droughts to future droughts occurring simultaneously around the world. As hopes for successful mitigation of climate change recede, political science will have to envision alternative social institutions and world orders that might enable states and societies to realistically survive—and hopefully thrive—in a much warmer, more disrupted world.

Adaptation involves questions of international justice, human rights, redistribution, authority, democracy, and policy implementation. These questions are the *raison d'être* of political science. However, the large scholarly literature on adaptation addresses these questions with relatively little input from political scientists. Although some valuable contributions by political scientists have been published, the number is not great, and they tend to appear in specialist journals on the environment rather than those devoted to political science. The kind of sustained, multifaceted discourse that one finds in political science journals regarding other important topics is not in evidence regarding the politics of adaptation to climate change.

In addition to more political research on adaptation, there is also a need for different kinds of political research. A problem for empirical political science is that the worst effects of climate change have not yet occurred, so they cannot be observed. By the time observation of severe climate change is possible, it will be too late for the policy implications of empirical political science research to matter in the real world. For political science to be especially relevant and useful, it must illuminate how adaptation can begin very soon to deal with the potentially severe climate disruption that is increasingly probable within the lifetimes of

people living today. The kind of political science appropriate to such a future is necessarily speculative and requires imagination. But this does not mean undisciplined speculation unanchored from reality. Scenario analysis and critical theory offer models for projecting the political implications of future conditions.

Successful adaptation to climate change is an urgent matter even though the worst effects may not be felt for decades. Preparation for severe climate change must begin today. Political scientists can further the project for doing so, using the tools of their discipline to augment the growing literature on adaptation in other disciplines. If innovative enough, and critical enough of the status quo, political science has the potential to do much more to help humanity understand and cope with a painful future.

Notes

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RUSSIA'S GREAT POWER ASSERTION: STATUS-SEEKING IN THE ARCTIC

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Abstract

As a state driven by a desire to return to its historical self-image, Russia's great power status has been crucial to the construction of the country's national identity and interests in the Arctic and on the world stage. This article explores the link between material incentives and status-seeking motivations in the development of Russia's Arctic policy. It will examine the extent to which Russian behavior in the Arctic is explained by status concerns and how much can be attributed to material interests. Russian perception of itself as a leading Arctic power is an instrumental source of projecting domestic and international status. By drawing upon historical aspirations, Russia's pursuit of great power status in the Arctic encompasses multi-dimensional motivations and engages multi-level audiences.

Introduction

In August 2007, the Russian scientific research ship Akademik Fedorov and the nuclear icebreaker Rossiya sent two submarines 4,300 meters down to the Arctic Ocean seabed to gather seismic and bathymetric data in support of Russia's territorial claim to the Lomonosov Ridge. Led by Duma member and veteran Arctic explorer Artur Chilingarov, the expedition resulted in the planting of a titanium Russian flag on the seabed underneath the North Pole.¹ Following the highly publicized flag planting, Chilingarov proclaimed that "we showed that the Arctic is ours, the Russian Arctic [...] the Arctic has always been Russian and will always be Russian."² The symbolic assertion highlighted the importance of the Arctic in the formation of Russia's national identity while signaling great status aspirations to domestic and international audiences. As a state driven by a desire to return to its historical self-image, attaining great power status has been crucial to the construction of Russia's national identity and interests in the Arctic and on the world stage.

In the Arctic, subjective and perceptual aspirations often overlap and interact with material factors such as geography,

economic strength, and military power to form Russian national interests. Climate change presents new opportunities in the Arctic, such as the opening of new maritime routes and offshore development of natural resources. Russia increasingly seeks to benefit from the Arctic's vast economic riches, as it is the region's largest state, accounting for approximately two-thirds of Arctic territory. Alongside this combination of historical legacies, material interests, and propensity for environmental change, the Arctic assumes an integral role in enhancing Russia's international status, while signaling its return as a great power to both international and domestic audiences.

The effects of climate change on sea ice extent fundamentally transform Russia's role as a maritime nation, while paving the way for the exploitation of formerly inaccessible resources and regular intercontinental shipping through the Northern Sea Route. Additionally, climate change holds significant economic benefits linked to its own domestic demand, such as the extraction of hydrocarbon reserves and the facilitation of navigation routes for transcontinental trade. The Arctic's melting ice, a result of increased rates of climate change, thus opens up the area for navigation routes and development of non-living resources, such as offshore oil and gas reserves located on Russia's continental shelf.³ Current technological limitations render it nearly impossible to exploit these potential reserves. However, climate change and technological advancements could enable the future exploitation of the Arctic's hydrocarbons. Rising temperatures and the subsequent melting of ice increases access to sizeable and lucrative offshore hydrocarbon and mineral reserves in the Arctic Ocean located beyond Russia's coastal waters.⁴ As climate change continues to thaw and alter the landscape of the Arctic, a variety of complex questions arise over control of territory, extraction of resources, and security of the region. Melting sea ice and the ensuing increase in economic activities hold major implications for border patrols and the enforcement of state sovereignty. Russian military presence in the Arctic must thus address both traditional and non-traditional forms of security. In addition to possessing the greatest amount of territory of the five circumpolar nations, Russia's military and economic presence in the region far surpasses that of the remaining four littoral powers.⁵ In fact, Russia has taken more concrete measures than any other country to assert its claims to the Arctic, as it regards the denial of access to the Arctic's resources as a direct threat to the country's survival and identity as an Arctic nation.

As the last frontier for both imperial Russia and the Soviet Union, the Arctic's extreme northern coastal regions served

as a symbol of national greatness and geographic uniqueness. Beyond material or fixed national interests, Russian Arctic policy serves to enhance its international status while signaling its return to great power status to both international and domestic audiences. Whereas Russian domestic discourse tends to engage in nostalgic overtones tied military power and mastery of the High North, internationally Moscow emphasizes cooperation, adherence to international law, and protection of its borders. In both cases, Russian perception of itself as a leading Arctic power is an instrumental source of projecting domestic and international status. By drawing upon historical aspirations, Russia's pursuit of great power status in the Arctic encompasses multi-dimensional motivations and engages multi-level audiences. Current Russian Arctic policy represents a continuation of the proclivity of Russia's leaders to conceptualize its role in the international hierarchy as a great power.⁶ The reassertion of Russia's sense of 'great powerness' (*derzhavnost*) arose as a response to the country's perceived humiliation under the Boris Yeltsin administration. Under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, Russian foreign policy has associated the Arctic with the restoration of great power status and has engaged in status signaling both domestically and internationally.

This article explores the link between material incentives and status-seeking motivations in the development of Russia's Arctic policy. It will examine the extent to which Russian behavior in the Arctic is explained by status concerns and how much can be attributed to material interests. The contemporary dynamics of Russian Arctic policy cannot be understood without a meaningful understanding of the historical underpinnings and aspirations that both inform and shape Russian identity. As result, Russian status-seeking often interacts with policy drivers which contain within themselves objective material and subjective perceptual components. By assessing Russian Arctic policy through extant literature on neo-realism, constructivism, and status, this article demonstrates that historical aspirations actively influence Russian national interests in the Arctic through conceptions of international status. Russian status signaling at the international and domestic levels validates these interests, which contain both material and subjective perceptual components.

This article will proceed as follows: Part I outlines the theoretical underpinnings of state behavior and the construction of Russia's identity as a great power in relation to its status-seeking objectives. Part II illustrates the historical aspirations which continue to inform Moscow's present day Arctic policy. In order to demonstrate the interplay between the perceptual and material factors of Moscow's policy, Part III and IV discuss the role

of status in the economic and military aspects of Russian great power assertion in the Arctic.

Constructing Identity and Great Power Status-Seeking

Theoretical International Relations insight from neo-realism, constructivism, and status literature offers a useful framework for an exploration of the possible motivators of Russian Arctic policy for its own sake and is grounded in status literature. In doing so, this article seeks to provide a contribution to an understanding of Russian international status conceptions, which have been discussed extensively in existing discourses on Russian policies towards the former Soviet Union, China, and the West, but insufficiently for the Arctic.

The theoretical assumptions of state behavior found in structural neo-realism suggest that the pursuit of military and latent power for state survival drives Russia's Arctic policy.⁷ Structural neo-realists, such as Kenneth Waltz and John J. Mearsheimer, emphasize the existence of international anarchy and the realities of power, placing concern about the structure of power at the heart of analysis. Thus, the distribution of material capabilities conditions state behavior with the primary objective of survival hinging on the pursuit of wealth and power.⁸ For offensive neo-realists, the accumulation of latent power matters because "greater economic prosperity invariably means greater wealth, which has significant implications for security, because wealth is the foundation of military power."⁹ According to structural neo-realism, Russia's underlying interests in the Arctic fundamentally relate to power accumulation and state capabilities achieved by the region's role as a source of economic revenue, resource endowment, and strategic military outpost.¹⁰

Neo-realism provides a clear picture of the material advantages of the Arctic's petroleum reserves and naval transportation routes, yet overlooks country-specific and relational considerations that place greater emphasis on the perspectives and contexts of decision-makers. In foreign policy, neo-realism "focuses on certain concepts: goals and objectives of the nation or government," and predicts state behavior "by calculating the rational thing to do in a certain situation, given specified objectives."¹¹ Neo-realist theory envisions Russia as a unified rational actor pursuing its objective national interests through the acquisition of material capabilities. However, in Russia, non-material concerns have previously eclipsed material realities in so far as actions directed towards enhancing relative status or prestige have overridden considerations of practical advantage. Though neo-realism illustrates the material

motivations of Russia's Arctic policy, it omits the psychological and cognitive roles played by considerations of identity and status. Therefore, neo-realism alone cannot sufficiently contextualize the dynamics shaping Russian national interests.¹²

By placing greater emphasis on the perspectives and contexts of decision-makers, constructivist theory helps reconcile the limits of neo-realism's structural determinism that often overlooks country-specific and relational considerations. Constructivism maintains that social institutions and national identities emerge from the continued interaction between human agents and social structures. Previous constructivist accounts seeking to explain Russia's interests and its status center on the production of its identity in interactions with other states and interactions within its society.¹³ Therefore, the identity of states depends on historical, cultural, political, and social contexts. By linking identity to national interests, Anne Clunan's aspirational constructivism approach departs from other types of constructivism. Clunan's theory employs social psychology to maintain that identity requires "positive distinctiveness" or self-esteem based on historical experiences that create aspirations for the future.¹⁴ For Clunan, elites socially construct a national identity from a set of alternative national self-images that consist of "sets of ideas about the country's political purpose and international status."¹⁵ The motivation for the elite introduction of competing national self-images hinges on "value rationality and the need for collective self-esteem."¹⁶ This need for collective self-esteem may be enhanced by employing strategies to enhance relative standing either by assimilating, competing for recognition, or inventing a new dimension for judgement.¹⁷

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the elite consensus that Russia was a great power emerged as the dominant national self-image. As Clunan notes, during the early 1990s, "the most commonly held historical aspirations among political elites concerned Russia's status as a great power."¹⁸ Russia's political elite view the collapse of the Soviet Union and the country's subsequent "weakness" as an aberration in a long history of internationally recognized *derzhavnost* or "great powerness" stretching back to the eighteenth century.¹⁹ Russia's policy objectives often tie into the concept of *derzhavnost*, which resonates widely in Russian society and serves an integrative function amongst elites.²⁰ The elite perception of Russia as a great power necessitates a nuanced account of the ideational context of Russian foreign policy-making, which employs both instrumental and expressive signals of status.

Additionally, geography serves as an intrinsic factor that territorializes national identity. The Arctic's symbolic and historic

value as an identity-building process benefits the elite-driven discourse of the Arctic's geographic uniqueness. The historical construction of Russia's unique geographic location territorializes the national identity by creating the sense of belonging to the sacred soil and turning the imagined boundaries into physical ones. Anthony Smith describes the process of the "territorialization of memory" where "certain kinds of shared memories are attached to particular territories" to produce "historical homelands."²¹ This process reinforces national identity by generating symbolic acts about the territory through geographical imagination. Territorial symbolism and geographic narratives legitimize Russian Arctic policy as "the symbols of the traditional culture are used as mechanisms for the articulation of political alignments."²² For Russia, the concept of its geographical uniqueness establishes the link between Arctic's territory and people, thereby serving as a justification for its great status aspirations and a form of domestic support.

The teleological narrative of Russia's "natural" expansion beyond the outer limits of the Eurasian landmass and its unique role as a distinct civilization supply the Russian state with its own spatial meta-narratives in the Arctic. Geographical meta-narratives focus on Russia's territorial size and location to advance the idea that "Russia's territory is larger than other countries in the world and forms a specific continent (Eurasianism); Russia is going higher in the universe (Cosmism); and Russia is going farther north (Arctic mythology)."²³ The Arctic meta-narrative "cultivates the national imagery of regeneration of great Russian power through a kind of Arctic rebirth."²⁴ These elite-driven narratives reinforce Russia's national identity and enhance collective self-esteem by generating symbolic acts about the territory through geographical imagination.

Literature grounded in status allows one to better contextualize the function of identity in international politics and the corresponding pursuit of non-material ends. Like aspirational constructivism, status literature often employs social identity theory as a framework for assessing the motivations and mechanisms used by states at domestic and international levels.²⁵ Social identity theory articulates the role of group membership in identity formation and the development and maintenance of self-image through social categorization, identification, and comparison. Individuals in different groups have both an inevitable and a psychological need for the favorable comparison of their achievements and vitality relative to those of other communities.²⁶ Applying this framework to states reveals the psychological need to improve collective self-esteem and maintain a positive social

identity, which motivates states to pursue different identity management strategies.²⁷ Social identity theory “suggests that rising powers may emulate or compete with more advanced states, or highlight their distinctive strengths.”²⁸ Identity management strategies directed at domestic and international audiences serves as both instrumental and expressive purposes for states experiencing status dissonance.

International status refers to the rank and positioning of a state in an “imagined international hierarchy” of political, military, social, and economic power, which involves evaluations of the material and non-material power possessed by a state itself, and all other parties.²⁹ Larson et al. define status as a “collective beliefs about a given state’s ranking on valued attributes (wealth, coercive capabilities, culture, demographic position, sociopolitical organization, and diplomatic clout).”³⁰ Since status itself is a social construction, “the capabilities and attributes that confer status also comprise a mix of measurable material resources and harder-to-measure nonmaterial inputs.”³¹ A state that aspires to enhance its relative standing may engage in status-seeking behavior aimed at influencing perceptions of its relative position on the status hierarchy.³²

The importance of the relationship between the material and the imagined facets of Russia’s Arctic policy manifests in the perception of its domestic and international status as a great power. The multi-dimensional nature of status denotes that “some indicators of status-seeking such as weapons acquisition or programs for economic development may also serve alternative goals such as security, power, or wealth.” Furthermore, as Xiaoyu Pu and Randall Schweller demonstrate, status-seeking also arises from the domestic concerns over legitimacy since “bolstering the country’s international status satisfies domestic prestige needs, consolidating the legitimacy of the ruling party or the ruling political coalition.”³³ Therefore, Russia engages in a two-level game where it must balance domestic and international audiences.

As demonstrated in Russian Arctic policy, material factors such as geography, economic development, and military strength determine how a state pursues its national interest based on its identity.³⁴ Historical antecedents legitimize material incentives that contain perceptual elements, which can be utilized to enhance collective self-esteem. While neo-realism explains the pursuit of economic and military power, constructivism combined with status literature provides a better understanding of the formation of Russian national interests within the context of the Arctic. Furthermore, the multi-dimensional nature of status and the multi-level process of status-seeking reveals the primacy of

Historical Aspirations of Arctic Conquest

Historical aspirations, rooted in Soviet Arctic policy, actively influence Russian national interests in the Arctic through conceptions of international status and political purposes. At both an international and domestic level, Russian status signaling affirms these interests which often contain both material and subjective perceptual components. Current Russian Arctic policy employs expressive and instrumental status symbols rooted in aspirations that link national interests to historic triumphs.³⁵ The material aspects of Arctic conquest, in particular Soviet economic exploitation and military power, rose to prominence during the apex of great power competition in the Cold War. As Russia seeks to return to its former superpower status, current Arctic policy invokes the history of polar exploration, Soviet military achievements, and Russia's distinct geographic role as a northern nation to justify its national interests. Therefore, understanding the drivers of Russian Arctic policy requires an examination of Soviet activity in the region.

Through expansion into the Arctic region began under the Tsars, technological achievement and scientific exploration in the Arctic emerged as a central objective of the Soviet Union.³⁶ The Soviet Union made massive investments in the Arctic, such as investing in the economic development of the northern regions, securing the Northern Sea Route, and utilizing the Northern Fleet for its strategic defense.³⁷ From the onset of the implementation of the Soviet planned economy, the development of the Arctic through *osvoenie* (mastering, utilization) of the northern resources occupied "a corresponding role in Soviet ideology."³⁸ Driven by a hope to master the Arctic's economic potential and by the imperative to protect territorial claims, the Soviets made significant strides in polar exploration.³⁹

Economic development and advancements in technology supported the Soviet conception of achieving "physical mastery" of the Arctic's harsh terrain as symbol of communist triumph.⁴⁰ Through large-scale population settlement and *osvoenie* of northern resources, Soviets pursued an "economic conquest" that reflected domestic imperatives.⁴¹ Like *osvoenie*, the Soviet authorities viewed the development of the Northern Sea Route an essential task for Russian economy to develop and sustain its northern territory.

In 1932, Soviet icebreaker *Sibiriakov*, commanded by Captain Otto Schmitt, transited through the Northern Sea Route for the

first time in a single season, prompting high hopes for a useable maritime route within the territorial limits of the Soviet Union.⁴² Due to intense interest and high centralization of Arctic policy, the Northern Sea Route rose to prominence during the years of high Stalinism, during which the Soviets achieved numerous scientific and technological advancements in the High North.⁴³ The Stalinist myth of the Northern Sea Route facilitated the partial realization of industrialization and mineral extraction in northern Russia. From 1932 to 1939, Stalinist propaganda relating to the Arctic frequently appeared in *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*, which “firmly embedded [the Arctic] in the Soviet national consciousness.”⁴⁴ Soviet advancements in Arctic technology and exploration served as a domestic status signaling that “articulated people’s belief that Russians had caught up with the West or even surpassed it.”⁴⁵ The spirit of adventure associated with the Arctic complemented the socialist realist themes of technological progress over nature and Stalin’s cult of personality. Moreover, by highlighting successful expeditions in the Arctic, the Soviets engaged in domestic status signaling to garner domestic legitimacy.

The military dimension of Soviet Arctic policy is equally significant as it is interrelated to its historic economic and territorial interest. Throughout the Cold War, the Soviet Union maintained a robust naval presence in the Arctic to protect its nuclear deterrent capabilities and facilities that based the Northern Fleet. Soviet military planners transformed the Arctic into a strategic outpost to serve “as a gateway for projection of Russian maritime power[...]as a protective zone for its strategic submarines and as a barrier against enemy seaborne threats against the homeland.”⁴⁶ The Northern Fleet, stationed at Severomorsk on the Kola Peninsula, guaranteed nuclear deterrence, while surface combat ships created naval fortresses to protect the Soviet Union’s nuclear submarines against potential incursion by NATO fleets.⁴⁷ As a symbol of technological achievement and great power status, the Soviet Union’s military constituted a source of pride and identity for its citizens. Traditionally, the military underscored the technological advancements of the Soviet Union as it concurrently engaged in a deep ideological competition with the capitalist economies of the West. Advancements in aviation and technology, key elements of Soviet Arctic exploration, therefore functioned as “potent expressions of modernity” within the Stalinist discourse that portrayed the Arctic as an example of socialism’s ability to overcome both the Arctic’s natural environment and its ideological adversary.⁴⁸

While narratives perpetuated by the Stalinist regime maximized the symbolic value of Arctic endeavors through

glamorous military parades and elevation of polar explorers as national heroes, the development of the northern regions and utilization of the Northern Sea Route for domestic shipping related to objective material interests for domestic stability. Likewise, strategic and symbolic considerations accounted for the military dimension of Soviet Arctic policy. As aspirational constructivism and status literature would suggest the emphasis on mastering the Arctic's inhospitable landscape and defending Soviet territory through technological prowess and ideological supremacy elevated the role of the Arctic as both a source of national identity and a material powerbase.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the decline of the Russian economy, authority, and global posture, which resulted from the Yeltsin Era policy, engendered a deep-seated concern among the Russian elite towards the preservation of its sovereignty and the revival of its material wealth. As the Yeltsin administration oscillated erratically between integration with the West and pragmatic balancing in a multi-polar international system, the implementation of foreign policy reflected the tension between the main ideological schisms of the Russian elite. The debate between the three overarching schools of thought—liberal westernists, pragmatic nationalists, and fundamental nationalists—would persist among the foreign policy elite of Russia until the development of the 1993 Foreign Policy Concept, which underscored the imperative to maintain and preserve “the interests of the Russian Federation as a great power.”⁴⁹ Pursuant to the assumptions of aspirational constructivism, a new consensus on Russia's national identity arose from competing national self-images. Of these national self-images, the notion of great power status emerged as the most salient due to its wide-ranging resonance among the elite and its historical prevalence.

Constructivist theory helps explain the emergence of a new consensus regarding Russian identity both domestically and in the international system. In contrast to structural neo-realism's assumption that states act according to self-interest through the accumulation of power in the context of an anarchic political setting, constructivism argues that the identity of a state depends on variables determined by historical, cultural, social and political context.⁵⁰ Moreover, since constructivism assumes that state behavior functions as a response to identity construction, Russia's emphasis on great power status is derived from narratives describing collective self-esteem. Portraying the Arctic “as rightful compensation for the hegemony lost with the disappearance of the Soviet Union” engrains a territorial attachment to the region as a source of national identity.⁵¹ Emblematic to the material and the

non-material elements of national interests, Russia's expansion northward concurrently employs historic myths and symbols of geographic uniqueness to justify development of the Arctic as an economic and military power base.

Russia's Arctic policy during the 1990s, a reflection of the greater incoherence of the Boris Yeltsin years, devolved into one characterized by deep neglect and decentralization.⁵² The emergence of a cohesive Arctic policy coincided with the recentralization of power and increased efforts at enhancing national self-esteem during Vladimir Putin's first two terms as president. By linking Russia's national interests to its historical role as a great power, Putin actively promoted the conception of *derzhavnost* alongside its domestic equivalent, *gosudarstvennost*, of a strong or paternalistic state.⁵³

The Arctic and Economic Great Power Status

The canon of Russian Arctic policy, a reflection of Vladimir Putin's strategic thought, emphasizes the potential to mobilize natural resources as a means of restoring state power as well as elevating its domestic and international stature.⁵⁴ Driven by the belief that Moscow needs to leverage its mineral resources to build up a strong state, Vladimir Putin's economic policy frequently uses energy production to assert the central government's primacy in domestic and foreign transactions.⁵⁵ The Arctic's high concentration of natural resources makes it integral to Putin's grand strategy of accomplishing economic prosperity and power parity with the United States through making Russia an energy great power. The potential benefits of consolidating territorial claims in offshore areas of the Arctic not only benefits Russia's domestic economy, but also elevates its status as an international energy superpower with sufficient clout to influence other great powers and decisions of various stakeholders involved in resource development.

The Arctic assumes a fundamental role in the pursuit of status with the elite realization of the inextricable link between Russia's future as a great power and the development of the Arctic as an economic resource base. Reminiscent of the Soviet narrative, Putin's public statements underscore how "mastering of the Arctic (*osvoenie Arktiki*) can become one of the locomotives of the country's economic growth."⁵⁶ During the 2017 International Arctic Forum in Arkhangelsk, Putin noted the "symbolic importance" of the Russian city referring to "85th anniversary of the famous Otto Schmidt expedition, which for the first time covered the route from the port of Arkhangelsk to the Pacific Ocean within one navigation season, launching regular navigation along the coast of Siberia,

the legendary Northern Sea Route.”⁵⁷ Historical allusions to Soviet economic endeavors such as *osvoenie* and polar exploration reveals the importance of the Arctic as an identity and collective self-esteem project for the Russian government.

Great powerness, combined with a particular emphasis on the exploitation of Arctic’s natural resources, suggests that “Russia’s potential as an energy producer and supplier[...]can transform the [great power] aspiration into a reality, to the extent that the Russian global superpower of the future must be precisely an ‘energy superpower.’”⁵⁸ Vladimir Putin’s preoccupation with resource development in the Arctic and his commitment to “resource superpower” status, “links the North to the future viability of the Russian state and echoes the old Stalinist myths.”⁵⁹ Thus, expansion of energy production not only signifies a material driver of Russia’s Arctic policy, but also establishes Moscow’s energy superpower status and supports state capacity to reassert domestic control.

Domestically, the revival of the Arctic as a flagship source of identity and economic development allows the assertion of great power status to legitimize government policies. Official state discourse narratives invoked symbolic devices to support and to bolster its Arctic claims which “illustrates the domestic political salience of these messages to Russians” as both nation-building tool and source of popular support.⁶⁰ Public opinion surveys indicate that Moscow’s “state-centric patriotic narrative” has largely been a success and source of legitimacy for its policies.⁶¹ In 2015, a public opinion survey found that two-thirds of the Russian population perceived the possession of the Arctic coast as beneficial for Russia. Despite the significant funds required for Arctic development, half of the respondents indicated that substantial spending on Arctic development was justified with sixty-eight percent of supporting mining and mineral extraction in the Arctic.⁶² By connecting the historical dimension of Arctic symbolism with status, the elite incitement of the Arctic provides domestic legitimacy to the regime, which appears to be responding to popular interests.⁶³ Yet beyond domestic great power status, Russia has cooperated in the Arctic, demonstrating its pragmatism and drive for international recognition as a great power through a social mobility strategy in multilateral forums.

Russian engagement in international status signaling emphasizes cooperation and international law as the keys to the Arctic’s development. Moscow’s submissions to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) under the auspices of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS) demonstrate the policy intent of transforming the Arctic into

Russia's strategic resource base and elevating Russia to a leading Arctic power. Russia's territorial claims to the Arctic center on its sovereign right to an extended continental shelf beyond the 200 nautical mile limit of its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), which confers the rights and responsibilities of all non-living resources of the seabed and subsoil thereof including oil and natural gas, gas hydrates, and mineral resources to a coastal state.⁶⁴

In December 2001, pursuant to Article 76, paragraph eight of UNCLOS, Russia asserted its entitlement to a continental shelf beyond the 200 nautical mile limit of its EEZ, encompassing 1,191,000 square kilometers of Arctic territory.⁶⁵ The following year, the Commission recommended that Russia revise its claim to the continental shelf by collecting scientific data to prove that the Lomonosov Ridge constitutes a prolongation of the Eurasian landmass. In 2007, the purpose of the expedition associated with the highly publicized flag planting was to find scientific evidence in support of Russian claims to an extended continental shelf. While the expedition itself dealt with issues of scientific nature, the planting of the Russian flag signaled the importance of Russian territorial claims in the Arctic.

Although the planting of the flag prompted mass media speculation over a "new Cold War" looming in the Arctic, Russia has consistently abided by international law.⁶⁶ Reacting to foreign criticism of the flag ceremony, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that the expedition aimed "not to stake Russia's claim but to [support it by showing] that our shelf reaches to the North Pole."⁶⁷ With its exploration of the High North, Russia further demonstrates to the international community its intention to remain firm in support of its claim to the Arctic. Territorial claims with the potential to provide Russia with hydrocarbon resources complement "Russia's quest for strategic advantage, economic growth, and superpower symbolism."⁶⁸ Through a strategy of social mobility, Russia's territorial claims in the Arctic have abided by international law in the Arctic and maintained cooperative relations with the circumpolar states, pursuant to the provisions of UNCLOS.

With oil and gas exports accounting for forty-three percent of state revenues in 2015, the Russian economy depends on the exploitation of onshore hydrocarbons reserves and the exploration of new offshore reserves to maintain its "energy superpower" status. Thus, the survival of the current Russian regime directly depends on oil and gas expansion since the failure to exploit its untapped hydrocarbons would not only devastate the Russian economy, but also threaten Moscow's ability to maintain the loyalty of its political powerbase. Furthermore, as production

output from the traditional onshore areas in West Siberia and European Russia plateaus, Moscow will increasingly be compelled to utilize the Arctic offshore areas as critical to maintain the daily 2015 production level above 10.5 million barrels of oil.⁶⁹

In the coming decades, extraction of hydrocarbon and mineral resources will be the main driver for increased Arctic shipping. Furthermore, revenues generated from hydrocarbon resources largely determines the extent of Russian state capacity to invest in the necessary infrastructure along the Northern Sea Route. As the shortest route connecting three oceans, the importance of Arctic sea transport along the Northern Sea Route has attracted much attention as an alternative conduit for commercial shipping. Reduction of navigational distances between Europe and Asia via the Northern Sea Route translates into shorter transit time and decreased fuel consumption.⁷⁰ Technological development combined with the melting ice of the Arctic Ocean and the shift of global center of economic activity towards Asia have increased the transit capabilities on the Northern Sea Route. For Russia, the Northern Sea Route functions as both domestic and export transport route intended to foster economic growth in the northern regions and to integrate these territories, rich in natural resources, into the global economy.

The realization of Russia's economic potential as a great power has driven Moscow to rebuild Arctic infrastructure and exploit its economic resources. Slowdown of the Euro-Asian trade growth, western sanctions against Russian energy companies in the Arctic, and declining oil prices have decreased the likelihood of the short-term development of the Arctic's lucrative resources and maritime transit routes. Nevertheless, Russia has a great economic stake in and regards the Arctic as an important element of re-asserting its national identity and global superpower status. Putin has publicly supported this notion by stating that "nothing is likely change [Russia's] priorities in this region."⁷¹ Enhancing Russia's relative status as an energy superpower may eclipse material realities, potentially overriding considerations of practical advantage. Due to limited international investment, Russia must mobilize its internal resources for development of the Northern Sea Route and commercial infrastructure to ensure deliveries of oil and the gas resources of the Russian Arctic coast to the world market.

Within the context of the Arctic energy reserves and opportunities for commercial trade, Moscow conceives natural resource extraction as "the key to Russia's economic future and rediscovery of its status as a superpower."⁷² The combined strategic and symbolic value of offshore natural resource extraction and control over sea routes to deliver these hydrocarbons to the

global market are at the heart of Russian economic interests in the changing Arctic environment. Potential wealth generated by Russian economic endeavors would thus supply Moscow with a significant source of latent power to support its long-term grand strategic aspirations, which include non-material motivations such as status achievement.

Arctic Militarization: Material Symbols of Status

Though Russian militarization in the Arctic relates to its nuclear security and the emergence of non-traditional security threats, the Navy serves as a significant status symbol that engenders a collective self-esteem in relation to the country's historical memory. By supporting Russia's national interests, the Northern Fleet allows "Russia [to retain] its great power status and...world-class military capabilities."⁷³ At the same time, the Northern Fleet protects Russia's economic interests in the Arctic zone which includes the securing of oil platforms, pipelines, and ships against possible non-traditional attacks or man-made disasters.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, significant cuts in defense expenditure resulted in the drastic decline of the Northern Fleet's budget as the Yeltsin administration recalibrated its efforts towards the domestic economy and the conflict in Chechnya.⁷⁴ The Northern Fleet which formerly enjoyed "most-privileged status" as an "ocean-going strategically pivotal" fleet "entered a period of accelerating degradation."⁷⁵ In less than a decade, defense spending fell approximately ninety-four percent from \$133.7 billion USD to \$7.5 billion USD. Cuts in defense spending declined commensurate to number of patrols conducted by the Northern Fleet's nuclear submarines, which dropped from eighty to eighteen per year from 1985 to 1995.⁷⁶ The considerable deterioration of Russia's Arctic military infrastructure functioned as a "prelude and background to the intense interest of the government in securing the Arctic militarily and economically as a symbol of the nation's recovery from the embarrassment of the Yeltsin years."⁷⁷ As President Vladimir Putin has sought to reverse debilitating effects of the Yeltsin administration on the Russian Navy, particularly the Northern Fleet through a large scale military modernization effort.

For Russia, the pursuit of status defined by its national identity as a great power compensates for the country's decline in material resources which occurred following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Moscow's considerable weight on the necessity of a military's symbolic and strategic presence in the Arctic aims to defend Russian national interests within the context of a changing

environment arising from climate change's impact on Arctic waters.⁷⁸ While official Russian statements express the imperative of maintaining the Arctic as a zone of cooperation, Moscow has simultaneously expanded its military posture in the High North for both symbolic and strategic purposes.

The material and symbolic elements of military power, especially naval power, demonstrates to domestic audiences the return of Russia as a leading global power. Putin's rhetoric emphasizes Russia's role as not only a great land power but also a great sea power. On Navy Day in 2015, Putin praised "the bravery of sailors, the talent of shipbuilders, and the daring of explorers, pioneers, and naval leaders our nation has held fast as a great maritime power. This status is a huge responsibility for us as we face history, our ancestors who created Russia's maritime glory, and, of course, future generations to whom we must pass a modern and strong Navy."⁷⁹ Symbols of past accomplishments serve as vehicles toward Russia's teleological rights to great power status, garnering support among the population and legitimizing the narrative of Russian "uniqueness."

Strategically, Moscow still considers the Kola Peninsula and the adjacent area of special strategic importance to Russia's national security due to its direct access to the Atlantic Ocean, relatively close proximity to potential NATO targets, and fairly developed military infrastructure. The peninsula hosts two-thirds of Russia's nuclear strategic submarine fleet which represents "a key element of Russian defense policy, [and is] essential to uphold the country's great power status by compensating for the country's weakness in conventional forces."⁸⁰ Maintaining strategic nuclear capabilities is, therefore, one of the highest priorities of Russia's military policies that extends beyond regional Arctic concerns to international posture as a great power.

Internationally, the Russian narrative on its military presence in the Arctic remains one primarily defensive in nature. Though Russia has sought to reopen previously closed Soviet airfields and military bases in the Arctic, re-militarization has occurred both as a reaction to NATO expansion and a desire to protect economic interests in the region.⁸¹ Responding to speculation regarding the build up of Arctic military infrastructure, Deputy Prime Minister Dmitri Rogozin stated that, "the formation of military bases and airfields has only one goal—to create conditions for economic development and protection of current and future infrastructure project."⁸² Likewise, while in the presence of representatives from the circumpolar Arctic states in 2016, Putin deemed the Arctic "an area for open and equal dialogue based on integral undivided security and a place where there is no room for geopolitical games

of military blocs...or for struggles for spheres of influence. Russia is committed to peaceful Arctic exploration while observing its national interests and respecting those of other countries.”⁸³ Through state-led modernization efforts and increased troop deployment, Russia’s military presence in the Arctic seeks to signal its status aspirations while defending its fundamental regional interests.

The Arctic occupies an essential role in supporting Russia’s traditional naval and strategic security objectives such as its nuclear deterrent capabilities, emergence as a blue-water navy, and access to the sea. In an area once limited by ice and increasingly open to exploration, the Arctic potentially provides Russia with a new power base to expand its military activities. At the same time, climate change makes the country’s northern border more vulnerable to non-traditional security threats such as external interference.⁸⁴ By emphasizing the critical importance of the Russian north for territorial sovereignty and domestic security, Moscow’s determination to assert itself as a great power concurrently advances domestic considerations and status aspirations.

At the international and domestic levels, Russian status signaling legitimizes its national interests which contain both material and subjective perceptual components. The link between the material and nonmaterial motivations demonstrate that Russian attempts at “status-seeking such as weapons acquisition or programs for economic development may also serve alternative goals such as security, power, or wealth.”⁸⁵ Though status relates to objective military capabilities, it is socially constructed and “achieves meaning through intersubjective beliefs and social processes.”⁸⁶ Contrary to realism’s emphasis on state’s instrumental desire for power, constructivism and status literature would suggest that Russian militarization has occurred to indicate status motivation.

Conclusion

Prior to the 2014 Sochi Olympics, an international delegation of the Arctic states brought the Olympic flame to the North. The delegation, led by Arthur Chilingarov, illustrated the cooperative spirit of the Arctic states and contrasted Russia’s domestic discourse, which tends to engage in nostalgic overtones tied to economic exploitation and military supremacy in the Arctic.ⁱ

In contrast to the rhetoric following the 2007 planting of the

i In 2017 at the International Arctic Forum, Putin emphasized that the Arctic states, through the Arctic Council are an “example of effective international cooperation that continues unabated by external change.”

Russian flag on the Arctic seabed, Moscow frequently underscores the cooperative nature of engagement with Arctic states and adherence to international law. The multi-level narratives, nevertheless, reflect Russian perception of itself as a leading Arctic power and of the region as an instrumental and expressive source of status. Through the invocation of historical aspirations and geographic uniqueness, Russia's pursuit of great power status in the Arctic encompasses multi-dimensional motivations and engages multi-level audiences.

The historical legacy of the Arctic explains the Russian nationalistic narrative as well as the revival of Soviet-era naval bases, yet does not necessarily preclude adherence to cooperation in the Arctic. As a state driven to achieve global great power status, Russia seeks to benefit from the Arctic's resources and strategic location that increase its objective material interests and enhance its position on the status hierarchy. Moscow frequently employs Arctic symbolism and historical patriotic motifs to garner domestic political legitimacy. Russia critically relies on the Arctic for its strategic military locations as well as its abundance of hydrocarbons, which become increasingly prone to exploitation with climate change.

In the Arctic, Russian status-seeking often interacts with policy drivers that contain within themselves objective material and subjective perceptual components. The constructivist and status literature help to illustrate the importance of the Arctic to Russia's great power status aspirations and links Moscow's Arctic policy to climate change, economic development, and broader security imperatives. Due to the historical, material, and perceptual aspects of the Arctic, the region will remain integral to Russia's pursuit of great power status.

Notes

1 Vladimir Putin, "Высокоширотная научная экспедиция «Арктика-2007» – большой успех всех, кто причастен к этому проекту [The Arctic 2007 Research Expedition was a Great Success for All Those Involved in the Project]," Office of the President of the Russian Federation (7 August 2007), <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/41627>, accessed 30 March 2017; "Оба российских батискафа поднялись на поверхность на Северном полюсе [The Two Russian Mini-Submarines Rose to the Surface at the North Pole]," RIA Novosti (2 August 2007), <https://ria.ru/science/20070802/70224087.html>, accessed 30 March 2017; Paul R. Josephson, *The Conquest of the Russian Arctic* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014), 339.

2 "Артур Чилингаров, "Мы доказали – Арктика наша [Artur Chilingarov, "We have proved that the Arctic is ours"]," *Moskovskiy komsomolets* (7 August 2007), <http://www.mk.ru/editions/daily/article/2007/08/07/88555-artur-chilingarov-myi-dokazali-arktika-nasha.html>, accessed 29 March 2017.

- 3 Lincoln E. Flake, "Navigating an Ice-Free Arctic: Russia's Policy on the Northern Sea Route in an Era of Climate Change," *RUSI Journal* 158, no. 3 (2013): 44-52.
- 4 Louise Ange, "The Consequences of Climate Change in the Arctic," *Ocean Yearbook Online* 23, no. 1 (2009): 39-88.
- 5 Eight circumpolar states — US, Russia, Canada, Norway, Denmark (via Greenland) Finland, Sweden, and Iceland — possess territories in the Arctic, which constitutes all land, submerged lands, and waters within the latitudinal circle 66° 33'39"N. The five littoral Arctic states include the US, Russia, Canada, Norway, and Denmark.
- 6 Jeffrey Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics* (City Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009), 62.
- 7 John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (WW Norton & Company, 2001), 80.
- 8 Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1979), 102-128.
- 9 Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 80.
- 10 Kenneth Waltz identifies a state's capabilities by the "size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence." Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 151.
- 11 Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision; Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown: 1971), 5.
- 12 In contrast to neo-realism, mid-twentieth century classical realists, such as Hans Morgenthau, considers the role of certain psychological tools such as prestige in the exercise or attainment of power. However, classical realism's tendency to conceive of prestige as a reflection of a state's military capability hinders comprehensive understanding the non-material determinants of status.
- 13 Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999* (N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2002), 16.
- 14 Anne L. Clunan, *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence: Aspirations, Identity and Security Interests* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 1-3. "If one national self-image succeeds in dominating public discourse over time, it becomes institutionalized not only in the form of domestic laws, regulations, and symbolic and governmental structures but also as stable expectations of rights, privileges, jurisdictions, obligations, and norms of behavior in relations with other states and among domestic societal actors. The ideas it entails about the state's international status and political purpose become national interests—values to be upheld, defended, and projected."
- 15 The selection of "a national self-image is most likely to become epistemically dominant and become institutionalized when most political elites perceive it as both consonant with historical aspirations and practicable given the current conditions the country faces." Clunan, *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence*, 205.
- 16 Clunan, *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence*, 10.
- 17 Deborah Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, "Shortcut to Greatness: The New Thinking and the Revolution in Soviet Foreign Policy," *International Organization* 57, no. 1 (2003): 77-109.
- 18 Clunan, *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence*, 55.
- 19 See generally, Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity* (Lanham: Rowan and Littlefield, 2006).
- 20 Jeffrey Mankoff, "Russian Foreign Policy and the United States after Putin," *Problems of Post-Communism* 55, no.4 (2008): 42-51.
- 21 Anthony D. Smith, "Culture, Community and Territory: The Politics of Ethnicity and Nationalism," *International Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1996): 453.
- 22 John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism: Critical Concepts in*

Political Science, (London: Routledge: 2000), 45.

23 Marlene Laruelle, "Larger, Higher, Farther North Geographical Metanarratives of the Nation in Russia," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 53, no. 5 (2012): 558.

24 Marlene Laruelle, *Russian Nationalism, Foreign Policy and Identity Debates in Putin's Russia: New Ideological Patterns After the Orange Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 77.

25 Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, "Status Seekers: Russian and Chinese Responses to US Primacy," *International Security* 34 (2010): 63-95.

26 For an overview of social identity theory see Henri Tajfel, *Differentiation between Social Groups* (New York: Academic Press, 1978); and Henri Tajfel, "Social psychology of intergroup relations," *Annual Review of Psychology* 33 no.1 (1982): 1-39.

27 Deborah Larson, T. V. Paul, and William C. Wohlforth, "Status and World Order," in *Status in World Politics*, eds. Deborah Larson, T.V. Paul, and William Wohlforth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 3-33.

28 Deborah Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, "Managing Rising Powers: The Role of Status Concerns," in *Status in World Politics*, eds. Deborah Larson, T.V. Paul, and William Wohlforth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 35.

29 Clunan, *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence*, 29-30.

30 Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth, "Status and World Order," 7.

31 Ibid., 14.

32 Ibid., 11. "Status concerns assume and imply that states are conscious of the presence of a certain type of informal or formal hierarchy in the international system based on positional power attributes, and the perceptual acceptance by others that the holder of such capabilities".

33 Xiaoyu Pu and Randall L. Schweller, "Status Signaling, Multiple Audiences, and China's Blue- Water Naval Ambition," in *Status in World Politics*, eds. Deborah Larson, T.V. Paul, and William C Wohlforth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 151; William C. Wohlforth, "Unipolarity, Status Competition and Great Power War," *World Politics* 61, no.1 (January 2009): 28-57.

34 Clunan, *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence*, 4-5.

35 Olga Khrushcheva and Marianna Poberezhskaya, "The Arctic in the Political Discourse of Russian Leaders: The National Pride and Economic Ambitions," *East European Politics* 32, no. 4 (2016): 549.

36 The sources of Russian legal claims to the Arctic date back to the reign of Ivan the Terrible in the fourteenth century, which ushered in an era of Russia expansion beyond the Urals and along the Arctic coast. From 1616 to 1620, ukases, orders issued by the Tsar, asserted the Russian Empire's exclusive rights to Arctic areas. With the discovery of the Northeastern Passage in 1648 followed by expeditions of Vitus Bering (1725-1728) and the Great Northern Expedition (1733-1743), the development of the Northern Sea Route intended to remedy a geographical deficiency of the country by opening a route for sea transport along the northern coast of the Eurasian landmass.

37 Historically the Russian Arctic has been, "a place of retreat, a place of veneration, a source of national identity, a strategic bastion, a prison, a labor camp." Emerson, *Future History of the Arctic*, 26.

38 Elana Wilson Rowe and Helge Blakkisrud, "A New Kind of Arctic Power? Russia's Policy Discourses and Diplomatic Practices in the Circumpolar North," *Geopolitics* 19 no. 1 (2014): 6-68.

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41 Laruelle, *Russia's Arctic Strategies*, 9.

42 That same year, the central government created the Chief Administration

of the Northern Sea Route, Glavsevmorput, entrusted to establish the sea route from the White Sea to the Bering Strait. Under the auspices of Glavsevmorput, the Soviets engaged in the creation of special icebreaking and transport fleet, hydrographic and air support for Arctic navigation, as well as geological, meteorological, and geographical research. John McCannon, "The Commissariat of Ice: The Main Administration of the Northern Sea Route (GUSMP) and Stalinist Exploitation of the Arctic, 1932–1939," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 20, no. 3 (2007): 396.

43 Laruelle, Russia's Arctic Strategies, 27.

44 John McCannon, "Positive Heroes at the Pole: Celebrity Status, Socialist-Realist Ideals and the Soviet Myth of the Arctic, 1932–39," *Russian Review* 56, no. 3 (1997): 348.

45 Otto Boele, *The North in Russian Romantic Literature* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), 251.

46 Clive Archer, *The Soviet Union and Northern Waters*, (London, Routledge 1988), 21.

47 Barbora Padrtová, "Russian Military Build-up in the Arctic: Strategic Shift in the Balance of Power or Bellicose Rhetoric Only?" *Arctic Yearbook* 2014 (2014): 417.

48 McCannon, "Positive Heroes at the Pole," 349.

49 Margot Light, "In Search of an Identity: Russian Foreign Policy and the End of Ideology," *Journal Of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 19, no. 3 (2003): 47.

50 Clunan, *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence*, 55.

51 Laruelle, Russia's Arctic Strategies, 40.

52 Vladimir P. Lukin and Aleksandr I. Utkin, *Россия и Запад: общность или отчуждение?* (Moscow: Sampo, 1995).

53 Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 64.

54 Harley Balzer, "The Putin Thesis and Russian Energy Policy," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 23, no. 3 (2005): 216. In 1999, Putin published an article in the journal of the St. Petersburg Mining Institute's *Zapiski* (Notes) based off of his dissertation topic which captures the impetus for heavy status investment in the hydrocarbon sector. Putin writes: "the existing socio-economic conditions and also the strategy for Russia's exit from the deep crisis and restoration of its former power on a qualitatively new basis demonstrate that the condition of the natural resource complex remains the most important factor in the state's development in the near term." See also, Vladimir Putin, "Минерально-сырьевые ресурсы в стратегии развития российской экономики [Mineral Natural Resources in the Strategy for Development of the Russian Economy]," *Zapiski Gornogo Instituta* 144 (1999): 3–9.

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56 Vladimir Putin, "Совещание по вопросу эффективного и безопасного освоения Арктики [Meeting on Effective and Safe Development of the Arctic]," Office of the President of the Russian Federation (5 June 2014), <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/45856>, accessed 1 April 2017.

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- 61 Laruelle, *Russia's Arctic Strategies*, 11.
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- 64 Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), *Outer Limits of the Continental Shelf Beyond 200 Nautical Miles from the Baselines: Submission by the Russian Federation*, Ref. No. CLCS 01.2001.LOS (Dec. 20, 2001). Russia's argument hinges on demonstrating the Lomonosov Ridge, a 1,240 mile-long seabed mountain range that divides the polar basin from Canada's Ellesmere Island to Russia's New Siberian Islands, qualifies as "natural prolongations" of the Eurasian landmass.
- 65 Jørgen Staun, "Russia's Strategy in the Arctic," Royal Danish Defense College (2015): 22.
- 66 Matz-Luck, "Planting a Flag in Arctic Waters," 247.
- 67 Richard Weitz, "Russia Seeks Northern Riches," 75.
- 68 Josephson, *The Conquest of the Russian Arctic*, 331.
- 69 Thane Gustafson, *Wheel of Fortune - The Battle for Oil and Power in Russia*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 456-473.
- 70 Nat Melia, Keith Haines, and Ed Hawkins, "Sea Ice Decline and 21st Century Trans Arctic Shipping Routes," *Geophysical Research Letters* 43, no. 18 (2016): 9722. Whereas the distance from Rotterdam to Yokohama through the Suez canal spans 11,580 nautical miles with a transit time of approximately 30 days, the Northern Sea route reduces the distance by 6,000 nautical miles and the transit time by 12 days.
- 71 Putin, "Международный форум 'Арктика – территория диалога' [International Forum 'Arctic – Territory of Dialogue']."
- 72 Josephson, *The Conquest of the Russian Arctic*, 340.
- 73 Valery Konyshchev and Alexander Sergunin, "Is Russia a Revisionist Military Power in the Arctic?" *Defense & Security Analysis* 30, no. 4 (2014): 323-335. "In contrast with the Cold War era when the Soviet behavior was driven by ideological or geopolitical factors, the current Russian policies in the Arctic are explained by Moscow's pragmatic interests, such as competition for natural resources and/or control over the sea routes."
- 74 Alun Anderson, *After the Ice*, 14.
- 75 Pavel K. Baev, *The Russian Army in A Time of Troubles* (Oslo: International Peace Research Institute, 1996), 96. Baev argues that the "accelerating degradation" of the Navy corresponded with the similar phenomenon affecting the Army; however, the problems with the Navy were exacerbated by the fact that the Russian Federation's Defense Minister "had very little understand of the 'blue water' strategy and from the very beginning took the naval programs as an obvious target for savings."
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- 79 Vladimir Putin, "День Военно-Морского Флота [Day of the Navy]," Office of the President of the Russian Federation (26 July 2015), <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50059>, accessed 16 January 2017.

80 Blank, "Russia in the Arctic," 606.

81 Rogozin: "We emphasize [these areas] because NATO has been developing actively of late and coming closer to our borders, and Russia is of course responding to these developments".

82 "Рогозин: все страны НАТО могут попытаться обеспечить военное присутствие в Арктике [Rogozin: All NATO Countries Can Assist the Military Presence in the Arctic]," TASS (20 November 2015), <http://tass.ru/politika/2456931> >, accessed 31 March 2017.

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85 Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth, "Status and World Order," 12. The military is important since "a state seeking to improve its status position is also likely to draw attention to its accomplishments and to make a public claim."

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BOOK REVIEWS

MARC SAGEMAN, *MISUNDERSTANDING TERRORISM*. PUBLISHER: UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA PRESS, 2016

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Overcoming the academic fatigue that characterizes the prolific field of terrorism research is no easy task. Yet, Marc Sageman did it twice. His last two books, *Understanding Terror Networks* (2004) and *Leaderless Jihad* (2008), made of him a prominent scholar in the study of political violence. In *Misunderstanding Terrorism*, Sageman, a former CIA officer in Afghanistan, forensic psychiatrist, and political sociologist, builds upon some of the controversial theses that have underpinned his scholarly success.

Sageman's overarching argument is that a deep misunderstanding of Islamist terrorism (which he calls "global neojihad," p. 5) has led the West to overreact to what is in reality a limited threat. In this book, his claim is supported by a re-assessment of the scope and nature of the terrorist threat, as well as an attempt to theorize the common processes at work in the turn to political violence.

In the introduction, Sageman argues that conventional threat assessments of terrorism artificially inflate risk estimates. In his opinion, this is due to a combination of factors such as the stake that politicians have in fear-mongering and the impact that this has on methodologies and datasets.

To tackle this issue, the first chapter introduces the study's original empirical data, which consist of a survey of global neojihadi plots and attacks in Western countries between 9/11 and 2011. After justifying his—arguably restrictive—sampling criteria, which exclude plots that do not constitute a "serious attempt at violence" (p. 25), sting operations-related acts, and attacks carried out by mentally disordered people without clear links to jihadi networks, Sageman raises compelling arguments from the analysis of his dataset. With a specific focus on the acts perpetrated by al-Qaeda and its affiliates, he reaches two conclusions that challenge conventional preconceptions and support some of his previous argument. First, he contends that Islamist terrorism has become largely leaderless (rather than being leader-led) and home-grown (rather than being "on the move," p. 51). Second, he

argues that the threat of al-Qaeda has diminished in the second half of the post-9/11 decade (rather than increased).

Chapter two delineates the implications of his findings in terms of assessing the scope of the terrorist threat and the probabilities of attacks. Based on the number of terrorists identified as having been involved in activities that target the “West”, Sageman derives the “global neojihadi base rate” (the number of terrorists per given population per year, p. 53). He concludes that there are three new terrorists per one hundred million Westerners per year, and less than one per million Muslim Westerners per year (p. 57). Claiming that counterterrorist policy should be based on these figures rather than on imaginary “worst case scenarios” (p. 58), and that effective counterterrorism measures should acknowledge the small scale of the threat, the author powerfully debunks some of the US terrorism classic policies such as the use of no-fly and selectee lists.

Turning to the more theoretical part of the book, chapter three reviews some of the main approaches that have so far attempted to shed light on radicalization processes, which the author divides into two categories: the “outsiders’ explanations” (p. 92)—individual-based ones, focusing primarily on internal predispositions, which encompass psychological and behavioural approaches; and the “insiders’ explanations” (p. 102)—contextual or structural ones, which include social movement theory.

Rejecting these existing approaches, the author proposes a new model to analyze the turn to political violence in chapter four. Drawing from social psychology, and specifically from Henri Tajfel’s social identity theory, Sageman argues for the usefulness of what he presents as an intermediary theory in understanding the process of radicalization. According to his model, the first step in the radicalization process consists in the formation of a politicized social identity through serious political grievances, which in turn creates an imagined “political protest community of meaning” (p. 119). In the context of an escalating conflict with another group (often the state), disillusionment with peaceful tactics or a triggering incident (often a state aggression) generate public moral outrage which leads some members of this community to develop a “martial social identity” and to turn to violence (p. 143).

Despite its thoroughness and consistency, Sageman’s radicalization model fails to convince. Indeed, due to its theoretical grounding being exclusively in social psychology, his argument is made vulnerable to the criticisms that this discipline usually attracts. For instance, accusations of failing to take cultural elements into account due to the use of rigid universal models seem particularly relevant here. Moreover, in the context of Islamism, the model’s

quasi-exclusive focus on identity at the expense of ideology ("In the turn to political violence identity trumps ... ideology," p. 74) constitutes a highly contentious premise, which may cast doubts on the relevance of the book's policy recommendations.

Sageman's advice to policymakers includes putting an end to the anxiety-provoking "War on Terror" rhetoric, avoiding sensationalizing the arrest of terrorists in the news, implementing monitoring and surveillance mechanisms that respect civil rights, as well as infiltrating terrorist networks to orchestrate the betrayal of prominent terrorist leaders. In particular, the author's belief that this latter policy could put an end to the activities of a terrorist network (p. 166) rests on the premises highlighted above, which markedly overlap in-group/out-group dynamics and overlook the value-based, religious or ideological dimensions of terrorism.

Misunderstanding Terrorism constitutes the latest work of a branch of terrorism studies that are theoretically positioned on the positivistic and "policy-relevant" side of scholarship. The book's main thesis—namely that "the West" overestimates the terrorist threat and overreacts to it—is not new. It has already been defended numerous times by various scholars, such as Fure-di, Bauman, or Mueller. However, while this thesis is generally put forward by researchers who base their analysis on more constructivist and interpretive methods, Sageman, however, masterfully challenges conventional wisdom on terrorism using the very tools and language associated with this wisdom; that of quantitative assessment and probabilistic thinking. This certainly is the book's principal contribution to terrorism studies.

Overall, despite the shortcomings of the proposed radicalization model, *Misunderstanding Terrorism's* impressive empirical data, argumentative power, and clarity of style make it a valuable read for students and scholars of terrorism alike.

Deborah Avant and Oliver Westerwinter,
Eds. *The New Power Politics: Networks
and Transnational Security Governance*.
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Contemporary world politics embrace complex processes of governance to address unprecedented challenges and increasingly tangled crises. Avant and Westerwinter's *The New Power Politics* makes an insightful contribution to the fast developing field of security studies, which aspires to better comprehend the constantly changing arena of security governance. For Avant and Westerwinter, contemporary governance reflects an expansion in scope and change in nature of global political interactions, where "authority to govern does not reside exclusively with states but is wielded by a variety of actors at different levels" (p. 1-2). Simultaneously, the dynamics of various networks shape security governance and advance a broad conceptualization of power as "relational, attached to different nodes with various bases, and with a broad range of effects" (p.10). As such, the book contests established views on power, which gives primacy to material power, by highlighting the evolving relational nature of power within security governance networks.

The book's overarching argument is that as "power emerges from and depends on the formation and continuation of relationships, it implies that as relationships build, power can grow; and if they change or break down, power can shift and dissipate" (p. 12). Through a series of well-researched cases, *The New Power Politics* investigates the twin questions of why a global governance system develops around certain security issues and not others, and whose interests it serves. The book offers a detailed account of the broad variation in the effectiveness of security governance across issues, and the disparity in who benefits from it. Noting the failure of mainstream IR theories to explain these variations, the volume turns to social network theory for an analytical framework to unpack the "puzzles of transnational security governance" (p. 6). Additionally, its analysis of governance variations is guided by the consideration of three defining characteristics of networks: "the relative position of different actors, the distribution of ties, and the quality of ties"

The New Power Politics comprises three complementing parts. The first two chapters set the stage conceptually and methodologically for eight contributions on a broad range of empirically relevant security policy problems. Network centrality—the importance

of an actor's position within a network—constitutes a crucial factor in better understanding the relational nature of power. In Chapter Two, Alexander Montgomery argues that a network centrality approach enriches current IR study of power networks by capturing “power effects that come from both diffuse and direct structural constraints placed on agents by their network positions rather than their possession of resources.” The second section investigates strategic networking and their impact on who benefits from global governance. Charli Carpenter's study of “The Case of the Making Amends Campaign” demonstrates that networking dynamics profoundly impact transnational advocacy by influencing what norms transnational activist organizations choose to promote.

Meanwhile in Chapter Four, Alexander Cooley and Daniel Nexon explore how interpersonal relationships between states' elite and representatives profoundly affect the capacity of a patron state to control a much weaker client. Highlighting multiplex nodes—actors who participate in, and can link, numerous networks within one or more issue areas—Cooley and Nexon examine the Georgia-U.S. relationship during the Bush administration and demonstrate that “the strong affective interpersonal ties that developed between U.S. and Georgian officials” strongly conditioned U.S. foreign policy and political attitude towards Georgia (p. 75). Deborah Avant (in Chapter Five considers similar dynamics in two related cases: small arms and private military/security firms, which equally highlight the variance in power relations between multiplex nodes and the U.S.

Although the book compellingly highlights the significance of multiplex nodes, this conceptualization largely overlooks the many actors who are part of two or more nodes within a same network. The only exception appears in chapter ten where Sarah Percy briefly hints to this possibility by noting that the counter-piracy network features “direct membership overlap between (its) three main nodes” (p. 250). Beyond this very niche example, actors with multiple affiliations within the same network are increasingly relevant, such as in public-private security partnerships, where some state representatives simultaneously belong to the private security industry as firms' owners or administrative members. Considering “multiplex nodes” across and within networks would further enhance our understanding of actors' influence on network dynamics.

The book's third part investigates variances in governance effectiveness by examining how network's variables—the three aforementioned characteristics of networks—influence governance outcomes on different issues. In this respect, Adam Bower's Chapter Seven greatly enhances the volume's argument by offering new insights on security governance networks. Examining the ban on antipersonnel mines, Bower demonstrates that power within

networks is twofold: social forms of power “may in some circumstances supplant more traditional power capacities”; while sole reliance on the latter can prove counterproductive if the materially powerful actor occupies a “modest network position” (p. 187). Additionally, the author examines how new governance tasks and actors, or “hubs,” have an impact on other actors’ centrality by changing the network’s structure in two ways: first, leading to “the further centralization of power with some hubs and comparative diminishment of others,” and second, triggering “the emergence of a new hub in the form of an implementation support unit” (p.188-189). Hence, contrarily to the received wisdom in the existing literature, Bower compellingly argues that “the decline of particular hubs may in fact result from the emergence of others, rather than degrading communications within the network.” Furthermore, Bower evokes the notion of “nested networks”—different layers of interactions within the same network—to encourage further research into how internal dynamics at one level of a network may affect outcomes at other levels (p. 194).

Notwithstanding the richness of its cases, the book remains largely Western-focused. For example, while rising insecurities and enduring conflicts in the Middle East dominated security governance in recent years, the book overlooks this subject, focusing instead on cases dominated by Western actors and networks. Similarly, the premise of U.S. hegemony plays an explicit role in shaping the book’s analysis. Aiming to contest conventional views of hard power as the ultimate commanding force in security networks, the volume predominantly focuses on how the U.S. is occasionally challenged and constrained by weaker actors, who capitalize on social power to gain networking leverage. This approach is problematic as U.S. hegemony is itself a contested theme in IR and security studies literature, especially in an increasingly multipolar system, where the U.S. increasingly struggles to impose its policy preferences internationally.

The social network model of analysis used in this book enhances current understandings of security governance by capturing the evolving and diversified nature of network dynamics. In the same vein, other IR and security studies scholars used nodal governance model to make equally remarkable contributions.¹ While the two models are similar, the nodal governance model treats a detailed study of the various nodes as the basis for a comprehensive analysis of network dynamics. Meanwhile, the social network model essentially focuses on the ties between nodes, using particular nodes’ attributes to better understand these ties. The diverse and complex network dynamics captured in this book suggest that equal attention is due to nodes’ attributes and nodes’ mutual ties. To better comprehend security

i Rita Abrahamsen. and Michael C. Williams. *Security Beyond the State: Private Security in International Politics*. 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2011)

governance dynamics, security studies scholars should be familiar with both social network and nodal governance, seeking to combine them into one balanced and comprehensive analytical framework.

To conclude, *The New Power Politics* provides a conceptually and empirically rich account of contemporary security governance. Using an innovative methodological approach and drawing on an impressive array of case studies, the volume offers numerous new insights on the subject of power in global governance and opens various avenues for further research. While an edited volume, the skilful collaboration among its contributors renders the book highly coherent, with each contributor seamlessly referring to points across the chapters to strengthen and complement each other's argument. The rich, accessible, and coherent nature of the book makes it a substantial contribution to the field of global governance studies, and will be appreciated by specialists and non-specialists alike.