### Note

This file applies to the Domain Awareness, Russian LNG, and Science Diplomacy affirmatives. This doesn’t really apply to the Native Renewables affirmative. You should read the Colonialism Kritik from the Native Renewables negative file against that affirmative.

This critique argues that the aff is motivated by an American anxiety of Russian and Chinese takeover of the Arctic and global order. The way that the aff has justified the plan (their descriptions of their advantages) are premised on certain narratives about who are the good guys (the US, their allies) and who are the bad guys (Russia, China). Those narratives can be used to justify violent, militaristic policies in the name of “responding to threats”.

The negative’s alternative is to **deconstruct security logics**. This means that we have to critically interrogate the meanings and motivations behind the ways that we come to understand who is a threat and why.

The affirmative has several options. One is to use the permutation to argue that the aff’s particular use of securitization is good, even if it should be used to reject other securitization. Another is to argue that realist international relations are good and that constructing threats is necessary to understand how states interact with each other.

The best aff responses are not in this file, they are in the 1AC! Explaining how what the 1ac said is true and why it should be trusted is super important.

# Security Kritik

## 1NC

### Security Kritik—1NC

#### The next offcase position is the security kritik:

#### US arctic policy is driven by status anxiety—that manifests in discursive threat construction to justify securitizing policy

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While American identity revolves heavily around being capable of projecting power anywhere in the world, Russia’s identity heavily resides in its position as an Arctic power. Literature has indisputably placed Russia as the main power in the Arctic region (Charron et al., 2012; Knecht & Keil, 2013; Huebert, 2019). It has the longest Arctic coastline out of all 8 Arctic states, the most populated Arctic region, the largest ice-breaking fleet in the world - which includes both nuclear and diesel propelled ships, as well as the biggest year-round ice-free port/city in the Arctic region (Murmansk). Besides, Russia has also been heavily investing on its Arctic region under a narrative of infrastructural development. The U.S., on the other hand, has had a reluctant position in accepting its role as an Arctic state. Its legitimacy in the Arctic dates from the purchase of Alaska in 1867, and to this day the state is often pointed to in public narratives as harsh and unwelcoming, or as a wilderness to be used (Gricius, 2022; Huebert, 2009). Furthermore, while U.S. rhetoric about the Arctic - expressed in its Arctic Region Policy documents (dated from 1994, 2009, 2013, and 2022), tries to emphasize that the region is key to American interests, discourse and practice regarding the region have been historically missmatched. Up until 2022, the United States only possessed one operating heavy polar icebreaker, Polar Star6 , and Arctic politics were mainly discussed in the domestic context of Alaska, not internationally.

In this paper, I periodize American involvement in the Arctic in four distinct “eras”, reflecting changing geopolitical and strategic priorities. The first era, spanning from the purchase of Alaska in 1867 to the 1960s, was characterized by domestic interest, with the Arctic framed as a frontier for resource exploration and development. This was followed by a period of heightened competition and militarization during the Cold War, where the Arctic became a strategic frontier between the United States and the Soviet Union. The early 2000s ushered in a phase of Arctic Exceptionalism, promoting cooperation and institution-building, exemplified by the Arctic Council. However, since 2014, the U.S. has entered a period marked by anxiety and competition, driven by concerns over Russia’s Arctic dominance and China’s expanding influence. This shift reflects a growing sense of status anxiety, as the United States grapples with the implications of falling behind in Arctic capabilities. The phases correspond to discursive shifts where status anxiety intensifies—marked by fears of lagging behind Russia and China, perceived loss of leadership, and increased rhetorical emphasis on “catching up” or “reclaiming dominance.” Why, then, is the United States now increasingly engaging in the Arctic? This paper argues that status anxiety, stemming from Russia’s established Arctic dominance and China’s growing influence, is a key driver of this shift. Status anxiety emerges when a higher-ranked actor perceives a decline in criteria that confer status—military power, economic capabilities, or normative influence—relative to rising competitors (Abrams & Hogg, 2006). For the United States, the Arctic represents a region where its global influence faces growing challenges, amplifying its anxiety and spurring strategic responses. This anxiety is not paralyzing but constructive, motivating proactive strategies such as increased investments, alliance-building, and policy recalibration.

#### Securitization is unethical—it creates a violent state-of-exception which necessitates endless threat construction and global wars

Nyman ’13 (Dr. Jonna Nyman – Ph.D. in the politics and ethics of energy security @ The University of Birmingham, co-editor of International Studies Today, Teaching Fellow in International Relations @ the University of Leicester, “Securitization Theory,” *Critical Approaches to Security: An Introduction to Theories and Methods*, published 2013, http://kelaspspskikat.blog.com/files/2013/04/shepherd-critical-approaches-to-security.pdf)

The Copenhagen school defines security in International Relations as different to security in an everyday sense – in International Relations, it is necessarily linked to power politics, and ultimately, it is about ‘survival’ (Buzan et al. 1998: 21). This makes security threats different to threats more broadly; they pose an ‘existential threat’ to a particular referent object – they threaten its very existence (Buzan et al. 1998: 21, emphasis added). The referent object, that is, the ‘thing’ under threat, was traditionally equated with the state, but this was extended by the Copenhagen school to include a range of possible referent objects, depending on the sector of security to be considered (in environmental security, for example, the global environment is often the referent object under threat). Securitization is the discursive process through which ‘an issue is dramatized and presented as an issue of supreme priority; thus by labelling it as security an agent claims a need for and a right to treat it by extraordinary means’ (Buzan et al. 1998: 26). As such, security is a ‘speech act’, ‘the utterance itself is the act’ (Wæver 1995: 55) – by speaking ‘security’ the securitizing actor moves the issue out of regular politics and into the security sphere, thereby legitimizing the use of extraordinary measures to deal with the threat (if the securitizing move is successful). Consequently, whether or not the threat is ‘real’ does not matter – securitizing an issue has nothing to do with the ‘reality’ of the threat but of the use of discourse to define it as such, and thus is always a ‘political choice’ (Buzan et al. 1998: 29). In the words of Wæver, ‘something is a security problem when the elites declare it to be so’ (Wæver 1995: 54). Actors in a position of power are more likely to be successful in securitizing by virtue of the added legitimacy of their position, though this does not guarantee that the audience will accept the securitizing move (Buzan et al. 1998: 31).

Once securitized, issues become addressed in particular ways: with ‘threat, defense, and often state-centred solutions’ (Wæver 1995: 65). In this way, if we accept that the label of ‘security’ changes the status of certain issues, securitized issues become too important to be subject to open debate and regular political procedure; instead, they should be prioritized over other issues by the state’s leaders or governing elite (Buzan et al. 1998: 29). It is impor- tant to note the role of the audience in securitization, as an issue only becomes securitized once the audience accepts a securitizing move as valid. In theory securitization can ‘never only be imposed’ (Buzan et al. 1998: 25). If the securitizing move has not been accepted to a point where emergency measures are possible, it remains a securitizing move but not a successful securitization (Buzan et al. 1998: 25). It is important to mention that it is not the word security itself that is necessary, but the designation of an issue as an existential threat in need of emergency action and the audience accepting that designation – sometimes the word ‘security’ is used outside of this logic, and some issues are securitized to a point where ‘security’ and priority are always implicit and do not have to be articulated as securitization has become institutionalized, such as ‘defense’, which always implies priority and security (Buzan et al. 1998: 27).

Securitized issues are recognized by a specific rhetorical structure stressing urgency, survival and ‘priority of action’ (Buzan et al. 1998: 26). The Copenhagen school suggests that securitization should be studied by looking at:

discourse and political constellations: When does an argument with this particular rhetorical and semiotic structure achieve sufficient effect to make an audience tolerate violations of rules that would otherwise have to be obeyed?

There are three key facilitating conditions that make successful securitization more likely: the speech act itself following the ‘grammar of security’ emphasizing priority, urgency and survival; the securitizing actor being in a ‘position of authority’ to maximize audience acceptance; and the features of the alleged ‘threat/s’ (Buzan et al. 1998: 33). Securitization theory distinguished security and securitization against regular politics and politicization, and presented a scale for identifying the status of issues, ranging from non-politicized to securitized, as shown in Figure 5.1 (Buzan et al. 1998: 23).

Securitization frames issues as exceptional politics or above normal politics and decision- making processes, justifying ‘actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure’ (Buzan et al. 1998: 24). As such ‘security should be seen as negative, as a failure to deal with issues as normal politics’ (Buzan et al. 1998: 29). Reflecting this, the Copenhagen school also developed the concept of desecuritization, the process which occurs when issues are moved out of the security sphere and back into the political sphere. Because of the particular conno- tations and history of the concept of ‘security’, the Copenhagen school argued that ‘defense’ and ‘the state’ remain central to the concept in International Relations; securitizing an issue inevitably ‘evokes an image of threat-defense, allocating to the state an important role in addressing it’ (Wæver 1995: 47). While security is thus to an extent seen as a negative, as a failure of regular politics, it also has advantages; securitizing an issue tends to give it extra priority, both in terms of allocating extra attention by key policy-makers and extra funds (Buzan et al. 1998: 29). When deciding on whether to securitize an issue, therefore, officials need to compare ‘the always problematic side effects of applying a mindset of security against the possible advantages of focus, attention, and mobilization’ (Buzan et al. 1998: 29). Because of the negative aspects of applying a mindset of security to particular issues desecuritization is presented as ‘the optimal long-range option’ (Buzan et al. 1998: 29), but securitization is not ruled out. Because of the problematic side effects of securitization, securitization theory does critique the idea that security is necessarily a positive, arguing that desecuritization should be the aim, shifting issues back into regular politics with its accompanying bargaining processes (Buzan et al. 1998: 4).

#### The alternative is to reject the affirmative in favor of deconstructing security logics

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Understanding, and practising, the thinking in which deconstruction engages (Lawlor 2011) is pivotal in producing deconstructive analysis. A deconstructive method may or may not reject the rigour of empirical analysis (this depends on the commitments of the researcher) but nevertheless has its own criteria of theoretical commitment. First, using a deconstructive method requires that we understand the world as a ‘text’, in that it can only be interpreted (Devetak 2005: 168). Language is not a mirror of nature and meaning is applied, never implicit. Deconstruction uses language as something more than a medium through which the world is expressed, or a secondary event to the world as it happens: rather, language is the world, constructing meaning and changing what we do or do not see. Second, decon- struction is less concerned with observation of ‘objects’ than with observation of ‘observa- tions as observations’ (Andersen 2003: xii). This produces a strategy of analysis that in practice refuses the separation of subject and object of study, seeing both as constituted by discourse and implicitly implicated in the relations of power therein. Thus, the ‘scientific’ separation of subject and object is impossible within a deconstructive method, since the observer is as caught in the text as the observed, and meaning dependent thereon. Third, our truths and facts are made possible within socially constructed language systems (‘systems of signification’, or discourses). Every object (material, factual, ideational, or otherwise) is constituted as an object of discourse, since no object is (or can be) given or determined beyond its discursive condition of emergence. Discourses are powerful embodiments of constraint, repression and imperative, which transform language from an infinity of potential meanings into more closed and ‘knowable’ systems. These systems unify and make sense of our social relations, identities and behaviours.

The fact that every object is constituted as an object of discourse has nothing to do with whether there is a world external to thought, or with the realism/idealism opposition. An earthquake or the falling of a brick is an event that certainly exists, in the sense that it occurs here and now, independently of my will. But whether their specificity as objects is constructed in terms of ‘natural phenomena’ or ‘expressions of the wrath of God’, depends upon the structuring of a discursive field. What is denied is not that such objects exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion that they could constitute themselves as objects outside any discursive condition of emergence.

(Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 108)

Challenge

A deconstructive methodology sets the IR scholar the task of challenging ‘the hegemony of the power relations or symbolic order in whose name security is produced, to render visible its contingent, provisional nature’ (Edkins 1999: 142). Deconstruction is essential in ‘radi- cally unsettling what are taken to be stable concepts and conceptual oppositions’, while deconstructive practice also pays particular attention to the effects of the stabilisations (or ‘stability-effects’) of any apparent totality (Devetak 2005: 168–169).

Although structure, and therefore discourse, is always partial, uncertain and inessential, ‘within structure there is not only form, relation, and configuration. There is also interde- pendency and a totality which is always concrete’ (Derrida 2001: 3). Highlighting how a structure centres itself reveals also how it neutralises its instabilities, ‘fixing’ itself through certain ‘organising principles’, origins or end points that orientate the ‘coherence of the system’. As Laclau and Mouffe argue, this process of neutralisation means that discourses are totalising but that they can never be sutured totalities (2001: 96). It is only through essentialist discourses, discourses of unity, that the ‘field of differences’ constituent of the diverse ‘social orders’ are domesticated, identities ‘fixed’ and made ‘real’, and thus social relations ordered. The ‘social’ may always be ‘open’, its processes partial, and every identity ‘precarious’ and ‘inessential’ (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 96), but it is not made to appear so.

Possibility

By exposing the contingency of otherwise apparently stable ‘truths’, ‘facts’ and/or hierar- chies, deconstruction is not ‘destructive’ but profoundly radical, proposing constantly the possibility of alternatives. Deconstruction offers ‘a kind of thinking that never finds itself at the end’ (Lawlor 2011) and in confronting the impossibility of singular metaphysical ‘truths’ (‘justice’, etc.) we recognise the multiple ways in which such truths are possible. In viewing discourses as ‘unstable grids’ rather than fixed and determined systems of meaning, we thus see their changeability, historical contingency and how they might be open to future change and reconfiguration. Although discourses are heterogeneous language systems, obeying and embodying ‘complex historical dynamics’, historical changes and changes in social life, they also deploy processes of centring that orient, balance and give grounding to their overall structure: analysis that focuses on the processes, practices and symbols through which different discourses create and pronounce meaning reveals the level of contingency of this meaning and meaningfulness, or, in other words, to what extent discourses turn potentially unstable meaning into concrete identity and how they might, then, be otherwise.

## Framework

### Framework—2NC

#### Interpretation—the debate should be about the affirmatives scholarship and representations, not simply whether the consequence of the plan is a good idea

#### Prefer our interpretation:

#### Our interpretation is more educational-- analyzing and challenging the securitizing assumptions is a prerequisite to evaluating if the consequences of the plan are good or bad

Burke et al. 14, \*associate professor of international relations and political science at the University of New South Wales, \*\*senior lecturer of international relations at the University of Queensland, \*\*\*senior lecturer of international relations at University of Queensland. (\*Anthony Burke, \*\*Katrina Koo, \*\*\*Matt McDonald, 2014, Ethics and Global Security, Routledge, 2014, ISBN 987-0-203-07130-4, pp.4-6)

The moral anxiety and debate in such cases-just a few of many-suggests something important. Ethics matters. in this book, we contend that the nature of global insecurity in the last century, and the kinds of security that the world will be able to achieve in this century, depends significantly on ethics: on the ethics we bring to our analysis, policymaking and decisions; on the ethics that underpins our understanding of what security is and to whom it is owed; and on the ethics that shapes the realities we accept or deny. Whether people live or die, whether they suffer or prosper--which people live and prosper and where they are able to do so are ethical questions. How these questions are answered in the real world will be the results of particular ethical frameworks, rules and decisions; the result of the ways in which ethical dilemmas are posed, and how they are addressed and resolved. Is it right to attack or target cities with nuclear weapons? Is it right to even possess them? Is it right to detain asylum seekers, push their boats out to sea, or return them to the places from which they fled? Is it right to target terrorists and insurgents with remote-controlled robotic aircraft and missiles, even if those killed include civilians and if their operators aim—and kill without risk? Is it right to invade a foreign country to stop crimes against humanity, end a famine, build a state, or remove a regime, and if so, what are the right ways of going about it? Is it right to use torture, or suspend habeas corpus or the rule of law, to protect our security? What forms of reasoning, what criteria and ends, should govern such decisions?

These are some of what most of us recognise as "moral" questions central to war and security questions about killing, harm and humanity—and put in this form they are certainly of great importance. In particular, such questions are addressed in great depth in the "just war'' tradition, and you will read more about that school of thought in the pages that follow. However, in this book we argue that the influence and problem of ethics in security goes beyond moral choices in particular cases, and beyond questions of war and violence, to take in the very system and infrastructure of global security itself. This "system" is a dynamic and contested set of processes that develops out of the frameworks provided by (and actions of) key structures and actors: international treaties and law, regional and global organisations, governments, militaries, intelligence and aid agencies, NGOs, corporations, communities, and civil society organisations. The "international" management of security, however, should not be confused with a genuinely global sensibility, perspective, practice or set of institutions. Currently, we have a largely state-centric international security system that attempts very imperfectly to deal with increasingly global processes and dynamics of insecurity: risks and threats that have transnational and often global sources and symptoms. This system is structured around a cooperative tension (and sometimes outright conflict) between national security policies and military alliances, regional security organisations (like ASEAN or the OSCE) and collective security "regimes" of international law, treaty agreements and international organisations in areas like arms control, disarmament, and the environment. These regimes reflect both cosmopolitan commitments to deal with global problems in an effective and equitable way, and an uglier power politics that generates compromises that reflect particular national and corporate (rather than global) interests. Such regimes are also almost entirely missing or stagnant in areas like the energy and the world economy. A global approach to security thus recognises that our common problems are global in scope and that national, regional and collective security responses need to be reformed to serve genuinely global ends (Burke 2013a).

In our view, the kind of global security system we have, how and to whom it provides security, is the very first ethical question. Does this system serve the interests of states and corporations alone or the interests of all people and the ecosystems that they depend on? Does it serve the interests of the wealthy and powerful, or the poor and the marginalised? Does it serve the interests of some at an unacceptable cost to others? These concerns preoccupied a "high level panel" of former states-people asked by then United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan to map out a new global security agenda in 2004. In their report, A More Secure World, they said:

Differences of power, wealth and geography do determine what we perceive as the gravest threats to our survival and well-being. Differences of focus lead us to dismiss what others perceive as the gravest of all threats to their survival. Inequitable responses to threats further fuel division. Many people believe that what passes for collective security today is simply a system for protecting the rich and powerful. (United Nations 2004: 2)

We believe that “ethics” and “morality” are not things that can be brought to insecurity or war from outside, to a space that would otherwise be unethical or amoral. Rather, we believe that even before we face a specific moral decision, ethics constitutes the choices available to us—that particular ethical commitments, options, limits and imperatives are implicit in the system itself, and in particular theoretical and policy world views. Every' vision, every' practice, and every' system of security has an ethics—even if we cannot agree that all are equally ethical. As Richard Shapcott argues, any work of political ethics

must draw attention to the possible consequences or implications of different starting points...it is only once we have assessed or understood these [consequences] that we can reflect adequately upon our ethics and whether we think the costs of our positions are worth it, or not, or whether they are justifiable or need modification. (Shapcott 2010: uii-ihiii)

In sum, even as we accept that to be able to term a perspective or behaviour “amoral”, “immoral”, or “unethical” is a powerful and sometimes legitimate use of language, it is analytically more helpful to be able to lay out the assumptions and commitments of a range of ethical frameworks that bear on the problems and realities of global security, so that their effects can be considered and judged. Even as we assume a responsibility to advance a distinctive global security ethics that is better—that will lead to a more just and stable world—we do so in a global political context where moral pluralism is a fact. Debate among competing ethical perspectives is necessary and important.

#### That’s especially true in Arctic policy—their “plan focus” framework fails without interrogating the core assumptions of the 1AC’s theories of international relations

Nabok 22, Senior Lecturer, Saint Petersburg State University. (Sergey Nabok, “Main Theoretical Approaches in the Arctic Policy Studies,” Arctic and North, 2022, no. 47, pp. 119–135)

In the scientific study of international relations, international political processes and management systems, the role of theory is characterized by two specific features that distinguish it from other social disciplines. Firstly, the actual political analysis used in the study of specific issues, such as state policy, inter-state relations, or international institutions, rarely relies on a well-defined set of concepts and propositions that establish key relationships between the phenomena under study, is ad hoc in nature, and claims to generalize conclusions. Although theory is an indispensable element of scientific discourse, its factual usefulness in political analysis is insignificant, and theoretical provisions (which are hypotheses in the epistemological sense) are often accepted as implicit suppositions, without reflection and critical analysis.

Secondly, as F. Chernoff notes, the prescriptive component is extremely important in the theory of international relations: although some theories seek to describe only the interrelations of phenomena, theoretical analysis often goes beyond a strict description and explicitly or implicitly formulates certain political goals and normative criteria used to evaluate a certain actual or hypothetical course of action [1, p. 3–4]. The latter leads to the fact that political theory acts as a discursive justification of a certain political model and as a basis for a political narrative that legitimizes a certain course of action.

Let us consider, for example, a simple theoretical statement, corresponding to the position of the realist paradigm: “The only type of actors whose actions matter for international politics and international relations are states”. Taking this statement as an implicit assumption focuses political analysis exclusively on the actions and decisions taken by the highest levels of state power, without even allowing the question of the possible role of non-state actors. If such political analysis is faced with the need to explain the behavior of non-state actors (for example, NPOs), they will be interpreted either as insignificant or as instrumental, that is, as tools of state actors’ decisions. If this theoretical premise becomes the basis for policy-making, the consequence is that any meaningful processes in international relations have to be interpreted as resulting from the decisions of state actors. Any actions of non-state actors are construed as being inspired by the governments of other countries, and the actors themselves are deprived of subjectivity, including in a practical political sense.

Such uncritical acceptance of theoretical propositions and the failure to distinguish between descriptive and prescriptive elements of theory have important negative consequences for both the scientific study of political processes and political practice. In a practical sense, this incorrectly evaluates information, makes erroneous decisions, and narrows the range of available behavioral strategies. In analytical terms, the focus of attention is distorted and the risk of misinterpretation of the observed phenomena increases. For example, the systematic efforts of China to influence the regional policy in the United States [2, de La Bruyère D., Pikarsic N.] in case of uncritical acceptance of the postulate of the state as the only actor in the world political arena should be recognized as meaningless and not having rational justification.

These problems of the theory of international relations are also typical for the study of the Arctic. The authors of publications citing the results of empirical research and political analysis do not always rely on clearly formulated theoretical positions and analytical models, and the descriptive characteristics of the subject under study (for example, the Arctic strategy of a particular state) are explicitly or implicitly based on the adoption of certain political goals, in according to which the situation and decisions are evaluated. At the same time, explicitly formulated theoretical provisions play an important role both in scientific research and in formulation of practical recommendations. Theory performs several important functions: defines the focus of research and the specific subjects to be studied and analyzed; establishes the content and relationships between key variables used for explanation and prediction; allows to evaluate alternative mechanisms for achieving political goals (without a priori determination of these goals).

### They Say: “Reps Don’t Shape Reality”

#### Securitizing reps shape reality and result in failed implementation of the plan

Tekin and Tekin 25, \*Professor, Department of International Relations, Galatasaray University, Türkiye, \*\*Professor, Department of Economics, Marmara University, Türkiye. (\*Beyza Çagatay ̆ Tekin, \*\*Rıfat Barış Tekin, 2025, “When the Hegemon Seeks Ontological Security: US Narratives on Rising Threats and the Future of the International Order” The Chinese Journal of International Politics, 2025, 18(1) https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/poae027) wtk

Narratives construct social reality;38 they are performative39 and constitutive of identity.40 They set the scene, organise events into a causal sequence, identify and characterise key actors, and depict the relationships between them, thereby ascribing meaning to the world.41 Identity emerges mainly as a result of nuanced characterisation in narratives, i.e. the attribution of certain qualities, roles, dispositions, and intentions to the self and a variety of others, either relationally or subjectively, within the setting of the story and in particular temporal and spatial contexts.42 We therefore examine the causal pathways revealed in the temporal and spatial emplotment of events and actions, together with the characterisation of actors in strategic narratives, in order to study the narrative constitution of identity and security.

Strategic narratives can be defined as purposefully deployed stories that relate to both states and the system as a whole.43 They are not necessarily analytical and “may rely on appeals to emotion, or on suspect metaphors and dubious historical analogies.”44 Political actors employ strategic narratives as a tool to extend influence, promote a particular agenda, and shape our perceptions of the world around us.45 Strategic narratives are crucial in shaping perceptions of security threats and mobilising support for specific policy responses,46 thus significantly influencing foreign policy processes and outcomes, from setting and legitimising policy agendas to enabling coalition building. By studying strategic narratives reproduced in official documents such as the NSS, one can gain insights into how states construct and communicate their identities, interests, and values, while legitimising particular policy responses to address ontological insecurities. This study places particular emphasis on the role of strategic security narratives in legitimising change, as they help us to understand how states enable a particular policy action or change in state routines that might otherwise be considered unacceptable or even unthinkable.

### Epistemology Flawed—2NC

#### Reject aff advantage claims—security studies are constructed and biased

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The goal of mainstream peace research was to develop “an integrated and coherent theory of the causes of international war” based on a grasp of the general factors that led to war (Singer 1972, 255; Senese and Vasquez 2008) and “the assumption that there are indeed regularities in the origins of different types of war” (Singer 1972, 244). States (or social groups) were treated like entities that behaved in similar ways over time and space, and the systemic features of international politics were regarded as constant (at least since 1815). Research thus had a structuralist bias and focused on uncovering the underlying conditions or processes that made states prone to conflict and war (Singer 1972, 245). Specific attributes or conditions included such things as territorial contiguity, arms races, the nature of domestic governance (the “democratic peace”), and gender inequality (Caprioli 2005). With respect to intrastate or civil war, ethnonationalist exclusion, horizontal economic inequality, geography, and governance have all been advanced as explanatory factors (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug 2013).2 All of these arguments operate at the macrolevel, assuming that conflict dynamics are comparable across time and space, that they are exogenously driven (especially the escalation from conflict to violence), and that local agency at the microlevel can be ignored. Yet, recent work on civil war by Stathis Kalyvas and others has challenged these assumptions and demonstrated that microlevel processes and actors have strong “agency” and interact with exogenous and top-down conflict factors in complex and highly endogenized ways (Kalyvas 2003; Justino, Brück, and Verwimp 2013).

Unpacking the theory of change and the related conception of agency and action behind mainstream peace and conflict research is a little more difficult. Most simplistically, mainstream peace research presumed to provide valid knowledge to state elites, in the form of “if-then” quasi-causal guides to action. These would include such things as how to stop escalation processes (arms races, nuclear confrontations), the risks associated with border or territorial disputes, and even the best form of domestic governance (democracy promotion under President Clinton). Academics and peace researchers would thus generate reliable scientific knowledge following the Comteian dictum that knowledge permits prediction and from prediction comes control.3 Agency is top-down and directly linked to decision-makers and political power or to the existence of institutions able to implement the solutions identified through peace research (Rapoport 1970). As the World Bank's reliance on quantitative and aggregate analysis to understand contemporary civil wars illustrates, this kind of argument was not restricted to Cold War superpower relations (World Bank 2011). As Collier and Sambanis argued, “in the international community . . . policy has not rested on a solid foundation of research-derived knowledge. The ultimate goal of our research project is to stimulate the research community to provide these foundations” (Collier and Sambanis 2002, 3).4

More importantly, conflict analysis was designed to isolate variables that account for the greatest degree of variance in outcomes or that are associated with the probability of war outbreak (Vasquez 1987). Most of the models ignored both history and time, neglecting that wars and conflicts are often not independent events, and unfold through interaction processes that are highly endogenous and path-dependent (Pierson 2004). The problem here is not just inadequate data, insufficiently fine distinctions, or underspecified models. Rather, the entire understanding of how conflict and violence unfolded was based on acceptance of a “general linear reality” description of how society works that “treat[ed] linear models as representations of the actual social world” (Abbott 1988).5 Mirroring or mimicking research, analysts in the policy- or practice-oriented world adopted the language of root causes and linear causation to frame their prescriptions. A mainstream “how to” manual from the Conflict Sensitivity Forum captures this well, by presenting solid conflict analysis as an essential step to designing programs to mitigate factors that contribute to conflict. Conflicts are visualized as having clear and general stages, cycles, and triggers across time and space (Conflict Sensitivity Forum 2012, 42).6 Likewise, and as pointed out in the contribution to this forum by Cassy Dorff, formal early warning models and forecasts are designed with similar assumptions in mind (Dorff, this issue; O'Brien 2010, 90). But this search for law-like causal processes is undertaken at the expense of effacing “the complex nature of social mechanisms in a specific space-time context” and the highly contingent and endogenous nature of conflict escalation dynamics (Korf 2006, 459).

## Links

### Link—Arms Control—2NC

#### Arms control policy is an extension of US hegemonic desire to control security threats

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The other point that is implicit in calls for arms control, in President Obama's speeches, and in very many other places, is the crucial specification of the world as a dangerous place, and hence in need of arms control. But precisely who is threatening to whom where is frequently less clearly specified not least because it is frequently taken for granted in political rhetoric. But as the rest of this paper suggests, focussing on those taken for granted contextualizations, on the implicit, and sometimes explicit, geographical framing of the world as needing certain forms of arms control, is a useful analytical way of clarifying how the politics of arms control works. Many of the new innovations in Washington retain the geopolitical assumptions of American hegemony. In Andrew Bacevich's terms they follow the long-held foreign policy credo in which American thinking has ‘an abiding conviction that the minimum essentials of international peace and order require the United States to maintain a global military presence, to configure its forces for global power projection, and to counter existing or anticipated threats by relying on a policy of global interventionism’.Footnote3

#### The result is serial policy failure

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We have thus moved from an era where arms control was principally about ensuring societies remained at risk of extermination to one where it is principally about exterminating risk all together – at least for the major powers. In many respects then, it is now the practitioners of the contemporary WMD non-proliferation agenda who have become the new unilateral disarmers (albeit of the forcible kind) and the new idealists in search of the kind of absolute security (albeit for themselves) that Bull dismissed in 1961.Footnote20 Ironically however, this search for absolute security appears to be giving rise to ever more arms control challenges as illustrated by the way in which prophylactic interventions to prevent the next 9/11 have given rise to threats of improvised explosive devices and the copycat use of unmanned aerial vehicles.Footnote21 It is also the search for the absolute security of the boiling frog, where low risk, high impact, events such as 9/11 prompt intense efforts to escape from repetition, but the gradual ratcheting up of normalized threats such as global warming are treated within a policy paradigm characterized by exceptionally high levels of tolerance for the associated risks, mutual vulnerabilities and insecurities they produce – including, in the case of global warming, the possibility of global ecocide.

### Link—China Threat—2NC

#### Their narrative of insecurity associates Asia with disorder and the West with stability---that’s epistemic racism.

Pan 21, PhD, Associate Professor of International Relations at Deakin University (Chengxin, “Racialised politics of (in)security and the COVID-19 Westfailure,” *Critical Studies on Security*, 9:1, p. 41, DOI: 10.1080/21624887.2021.1904195)

Racialised politics of (in)security in Western IR

Mainstream Western security thinking is predicated on a self-gratifying imaginative geography: the world is divided roughly into two contrasting zones, one marked by community, order, and security and the other by disorder, insecurity, and threat. These imagined binaries are both underpinned by and emblematic of a thinly disguised Orientalist, Eurocentric, and ultimately racist idea, which equates the former zone more or less with whites and the West, and the latter with non-whites (Barkawi and Laffey 2006; Howell and Richter-Montpetit 2019). The idea, often passed off as fact (through the Western-dominated subfield of security studies), has been constitutive of the highly racialised realities in international relations (Bell 2013; Carrozza, Danewid, and Pauls 2017; Ling 2017; Howell and Richter-Montpetit 2020).

Although by no means unique to the West, racism is a key source code of mainstream Western theory and practice of security. Security presupposes a subject, namely, what or who needs security or should feel secure, which, in turn, implies what or whom is to be secured from or against. Central to security studies, therefore, is an implicit ontological bifurcation between the subject of security and its threat. And the security/threat boundaries are often drawn along a ‘colour line’ (Anievas, Manchanda, and Shilliam 2015).

The racially-mediated binaries in security thinking and practice are enabled above all by an epistemic hierarchy, which insists on ‘the inherent superiority of one’s culture over all others’ (Le Melle 2009, 77). Indeed, racism is first and foremost epistemic racism, which is ‘the foundational form …of racism’ (Grosfoguel 2010, 29). The West’s self-representation as the quintessential modern knowing subject, who has the rational capacity to know the objective world (Pan 2012), is epistemic racism par excellence. Since ‘[k]nowing is then linked to the possibility of control of the known’ (Walker 1988, 51), the knowing Western subject can enjoy certainty, dominance, and security, hence the self-image as a zone of security. The West’s epistemic certainty thus helps lay the groundwork for its sense of moral, political, economic, civilisational, and geostrategic superiority vis-à-vis other races and peoples, whose ‘epistemic inadequacy’ makes them irrational, ignorant, uncivilised, and ontologically threatening (even if occasionally blissfully innocent and/or exotically attractive).

Threats from ‘zones of insecurity’ have taken many forms: tribalism, terrorism, crime, disease, overpopulation, unregulated migration, espionage, unfair trade practice, anarchical, illiberal power politics, or some combinations of the above (Kaplan 1994; Huntington 1996). Intellectually sophisticated and racially agnostic as they are, many (Western) security concepts and approaches are in effect about methodologies of eliminating, minimising, or containing the (largely non-Western) ‘zone of insecurity’, whether through democracy promotion, norm diffusion, free trade, transnational activism, emancipatory intervention and developmental assistance, or by ways of alliance building and expansion, forward defence, military deterrence, containment, power balancing, and border control.

Of course, boundaries of zones of (in)security can change. But redrawing such boundaries is again often the prerogative of scholars who self-identify with the ‘zone of security’. They routinely play a crucial cartographer’s role in mapping and re-mapping zones of (in)security (Huntington’s civilisational map and the ‘Indo-Pacific’ come to mind).2 Their dominance in the process of knowledge production about (in)security and about IR more broadly exposes and, indeed, often solidifies a colour line in academia that mirrors the racialised realities of IR (see also Henry, and Haastrup and Hagen in this Issue). Scholars of colour and/or from the South are at best treated as area specialists, a lowly ranked niche in the scholarly epistemic hierarchy, thus perpetuating the epistemic status quo that has helped produce the racially-mediated binaries in security thinking and practice in the first place.

#### Fear of Chinese threat is a form of identity construction rooted in maintaining US control of the global economy

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The US’ Pursuit of Ontological Security and Legitimation of Transformative Change

The NSS reflects distinct ontological security concerns and anxieties about (1) the resilience of the international order and US hegemonic power within it; (2) the loss of control over the dynamics and pace of free-market capitalism; (3) the negative effects of globalisation, which feed anti-establishment sentiments and opposition to open multilateralism and the liberal order; and (4) uncertainties about the future of US exceptional power and status, particularly in relation to the ability to maintain technological and economic superiority and manage technological development.

States address ontological insecurities and anxieties in a variety of ways. These include re-establishing routines and reinforcing biographical narratives,86 deliberately avoiding or rejecting negative aspects of their past,87 seeking external recognition of their great power status and desirable self-identity preferences,88 redefining borders and designating home,89 or changing identities.90 Strategic narratives in the NSS reveal that the US aims to address ontological insecurity and reduce the uncomfortable disconnect with its self-identity mainly in two ways. First, by recalibrating or changing some of its routinized relationships—i.e., adjusting its relations with other major powers like China and Russia, adopting a more exclusionary, containment approach, reconsidering its stance on multilateralism and the openness of the international trading system, and reshaping state-market relations. Second, by reshuffling, rearranging, or shifting the emphasis of some of the biographical narratives that define its self-identity, emphasising different aspects of its nature, history, and goals to better align with current strategic imperatives. The NSS also plays upon emotions embedded in strategic narratives such as feelings of grandeur, entitlement, responsibility, and nostalgia as a way of addressing ontological insecurity.

Narratives in the NSS suggest that the US is being challenged in its ontological security first by the rapid evolution of global capitalism into an unknown entity, a stranger,91 largely as a result of the rise of and destabilising actions by non-Western actors such as China. Fears and insecurities about the unchecked rapid change in global capitalism and the current state of the international economic system moving in a direction that potentially threatens the US’ state of being are influencing national security priorities and giving way to the transformative changes proposed in the NSS. To address these overarching ontological security concerns, appease related anxieties, and maintain a sense of self rooted in distinctiveness and exceptionalism, the NSS proposes a rapid economic restructuring and substantial change in American capitalism, which also corresponds to a rethinking of the global capitalist order.

### Link—Democracy/Allied Cooperation—2NC

#### Cooperation with allies to protect the liberal international order is based on a hierarchical in-group creation that securitizes against ‘Other’ non-western threats

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Narrative Construction of the In-group and Representations of the Self

The NSS describes security as an ongoing struggle between countries that follow democratic principles and those that are governed by authoritarian regimes. It is mainly through this strategic narrative of a “heightened competition between democracies and autocracies”53 that the world is divided into several layers; friend and foe, enemy and ally, and the in-between. The in-group, which includes the self and its allies, and the out-group are delineated through this strategic narrative.

Remarkably, the self is characterised as the bearer, and in most cases the originator, of a set of liberal democratic values, i.e. democracy, respect for human rights, and the rules and norms of the existing international order. The NSS reproduces the well-researched autobiographical narrative that the US is and always has been a free trader and a liberal hegemon, a promoter and defender of an open economic order.54 The security priorities in the NSS resonate with the US’ sense of agency, particularly its self-identity, which encompasses the rules-based liberal international order and global free-market capitalism as the source of peace, freedom, and prosperity. National security, then, is not just about protecting the US as a motherland, territory, or state but the US as an embodiment of values and hegemonic power or singular (ideational and material) leadership capacity.

Almost all nations have their own narratives of exceptionalism, which are strategically reproduced and transmitted in offcial discourses, with reference to the spatial, cultural, or historical roots of their uniqueness.55 Narratives of unparalleled, exceptional stance in world politics necessarily involve some form of national self-glorifcation,. combined with a careful search for balance between myth and a rational reading of material capacity The NSS explicitly declares US exceptionalism, stating that “[t]here is no nation better positioned to lead with strength and purpose than the United States of America,”56 and further details what makes it exceptional as follows:

Our inherent national strengths—the ingenuity, creativity, resilience, and determination of the American people; our values, diversity, and democratic institutions; our technological leadership and economic dynamism; and our diplomatic corps, development professionals, intelligence community, and our military—remain unparalleled. We are experienced in using and applying our power in combination with our allies and partners who add signifcantly to our own strengths.57

While exceptionalism is a recurrent theme in all the national security strategies we have studied, the current document also acknowledges the limitations of US power. In the case of the US, as a declining hegemonic power facing a rising challenger,58 exceptionalism borders on what can be termed as “great power narcissism,” which involves acknowledging both strengths and weaknesses.59 As such, exceptionalism is intertwined not only with grandeur but also with feelings of pride, entitlement, responsibility, and inadequacy.

What makes the US unique is its commitment to upholding the open international order and the free-market, which are further narrated as the main sources of the US’ exceptional power, economic dynamism, technological edge, and competitiveness. It is through this narrative that the US constructs itself as responsible for the health and continuity of the international order and global market capitalism.60 US responsibility extends beyond its own citizens and those of its allies to include the welfare of citizens of rival outsider entities such as China.61 The US’ primary responsibility, which was explained as “ridding the world of evil” in Bush’s 2002 NSS62 or “leading from a position of strength” in Obama’s 2015 NSS, is now defned in an even broader manner (see Table 1).

The NSS also engages in the construction of an in-group through carefully chosen narratives about the self and its entourage. The in-group consists of a hard core, the self (the United States), and a layer around this core, a group of “like-minded” states, partners, and allies such as the European Union (EU) member states, Japan, India, and NATO members, with which the self is willing to act in pursuit of security and prosperity. Members of the ingroup are narratively characterised as sharing the same liberal values, interests, behaviours or essential characteristics, and ideals with the US and a commitment to act together in defence of the liberal international order. It is with the members of this in-group that the self is engaged in safeguarding the international order and its hegemonic power therein. It intends to do so not only by strengthening the existing security architecture but also by changing the global networks of production and innovation. US superiority, technological or economic, thus depends crucially on the collaborative advantage that would result from “transformative cooperation”63 with friends and allies.

However, remarkably, not all members of the in-group are inherently equal. The ingroup called for cooperation to bring transformative change is thus not monolithic and devoid of power hierarchies. While some are characterised as a “foundational partner,” a natural extension of the self, such as Europe, care must be taken to avoid alienation and dissonance for other members of the in-group, such as Türkiye.64 US security narratives are thus involved in an ongoing construction of hierarchical power relations within the in-group through careful politics of representation. At the same time, they also serve to establish the distance and proximity of the members of the in-group to the self. What is noticeable is that more than 75 years after D-Day and the Marshall Plan, Europe is still narrated in US national security discourse in terms of its physical, existential security needs. Europe appears as a somewhat weaker self on another continent, which is currently under attack and in need of US support for its integrity, freedom, and security:

Europe has been, and will continue to be, our foundational partner in addressing the full range of global challenges. […] America maintains our fundamental commitment to the pursuit of a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace. Russia’s further invasion of Ukraine poses a grave threat to this vision […].65

Remarkably, the in-group in US national security narratives includes not only states, sovereign members of the international community, but also non-state actors. These nonstate actors include security organisations such as NATO and the Indo-Pacifc Quadrilateral Security Dialogue and international fnancial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Narratives in the NSS characterise these as members of the in-group and assign specifc roles and functions to each of these non-state entities, particularly in the pursuit of technological leadership, crisis resilience, and transforming the global economy.66

### Link—Domain Awareness—2NC

#### The desire for domain awareness in the Arctic relies on a securitization of Arctic wilderness as ‘Other’

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Perhaps the clearest and most prevalent way that the Arctic wilderness is described throughout these documents is through a harsh and unwelcoming lens. The word ‘harsh’ is used 37 times across the policies: six times in 2013; four times in 2016; 11 times in 2019; two times in 2020; and 14 times in 2021. This harshness is often prefaced in opposition to the need for the United States to gain domain awareness, an approach for understanding security challenges by stressing full awareness.32 Earlier documents in 2016 and 2013 stress the harshness of the Arctic wilderness both in reference to infrastructure development and sustaining forces in the region.

With the increase in military-focused policies in 2019–2021, the Arctic is often described as (p. 39) “unpredictable and harsh as in the 2019 Coast Guard Strategic Outlook, (p. 4) ‘characterized by harsh conditions’ as in the 2019 Department of Defence Arctic Strategy, and the environment is even described as (p. 5–6) ‘ . . . the greatest adversary to Arctic Operations’ as in the 2020 Air Force Arctic Strategy. These characterisations of the region suggest that this harshness makes communication difficult, that there is not as much maritime and road infrastructure and that variations in weather makes defence capabilities difficult. This lack of predictability with (p. 5) ‘extreme temperatures, long periods of darkness and extended daylight, high-latitudes, seasonal challenging and changing terrain, and rapidly changing weather patterns’ makes gaining domain awareness difficult. All Arctic policies from 2019 to 2021 stress the importance of domain awareness and the difficulty of obtaining it in the Arctic. Not only is the Arctic harsh in its climate and difficult to gain awareness about, according to the 2019 Coast Guard Strategic Outlook, but it also poses risks to (p. 6) ‘agencies charged with providing maritime safety and security to all Americans, including the hundreds of villages and thousands of seasonal workers in the US Arctic.’ Much of this recent focus on domain awareness comes back to recent developments in power competition in the region – which has increased the United States’ focus on this element of its Arctic behaviour both in its imagination and experience. For example, in the build-up to NATO’s 2018 Exercise Trident Juncture, the American Navy faced significant difficulties – leading to changes in how the Department of Defence began to reframe Arctic policy.33 The adoption of harsh and unwelcome language has two implications. First, it falls back on the comfortable myth of pure wilderness, that the harshness is a feature, not a bug, in how the Arctic wilderness operates. Second, it reinforces hierarchical thinking in how the region is conceived. If the region is framed as harsh and unwelcoming, what then of the Indigenous People that live there and exist in that climate? By treating the wilderness here as harsh, that metaphor is extended to what exists in that wilderness – namely people in opposition to a more welcoming colonial south. Further, by consistently conceiving the wilderness as harsh and unwelcoming, it makes alternative policies that may reframe the region in a different way difficult if not impossible – limiting the universe of possible approaches to Arctic policy.

### Link—Environment/Climate—2NC

#### The 1AC’s securitization of ecological stress reflects a colonial research paradigm of determinism that authorizes land grabs and armed intervention.

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From Environmental Warfare to Environmental Security

In the 1990s, western security analysts adopted neo-Malthusian warnings that ecological stress would damage U.S. national security interests, spurred by a confluence of factors, including the end of Cold War tensions and newly felt criticism of excessive U.S. military presence and spending, as well as growing environmental consciousness and efforts to address ecological exigencies in international forums (McDonald 2021). This signaled an important shift from mid-century military interests in the weaponization of environmental and climate change to late-century interests in their securitization, a discursive process by which security actors articulate the urgency of political issues and remove them from politics to a state of exception, where security actors are the responsible party for defining and responding to threats (Waever 1995; Buzan et al. 1998). Ecological concerns spotlighted by the environmental movement became the purview of military and security planners, lifting them from the realm of civilian influence—as security studies scholar Simon Dalby argues, securitization of the environment “ultimately disenfranchises the majority, stripping environmental ‘speech’ from its more emancipatory projects” (Dalby 2002). The U.S. and its allies, seeking to manage a new unipolar world order and justify peacetime military spending, folded the environment into national security planning; the new focus on environmental security was fueled by the “global managerialist ambitions of some northern planners,” who sought to engage in neo-colonial governance of natural resources and environmental problems (Dalby 1999:26). During the postCold War moment, very legitimate public concerns about the environment, such as ozone depletion and air pollution, were transmogrified into a scarcity-conflict model that built “an image of an overpopulated, environmentally degraded and violent Third world” (Hartmann 1998:114). The void left by the Cold War was quickly filled by an environmental security 13 agenda that offered renewed purpose to the military industrial complex and “mask[ed] the tragic human consequences of US support for military regimes and Duvalier-style dictatorships” (Hartmann 1998:114).

Environmental security research, which formed the basis of emergent environment security discourse in the late 20th century, was quickly absorbed and reinforced both through abundant funding and circulation of its findings amongst the U.S. State Department and Department of Defense, private foundations, and non-governmental organizations. Researchers, though, have been writing about the relationship between environment and security since at least the 1940s, illustrated by the 1948 publication “Our Plundered Planet” by Fairfield Osborn, a book that inspired Paul Erlich’s “Population Bomb” and helped to revive Malthusian thinking in post-WWII environmental research (Rønnfeldt 1997). As early as the 1950s, military planners and scientists helped to pioneer environmental modeling with an eye towards the implications of ecological stress on conflict and geopolitical tensions. These methods of prediction were later reproduced in the influential publications of Erlich and the Club of Rome, which sat at the center of civil scientific and public narratives of imminent ecological collapse in the 1970s (Hamblin 2013). However, it was not until the 1980s and the arrival of the so-called “first generation of environment and security research” that scholars began to push for the integration of environmental factors into the study and conceptualization of national security (e.g., Ullman 1983), a call that was eventually heeded by the United States, the U.N. Security Council, and other geopolitical actors.

Seeking to substantiate the claims of early environmental security proponents, a second generation of environment-security research emerged in the 1990s, most prominently associated with “the Toronto Group,” led by political scientist Thomas Homer-Dixon (Rønnfeldt 1997). Alongside his research team at the Project on Environment, Population and Security at the University of Toronto, Homer-Dixon sought to conduct rigorous, empirically grounded research on the relationship between resource scarcity and violent conflict in developing countries. His publications (1991; 1994), built from a series of case studies of states in the Global South, posited that environmental scarcity (e.g., limited access to cropland, water, fish stocks) was a causal predictor of conflict and instability. These studies became influential among researchers, policymakers, and journalists, significantly shaping mainstream and academic security discourse. In 1994, citing Homer-Dixon’s environment-conflict thesis, Robert Kaplan published his seminal article, “The Coming Anarchy” in the Atlantic Monthly. Kaplan warned, in alarmist terms, that population growth and environmental degradation would lead to social disintegration and political chaos, significantly raising the profile of environmental security. Allegedly, his writings were popular amongst foreign policy professionals in Washington D.C. and captured the attention of then-President, Bill Clinton who was “so gripped by many things that were in that article”—Homer-Dixon was later invited to provide White House briefings on resource scarcity and acute conflict (Dalby 1996). Ultimately, the popularity of Homer-Dixon’s research and the scarcity-conflict thesis contributed to the rise and institutionalization of environmental and climate security studies within academia, policy think tanks, and governmental bodies (McDonald 2021).

Race, Colonialism, and the Scarcity-Conflict Nexus

While the work of the Toronto Group helped to solidify the place of environmental security in research and government agendas, their methods were widely accused of renewing long-discredited environmental determinist thinking and perpetuating racialized stereotypes of “uncivilized” developing countries (Smil 1997). Climatic and environmental determinism were central to European imperial intellectual traditions and the spread of colonialism in the 15th century; colonizers attributed racial and cultural differences to climatic and environmental conditions, advancing a pseudo-scientific theory of the Western European superiority that was used to justify colonization and slavery (Livingstone 1991). In the 18th and 19th centuries, climatic determinism shaped ideas about labor, health, and medicine, and were used to advance, for example, the idea that the climate of the Tropics naturally gave rise to laziness and disease (Livingstone 1999; Harrison 1996). Though environmental determinism waned in popularity, eventually becoming marginalized in the early 20th century, its influence continues to shape ideas about the relationship between society and the environment today. Notably, it has been potently revived in the environment-security literature with its naturalization of scarcity and conflict in the “darker nations” of the world (Lipschutz 1997).

Opponents of the environment-conflict thesis accuse the literature of being ahistorical and decontextualizing its case studies, leading to the invisibilization of historical factors and economic inequalities that structure scarcity and environmental degradation. As Barnett argues, not only does the environment-conflict literature reproduce colonial logics of climatic determinism, it fails to consider the “broader social and ecological degradation wrought by modernity which is the overriding context for any discussion of security” (2000:284). As others point out, conspicuously absent in Homer-Dixon’s analyses are the roles of multinational corporations, international financial institutions, and colonial legacies in shaping renewable resource availability; for example, stress on crop production is not analytically linked to the role of agribusiness and land enclosure, or the influence of uneven trade relationships that displace subsistence farming in favor of export-oriented crop cultivation, thereby erasing external pressures that are at the root cause of food shortages (Barnett 2000; Dalby 1996; Hartmann 2014). In addition to historical erasures of colonialism and imperialism, scholarly circulation of the scarcity-conflict thesis and its uptake in policy and public discourse reinforces neocolonial power relations by legitimizing the security agendas and military spending of Global North countries (Barnett 2000; Selby 2014).

In Homer-Dixon’s writings and the grey literature of environmental security it informs, “developing countries'' are “vulnerable” to environmental conflict for a variety of reasons, including resource mismanagement and political instability, framings that both naturalize colonial and imperial legacies and justify neo colonial governance. State fragility, natural scarcity, and population growth, which are considered primary contributors to conflict in Western environmental security risk assessments, are rooted in imperial discursive traditions that authorize neocolonial management, bearing close resemblance to the notion of the white man’s burden and its civilizing mission. Colonial claims that non-white populations were incapable of self-governance and inherently susceptible to violence and disorder motivated both martial and humanitarian interventions and were central to U.S. empire-building and wars of territorial expansion, both domestically—against Native nations—and abroad, as was the case in the Philippine-American War (Immerwahr 2019). These racialized, colonial claims are now manifest in the discourse of state fragility, which originated in the field of international relations and is treated as an independent variable in many empirical studies of environmental security. As international relations scholar Gruffydd Jones argues, the conceptual language of state fragility and failure must be understood as a successor of imperial discourses and a commonsense form of “modern racialized international thought” that reinforces hierarchy between European and non-European states (Gruffydd Jones 2013:53). Assessments of state fragility also conceal many postcolonial nations’ inheritance of anemic systems of colonial governance, as well as attempts to thwart the development of sovereign governments by external actors through a variety of coercive means—ranging from economic to military interventions (Táíwò 2021). In addition to naturalizing imperial legacies, Gruffydd Jones argues invocations of fragility and instability help to “legitimize the spectrum of Western intervention in Africa and other non-western societies, from governance reform to military intervention,” reinforcing colonial power in the present (Gruffydd Jones 2013:62).

Natural scarcity, at the heart of the neo-Malthusian thinking that provoked the environmental fears of activists, researchers, and military planners in the mid-20th century, is reproduced in Homer’s environmental-conflict thesis. Amidst oil shocks and the publication of the Club of Rome’s The Limits to Growth, resource scarcity enjoyed heightened political attention in the 1970s, leading to critical debates about scarcity and abundance in the global economy (Mehta et al. 2019). Critics argue that scarcity, conceptually derived from modern economics, is socially and politically constructed, often utilized by state and other powerful actors to obscure deeply unequal distribution of resources and sustain capitalist power (Luks 2010; Mehta 2010). Scarcity, rather than being a product of uncontrollable ecosystem pressures, such as drought or disease, is more often the result of uneven power relations that selectively limit access to resources and create artificial supply shortages (Mehta et al. 2019). Historically, this phenomenon is potently demonstrated by the Bengal famine of 1943, as Amartya Sen argues in his seminal essay, Poverty and Famines—food shortages were not caused by drought, but by British colonial policies that authorized resource hoarding and the continued export of rice that made purchasing food impossible for many Bengalis living in poverty (Mukherjee 2015).

As alarm over environmental change took center stage in the late twentieth century, the discourse of natural scarcity was powerfully renewed. However, scholars maintain that resource distribution, rather than availability, largely determines scarcity in a globalized economy—and that scarcity is mobilized to legitimize land and water grabs and authorize external management of ostensibly vulnerable resources (Gilbert 2016; Borras et al. 2012). Further, invocations of natural scarcity often reproduce colonial imaginaries of racialized, primitive others, incapable of responsibly managing land and sustainably using resources (Sasser 2014; Hartmann 1998). Narratives of environmental decline and resource mismanagement, much like earlier degradation narratives of the colonial era (Davis 2007), position Indigenous, nomadic, and non-western populations as responsible for unsustainable extraction and desertification, masking the role of (neo)colonial extractivism and uneven development in producing environmental crises.

#### Apocalyptic imagery backfires---it encourages knee-jerk militarism and primes the audience for extreme quick fixes

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We argue that scientific debates and cultural representations offer parallel imaginings of apocalypse that escape specific culpability (for instance, in processes of settler colonialism, capitalism, or imperialism) and instead center a universal human frailty that ends with triumph, a clear moral, and a clean slate. Not all imaginaries reiterate this narrative; in closing we turn to fantastical artwork that holds the violences of colonialism, racism, and environmental destruction in tandem with creative and abundant futures. Our aim, as three scholars working at the intersection of climate justice, geopolitics, and futurity, is to bring race more firmly into conversations of the Anthropocene. We suggest that apocalyptic imaginings have often been framed through an exclusionary hierarchy of humanity, necessitating closer examination of how clichéd genre conventions that saturate our media environment rely on anti-Black racism and indigenous erasure. Without such attention, we risk reiterating these clichés in narrating environmental crisis. We focus on renderings of the apocalypse in American popular culture as a window into cultural anxieties, following scholars in media studies and ecocriticism (Murray and Heumann, 2014; O’Brien, 2016; Willoquet-Maricondi, 2010) and geography (Dittmer and Gray, 2010; Dodds, 2008; Kennedy and Lukinbeal, 1997; Lukinbeal and Zimmermann, 2006; Sharp, 1998).

Bettini (2013) and Hartmann (2010) caution that unexamined apocalyptic imagery in policy documents will shift governance in response to climate change from politics to security. The spillage of sci-fi into science and security is not hypothetical; consider the U.S. Army’s recent “Mad Scientist Science Fiction Writing Contest,” encouraging contestants “to explore fresh ideas about the future of warfare and technology … with implications for how the Army operates in future conflicts” (US Army Training and Doctrine Command, 2016). We write here for political geographers, political ecologists, and scientists engaging with the politics of the environmental future. It is beyond our expertise to comprehensively detail genres of apocalypse, but rather we outline three among many possible geo-historical junctures that can clarify the political stakes of the Anthropocene. This does mean, as we explain later, that our readings of the films lean into the clichés of these genres, rather than untangle their simultaneous complexity. We understand these geo-historical junctures as flashpoints of a “master-narrative of the political unconscious” (Jameson, 1982), a turbulent reckoning with what it means to be human that is fraught with the racialized hauntings of genocide, slavery, and ongoing imperialism.

What kind of urgency does the Anthropocene produce? For whom? Baldwin (2012: 172) argues whiteness is figured through “tropes of uncertainty, Utopia, apocalypse, prophesy, hope, fear, possibility and potentiality.” Here, we disaggregate futurity’s tropes in conversation with a parallel undoing of the fundamentally racialized definitions of humanness (da Silva, 2011; Gilroy, 2018; Weheliye, 2014; Wynter, 2003). At the core of processes that accelerated environmental devastation, now represented as global, has been the consistent sacrifice of some lives for the betterment of others. The Anthropocene uncomfortably reiterates a nature/human binary figured in racialized terms, at times serving as a proxy for deep-seated anxieties of racialized Others “taking over” the planet. We construct three geo-historical junctures: a staged encounter between geological proposals under review by the Anthropocene Working Group and corresponding cinematic apocalyptic genres. Building on Jameson’s (1982: 153) articulation of sci-fi as dramatization of “our incapacity to imagine the future … the atrophy of the utopian imagination,” we analyze how these apocalyptic imaginaries break down or intensify human/nature divisions in ways that sometimes disrupt but more often reinvigorate a racial classification of humanity. We begin by reviewing the Anthropocene as a collective contestation over what it means to be human, elaborate our rationale for examining popular culture, and then analyze the underlying racial premises of common Hollywood tropes. We close the article with warning signs and alternate imaginaries that disrupt this troubled legacy.

Anthropocene as apocalyptic futurity

We build on a rich tradition of “storytelling” in environmental justice activism and research (Houston and Vasudevan, 2017) that examines the Anthropocene as a narrative (Buell, 2014) whose meaning is being contested among scientists, social movement actors, critical theorists and cultural producers. What then do we learn from the storytelling that takes place in debates over when the Anthropocene began? Lewis and Maslin (2015, see also Davis and Todd, 2017) propose, 1610 as start date: the conquest of the Americas. This territorial accumulation highlights, “a long-term and large-scale example of human actions unleashing processes that are difficult to predict or manage” (Lewis and Maslin, 2015: 177). While the, 1610 proposal has not gained traction in the scientific community (Hamilton, 2015), its acknowledgment of colonization’s genocidal violence makes possible a more incisive understanding of what is meant by the designation of the epoch (Davis and Todd, 2017). Other proposals also highlight politically charged moments in history, and are read as Gergan et al. 3 a corrective to Enlightenment hubris (Lovbrand et al., 2009). As noted by Robbins and € Moore (2013: 9), “Anthropocene scientific culture thus simultaneously displays a panicked political imperative to intervene more vocally and aggressively in an earth transformation run amok and an increasing fear that past scientific claims about the character of ecosystems and their transformation were overly normative, prescriptive, or political in nature.”

Analyzing climate change as a literary narrative explores how scientific knowledge gains traction, “[crystallizing] the anxieties of a wider public” (Buell, 2014: 272). For Yusoff (2013), this “geological turn” pushes our focus beyond social relations with fossil fuels and human impacts on Earth, to think of human being as itself geologically composed; the social then emerges as an expression of geology and geochemistry. The Anthropocene debate offers critical scholars a rare opportunity to engage with the scientific community, making possible a more political geoscience (Castree, 2015: 15). However, these proposals may elide who is contained within the “human,” while potentially legitimating “non-democratic and technophilic approaches, such as geoengineering” (Baskin, 2015: 11). Ahuja (2016) argues, “Geology is a spawn of the colonial capitalist assemblage that is rapidly transforming the planet … the discipline cannot stand objectively outside the relations that term clumsily attempts to name.” We find ourselves in agreement with theorization of the Capitalocene that challenges the narrative of a “fictitious human unity” erasing the unevenness of ecological violence (Haraway, 2016; Moore, 2017), and in agreement with critiques centering the persistent role of colonial processes and settler colonialism as inseparable from climate-driven conditions of violence (Davis and Todd, 2017; Whyte, 2016, 2013). For Baldwin (2014: 525), climate change anxieties reiterate the human as a racial category “at a moment often characterized as simultaneously post-racial and post-human.” While post-humanist scholarship has presented an important critique of the anthros, postcolonial, decolonial and critical race studies suggest that analysis of the Anthropocene must consider how colonial demarcations of the human–nonhuman boundaries were premised upon and developed alongside racial hierarchies of human difference (Gilroy, 2018; Jackson, 2013; Livingstone et al., 2011).

Ecological anxieties abound (Robbins and Moore, 2013), and “fantasies of apocalypse are both a product and a producer of the Anthropocene” (Ginn, 2015: 352). But what politics do visions of future catastrophe engender (e.g. Baldwin, 2012; Ginn, 2015; Katz, 1995; Schlosser, 2015; Skrimshire, 2010; Swyngedouw, 2013)? Following the premise of popular geopolitics, we understand that popular culture narratives enable particular forms of truth making, inciting affective predispositions that generate political action (or inaction) (Dittmer and Gray, 2010; Dodds, 2008; Sharp, 1998). Apocalyptic film can be consumed as a spectacle of future ruin that closes space for political action by fetishizing causes (such as carbon), proposing technological fixes, and downplaying unevenly violent results of ecological change. But it can also be a form of social dreaming that makes different futures possible (Ginn, 2015; Schlosser, 2015).

### Link—Russia/China Threat—2NC

#### Russian and Chinese threats are constructed using strategic narratives to preserve US influence over the global economy

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Narrative Construction of the Out-group and Representations of the Others

Identity often emerges from the binary opposition between the self and the other. Building on seminal contributions by Campbell (1992), Connolly (1991), Hansen (2013), and Neumann (1996), among others,67 we recognise that the politics of representation plays a crucial role in identity construction. We also acknowledge the existence of multiple constitutive others with varying degrees of proximity and difference to the self68 and argue that the portrayal of characters and events in narratives influences how states seek to maintain their stable sense of identity and ontological security.

The NSS identifies China as the main threat to the liberal international order and to US hegemonic power. It declares China to be “America’s most consequential geopolitical challenge”69 and “the only competitor with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to do it.”70 Russia is then identified as “an immediate and persistent threat to international peace and stability,”71 while the list of authoritarian challengers, the ultimate others to the US self, also includes Iran.

While it is noteworthy that China represents the antithesis of liberal democracy, both politically and passively, given its authoritarian single-party regime, what makes it the most consequential challenge to the liberal international order, and a threat to US values and interests, is its actions directed at free-market capitalism and the open multilateral trading system. Here, we see another recurrent narrative that frames the market as vulnerable and currently under coordinated attack by China and other authoritarian members of the out-group. This narrative is strategically deployed to perform various discursive functions, including, most importantly, the legitimation of the proposed transformative change. The climate crisis and the supply chain crises experienced by developed countries including the US during the coronavirus pandemic and its aftermath both provide rich “narrative contexts” here (see Table 1). The narrative of the free-market as vulnerable and incapable of responding to growing challenges on its own is embedded throughout the text and can be summed up in the following quote:

The private sector and open markets have been, and continue to be, a vital source of our national strength and a key driver of innovation. However, markets alone cannot respond to the rapid pace of technological change, global supply disruptions, nonmarket abuses by the PRC and other actors, or the deepening climate crisis. Strategic public investment is the backbone of a strong industrial and innovation base in the 21st century global economy. That is why the United States is pursuing a modern industrial and innovation strategy. 72

Through the use of this recurrent narrative, China and Russia are strategically constructed not only as inherently different, non-democratic entities but also as “defectors” and willful abusers of the liberal international order. This is mainly because they exploit it, circumventing the rules and established global norms to advance their own agenda and interests, despite having “benefted greatly” from the system. Unlike the Soviet Union, which represented an Other par excellence—an ideological rival totally incompatible with the American-led international order and free-market capitalism during the Cold War73—China and Russia represent cases of defection:

Just as the United States and countries around the world benefted greatly from the postCold War international order, so too did the PRC and Russia. The PRC’s economy and geopolitical infuence grew rapidly. Russia joined the G8 and G20 and recovered economically in the 2000s. And yet, they concluded that the success of a free and open rules-based international order posed a threat to their regimes and stifed their ambitions.74

Just as the politics of representation in narrative characterisations serve to promote feelings of sameness or togetherness in the construction of an in-group, they also evoke feelings of difference, antagonism, and inherent incompatibility while constructing an out-group. The self-other dichotomy is thus inscribed in nuanced characterisations in narratives that portray Russia and China as threatening, deceitful, manipulative, and abusive actors in an open international order populated by rule- and norm-abiding, peaceful actors. Temporal emplotment is notable in such narrative constructions, with the NSS often portraying them as states that were once welcomed into the international community but have gone rogue to advance their own interests and political agendas that are incompatible with the liberal order. Spatial elements are also crucial in these narratives, often depicting China as threatening stability and peace in the Indo-Pacifc and Russia as threatening regional security in Europe.

The NSS describes non-market abuses of autocratic governments as consisting of a wide range of malign policies. It accuses autocratic governments of limiting access to their domestic market, moulding global technology and digital infrastructure, arbitrarily raising costs by withholding the movement of key goods, and using economic power to coerce countries, in short, “weaponising” the global economy’s interconnectivity and strengths.75 The document further details these abuses, which are most of the time implicitly assigned to China, as “currency manipulation,” “illicit fnancing,” “forced labour,” “supply chain manipulation,” “technology theft,” and “discriminatory regulation,” among others (see Table 2). These allegations and negative representations of China are, to a certain extent, reminiscent of the “Japan-bashing” of the 1970s and 1980s.76 But China’s case is different from Japan’s, mainly because the challenge now comes from a member of the out-group.77

The strategic narrative portraying the market as a vulnerable entity under attack and in need of protection, both domestically and globally, is significantly more pronounced than in the previous national security strategies we have studied. While President Bush and Obama’s strategies also emphasise economic liberalism and depict the open, free-market as the catalyst for universal prosperity that should be promoted globally, they do not advocate for the use of state power to actively safeguard the market against emerging threats. Although Trump’s 2017 NSS contains a similar theme, it identifes China’s threat primarily to the American economy, rather than to the open trading system and global market capitalism. Moreover, the 2017 NSS focuses mainly on the US bilateral trade defcit, not only with China but also with allied countries, attributing the problem to “bad trade deals” such as NAFTA.78 The main concern in relation to the economy in the 2017 NSS is explained as the inability to maintain “reciprocal international economic relations.” Accordingly, protectionist measures and government intervention are justifed with “beggar-thy-neighbour” and “zero-sum trade” neomercantilist arguments.

What is equally remarkable about the NSS is the abstinence from explicit, unmitigated cultural essentialism. Just as selectively told stories, untold stories and strategic omissions also play a role in shaping security perceptions. In contrast to President Trump’s national security discourse, the current strategy refrains from overtly prioritising culture and civilisation as the primary focal points of analysis. In fact, the NSS makes no explicit reference to insurmountable essential, cultural, or civilisational differences and incompatibilities between the West and the East, Islam and other religions, or China, Russia, and the US. Unlike the 2017 NSS, the world is no longer defined by the dichotomy of “free and civilised states” versus the violent and uncivilised.79 Allegations of “ideological threats that emanate from radical Islamist groups and competitor nations”80 or threats to the “American way of life” from “porous borders and unenforced immigration laws”81 no longer dominate US national security narratives.82 Just like Obama strategically removed expressions such as Islamic extremism, terrorism, or fundamentalism from the US national security strategy after replacing Bush, the Biden administration does the same and does not employ such unmitigated expressions of cultural essentialism.

“China and Russia want to shape a world antithetical to U.S. values and interests,”83 and China is the main “strategic competitor” narrative themes, and characterisations, however, still prevail as a form of latent cultural essentialism, providing a certain case of narrative continuity between the two most recent national security strategy documents. In other words, civilisational differences remain at the core of the NSS but are kept at a more latent level, rooted in the politics of representation that characterises China’s investment controls, state interventions, and activism in the economy as threats to the values of the self. Strategic narratives accordingly define the US’ main security concern in terms of a binary opposition between two “varieties of capitalism”84 or “types of capitalist governance.”85 In this dichotomic view of the world, the antagonism is not between two incompatible civilisations or two competing alternative ideologies but between different ways of understanding and practising capitalism. These are open, rules-based free-market capitalism and authoritarian (competitive or state bureaucratic) capitalism, which are portrayed as in confict with each other and associated with the self and the others, respectively.

#### Fears of Russia and China are reflective of US status anxiety

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Traditionally, the United States is not considered a status-anxious state, since it possesses primacy over most hierarchies in the international system. Diverse composite indicators8 rank the U.S. as number 1 in regard to its military and capabilities, far from runner-ups, and its prestige - although an abstract concept - helped build and maintain the world order for the last century. American positioning in the Arctic, however, is more complex than that. The strategic significance of the Arctic as a frontier has increased due to the region’s receding ice, opening up new sea routes and potential for resource extraction. This shift has made the Arctic a focal point for geopolitical competition. The U.S. has been slow to respond, especially compared to Russia, which has significantly advanced its capabilities in the region. Russia’s extensive icebreaker fleet, robust military presence, and infrastructural developments have positioned it as the leading power in the Arctic. China, too, has made substantial investments, viewing the Arctic as a critical area for expanding its influence. Status anxiety, in this context, refers to the fear of further losing global dominance and influence. For decades, the United States has been accustomed to a position of unparalleled geopolitical power, but the Arctic presents new challenges that threaten this status.

Congressional hearings on Arctic security repeatedly highlight the anxiety underlying U.S. Arctic policy, particularly the fear of falling behind key competitors. This sense of urgency, largely absent before the 2010s, has become increasingly pronounced as lawmakers call for a more robust U.S. presence to counteract the strategic advances of Russia and China. Records consistently emphasize the stark disparity in capabilities, such as Russia’s fleet of over 30 icebreakers compared to the United States’ significantly smaller and less capable fleet, exemplifying a critical gap in Arctic readiness.

This anxiety is further reflected in U.S. Arctic Strategy documents from 1994 to 2024, which reveal a dramatic increase in references to Russia, China, security, and threats. Recent strategies underscore the Arctic’s transformation into a contested geopolitical arena, calling for enhanced U.S. capabilities and a heightened presence in response to intensifying competition. The shift from viewing the Arctic as a low-priority region to acknowledging its critical importance illustrates how anxiety about losing status and influence has driven a recalibration of U.S. policy. These documents signal a recognition that the Arctic is no longer a peripheral concern but a key battleground for great power rivalry, necessitating a more militarized and proactive approach to protect American interests and sustain geopolitical standing.

Conclusion

In this paper, I analyze how the evolution of U.S. Arctic policy reflects a broader narrative of status anxiety, which has served not as a paralyzing force but as a catalyst for strategic recalibration. Historically, the Arctic was peripheral to U.S. foreign policy, viewed primarily through the domestic lens of Alaska and rarely integrated into the country’s global strategy. However, the changing geopolitical landscape—marked by the rise of Russia and China as key players in the region—has redefined the Arctic as a critical frontier for great power competition. The analysis of U.S. Arctic policy documents and Congressional hearings reveals a pattern: the increasing securitization of Arctic discourse aligns with a growing recognition of the region’s strategic importance. Anxiety about losing influence in the Arctic has propelled the United States toward more proactive measures, including alliance-building, infrastructure investments, and heightened military engagement. This shift underscores the dual nature of anxiety: while it signals vulnerability, it also motivates states to adapt and innovate in the face of perceived challenges.

By reframing anxiety as a constructive force, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the emotional drivers behind state behavior. Status anxiety, in particular, offers a compelling lens for interpreting how hegemonic powers like the United States respond to emerging threats in contested regions. The Arctic’s transformation from a zone of cooperation and idealism to a theater of competition illustrates how anxiety can reshape priorities, galvanize action, and redefine geopolitical landscapes.

### Link—Science Diplomacy—2NC

#### Science diplomacy isn’t neutral—it’s a tool of states to shape international power and contain constructed threats

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From one taxonomy to another: national interests openly enter the discourse

In the brief history of the concept of SD, there has been an “increasing recognition of national interests guiding the foreign policy of science diplomacy…” (Kaltofen and Acuto, 2018b, p. 10). Although present in the intentions, national interests remained unspoken in the first writings. Subsequent developments would make them explicit. This refocusing is visible in the choice of the words that weave more recent writings. Prominent contributors to the practitioner-driven literature could state in 2015 that SD “is the process by which states represent themselves and their interests in the international arena when it comes to areas of knowledge (…) acquired by the scientific method”, which can be used to “leverage one country’s influence over another”, adding that “the central purpose of science diplomacy is often to use science to promote a state’s foreign policy goals or inter-state interests” (Turekian et al., 2015, p. 4, 6). When comparing the two main practitioners’ taxonomies that have been produced to date, this change of emphasis is noteworthy.

The first taxonomy describing SD came from the Royal Society-AAAS seminal report of 2010. The second one was brought forward in an article published in 2017 (Gluckman et al., 2017), in which some notable practitioners proposed a new frame intended to be pragmatic and operative for foreign ministries and other agencies with international responsibilities. As an “alternative” to the “traditional taxonomy”, they introduced a new pattern of actions to be labeled as SD:

“Actions designed to directly advance a country’s national needs” (… “from exercising soft power to serving economic interests to promoting innovation”),

“Actions designed to address cross-border interests” (regarding for instance “matters relating to transborder shared resources”),

“Actions primarily designed to meet global needs and challenges” (addressing the “global interest” regarding shared challenges across borders and spaces beyond national jurisdictions).

Unlike the traditional taxonomy, the alternative taxonomy explicitly highlighted the needs and interests of countries, which the authors emphasized by asserting that “for a country to make any investment that supports science diplomacy, the actions must be seen to either directly or indirectly advance its national interest” (Gluckman et al., 2017, p. 3). It is to the credit of this alternative grid to have recognized the essential driving role of national interests in science diplomacy.

The assertion of states’ foreign policy interests allows a clear reformulation of what SD is about. SD seeks to marry and balance two imperatives: advancing a country’s national interests, and addressing common challenges. It follows that issues of SD can be addressed from two distinct and complementary entry points, national and global:

In the national approach, SD refers to practices which directly or indirectly advance a country’s national interest. This is in accordance with the traditional state-centered approach to diplomacy. In such a perspective, SD is understood as a subset of the country’s foreign policy and the related actions must be consistent with the general orientation of its overall diplomacy. The national approach is favored by agents and institutions invested with a public mission under the state’s external action, and primarily by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which plays in it a leading role. Most actions are essentially of a top-down nature.

In the global approach, SD is seen first and foremost from the angle of common problems that need to be resolved. In this common issues’perspective, most of the inspiration and impulses come from the scientific community, who very often raised awareness on threats over global public goods and pushed for their entry into diplomatic arenas. This global approach is preferred by scientific actors, individuals and non-state institutions, which advocate for using science to engage in problem solving. Their actions have essentially a bottom up nature.

These are basically the two ways of getting into the questions of SD. Individual actors who, in one way or another, lead actions labeled as SD are more marked by one or the other of these visions, which depends on their intellectual training, their professional position or the interests they represent. This will be developed below in section “Hypotheses about the discrepancy between the discourse and the reality of SD”. But we must beware of a too clear-cut and schematic vision: the two approaches meet and complement each other where issues of science and shared interests of countries intermingle, which allows to account for important developments of multilateral SD.

A discourse more marked by realism?

Between the two taxonomies of 2010 and 2017 there was a shift in the description of SD. The recent discourse is more marked by realism, and its flagship expression—Gluckman et al.’s, 2017 article—brings out the driving role of national interests and needs. The realism of diplomacy has gradually penetrated the practitioner’s discourse. One may assume that it has incorporated the criticisms that have been made to the overly irenic vision of the first advocates of SD. Another hypothesis is that a learning process may have played its role: there has been over the years a growing understanding of what SD is, and scientists engaged in it could have gradually changed their perception through their interaction with diplomats, who are realist figures par excellence. But in a more diffuse way, the evolution of the global environment could also explain why narratives on SD are today more permeable to realism. Multi-polarization of SD is at work. More and more countries claim their commitment to it and recognize it as an important dimension of their foreign policy. When countries like China, Brazil, Turkey, or India engage in SD, they certainly believe in the virtues of international scientific cooperation and they agree to follow the overall movement towards building an improved governance of global public goods (the “addressing global challenges” approach to SD). But what they are looking for most is to attract scientific resources and talents and access international networks, and to build capacity for sustaining the national scientific development (the “advancing national interests” approach). The updated and more realist characterization of SD is more suited to them. Political change may also have played some role. Analyzing the recent evolution of USA’s SD since 2017, a prominent author could write that “science diplomats are realists and recognize that politics is a more powerful force than science, at least in the short run” and that “the proponents of science diplomacy recognize that national interests do indeed trump idealistic visions” (Colglazier, 2017, p. 1,2). Finally, having in mind the questioning of multilateralism and the surges of nationalism that are manifesting here and there in the world, it appears that the integration of more realism in the discourse on SD is in line with these changes of the contemporary world.

#### That turns case—it turns science from a tool of diplomacy to coercion

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A contrasting judgment emerges when turning the pages of the mainstream literature. The reference to national interests has openly surfaced, and this reflects a better consideration of the practices of SD. However, not all of the consequences of this more realistic conceptualization have been drawn. At the interface of science and diplomacy, there exist situations where the interests of some countries do not correspond to that of others, there are cases where the spirit of competition prevails over that of cooperation and where unilateral national strategies lead to asymmetries of power and tensions between countries. States may conduct strategies of SD that are strictly rooted to their national interest and aiming only at taking advantage over others, thus not contributing to the quest for a better world order, which is at odds with the prevailing vision of SD. In this section, we focus on what this vision leaves in the shade. We identify three gray areas.

Power relations between countries are overshadowed

Power relations are mentioned in some of the first writings, pointing for instance at science as “providing a way for countries to exercise their own soft power” or at SD as a tool for “expressing national power or influence” (Turekian and Neureiter, 2012). By introducing the “science for diplomacy” dimension, the Royal Society-AAAS 2010 report illustrated that science can contribute to the achievement of foreign policy objectives. However, the impression conveyed from these first writings was that, although mentioned, questions of national interests and power receded to the periphery. The 2010 report New Frontiers in Science Diplomacy has a subtitle, “Navigating the changing balance of power”, which has generally remained unnoticed. From this subtitle, one could expect the report to examine the place taken by science in power relations between countries, and the ways in which some countries could use SD for creating situations of hegemony and domination, thus opening the path to a more realist approach. The report used the word “power” when mentioning “soft” and “hard power”, but did not deliver any analysis of the balance of power and of its changing nature, an ambiguity that has already been noted in the scholarly literature (Kaltofen and Acuto, 2018a; Rungius et al., 2018).

SD is not always as a tool for progress and peace

Central in the discourse is the capacity of international scientific cooperation to build bridges and to maintain dialog between countries experiencing difficult political relations. Without a doubt, SD can improve international relations, of which examples and case studies provided by the literature give evidence. But in some cases, certainly much less numerous, SD can create conflict rather than appeasement. Early in the discourse it was asserted that “not all science diplomacy is devoted to the achievement of pacific ends” (Copeland, 2011, p. 2) and that SD could be viewed as a “double-edged sword” (Copeland, 2015, p. 9). The use of contemporary technologies for monitoring communications in the context of covert operations and spying show that “there are often situations that fall under the banner of Science for Diplomacy in which the notion of science diplomacy has not produced the desired outcomes” (Davis and Patman, 2015, p. 266). Accusations of espionage surrounding the US Naval Medical Research Unit 2 (NAMRU-2), which operated in Indonesia for more than 40 years, give evidence that “science diplomacy itself may heighten conflict or reduce trust and transparency” (Smith, 2014, p. 828). Another illustration is given by the anchoring by Russian scientists of their national flag on the seabed of the North Pole, in August 2007, which could be seen by other bordering states as the expression of a territorial claim; it that case, science and scientists were indeed used for advancing national interests, but not a as facilitator of diplomacy and rather at the source of a diplomatic tension (Ruffini, 2017, pp. 102–103). These examples would logically open to the question of the politicization of science through SD. However, the dominant discourse has avoided going deeper into this troublesome question with sweeping statements such as “science is neither inherently political nor ideological” (Turekian et al., 2015, p. 4) and more generally, by waving the very convenient reference to the universal values of science.

### They Say: “Permutation Do Both”

#### The permutation and the alternative are mutually exclusive—the aff increases securitization, the alternative rejects it.

#### Every link we win is a reason not to do the permutation because it proves that the affirmative is entrenched in securitizing scholarship

\*\*Explain the link/read link evidence here\*\*

#### Reject every instance of securitization

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The only way out of such a dilemma, to escape the fetish, is perhaps to eschew the logic of security altogether - to reject it as so ideologically loaded in favour of the state that any real political thought other than the authoritarian and reactionary should be pressed to give it up. That is clearly something that can not be achieved within the limits of bourgeois thought and thus could never even begin to be imagined by the security intellectual. It is also something that the constant iteration of the refrain 'this is an insecure world' and reiteration of one fear, anxiety and insecurity after another will also make it hard to do. But it is something that the critique of security suggests we may have to consider if we want a political way out of the impasse of security.

This impasse exists because security has now become so all-encompassing that it marginalises all else, most notably the constructive conflicts, debates and discussions that animate political life. The constant prioritising of a mythical security as a political end - as the political end constitutes a rejection of politics in any meaningful sense of the term. That is, as a mode of action in which differences can be articulated, in which the conflicts and struggles that arise from such differences can be fought for and negotiated, in which people might come to believe that another world is possible - that they might transform the world and in turn be transformed. Security politics simply removes this; worse, it removes it while purportedly addressing it. In so doing it suppresses all issues of power and turns political questions into debates about the most efficient way to achieve 'security', despite the fact that we are never quite told - never could be told - what might count as having achieved it. Security politics is, in this sense, an anti-politics,141 dominating political discourse in much the same manner as the security state tries to dominate human beings, reinforcing security fetishism and the monopolistic character of security on the political imagination. We therefore need to get beyond security politics, not add yet more 'sectors' to it in a way that simply expands the scope of the state and legitimises state intervention in yet more and more areas of our lives.

Simon Dalby reports a personal communication with Michael Williams, co-editor of the important text Critical Security Studies, in which the latter asks: if you take away security, what do you put in the hole that's left behind? But I'm inclined to agree with Dalby: maybe there is no hole.142 The mistake has been to think that there is a hole and that this hole needs to be filled with a new vision or revision of security in which it is re-mapped or civilised or gendered or humanised or expanded or whatever. All of these ultimately remain within the statist political imaginary, and consequently end up reaffirming the state as the terrain of modern politics, the grounds of security. The real task is not to fill the supposed hole with yet another vision of security, but to fight for an alternative political language which takes us beyond the narrow horizon of bourgeois security and which therefore does not constantly throw us into the arms of the state. That's the point of critical politics: to develop a new political language more adequate to the kind of society we want. Thus while much of what I have said here has been of a negative order, part of the tradition of critical theory is that the negative may be as significant as the positive in setting thought on new paths.

For if security really is the supreme concept of bourgeois society and the fundamental thematic of liberalism, then to keep harping on about insecurity and to keep demanding 'more security' (while meekly hoping that this increased security doesn't damage our liberty) is to blind ourselves to [remain ignorant of] the possibility of building real alternatives to the authoritarian tendencies in contemporary politics. To situate ourselves against security politics would allow us to circumvent the debilitating effect achieved through the constant securitising of social and political issues, debilitating in the sense that 'security' helps consolidate the power of the existing forms of social domination and justifies the short-circuiting of even the most democratic forms. It would also allow us to forge another kind of politics centred on a different conception of the good. We need a new way of thinking and talking about social being and politics that moves us beyond security. This would perhaps be emancipatory in the true sense of the word. What this might mean, precisely, must be open to debate. But it certainly requires recognising that security is an illusion that has forgotten it is an illusion; it requires recognising that security is not the same as solidarity; it requires accepting that insecurity is part of the human condition, and thus giving up the search for the certainty of security and instead learning to tolerate the uncertainties, ambiguities and 'insecurities' that come with being human; it requires accepting that 'securitizing' an issue does not mean dealing with it politically, but bracketing it out and handing it to the state; it requires us to be brave enough to return the gift.143

### They Say: “Threats Real”

#### If we win our link argument or case defense, it proves that their threat is constructed and not real

#### However, even if they win threats are real, they still have to win that talking about them in a securitizing way is good

Greaves 16, Ph.D. candidate, Department of Political Science, University of Toronto (Wilfrid Greaves, “Constructing In/Security in the Arctic: Polar Politics, Indigenous Peoples, and Environmental Change in Canada and Norway” <https://utoronto.scholaris.ca/items/e0790f25-319a-401b-a8c2-3149989fbc22/full>) **\*CS = Copenhagen School**

In its aims, CS securitization theory is explicitly not concerned with identifying real or objective security threats, but rather the discursive process through which security threats are established.188 Even conceding the role of facilitating conditions, the CS remains “radically constructivist”189 in that in/security is determined by the success of particular securitizing moves in elevating an issue to the fore of the audience’s consciousness and the apex of political priority. Whether or not a material danger corresponding to a securitizing move exists is irrelevant to the construction of security threats, just as the normative or practical implications of responding to a particular threat are inconsequential to its validity as a successful securitization. To the CS, “‘security’ is thus a self-referential practice, because it is in this practice that the issue becomes a security issue – not necessarily because a real existential threat exists but because the issue is presented as such a threat.”190 Successful securitizations may represent objectively dangerous material phenomena, or have little or no basis in materiality, with the latter emerging either from a subjective perception of threat or from instrumental use of security language.

The CS view of security as self-referential means it is neither characterized by the absence of a threat, per se, nor understood as a binary opposite to insecurity. Instead, “insecurity is the situation when there is a threat and no defence against it; security is a situation with a threat and a defence against it.”191 Security is not constituted by the absence of threats, but by the specification of a threat and a suitable defence-response. By contrast, the absence of threats – not their material absence, but lack of issues socially constructed as such – is a condition outside the realm of security the CS refers to as “normal politics.”192 As Wæver explains:

When there is no security problem, we do not conceptualize our situation in terms of security; instead, security is simply an irrelevant concern. The statement, then, that security is always relative, and one never lives in complete security, has the additional meaning that, if one has such complete security, one does not label it ‘security.’ It therefore never appears. Consequently, transcending a security problem by politicizing it cannot happen through thematization in security terms, only away from such terms.193

The Copenhagen School envisions all possible social issues falling along a spectrum ranging from depoliticized-politicized-securitized. Issues can move from politicized to securitized, but also from security back into the realm of normal politics through the reverse process of desecuritization. Throughout their work, the CS is clear in their preference for issues to be desecuritized rather than the opposite. For them, “security should be seen as negative, as a failure to deal with issues as normal politics. Ideally, politics should be able to unfold according to routine procedures without this extraordinary elevation of specific ‘threats’ to a prepolitical immediacy.”194 While the CS acknowledges that securitization may sometimes be necessary, they always consider it regrettable because of the societal cost to the normal operation of political institutions, protection of particular rights, and the rule of law.

This preference for desecuritization is one of the central distinctions between the Copenhagen School and other theoretical approaches to security, including subsequent accounts of securitization. Both objectivist and critical security theories tend to emphasize maximizing the provision of security, whether through the expansion of material power for sovereign states or the pursuit of “positive security” for individuals and communities.195 Wæver dismisses this position, arguing “the trick was and is to move from a positive to a negative meaning … We want less security!”196 For the CS, rather than more security for threatened referent objects, “desecuritization itself – as the absence of a world framed in terms of security – is the emancipatory ideal.”197 Their position exhibits an unqualified preference for the operation of normal politics lacking the emergency connotations and anti-democratic potential of securitization. It also suggests the radicalism of the CS position, especially in the early post- Cold War context in which the theory was first articulated: arguing for less security was, and remains, a bold and counter-intuitive approach to ISS.

## Impact

### !—Endless War—2NC

#### Securitization makes war inevitable and ordinary

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Apart from this, the interesting question is, of course, whether there is indeed a universal logic of security, what such a logic actually entails, and, fatally, how one can identify such a logic. For the Copenhagen School, security needs to be read in the context of a 'state of exception', which leads them to the claim that security threats are always existential for the survival of a particular referent object, which can be the state/ populace/territory but also Identity/culture, organizational stability/ social order, natural environment/biosphere or markets/financial sys-tem (see Buzan et al., 1998: 7; Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2010:80). Likewise, security is characterized in terms of a distinct modality marked by utmost urgency, priority of action and the breaking free of 'normal ales' of politics (with the process of securitization, an issue is drama-tized as an issue of supreme priority, to that an agent can legitimately claim a need to raise the issue above the constraints of regular polit-ical rules and procedure and open debate to treat it by 'extraordinary measures' (see Buzan et al, 1998: 24,9).

In Securitization and Desecuritization, Waver (1995: 47) justifies his concession to (a radicalization of) traditionalism by arguing that secu-rity 'carries with it a history and a set of connotations that we cannot escape, which he than goes on to specify by drawing on the theoretical literature of strategic studies are Weyer, 1995: 51, 54-57). In Security: A New Framework for Analysis, this aspect even gets a prescriptive conno-tation: The main purpose of this book is to present a framework based on the wider agenda that will incorporate the traditionalist position [...] [because members of the Copenhagen School] take seriously the tradi-tionalists' complaint about intellectual incoherence (of the (traditional) field of security studies]' (Buzan et al., 1998: 4; emphasis added). Consequently, they argue that if security Issues are 'to count as security Issues' they need to meet 'strictly defined criteria' (Buzan at al., 1998( 5) (rather Nan the various ambivalences of multiple local usages in the actual sociopolitical 'field(s) Of security’). Their reference to traditionalism is thereby equated with 'exploring the logic of security (Buzau et al., 1998:4) (as though there existed a universal, transhistorical 'logic').

Apart from the fact that the Copenhagen School arguably go even beyond traditionalism, their reading of security strictly in the context of a state of exception, they seem to also overlook the complexity and historical contingency of the concept of security. As scholars such as Rothschild (1995) or Mends (2008) - as well as Wrever (2008) himself, curiously enough - have shown (see also Stritael and Yvon, forth-coming), understandings of security have changed quite significantly throughout history depending on the sociopolitical context and the constellations of actors promoting or resisting a particular understand-ing. Security is thus always' political construction in specific contexts' (Dolby, 2002,0d1).

From a historical perspective, as Yergin (1977) showed for the US con-text, the meaning of security as 'national', 'military' and 'state security was a deliberate political intervention of US officials in the evolving Cold War context, where It replaced 'defense' as the previously preferred term of the military (see Yergin, 1977: 193-194). The war effort required the combination of civilian and military activities, which led to a shift in terminology because security blurred the distinction between military and civil issues, and between domestic and international. This made the war effort more palatable. Defence was usually understood as fol-lowing geopolitical lines, while security was freed from this constraint, as it could be defined according to the needs of 'national interests'. 'National interests', or 'legitimate interests', were a defining referent for security in the 1940s (see e.g. Lippman, 1943), while by the 1950s the emphasis had shifted towards what Wolfers coined as 'core values' (see Wolters, 1952: 484). Specifically, after the war the notion of security was useful to curtail the traditional mistrust of standing armies in the US. According to Yergin, it was first Secretary of Defense Forrestal who used national security to legitimate a strong military establishment to fight a 'future enemy, which was then also reflected in the National Secu-rity Act of 1947 (see Yergin, 1977: 209-210, 339-3401. National Security that arguably worked as a 'package legitimization In the Cold War competi-tion with the Soviet Linton and the 'Communist threat' (see also Stritael and Vuori, forthcoming). In this specific historical context, the evolv-ing concept of national security can be interpreted as, indeed, retaining a form of radical ration di stato policies of absolute state authority in the US context in an era when democratic ethics seemed to be making such a way of thinking increasingly unacceptable (see also Stritzel and Vuori, forthcoming). From this perspective, the national interest, and now national security, were ways to address the 'democrat's dilemma' In the US context of how to combine democratic values in domestic politics with a perceived amoral and anarchic international system and to justify drastic measures including military intervention, political assassinations and war during the Cold War.

### !—Value to Life—2NC

#### Securitized governmentality creates bare life and Global Civil War---threat strips life to parts that are maximized through mastery and destruction

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Duffield’s principal message here is clear and provocative: Liberalism proceeds on the basis that ‘Others’ are the problem to be solved. With politics therefore becoming the handmaiden of necessity, mired in the instrumental pursuit of power, any form of political subjectivity that stands against the technical recovery of the good life is necessarily rendered dangerous for the greater social good. This is significant. Since de-politicization is said to occur when life is being primed for its own betterment – that is, within the remit of humanitarian discourses and practices – it is possible to offer an alternative reflection on Agamben’s bare life. Bare life for Agamben is seen to be a product of the sovereign encounter. Life, in other words, becomes bare since it is beyond the recourse of any legal frameworks/obligations – hence set outside (‘abandoned’ in Agamben’s terms) the juridical protections that normally guarantee the subject a place in our moral and political universe of obligation. What Duffield implicitly suggests, however, is that the bare life of the biopolitical encounter is the product of a different logic. No longer banished from the realm, life is denied its political quality as the ‘bare essentials’ for species survival take precedence. No longer then made bare in order to be rendered inactive to the society it endangers, life is stripped bare of its pre-existing values on the basis that those precise qualities impede its potential productive salvation. Hence, while this life is equally assumed to be without meaningful political quality – though in this instance because of some dangerous lack of fulfilment – permitting the restitution in the life of the body implies that exceptional politics are displaced by the no less imperial and no less politically charged bare activity of species survival. Barely active life accordingly has not only become the privileged object of global security governance. Global battle lines are effectively drawn around its hollowed-out form in order to gain mastery over the productive spoils of global existence.

The Liberal War Thesis

Imposing liberalism has often come at a price. That price has tended to be a continuous recourse to war. While the militarism associated with liberal internationalization has already received scholarly attention (Howard, 2008), Foucault was concerned more with the continuation of war once peace has been declared.4 Denouncing the illusion that ‘we are living in a world in which order and peace have been restored’ (Foucault, 2003: 53), he set out to disrupt the neat distinctions between times of war/military exceptionalism and times of peace/civic normality. War accordingly now appears to condition the type of peace that follows. None have been more ambitious in mapping out this war–peace continuum than Michael Dillon & Julian Reid (2009). Their ‘liberal war’ thesis provides a provocative insight into the lethality of making live. Liberalism today, they argue, is underwritten by the unreserved righteousness of its mission. Hence, while there may still be populations that exist beyond the liberal pale, it is now taken that they should be included. With ‘liberal peace’ therefore predicated on the pacification/elimination of all forms of political difference in order that liberalism might meet its own moral and political objectives, the more peace is commanded, the more war is declared in order to achieve it: ‘In proclaiming peace . . . liberals are nonetheless committed also to making war.’ This is the ‘martial face of liberal power’ that, contrary to the familiar narrative, is ‘directly fuelled by the universal and pacific ambitions for which liberalism is to be admired’ (Dillon & Reid, 2009: 2). Liberalism thus stands accused here of universalizing war in its pursuit of peace:

However much liberalism abjures war, indeed finds the instrumental use of war, especially, a scandal, war has always been as instrumental to liberal as to geopolitical thinkers. In that very attempt to instrumentalize, indeed universalize, war in the pursuit of its own global project of emancipation, the practice of liberal rule itself becomes profoundly shaped by war. However much it may proclaim liberal peace and freedom, its own allied commitment to war subverts the very peace and freedoms it proclaims (Dillon & Reid, 2009: 7).

While Dillon & Reid’s thesis only makes veiled reference to the ontotheological dimension, they are fully aware that its rule depends upon a certain religiosity in the sense that war has now been turned into a veritable human crusade with only two possible outcomes: ‘endless war or the transformation of other societies and cultures into liberal societies and cultures’ (Dillon & Reid, 2009: 5). Endless war is underwritten here by a new set of problems. Unlike Clausewitzean confrontations, which at least provided the strategic comforts of clear demarcations (them/us, war/peace, citizen/­soldier, and so on), these wars no longer benefit from the possibility of scoring outright victory, retreating, or achieving a lasting negotiated peace by means of political compromise. Indeed, deprived of the prospect of defining enmity in advance, war itself becomes just as complex, dynamic, adaptive and radically interconnected as the world of which it is part. That is why ‘any such war to end war becomes a war without end. . . . The project of removing war from the life of the species becomes a lethal and, in principle, continuous and unending process’ (Dillon & Reid, 2009: 32). Duffield, building on from these concerns, takes this unending scenario a stage further to suggest that since wars for humanity are inextricably bound to the global life-chance divide, it is now possible to write of a ‘Global Civil War’ into which all life is openly recruited:

Each crisis of global circulation . . . marks out a terrain of global civil war, or rather a tableau of wars, which is fought on and between the modalities of life itself. . . . What is at stake in this war is the West’s ability to contain and manage international poverty while maintaining the ability of mass society to live and consume beyond its means (Duffield, 2008: 162).

Setting out civil war in these terms inevitably marks an important departure. Not only does it illustrate how liberalism gains its mastery by posing fundamental questions of life and death – that is, who is to live and who can be killed – disrupting the narrative that ordinarily takes sovereignty to be the point of theoretical departure, civil war now appears to be driven by a globally ambitious biopolitical imperative (see below).

Liberals have continuously made reference to humanity in order to justify their use of military force (Ignatieff, 2003). War, if there is to be one, must be for the unification of the species. This humanitarian caveat is by no means out of favour. More recently it underwrites the strategic rethink in contemporary zones of occupation, which has become biopolitical (‘hearts and minds’) in everything but name (Kilcullen, 2009; Smith, 2006). While criticisms of these strategies have tended to focus on the naive dangers associated with liberal idealism (see Gray, 2008), insufficient attention has been paid to the contested nature of all the tactics deployed in the will to govern illiberal populations. Foucault returns here with renewed vigour. He understood that forms of war have always been aligned with forms of life. Liberal wars are no exception. Fought in the name of endangered humanity, humanity itself finds its most meaningful expression through the battles waged in its name:

At this point we can invert Clausewitz’s proposition and say that politics is the continuation of war by other means. . . . While it is true that political power puts an end to war and establishes or attempts to establish the reign of peace in civil society, it certainly does not do so in order to suspend the effects of power or to neutralize the disequilibrium revealed in the last battle of war (Foucault, 2003: 15).

What in other words occurs beneath the semblance of peace is far from politically settled:

political struggles, these clashes over and with power, these modifications of relations of force – the shifting balances, the reversals – in a political system, all these things must be interpreted as a continuation of war. And they are interpreted as so many episodes, fragmentations, and displacements of the war itself. We are always writing the history of the same war, even when we are writing the history of peace and its institutions (Foucault, 2003: 15).

David Miliband (2009), without perhaps knowing the full political and philosophical implications, appears to subscribe to the value of this approach, albeit for an altogether more committed deployment:

NATO was born in the shadow of the Cold War, but we have all had to change our thinking as our troops confront insurgents rather than military machines like our own. The mental models of 20th century mass warfare are not fit for 21st century counterinsurgency. That is why my argument today has been about the centrality of politics. People like quoting Clausewitz that warfare is the continuation of politics by other means. . . . We need politics to become the continuation of warfare by other means.

Miliband’s ‘Foucauldian moment’ should not escape us. Inverting Clausewitz on a planetary scale – hence promoting the collapse of all meaningful distinctions that once held together the fixed terms of Newtonian space (i.e. inside/outside, friend/enemy, citizen/soldier, war/peace, and so forth), he firmly locates the conflict among the world of peoples. With global war therefore appearing to be an internal state of affairs, vanquishing enemies can no longer be sanctioned for the mere defence of things. A new moment has arrived, in which the destiny of humanity as a whole is being wagered on the success of humanity’s own political strategies. No coincidence, then, that authors like David Kilcullen – a key architect in the formulation of counter-­ insurgency strategies in Iraq and Afghanistan, argue for a global insurgency paradigm without too much controversy. Viewed from the perspective of power, global insurgency is after all nothing more than the advent of a global civil war fought for the biopolitical spoils of life. Giving primacy to counterinsurgency, it foregrounds the problem of populations so that questions of security governance (i.e. population regulation) become central to the war effort (RAND, 2008). Placing the managed recovery of maladjusted life into the heart of military strategies, it insists upon a joined-up response in which sovereign/militaristic forms of ordering are matched by biopolitical/developmental forms of progress (Bell & Evans, forthcoming). Demanding in other words a planetary outlook, it collapses the local into the global so that life’s radical interconnectivity implies that absolutely nothing can be left to chance. While liberals have therefore been at pains to offer a more humane recovery to the overt failures of military excess in current theatres of operation, warfare has not in any way been removed from the species. Instead, humanized in the name of local sensitivities, doing what is necessary out of global species necessity now implies that war effectively takes place by every means. Our understanding of civil war is invariably recast.

### !—Cooperation—2NC

#### Rejecting Arctic securitization is key to cooperation over existential threats. Securitization isn’t inevitable nor irreversible.

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Furthermore, shared knowledge and interpretations play a crucial role in shaping the perceptions, behaviors, and interactions of actors in the global system (Flockhart, 2016, p. 85). The AC’s success in diplomatic negotiations and its ability to foster cooperation among Arctic states is an example of how shared knowledge and interpretations shape perceptions of the Arctic as a region requiring cooperative solutions (Jóhannesson, 2022). This success in the Arctic has implications for global diplomacy and the importance of cooperative forums in addressing shared challenges. Furthermore, the scientific cooperation within the AC aimed at better environmental protection and sustainable development exemplifies how shared knowledge and interpretations influence global scientific collaboration (Jóhannesson, 2022). Research findings and knowledge sharing in the Arctic contribute to global efforts to combat climate change and protect the environment. Furthermore, the exclusion of hard security matters from the AC agenda reflects shared interpretations among Arctic states that the region should remain primarily focused on non-military cooperation and environmental concerns (Exner-Pirot et al., 2019). It aligns with Wendt’s (1992) perspective regrading principles of norms and shared understandings. This constructivist perspective helps us recognize how the Arctic cooperative narrative emerges, spreads, and becomes internalized as a framework for understanding the region’s security dynamics.

In relation to great power competition the increasing interest of great powers like the US, Russia, and China in the Arctic due to economic opportunities and strategic considerations (Gross, 2020; Lopez, 2021; Humpert, 2022) shows how shared knowledge and interpretations about the Arctic’s changing landscape can influence their global strategies. This competition in the Arctic could have implications for global power dynamics and international relations. Wendt’s (1992) argument that structures manifest through formal rules and norms is particularly relevant. States’ behaviors and interactions are influenced by norms and rules associated with their identities and social groups. In the context of great power competition, norms related to cooperation and rivalry are constructed and internalized over time. Furthermore, Wendt’s perspective reminds us that the Arctic’s evolving structure, influenced by norms associated with cooperation and rivalry, plays a pivotal role in shaping how states respond to the challenges posed by the melting Arctic and the dynamics of great power competition.

5.1.3 Identity and Logic of Actions

In constructivism, identities establish order and predictability in domestic society and international politics (Hopf, 1998). The presence of inter-subjective identities, characterized by stability and consistency, forms the basis for enduring expectations among states, guiding their behavior. Arctic cooperation, as viewed through a constructivist lens, is influenced by the identities of the participating states. The concept of inter-subjective identities, characterized by stability and consistency, creates a sense of order and predictability in the region (Hopf, 1998). Arctic states share an identity as Arctic actors, emphasizing their common interests in environmental preservation, sustainable development, and cooperation in relation to the melting Arctic (Arctic Council, n.d.-a). This shared identity forms the basis for enduring expectations among states, guiding their behavior within the Arctic context.

Even though the US and Russia have been able to work as cooperative Arctic actors within the AC, one could argue that, as great power competition reenters the Arctic region, these Arctic cooperative actors may evolve back into confrontational superpowers. This is amplified by the behavior of the states the US, Russia, and China within the region and their pursuit of economic gain and strategic consideration (Gross, 2020; Lopez, 2021; Humpert, 2022).

5.1.4 Agents and structures

As illustrated by Flockhart (2016, p. 88), the concept of mutual constitution underscores the dynamic nature of how perspectives in the Arctic region are constructed, perpetuated, and potentially transformed. In the context of the melting Arctic, the notion of mutual constitution central to constructivism becomes apparent. This perspective emphasizes that structures influence actors and are simultaneously shaped by their practices (Giddens, 1991). Archer (1995) expands on this concept by introducing “structuration,” highlighting that agents reproduce and transform structures through their actions. Consider, for instance, the changing Arctic identities. Historically, Arctic states viewed themselves primarily as the AC members focused on cooperative governance (Lackenbauer & Dean, 2021, p. 327). However, as the region’s resources become more accessible and the potential for great power competition increases, these identities are evolving. States like the US are adapting their practices and identities to assert themselves more forcefully in the region, challenging the existing cooperative structures (Flockhart, 2016, p. 88). The norms governing Arctic security have also undergone transformation. The Arctic was traditionally seen as a zone of cooperation, with a focus on environmental protection and peaceful coexistence. However, the changing geopolitical landscape and resource interests are reshaping these norms. The emergence of new security concerns related to resource competition and military presence reflects how practices and interactions can influence security perspectives (Archer, 1995).

Furthermore, disruptive events in the Arctic, such as the opening of new shipping routes and resource extraction projects, challenge shared meanings and existing structures of governance. These events expose the inadequacy of traditional cooperative structures in addressing emerging security issues. Arctic states must adapt their practices and identities to address these challenges effectively (Flockhart, 2016, p. 90). This demonstrates how the constructivist perspective, emphasizing the mutual constitution of structures and actors, can help us understand the evolving dynamics of Arctic security and cooperation in the face of environmental changes and shifting power dynamics.

5.2 Arctic Exceptionalism Perspective

Before diving further into the analysis, this section will start of by addressing how Arctic exceptionalism will be utilized in the discussion. The theory of Arctic exceptionalism offers an insightful framework for comprehending the distinctive characteristics of the Arctic region (Lackenbauer & Dean, 2021, p. 327). This understanding provides researchers with the tools to effectively identify and predict security threats unique to the Arctic. However, authors and scholars such as Gjørv and Hodgson (2019) argue that Arctic exceptionalism’s narrow view of Arctic security prevents it from taking meaningful actions to protect the environment and human security. Furthermore, Melchiorre (2022) contends that the Arctic is not exceptional and is instead a reflection of the international order, suggesting that the “exceptional” idea of the Arctic was an illusion. Nonetheless, the concept of Arctic exceptionalism has predominantly been interpreted through the lens of Gorbachev’s speech, where he characterizes the Arctic as a “zone of peace” (Gorbachev, 1987). Instead, by revisiting the origin of the theoretical framework, which emphasized the distinction from other regions due to extraordinary characteristics and the perspective of the Arctic as a “land of tomorrow” requiring exceptional protection, this revised interpretation of Arctic exceptionalism could offer valuable insights into the security dynamics of the region (Lackenbauer & Dean, 2021; Young & Osherenko, 1989; Young, 1992). Revisiting this origin-based interpretation of Arctic exceptionalism not only offers insights into the security dynamics of the region but also unlocks a fresh perspective on how its exceptional characteristics shape both the challenges and opportunities it presents.

Considering these insights, understanding the security dynamics in the Arctic necessitates a shifting focus from the usual narrative of Arctic exceptionalism in favor of a strategy that considers the region’s unique characteristics and vulnerabilities. Recognizing the intricate interplay between environmental, human, and traditional security components, we see the Arctic as more than just a “zone of peace.” The updated or revisited understanding of Arctic exceptionalism motivates researchers to look at security issues from various approaches.

Viewed through the Arctic exceptionalist lens, the rapid sea ice loss and tundra thawing in the Arctic, occurring at a rate three times higher than the global average, exemplify the region’s exceptional response to global climate change (Arctic Council, n.d.-a; World Wildlife Fund Arctic, 2023). This distinctiveness underscores the exceptional nature of the Arctic environment, a critical area for climate study and policy. The increased frequency of forest fires, transformation of the Arctic landscape, rising sea levels, and loss of biodiversity in response to these climate changes are further examples of the Arctic exceptional nature (Gigova & Paddison, 2023; Struzik, 2020; Greenpeace USA, 2015). Notably, Arctic exceptionalism highlights that the Arctic’s response to global climate shifts differs significantly from other regions by the intricate connection of climate change, environmental security, human security, and the rise of geopolitical competition. Moreover, the concept underscores that the consequences of the melting Arctic extend beyond its borders, affecting ecosystems worldwide. This interconnectedness, highlighted by Arctic exceptionalism, emphasizes the need for international cooperation and policy actions to address Arctic climate change as part of broader global climate efforts (GreenFacts, 2010). The exceptional vulnerabilities and global ramifications of Arctic climate change underscore the imperative for responsible governance and sustainable practices, recognizing the Arctic’s pivotal role in the broader climate system and its impacts on human security globally.

The concept of Arctic exceptionalism underscores the importance of collaboration concerning the interconnectedness of global ecosystems and the shared responsibility to address environmental challenges. The urgency to adopt sustainable practices becomes evident when considering the potential ramifications of the Arctic’s vulnerabilities on a global scale. As the Arctic region continues to experience rapid changes, it serves as a call to action for individuals, communities, and nations to work collaboratively in mitigating climate change, preserving biodiversity, and promoting sustainable development practices. By understanding and addressing the unique vulnerabilities of the Arctic, we can better appreciate the imperative for immediate and concerted efforts to secure a resilient and harmonious future for the Arctic region and the entire planet. This idea finds resonance in the statement by Lackenbauer and Dean (2021, p. 328), who describe the Arctic as a realm of “compelling opportunities and exhilarating risk.” Indeed, these dynamics extend beyond the Arctic region to influence the rest of the world.

Viewed through the lens of Arctic exceptionalism, the challenges faced by Arctic residents due to the changing Arctic climate take on a unique and exceptional character (Bludd, 2022; Reist et al., 2006). Indigenous peoples experience the profound impacts of these changes on their traditional livelihoods. Arctic exceptionalism highlights that the Arctic’s response to global climate shifts differs significantly from other regions, as it encompasses environmental changes and deeply intertwined human and cultural dimensions. Kornhuber et al. (2023) state that even though Arctic exceptionalism is “blocked” in geopolitics, the challenges the region faces remains exceptional. Therefore, investing more in remote sensing initiatives for independent scientific data collection, free from geopolitical tensions, could be considered (ibid.). Moreover, engaging Arctic Indigenous Peoples in co-producing knowledge on ecosystems, climate change, biodiversity, and environmental development is crucial. Their involvement can enhance the understanding of the Arctic's unique challenges and contribute to more sustainable solutions within the framework of Arctic exceptionalism.

Greaves (2019) on the other hand argue how growing geopolitical competition are breaking up the unified Arctic and creating three distinct security regions across the polar area. This change is similar to how global warming is transforming the Arctic Ocean into something more like the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, erasing the Arctic's uniqueness. This shift marks the end of the post-Cold War era when the Arctic was seen as separate from global power struggles. As the Arctic warms and becomes less distinct from lower-latitude regions, its politics and security increasingly mirror those in the south (ibid.). Furthermore, Greaves (2019) state that this fragmentation does not imply that more conflict will come from within the region but will most likely be caused by external factors spilling into the region. As a result, the Arctic will become less distinct and more influenced by global factors, reflecting the dynamics of neighboring regions rather than its unique characteristics.

## Alternative

### Alt—Rejection Solves—2NC

#### Rejecting security logic solves—it’s a necessary starting point for evaluating policies

Leese 15, MA, senior researcher at the Center for Security Studies. (Matthias, “On security, once more: Assorted inquiries in aviation”, p. 45-46, https://publikationen.uni-tuebingen.de/xmlui/handle/10900/60118)

Thus, how are we to come to terms with an agenda of security as assemblage empirically, if its empirics are defined by radical openness? Connolly (2013: 401) suggests a clear-cut “problem orientation, pursuing the contours of an issue up and down these interacting scales, as the issue requires.” If security politics evolve around specific security problems, in whichever of the manifold ways that we have sketched out so far, then the very evolution of complex, and at times contradictory, assemblages alongside the constitution of security politics provides a valuable starting point. As Adey and Anderson (2012: 106) argue, “in seeking to understand how life is governed in and through contingency, we should take care to remember the contingencies of the apparatus of security – that is, how apparatuses form, endure and change as the elements that compose them are (re)deployed.” Already implied in such a perspective is the notion that each assemblage could be formed differently – and that what we encounter is merely a momentary snap-shot of stabilization that might rather sooner than later fall apart again through the multiple contestations that security is subjected to. As Schouten (2014b: 88) claims, such a perspective could considerably contribute to a general agenda of thinking about security by “by radicalizing the insight in security studies that security is ‘essentially contested’ to study the on-going attempts to stabilize security.” As he adds: “if security practitioners ‘out there’ struggle with the very ontology of (in)security, how could ‘we’ as analysts a priori decide that security is a matter of discourse, practice or materiality?” (Schouten, 2014b: 88)

The utility of such an approach becomes rather obvious when we call to mind the preceding narrative of security as economy and the ensuing “close assemblage with international partners and private companies that underpin the EU’s force in the domain of security” (de Goede, 2011: 12). Moreover, it can also contribute to the multiple layers of security as surveillance and technology, as government, and as futurity and securitization. Security as assemblage, however, is not some kind of ‘master narrative’. Neither does it occupy a privileged position among the narratives of security provided here. Rather, thinking about security as assemblage can arguably contribute to a better understanding of how all of those narratives come into being empirically – not necessarily through an underlying political agenda, but through complexity, fragility, and ambiguity. With regard to security, then, as Schouten (2014a: 28) explains, “this process of translation concerns ontological politics, for establishing security as technical rather than social, or private rather than public, subsequently restricts and redefines accountability; distribution of scarce output; and/or the scope of possible action available to different affected actors [emph. in orig.].”

After all, as Rose (1999: 22) reminds us, “the space of government is always shaped and intersected by other discourses, notably the veridical discourses of science and changing moral rhetorics and ethical vocabularies, which have their own histories, apparatuses and problem spaces, and whose relation to problematics of government is not expression or causation but translation.” It is this very translation that must be researched empirically if any analysis seeks to unpack specific security assemblages. The processes of translation mark the trajectories along which actor relations form and re-form, and, most importantly, become visible: “when security is in the making – that is, still a controversy to be settled – it is ontologically unstable and indistinguishable from the ‘context’ made up of economic, technological, medical and legal considerations” (Schouten, 2014a: 38). Scholars of governmentality have shown that “an analytics of a particular regime of practices, at a minimum, seeks to identify the emergence of that regime, examine the multiple sources of the elements that constitute it, and follow the diverse processes and relations by which these elements are assembled into relatively stable forms of organization and institutional practice” (Dean, 2006: 21), and thus we can once more identify a strong parallel here.

As Rose (1999: 277) quite plainly frames the issue, “our present has arisen as much from the logics of contestation as from any imperatives of control”, and thus security studies must in fact transcend the scope on control that strikes at the heart of many inquiries into surveillance and technology. In the vein of Foucauldian thought, as Schouten (2014a: 38) emphasizes, the “critical purchase thus lies in offering us a way to study security, not in terms of stable arrangements that impress themselves upon us as powerful ‘cold monsters’, but rather as unsettled accounts of fragile security by entering in to the controversies when security is still in the making.” What implications must be derived from such insight? How does this narrative of security as assemblage undermine, underpin, challenge, or reinforce its preceding narratives? It most certainly thwarts any over-simplistic understanding of security that centers merely centers around selected rationalities, thereby neglecting others. It can serve to highlight how economics or technological discourses have prevailed in the arena by tracing how, and through which particular power relations, controversies and ambiguities have become settled and stabilized. And by doing so, it can most notably challenge security politics by exposing reductionist and epistemologically twisted arguments of governing, of securitization, and of futurity. As Connolly (2013: 404) rather ironically puts the added value of assemblage thought: “‘How come we did not anticipate this?’, ask the Intelligence agencies. ‘How come we did not predict this?’, whisper political scientists to each other, before they catch themselves to recall how they only promise to predict hypothetical events under conditions in which the ‘variables’ are closely specified, and not to explain actual events in the messy, ongoing actualities of triggering forces, contagious actions, complex and floating conflicts, creative responses, obscure searches, ambiguous anxieties, and shifting hopes.”

### They Say: “Realism Good/True”

#### The alternative’s constructivist approach includes many of the good components of realism, but realism alone is incomplete and ignores the role of identity formation in threat perception

Runesson 24, Master’s Candidate in International Affairs, Linnaeus University . (Linn Runesson, 2024, “The Arctic: A Stage for Great Power Competition?,” https://lnu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1933832/FULLTEXT01.pdf)

The conventional constructivist branch agrees with several of the neorealist tenets as it connects constructivism with rationality (Agius 2019: 84), and furthermore seeks to study actors, norms interests and identity, and to uncover the casual relationships and deductive mechanisms between them (Checkel 2008, as cited in Cho 2012: 301). This means that conventional constructivism in a sufficient way can work to complement neorealism and thus in the end contribute with a more holistic analysis of the Arctic security strategies and policies of Russia and the United States. Hopf (1998) further states that conventional constructivism aspire to give an account for how identities and their so called ‘associated reproductive social practices’ result in certain actions (Hopf 1998: 183). In other words, identities are considered to be foundational for feasible causes of action, and also play a crucial part in telling you and others who you and they are, which results in different sets of interests and preferences depending on what actor they refer to. In contrast to neorealism constructivism also adds another layer to identity by arguing that a state identity is not solely based on self-interest, but that it also needs to be realized within its own historical context (Hopf 1998: 175, 184).

Similarly to neorealism, conventional constructivism also agrees that the state is a central actor when theorising and that states ally against threats, but points to that although constructivism is susceptible to the balance of threat concept, the neorealist perspective lacks a theory of threat perception, which is something that the constructivist ‘account of identity’ can offer. Identities can furthermore contribute to the production of a state’s actions, both domestically and internationally, as they are potentially partaking in shaping the state’s constitutive practices (Agius 2019: 85; Hopf 1998: 186–187, 193). Cho (2012) emphasises the same thing by stating that the changeable identity and interests of a state lays the foundation for its actions (Cho 2012: 305). A state’s identity also relates to so called role identity and rights and behavioural norms which are based on how the state is recognised by other states (Wendt 1999: 228), where “enemy” and “friend” are two prominent examples of role identity. Wendt (1999) argues that when defining those roles, the most significant factor to consider is the interdependence, or so called “intimacy” between the Other and the Self. When the intimacy is high between the Self and the Other, states can be unable to define their own roles as a certain position might be forced upon them by the representation of Others, Others that might do so in order to ensure that their own identity is ensured. As this occurs it can thus be difficult for states to abandon the role that has been enforced upon them (Wendt 1999: 228). Cho (2009) follows along the same line by stating that when cultures and norms create a collective identity, this collective in turn shape state’s interests as well as its policies, and that it is a must that the state act according to what its identity and interests direct (Cho 2009: 81–82). Relating to this is the notion of power, as conventional constructivists believe that power is to be found everywhere since “social practices reproduce underlying power relations” (Hopf 1998: 185), and that many of the assets that are often attributed to states such as egoism, the meaning of power and power-seeking, are all in fact actually formed by the international system (Cho 2009: 88).

#### **Realism neglects individual psychology** as an explanation for state behavior

Pursiainen and Forsberg 21, \*Professor of Societal Safety at the Arctic University of Norway, \*\*Professor of International Politics at the University of Tampere and Deputy Director of the Centre of Excellence on Choices of Russian Modernisation at the Aleksanteri Institute of the University of Helsinki. (\*Christer Pursiainen, \*\*Tuomas Forsberg, 2021, “The Psychology of Foreign Policy” in *Palgrave Studies in Political Psychology* p. 14-15, ISBN 978-3-030-79886-4) wtk

Realism, in its various formulations, has always had a somewhat ambivalent relationship to psychology (Donnelly, 2000, pp. 43–80; Edinger, 2021). Hans Morgenthau (1955), the founder of political realism, warned against the search for the clue to foreign policy exclusively in the motives of state leaders because it was both futile and deceptive. Yet many political realists have still paid a great deal of attention to major figures in international politics and their actions, starting from some implicit psychological analysis on the basis of the leader’s experience or moral characteristics. Political realism assumes rationality as the methodological starting point for analysis, yet Morgenthau (1946, p. 154) himself fundamentally doubted the extent to which foreign policy decision-makers or any human being can be rational; indeed, he called the idea of human rationality a “rationalist superstition.” To the extent that rationality in realism would be tantamount to basing one’s actions on power alone, Reinhold Niebuhr (2013, p. 4; see also Meinecke, 1957, p. 433) in turn admitted that in reality this is not the case: “Politics will, to the end of history, be an area where conscience and power meet, where the ethical and coercive factors of human life will interpenetrate and work out their tentative and uneasy compromises.” Yet neither Morgenthau nor other classical realists provided a clear account of the psychological aspects of foreign policy other than the general deficiency of human nature.

Structural realism (neorealism) shifted the angle of the older political realism away from state leaders to the structural conditions of the international system (Elman, 1996). In a vulgar reading of structural realism, it is sometimes maintained that any statesperson would behave in a similar way in given structural conditions. The most visible scholar of offensive realism in the past twenty years or so, John Mearsheimer, argues that Russia’s actions in Ukraine in 2014 should be seen as a self-evident reaction to the West’s aggressive grand strategy: “No Russian leader would tolerate a military alliance that was Moscow’s mortal enemy until recently moving into Ukraine. Nor would any Russian leader stand idly by while the West helped install a government there that was determined to integrate Ukraine into the West” (Mearsheimer, 2014, p. 82, italics added). Hence, the psychological idiosyncrasies of individual decision-makers are completely neglected. Yet Mearsheimer titles his article ‘Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West’s Fault: The Liberal Delusions that Provoked Putin’, revealing the clear psychological microfoundations of the author’s overly structuralist argument.

# Affirmative Answers to Security Kritik

## Framework

### Framework

#### Framework---the ballot is a referendum on the hypothetical consequences of the plan. Any links must be to the plan and there must be an alt that causally solves their harms, with the inclusion of the plan precluding that solvency.

#### First, fairness---plan vs agential alternative is the most stable and non-arbitrary. Any other interp reactively shifts the goalposts which moots the 1AC and makes aff victory impossible.

#### Second, rejoinder – focus purely on representations without considering the pragmatic implementation of the plan fails and ensures their k stays completely detached from the world

Visoka 19, Associate Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies at Dublin City University. (Gëzim Visoka, 2019, “Critique and Alternativity in International Relations,” International Studies Review, 21(4), 2019, pp.678-704, DOI 10.1093/isr/viy065 )

More broadly, alternativity in critical IR theory needs to be rescued from never-ending conceptual reifications, which have ended up making ontological assentation about the world become completely detached from the world. In this regard, there is a growing realization in IR that “critique is a necessary but secondary task; the priority is to return to practical theory as quickly as possible” (Levine 2012, 69). Recalibrating the purpose of alternativity in critical theory requires recalibrating knowledge production, not only to unmask power relations and the dynamics of dominance and to create space for a politics of resistance but also to generate practical knowledge for political action that challenges, confronts, and disrupts existing power relations and offers alternative solutions for reshuffling social relations on more emancipatory and inclusive terms (see Duvall and Varadarajan 2003, 85; Murdie 2017; Deiana and McDonagh 2018). A feature of critical peace and conflict studies is a congruence between the emancipatory and problem-solving perspectives, which should be predicated on the conciliation of knowledge, the expansion of onto-politics of peace, and the pluralization of epistemological and methodological approaches. The recent methodological work by J. Samuel Barkin and Laura Sjoberg (2017) on interpretive quantification is a promising move toward this much-needed pluralist fertilization within critical theory. In particular, a stronger linkage between criticality, alternativity, and practicality could help critical security, peace, and conflict theories to offer alternatives that would maintain critical impetus while simultaneously strengthening ties to practical and societal problem-addressing solutions. Genealogical studies would blend well with a critical analysis of conceptual and policy alternatives (see Milliken 1999). Statistical analysis with an emancipatory hypothesis coupled with critical analysis would contribute to subverting policy practices and would normalize alternative knowledge about peace, justice, and emancipation.

The recent practice-turn in IR offers new bridges between scholars and practitioners, making it possible to translate critical knowledge into practice without compromising the normativity and criticality of scholarly works (see Bigo 2011). A forum on pragmatism published in this journal has implicitly highlighted the importance of alternativity in understanding global politics and generating impactful knowledge beyond the existing epistemological and methodological divides (see Hellmann 2009). Friedrichs and Kratochwil (2009, 701) have argued for “the orientation of research toward the generation of useful knowledge.” Practicality is essential for generating alternatives. For instance, Jonna Nyman (2016, 142) argues that “a pragmatic, practice-centred approach . . . can help us gain practical knowledge of how security works and understand the value of security better, as well as help us to suggest alternative possibilities.” Similarly, Navnita Chadha Behera (2016, 154) argues: “theorizing in IR needs to step out of the rarefied atmosphere of its academe, develop a healthy scepticism toward its canonical frames, and open up to the possibilities of learning from everyday life and experiences of people and their living traditions and practices.” Practicality shifts the focus from abstract criticality and normativity to contextual critiques that account for everyday practices and interactions. This would be essential for rescuing critique from becoming a postempirical endeavor.

Critical knowledge that engages with policy alternatives “is not only pragmatic, it is also politically enabling: it forces us away from instrumental problem-solving perspectives towards a wider framework of pragmatic thought where narrow instrumental goals are overridden by wider normative and political concerns” (Kurki 2013, 260). Such grounded critiques are crucial in order to expand non-prescriptive alternativity and exploring practical possibilities for social emancipation and change. For Steve Smith (2002: 202), “the acid test for the success of alternative and critical approaches is the extent to which they have led to empirically grounded work that explores the range and variety of world politics.” This would also be congruent with Daniel Levine's (2012, 30) concept of sustainable critique, which entails thinking in both practical and critical terms at once so that “IR could create a sustainably critical perspective on global politics that might then be turned back onto, and made to inform, ongoing policy debates and discourses.” Behera (2016, 154) further maintains that the “state-centric ontology of IR has effectively ended up dehumanizing the discipline in a way so that normally it has little to do with human relations, human needs, and the larger imperatives of humanity.” Generating practical alternatives would therefore require endorsing situated knowledge as an epistemological and methodological basis for any engagement with the real world. The work of feminists such as Donna Haraway (1988, 584) on situated standpoints is also relevant here because they offer “more adequate, sustained, objective, transforming accounts of the world.” Situated knowledge is, mostly, nonrepresentational knowledge, in that it is not firmly mediated through preexisting discourses. In this regard, promoting subjugated knowledge discourses and practices could be central to rejuvenating the emancipatory commitment of critical theory (see Doty 1996).

### Reps Aren’t First

#### Reps don’t determine policy outcomes.

Mortensgaard, 20—Research Assistant at the Centre for Military Studies, University of Copenhagen (Lin Alexandra, “Contesting Frames and (De)Securitizing Schemas: Bridging the Copenhagen School's Framework and Framing Theory,” International Studies Review, Volume 22, Issue 1, March 2020, Pages 140–166, dml)

In reality frames are rarely clear-cut. Frames in the media are often incomplete, as they may define the problematic effect/condition in one way but endorse another type of remedy/improvement.21 Additionally, news items may contain multiple complete or incomplete frames (Steensland 2008). This means that the frame contest takes place not only between news items but also within a single news item. This, however, does not mean that one frame cannot dominate the single news item, the particular media outlet, or the media at large. It just means that when analyzing media sources, we must be careful not to look for one complete frame contesting another complete frame.22

#### Sweeping theories can’t explain policy decisions—if they can, then our framework link turns their offense.

Rose, 21—editor of Foreign Affairs (Gideon, “Foreign Policy for Pragmatists,” Foreign Affairs, March/April 2021, dml)

Theories of history, fundamental beliefs about how the world works, are usually assumed rather than argued and rarely get subjected to serious scrutiny. Yet these general ideas set the parameters for all the specific policy choices an administration makes. Know an administration’s theory of history, and much of the rest is easy to fill in.

There are a lot of possible theories of history, but they tend to fall, like Bush’s and Trump’s, into two main camps: optimistic and pessimistic. Thus, the Clinton administration followed its own version of happy directionality—think of it as Bush with less muscular Christianity. And there have been earlier believers in Trump’s dark and stormy night, as well.

Unfortunately, given the stakes of the question, no one really knows whether the optimists or the pessimists have the better case. Political theorists have fought about that for centuries, with neither side winning. A few generations ago, modern social scientists joined in, generating and testing lots of theories in lots of ways, but still, neither camp bested the other. And then, in the last few years, history got interesting again and erased some of the few things the scholars thought they had learned.

As individuals, presidents have had strong views on these matters. As a group, they have not. American foreign policy is notorious for its internal tensions. Its fits and starts and reversals do not fit easily into any single theoretical framework. Yet this pluralism has proved to be a feature, not a bug. Precisely because it has not embraced any one approach to foreign policy consistently, Washington has managed to avoid the worst aspects of all. Blessed with geopolitical privilege, it has slowly stumbled forward, moving over the centuries from peripheral obscurity to global hegemony. Its genius has been less strategic insight than an ability to cut losses.

By now, it seems fair to say that the debate between the optimists and the pessimists will never be settled conclusively, since each perspective knows something big about international politics. Instead of choosing between them, the new administration should keep both truths in its pocket, taking each out as appropriate.

Learning in U.S. foreign policy has come largely across administrations. President Joe Biden’s goal should be to speed up the process, allowing it to happen within an administration. Call it the Bayesian Doctrine: rather than being wedded to its priors, the administration should constantly update them.

The way to do so is to make theorists, not principals, the administration’s true team of rivals, forcing them to make real-world predictions, and to offer testable practical advice, and then seeing whose turn out to be better in real time. In this approach, searching intellectual honesty is more important than ideology; what people think matters less than whether they can change their minds. Constantly calculating implied odds won’t always win pots. But it will help the administration fold bad hands early, increasing its winnings over time.

### They Say: “Epistemology Flawed”

#### Our epistemology isn’t flawed—if our authors inflated threats, they would be fired!

Ravenal 9, Distinguished Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy Studies at the Cato Institute, professor emeritus of the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service. (Earl C. Ravenal, 2009, , “What's Empire Got to Do with It? The Derivation of America's Foreign Policy.” Critical Review: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Politics and Society, 21(1), 2009, pp.40-43)

The underlying notion of “the security bureaucracies . . . looking for new enemies” is a threadbare concept that has somehow taken hold across the political spectrum, from the radical left (viz. Michael Klare [1981], who refers to a “threat bank”), to the liberal center (viz. Robert H. Johnson [1997], who dismisses most alleged “threats” as “improbable dangers”), to libertarians (viz. Ted Galen Carpenter [1992], Vice President for Foreign and Defense Policy of the Cato Institute, who wrote a book entitled A Search for Enemies). What is missing from most analysts’ claims of “threat inflation,” however, is a convincing theory of why, say, the American government significantly (not merely in excusable rhetoric) might magnify and even invent threats (and, more seriously, act on such inflated threat estimates).

In a few places, Eland (2004, 185) suggests that such behavior might stem from military or national security bureaucrats’ attempts to enhance their personal status and organizational budgets, or even from the influence and dominance of “the military-industrial complex”; viz.: “Maintaining the empire and retaliating for the blowback from that empire keeps what President Eisenhower called the military-industrial complex fat and happy.” Or, in the same section:

In the nation’s capital, vested interests, such as the law enforcement bureaucracies . . . routinely take advantage of “crises”to satisfy parochial desires. Similarly, many corporations use crises to get pet projects—a.k.a. pork—funded by the government. And national security crises, because of people’s fears, are especially ripe opportunities to grab largesse. (Ibid., 182)

Thus, “bureaucratic-politics” theory, which once made several reputations (such as those of Richard Neustadt, Morton Halperin, and Graham Allison) in defense-intellectual circles, and spawned an entire sub-industry within the field of international relations,5 is put into the service of dismissing putative security threats as imaginary.

So, too, can a surprisingly cognate theory, “public choice,”6 which can be considered the right-wing analog of the “bureaucratic-politics” model, and is a preferred interpretation of governmental decision-making among libertarian observers. As Eland (2004, 203) summarizes:

Public-choice theory argues [that] the government itself can develop separate interests from its citizens. The government reflects the interests of powerful pressure groups and the interests of the bureaucracies and the bureaucrats in them. Although this problem occurs in both foreign and domestic policy, it may be more severe in foreign policy because citizens pay less attention to policies that affect them less directly.

There is, in this statement of public-choice theory, a certain ambiguity, and a certain degree of contradiction: Bureaucrats are supposedly, at the same time, subservient to societal interest groups and autonomous from society in general.

This journal has pioneered the argument that state autonomy is a likely consequence of the public’s ignorance of most areas of state activity (e.g., Somin 1998; DeCanio 2000a, 2000b, 2006, 2007; Ravenal 2000a). But state autonomy does not necessarily mean that bureaucrats substitute their own interests for those of what could be called the “national society” that they ostensibly serve. I have argued (Ravenal 2000a) that, precisely because of the public-ignorance and elite-expertise factors, and especially because the opportunities—at least for bureaucrats (a few notable post-government lobbyist cases nonwithstanding)—for lucrative self-dealing are stringently fewer in the defense and diplomatic areas of government than they are in some of the contract-dispensing and more under-the-radar-screen agencies of government, the “public-choice” imputation of self-dealing, rather than working toward the national interest (which, however may not be synonymous with the interests, perceived or expressed, of citizens!) is less likely to hold. In short, state autonomy is likely to mean, in the derivation of foreign policy, that “state elites” are using rational judgment, in insulation from self-promoting interest groups—about what strategies, forces, and weapons are required for national defense.

Ironically, “public choice”—not even a species of economics, but rather a kind of political interpretation—is not even about “public” choice, since, like the bureaucratic-politics model, it repudiates the very notion that bureaucrats make truly “public” choices; rather, they are held, axiomatically, to exhibit “rent-seeking” behavior, wherein they abuse their public positions in order to amass private gains, or at least to build personal empires within their ostensibly official niches. Such sub- rational models actually explain very little of what they purport to observe. Of course, there is some truth in them, regarding the “behavior” of some people, at some times, in some circumstances, under some conditions of incentive and motivation. But the factors that they posit operate mostly as constraints on the otherwise rational optimization of objectives that, if for no other reason than the playing out of official roles, transcends merely personal or parochial imperatives.

My treatment of “role” differs from that of the bureaucratic-politics theorists, whose model of the derivation of foreign policy depends heavily, and acknowledgedly, on a narrow and specific identification of the role- playing of organizationally situated individuals in a partly conflictual “pulling and hauling” process that “results in” some policy outcome. Even here, bureaucratic-politics theorists Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow (1999, 311) allow that “some players are not able to articulate [sic] the governmental politics game because their conception of their job does not legitimate such activity.” This is a crucial admission, and one that points— empirically—to the need for a broader and generic treatment of role.

Roles (all theorists state) give rise to “expectations” of performance. My point is that virtually every governmental role, and especially national-security roles, and particularly the roles of the uniformed military, embody expectations of devotion to the “national interest”; rationality in the derivation of policy at every functional level; and objectivity in the treatment of parameters, especially external parameters such as “threats” and the power and capabilities of other nations.

Sub-rational models (such as “public choice”) fail to take into account even a partial dedication to the “national” interest (or even the possibility that the national interest may be honestly misconceived in more paro- chial terms). In contrast, an official’s role connects the individual to the (state-level) process, and moderates the (perhaps otherwise) self-seeking impulses of the individual. Role-derived behavior tends to be formalized and codified; relatively transparent and at least peer-reviewed, so as to be consistent with expectations; surviving the particular individual and transmitted to successors and ancillaries; measured against a standard and thus corrigible; defined in terms of the performed function and therefore derived from the state function; and uncorrrupt, because personal cheating and even egregious aggrandizement are conspicuously discouraged.

My own direct observation suggests that defense decision-makers attempt to “frame” the structure of the problems that they try to solve on the basis of the most accurate intelligence. They make it their business to know where the threats come from. Thus, threats are not “socially constructed” (even though, of course, some values are).

A major reason for the rationality, and the objectivity, of the process is that much security planning is done, not in vaguely undefined circumstances that offer scope for idiosyncratic, subjective behavior, but rather in structured and reviewed organizational frameworks. Non-rationalities (which are bad for understanding and prediction) tend to get filtered out. People are fired for presenting skewed analysis and for making bad predictions. This is because something important is riding on the causal analysis and the contingent prediction.

For these reasons, “public choice” does not have the “feel” of reality to many critics who have participated in the structure of defense decision-making. In that structure, obvious, and even not-so-obvious, “rent-seeking” would not only be shameful; it would present a severe risk of career termination. And, as mentioned, the defense bureaucracy is hardly a productive place for truly talented rent-seekers to operate compared to opportunities for personal profit in the commercial world. A bureaucrat’s very self-placement in these reaches of government testifies either to a sincere commitment to the national interest or to a lack of sufficient imagination to exploit opportunities for personal profit.

## Links

### Permutation Do Both

#### Permutation do both—you can reject securitizing logics without rejecting the plan

#### We can use the aff to incrementally reject the worst versions of securitization

McDonald 17, Reader in International Relations at the University of Queensland. (Matt McDonald, 2017, “Critical security in the Asia-Pacific: an introduction,” Critical Studies on Security, 5(3), 2017, pp.237-252, DOI 10.1080/21624887.2017.1420125)

There is also evidence to support the idea that in some instances, states are emphasising non-traditional security issues and cooperation associated with it as a mechanism for consolidating strategic partnerships driven by more traditional strategic concerns. This might be applied to the example of responses to the 2004 tsunami. Here, the United States, Japan, India and Australia established a coalition to coordinate aid delivery, in the process solidifying strategic relations while responding to regional disaster. Such a development suggests challenges associated with making clear distinctions between a traditional and non-security agenda, challenges heightened if non-traditional security is still viewed through the lens of state security.4

These issues raise important questions about the politics of security as applied to critical approaches, especially those that wish to contribute to debates about security practices: should our aim be to speak truth to power and articulate a bold vision for substantially different sets of approaches and actors, or to engage those institutions and actors with the capacity to enact change, attempting to encourage more progressive practices in the process? Of course, this is a simplistic binary in the sense that scholarship (and individual scholars) can do both. But it serves to remind us of the importance of engaging with the politics of security. This is central to Lee Wilson’s discussion of dynamics and practices of security in Indonesia in this special issue. Ultimately, we should be in a position to articulate grounds for incremental progressive change to those with the power to enact it, even while compelling ourselves to keep sight of a vision of security that is genuinely ethically defensible. This is a challenge for a critical approach to security, but one which intellectual openness, humility and reflexivity – combined with acceptance of a division of academic labour within the broad contours of such an approach – might go some way to addressing.

#### To beat the perm, the neg has to particularize their links to the action of the plan—anything else over-simplifies Arctic policy

Østhagen 20, Senior Research Fellow at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute (Andreas Østhagen, 2020, “The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Three Levels of Arctic Geopolitics,” The Arctic and World Order, Chapter 15, pp. 367-372)

It is therefore futile to generalize about how Arctic countries themselves perceive and respond to their security interests and challenges across the whole northern circumpolar region. Security and—essentially defense—dynamics in the Arctic remain anchored in the sub-regional and bilateral level. Of these, the Barents Sea/European Arctic stand out. Here, bilateral relations between Russia and Norway are especially challenging in terms of security interactions and concerns. Norway is a small state and NATO member bordering a Russia—with its potent Northern Fleet based at Severomorsk on the Kola Peninsula—intent on investing in the Arctic for regional and strategic purpos- es. Since 2014, defense aspects have made relations increasingly tense, with bellicose rhetoric and a surge in military exercises on both sides.43 In other words: with Russia intent on re-establishing the prominence of its Northern Fleet primarily for strategic purposes (albeit with an eye towards regional development as well), Norway—whose defense posture is defined by the situation in its northern areas—faces a more challenging security environment.44

However, bilateral dynamics in the case of Norway–Russia are multifaceted, as the two states also engage in various types of cooperation, ranging from co-management of fish stocks to search-and-rescue operations and a border crossing regime.45 Furthermore, in 2010, Norway and Russia were able to resolve a longstanding (almost four-decadesold) maritime boundary dispute in the Barents Sea, partly in order to be initiate joint petroleum ventures in the disputed area.46 These cooperative arrangements and agreements have not been revoked after the events of 2014,47 a clear indication of the complexity of one of the most fraught bilateral relations in the Arctic.

Dynamics in bilateral relations in the Arctic, even if designated as “ugly,” cannot simply be defined as good or bad. They are influenced by what is taking place at the regional and international levels, but are distinct enough so that they warrant scrutiny and examination.

Mixing Characters and Future Plot Twists

The separation between these three different levels is an analytical tool for unpacking some of the dynamics at work in this specific part of the world. These dynamics are not constant, but constantly evolving. Two aspects are central in assessing how the future of Arctic security might look: the interaction between the “levels,” and the way in which the global relationship of the great powers, in which the non-Arctic state actor China plays a key role, affects the region. The former draws attention to what happens regionally and what from the bilateral or wider international plane influences regional affairs. The latter concerns how great powers (and great power competition) external to a region can impact region-specific developments.

Starting with regional (intra-Arctic) dynamics, the central question is how much developments at this level can be insulated from events and relations elsewhere. If the goal is to keep the Arctic as a separate “exceptional” region of cooperation, the Arctic states have managed to do a relatively good job, despite setbacks due to the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014. This political situation is underpinned by the Arctic states’ shared economic interest in maintaining stable regional relations.

Moreover, we cannot discount the role of an Arctic community of experts, ranging from diplomats participating in forums such as the Arctic Council, to academics and businesspersons who constitute the backbone of fora and networks that implicitly or explicitly promote northern cooperation. The annual conferences that have emerged over the past decade, often gathering several thousand Arctic “experts,” are one such channel.48 Here we should also note the new agreements and/ or institutions set up to deal with specific issues in the Arctic as they arise, such as the 2018 “A5+5” (including China, Iceland, Japan, South Korea and the EU) agreement on preventing unregulated fishing in the Central Arctic Ocean, or the Arctic Coast Guard Forum that was established in 2015.49 Such agreements and interactions among “epistemic communities”50 have a socializing effect on the Arctic states,51 as cooperation becomes the modus operandi for dealing with Arctic issues.

The most pressing regional challenge, however, is how to deal with and talk about Arctic-specific security concerns, which are often excluded from such cooperative forums and venues. The debate on what mechanisms are best suited for further expanding security cooperation has now been ongoing for a decade.52 Some hold that the Arctic Council should acquire a security component,53 whereas others look to the Arctic Coast Guard Forum or other more ad-hoc venues.54

The Northern Chiefs of Defense Conference and the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable were initiatives established to this end in 2011/2012,55 but they fell apart after 2014. The difficulties encountered in trying to establish an arena for security discussions indicate the high sensitivity to, and influences from, events and evolutions elsewhere. Any Arctic security dialogue is fragile, and risks being overshadowed by the increasingly tense NATO–Russia relationship in Europe at large. Paradoxically, precisely what such an arena for dialogue is intended to achieve (preventing the spillover of tensions from other parts of the world to the Arctic) is the very reason why progress is difficult.

Let us now turn us to the international level and how it impacts Arctic affairs. Primarily, this concerns the growing hostility between what some refer to as “two poles”—the United States and its perceived challenger China.56 Some scholars have stressed the anarchic state of the international system, where relative power considerations and struggles determine the path taken by states and thus inexorably lead to conflict.57 However, such analyses focused on relative power do not have to become self-fulfilling prophecies. Measures to alleviate concerns and possible rivalry can after all be taken at the international level—by cooperation, by putting in place agreements, or by developing joint institutions, thereby fostering greater trust.58

If we transfer these theories to the Arctic situation, we note that China’s increasing global engagement and influence has in fact—thus far—been rather subdued in the North. Beijing, for all its rhetoric about its in interests in a “Polar Silk Route” (2018) has used all the correct Arctic buzzwords about cooperation and restraint in tune with the preferences of the Arctic states.59

However, there are legitimate fears that this may be just be a mollifying tactic—merely the beginning of a more assertive Chinese presence where geo-economic actions, i.e. financial investments with motivated by geopolitical goals60—are part of a more ambitious political strategy aimed at challenging the hegemony of the “West” and also the balance of power in the North.61 The Arctic speech by U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo in 2019 fed directly into this narrative.62 The United States obviously has a considerable security presence in the Arctic that ranges from an air base in Thule, rotating ships and planes at Naval Air Station Keflavik, U.S. military personnel in Canada as part of the NORAD exchange program, rotational deployment of U.S. Marines to Norway, as well as its own Alaskan Arctic component.63

The question is whether Chinese actions in the region are meant to challenge this presence by an engagement that appears to assumes predominantly soft-power characteristics. At the same time, shifting power balances and greater regional interest from Beijing need not lead to tension and conflict—to the contrary, they might spur efforts to find ways of including China in regional forums, alleviating the (geoeconomic) concerns of Arctic states.64

The other Great Power with global (international) status as much as Arctic influence is of course Russia, which in contrast to China is by nature an Arctic state. As the by far largest country of the circumpolar region and the most ambitious in terms of military investments and activity, Russia sets the parameters for much of the Arctic security trajectory. This is not likely to change, although exactly how the future Arctic security environment will look like depends on the West’s response to Russian actions predominantly taking place in other regions around the world.

However, Russian military engagement in the Arctic does not have a uniform regional effect: even if old bases are revived and new ones are built along its Northern shoreline and islands, its emphasis is concentrated in the North Atlantic/Barents Sea portions of the wider circumpolar area. This is where the bilateral arena comes into play. Geographic proximity does play a role. Neighbors, after all, are forced to interact regardless of the positive or negative character of their relations. In turn, centuries of interaction compound and form historic patterns that influence relations beyond the immediate effects of other crisis and developments—on the regional or global levels.65 It is precisely the complexity of these relations and multiple multi-level entanglements that make it difficult to categorize them in one way or another.

Take Norway and Russia: the two countries collaborate on everything from dealing with environmental concerns to cultural exchange and border crossings, independent of events elsewhere. At the same time, these relations are not immune to outside developments. The regional upsurge in Arctic attention around 2007/2008 (because of flag plantings, resource appraisals and Russia’s re-focus northwards), had a positive impact on bilateral relations. In 2010, a new “era” of Russo-Norwegian relations was announced,66 after various forms of bilateral cooperation had been established as the Cold War receded.

However, bilateral relations are also behest to power asymmetry, rivalry, and the tendency of states to revert to power balancing (for example, via alliance systems). Moreover, they are influenced by international events. When events in Ukraine brought a deterioration in NATO–Russia relations, Norway–Russia relations were negatively affected.67 Indeed since then mistrust and accusations of aggressive behavior have returned, reminiscent of Cold War dynamics.

At the same time, bilateral relationships are impacted by regional relations (say, a new agreement signed under Arctic Council auspices), and can in turn have an impact on the same relations (deterioration in bilateral relations might, for example, make it more difficult to agree on something in the Arctic Council). In other words, bilateral relations, especially if so delicately balanced as Norway’s relations with Russia, can easily become funnels for issues and dynamics at different levels in international politics.

Nonetheless, as we have mostly seen in their bilateral relations, the Arctic states try time and again to take measures to deviate from exogenous power-balancing behavior and influences. Through regional webs of agreements and collaborative measures, they seek to reduce tension and prevent conflict (even if disagreements persist over conflictual issues elsewhere). This is the balancing act that Arctic states—like states everywhere—must manage.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have employed a stylized separation involving three different levels—the regional, the international, and the bilateral, or, if we wish, the “good,” the “bad,” and the “ugly.” Crucially, what happens in the Arctic does not remain solely in the Arctic, be it environmentally or politically. Conversely events and processes elsewhere can in turn impact the Arctic—in terms of global warming, security, and desires to exploit economic opportunities. Despite this apparent general insight, there are some paradoxical dynamics—explaining the mix of cooperation and tension if not conflict—that are best understood through the threefold distinction presented here: international competition (why the United States is increasingly focusing on China in an Arctic context), regional interaction (why Arctic states still meet to sign new agreements hailing the cooperative spirit of the North), and bilateral relations (why some Arctic states, and not others, invest heavily in their Northern defense posture).

That the Arctic is important for the Arctic states is not new. Indeed, increasing attention has been paid for some time now to northern security challenges by Arctic actors (including Russia, the United States, and by proxy the EU) and those with a growing interest in the Arctic, like China. Yet the intensity of interests is novel. Regional collaborative schemes have expanded in response. The growing importance of the region within the international system is also becoming apparent. This is, however, only partly linked to events in the Arctic (ice-melt, economic ventures, etc.). For a large part it has to do with the strategic position of the Arctic between Asia, Europe, and North America. On the bilateral level, we can note some intra-regional competition, as well as investments and cooperation. However, here it is difficult to generalize across the Arctic “region,” precisely because of the vastness and inaccessibility of the area itself, and the complex nature of relations.

What these nuances imply is that simplistic one-liner descriptions of “Arctic geopolitics” must be taken with a pinch of salt. This should inspire further studies of security politics in a region that is at least as complex as any other part of the world, but that has again become a focal point as the present world order appears to be at a tipping point.

### Threats Real

#### Ignoring security threats in the Arctic inverts the error

Lackenbauer and Dean 20, \*Professor in the School for the Study of Canada at Trent University, \*\*PhD Candidate in the Department of Political Science at the University of Calgary (\*P. Whitney Lackenbauer, \*\*Ryan Dean, Lackenbauer, 2020, “Arctic Exceptionalisms,” The Arctic and World Order, Chapter 14, 331)

In a tidy definition, Michael T. Bravo describes Arctic exceptionalism as scholars treating the Arctic “as a regional security complex with its own, independent, political calculus that is poorly explained by conventional realist theories of international relations.”17 The nature of this security complex remains open to debate. Exner-Pirot suggests that “the Arctic is exceptional in that the environmental sector dominates circumpolar relations,” making it, in effect, a regional environmental security complex.18 By marginalizing traditional military and security issues, the Arctic exceptionalism embedded in these articulations of an Arctic security complex also creates vulnerability in suggesting that the reintroduction of defence considerations inherently undermines them. Furthermore, by prescribing that the logic of exceptionalism points to a certain type of regime predicated on liberal institutionalism, we might overlook different ways that other commentators—rooted in other schools of thought—also identify “exceptional” characteristics to justify or explain national behaviour and regional dynamics.

#### The alt cedes foreign policy to imperialists

Wertheim 22, Senior Fellow in the American Statecraft Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (Stephen Wertheim, “Responses to Aziz Rana,” Dissent, Volume 69, Number 3, Summer 2022, pp. 27-42)

Some discussions of left or progressive foreign policy—Rana’s not included—dance around issues of “hard” political-military power, on the premise that more profound human challenges pertain, say, to econom- ics, race, or the environment. Even if the premise were true, the conclusion would not follow. By avoiding conventionally defined security questions, the left cedes this terrain to the establishment, which has made global military dominance into the foremost priority of U.S. foreign policy, overriding all other goals. In this context, Americans who support global dominance are not necessarily wrong to put a premium on security. They need to hear how a different approach will make them safer.

### Link Turn (Diplomacy Affirmatives)

#### Cooperative Arctic governance alters state-centric security paradigms.

Heininen, 16—Professor, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lapland (Lassi, “High Arctic Stability as an Asset for Storms of International Politics – an Introduction,” *Future Security of the Global Arctic: State Policy, Economic Security and Climate*, Chapter 1, 7-8, SpringerLink, dml) [corrected “definite” to “define,” change denoted by brackets]

The broader and more dark picture of the current state of the world gives one more reason to value the high stability of the Arctic region, that the Arctic is not isolated but keenly a part of the globe and is heavily impacted by globalization and its multifunctional effects; furthermore, that the globalized Arctic has its global implications and drivers that affect both the region and the rest of the globe, as it is described in the GlobalArctic project (www.globalarctic.org). Recent industrial developments, such as aggressively expanding exploitation of minerals and (off-shore) hydrocarbon resources due to increasing resource demand, on the one hand, bring new and more dangerous environmental and societal risks to the Arctic and its people(s) – they have already created the ‘Arctic Paradox’ – and on the other hand, have feedbacks related to global energy and natural resource systems. From this we can conclude that on the other hand, the ‘Antropocene’ is already at play in the Arctic, as Finger discusses in his chapter, and on the other hand, what happens in the Arctic matters on a global scale.

To conclude, the Arctic region with its high political stability, as well as military structures based on the nuclear weapon systems of Russia and the United States, and with a keen international (mostly multilateral) cooperation, much initiated and supported by nonstate actors, could be interpreted to be positively ‘exceptional’ and left out of regional crises and wars and political and military tension. Here the Arctic and international Arctic cooperation would be and become a joint valuable, human-made asset between the eight Arctic states, as the International Space Station (ISS) acts for Russia and the United States and their space cooperation. Furthermore, here the Arctic / international Arctic cooperation would be a reserve for the future, the moment, when it is, again, needed to calm down and to press reset. The situation might come sooner than later, when the world, including Russia and the United States, is facing even more serious regional and irrational warfare than the threat by ISIS and the exposing middle East, that is, real big worldwide challenges and threats, such as immediate impacts of rapid climate change and the ‘Anthropocene’.

In this kind of situation, the Arctic would act as a test ground and a workshop to examine and test soft ways of governance and brainstorm an alternative way to definite [define] security by causing a paradigm shift (see Heininen in this volume). Here the two discourses are far too much state-centric. A more interesting feature of Arctic security is the coexistence of several concepts of security and its transformation from traditional and state-controlled security to human security with an emphasis on the environment, or economic development/security, and that they are closely related to each other making ‘Arctic security’ a special kind of phenomenon to influence the region and its geopolitics. With regard to the future securities of the global Arctic there are challenges, which go beyond state sovereignty and nationalistic security thinking.

## Impact

### No “State of Exception” Impact

#### Securitization doesn’t automatically justify emergency actions—if so, it’s non-unique.

Çetindişli, 24—PhD candidate, Bursa Uludag University, Department of International Relations (Özge Gökçen, “A Methodological Discussion on Evaluating the Success of Any Securitizing Move,” International Journal of Social Inquiry, 17(1), 2024, pp. 1−16, ST=security theory, dml)

Furthermore, Bigo (2002) argues that contrary to the claims of the CS, security is not a ‟field” that is the responsibility of any security forces, and therefore there is no distinction between the political sphere and the security sphere. Moreover, most of the current security practices are already extraordinary, and with each passing day the ‟extraordinariness” is brought into daily politics via the practices of power (pp. 64–65), or the de-formalized law and administration.

The emphasis on ‟emergency,” which refers to the suspension of responsibility, transparency, and accountability, is seen in the context of the study as a ‟purification ritual” (Bigo, 2000, p. 325) in which everything is justified in the face of a threat.

However, sophisticated analyses reveal that the response to a securitized threat following any securitizing move is not always exceptional, sometimes it is a routine practice, a normalized exception, and sometimes a combination of both exceptional and routine factors (Bigo, 2000; Bourbeau, 2014; Corry, 2012; Floyd, 2016; Floyd, 2023; Salter, 2010; Trombetta, 2008).

6. Concluding Remarks

ST focuses on the process by which any issue that constitutes the subject of the public sphere is declared an existential threat via the speech act, thus established as a security concern. The original posit of the theory is that a securitizing move transforms a succeeded security practice when the target audience accepts the arguments of the securitizing agent, and the agent is freed from constraints. Thus, an analyst who wants to evaluate the outcomes of any securitizing move has two key factors to consider: ‟audience approval and adopting extraordinary measures.” However, the classical version has been heavily criticized for failing to adequately determine the status of these constituents (audience and exceptionalism) and for promoting a securitizer-driven and non-usual process to address urgent threats.

This study seeks to provide analysts with an avenue, more specific than before, of ‟the conditions that need to be met for a certain securitizing move to occur successfully” which was theorized in a non-rigid way in the classical cast. In this sense, the paper begins by addressing ‟the politics of the audience.” In theory, the CS defines securitization as an intersubjective process and delineates the audience as one of the main actors of this process. However, it did not sufficiently answer some fundamental questions such as ‟who or whom this audience consists of” or ‟how to measure the reactions of the relevant audience,” thus dragging securitization ‟in practice” to a process that takes place only under the patronage of the securitizer.

Given this, the study proposes an ‟effective and visible audience portrait” to strengthen the intersubjective character that makes the theory unique and addresses these ambiguities. An empowered audience can be a counterbalance to the uncontrolled actions of securitizing actors. It also argues that the ‟engaged audience” would be specifically determined for each case study, as each society, state, or institution has a different form of government, norms, and culture. To measure the support or resistance of the engaged audience, the study suggests observation of social events such as protests or riots, as well as formal (voting on a particular issue or a general election) or informal (opinion polls or surveys) methods, again depending on the context in which securitization takes place (whether democratic or not).

The second issue problematized in the study is the logic that confines securitization to an exceptional security framework, reminiscent of fast-track procedures or coercive methods such as military and police forces. ‟The logic of exception” is both inherently risky and inappropriate for real-world securitizations. Indeed, in recent years, the security perception has transcended its conventional boundaries, and besides conventional concerns, sophisticated ones like epidemics or environmental degradation have been added to the security agenda. With this expansion, in many cases, the securitizing move has been followed by ‟unexceptional responses.” So, the paper argues that in addition to the ‟exceptional ways” of original ST to deal with an existential threat, ‟normalized exceptional” and, more importantly, ‟routine responses” should be inserted into the functioning of ST. ‟Normalized exceptional” is what Neal (2012) calls ‟legislative exceptionalism,” which are practices that were once seen as an exceptional response but which, over time, transform into the ‟new normal” thanks to legislation enacted by governments. The USA’s 2001 Patriot Act and the UK’s 2001 Anti- Terrorism, Crime, and Security Act (ATCSA) exemplify the institutionalization of exceptionalism through legislative measures against the relative slowness of normal politics. ‟Routine responses” refer to any ‟action/observable change in behaviour that takes place in the ordinary functioning of normal politics” (Floyd, 2016, p. 684) or established mechanisms in liberal democratic states and is associated with the securitizing movement. Contrary to the ‟exceptionalism of securitization,” the ‟decision-making is open in the sense that legislatures and other bodies are able to scrutinize the executive” (Roe, 2012, p. 251). In this sense, the process is accountable and transparent. For instance, a decision to impose a sanction that follows established norms in response to the presumed threat. Inspired by Foucault and Bourdieu, Bourbeau (2014, p. 190) calls them the ‟logic of routine” and describes them as a set of routinized and stereotyped practices carried out by bureaucrats and security experts, in which technology plays an important role.

### No Endless War

#### No endless war or racial violence---US has and will exercise massive restraint.

Mazarr ’20 [Michael; 2020; Ph.D. from the University of Maryland, M.A. in Security Studies from Georgetown, senior political scientist at the RAND Corporation; Washington Quarterly, “Rethinking Restraint: Why It Fails in Practice,” 43(2), pp. 7–32, https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2020.1771042]

The restraint literature downplays the often-powerful reluctance with which successive US administrations have grappled with most decisions to intervene. US action in cases like the Balkan wars and even Libya only came with great hesitancy and after fierce internal debates.8 The United States has shunned many opportunities for large-scale interventions in the last generation alone—in Somalia, Rwanda, Syria, and elsewhere.9 US administrations did not act in crises in the Great Lakes region of Africa and two major examples of Russian aggression in Georgia and Ukraine.10 An infamous case of non-intervention was the Darfur tragedy in the Sudan, when credible accusations of genocide did not prompt US action.11 The United States would never have invaded either Afghanistan or Iraq had it not been for 9/11; indeed, then-NSC official Richard Clarke and others begged two administrations to strike al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan for months beforehand, to no avail.12 In regard to humanitarian intervention broadly speaking, the selectivity of US action, rather than a general impulse to intervene, is the dominant lesson.13

Even with regard to Vietnam, two US presidents (Kennedy and Eisenhower) struggled to avoid an open-ended US commitment; when the United States did engage, it was because Lyndon Johnson felt a need to stand up to communist aggression and protect his personal reputation, but he was hardly enthusiastic about the prospect. He was painfully conflicted about the war and deeply regretted having to fight it.14 In other words, when US interventionism has occurred, it has often been reactive and halfhearted rather than aggressively ambitious. In fact, the alleged epicenter of US global military power—the Department of Defense and the military services—have forcefully opposed many interventions in places like the Balkans, Somalia, and Libya, believing they should husband their power for major wars. The two leading modern conceptual articulations of criteria for going to war—the Weinberger and Powell Doctrines—came from senior defense officials, and both represented efforts to constrain, not liberate, the use of force.15 Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates told a graduating class at West Point that “any future defense secretary who advises the president to again send a big American land army into Asia or into the Middle East or Africa should ‘have his head examined,’ as General MacArthur so delicately put it,” 16 reflecting a widely held view at Defense—one far afield from the ideas of unrestrained primacy. A similar impulse for limits has emerged in major diplomatic initiatives. In a recent essay outlining a restraint agenda, Stephen Wertheim suggests that the United States should “seek to normalize relations with North Korea” in part with a nuclear deal, and that it should “end its grudge match” with Iran.17

In fact, the United States at one time embraced both these ideas in the form of the Agreed Framework with North Korea and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran. The later US desertion of these accords was prompted by hawkish factions in two Republican administrations, not an indiscriminate national hegemonic inclination.18 Nor can US involvement in foreign wars and interventions usually be traced to a hegemonic desire to spread liberal values. A missionary attitude in foreign policy and liberal value promotion agenda may help lay the groundwork or justify the public case for unnecessary commitments and may be responsible for a few of them. But the largest interventions—Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War, the Balkan wars, Afghanistan, and Iraq—were all primarily motivated by security considerations.19 Some of these actions may have been excessive to begin with or become so over time, and the security concerns that drove them may have been based on bad information or inflated fears. But they were not fueled by the boundless commitment to primacy and liberal value promotion described by many advocates of restraint.

### No Value to Life Impact

#### Value to life is inevitable and subjective – their assertions are the only scenario for negative value

Schwartz, et al 2 Lisa, Lecturer in Philosophy of Medicine, Department of General Practice, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK; Paul Preece, Theme Coordinator of Medical Ethics, Dundee Medical School, Ninewells, Dundee, UK; and Rob Hendry, Medical Advisor, Medical & Dental Defense Union of Scotland, Mackintosh House, Glasgow, UK, Medical Ethics: A Case-Based Approach, p. 112, November 2002

The second assertion made by supporters of the quality of life as a criterion for decisionmaking is closely related to the first, but with an added dimension. This assertion suggests that the determination of the value of the quality of a given life is a subjective determination to be made by the person experiencing that life. The important addition here is that the decision is a personal one that, ideally, ought not to be made externally by another person but internally by the individual involved. Katherine Lewis made this decision for herself based on a comparison between two stages of her life. So did James Brady. Without this element, decisions based on quality of life criteria lack salient information and the patients concerned cannot give informed consent. Patients must be given the opportunity to decide for themselves whether they think their lives are worth living or not. To ignore or overlook patients’ judgement in this matter is to violate their autonomy and their freedom to decide for themselves on the basis of relevant information about their future, and comparative consideration of their past. As the deontological position puts it so well, to do so is to violate the imperative that we must treat persons as rational and as ends in themselves.

## Alternative

### Realism Good/True

#### Realism is true for both America and Russia in the Arctic—the alternative fails and causes war because it ignores national interests

Runesson, 24—Master’s Candidate in International Affairs, Linnaeus University (Linn, “The Arctic: A Stage for Great Power Competition?,” [https://lnu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1933832/FULLTEXT01.pdf](https://lnu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2%3A1933832/FULLTEXT01.pdf), dml)

Continually, the United States declares that the “strategy is rooted in our national interests: to protect the security of the American people” and “to expand economic prosperity and opportunity” (The White House 2022b: 7; USDD 2022: 1). Continuing down the line regarding interests, the National Security Strategy states that the United States is a “world power with global interests” and that in order to advance American prosperity the state will work to shape the international world order in order for it to align with the American interests and values (The White House 2022b: 11), which can be related to the US seeing the Arctic as a “new strategic theatre for competition” (Gricius 2021: 19). Additionally, the US aspires to reduce risk and prevent unnecessary escalation in the region, as well as protecting “freedom of navigation and determine the US extended continental shelf in accordance with international rules” (The White House 2022b: 45).

National defence, homeland security and safe commercial and scientific activities are further listed as American Arctic interests (The White House 2023: 6), and that the Department of Defence will “deter threats to the US homeland from and through the Arctic region” (USDD 2022: 16). This can be related to the fact that the US has given the Arctic region more attention in recent years, especially in relation to Russian military efforts in the region (Bye 2020: 82–83, 93). The United States’ desired outcomes in the Arctic region are to preserve its navigational rights and freedoms in Arctic waters, monitor threats to the freedom of navigation and to protect the global mobility of the US and its allies and partner forces (USDD 2024: 16), security interests have been prominent in American Arctic strategies since the Bush administration in 2009 (Bye 2020: 86).

When looking at the different Arctic aspirations, intentions and interests of Russia and the United States one can quickly detect several similarities in their 34 (63) respective strategies. Both state that they seek to preserve stability in the region, increase national defence, ensure their Arctic territorial sovereignty and military security, as well as economic interests relating to regional economic development and navigational rights in connection to the Northern Sea Route and Arctic waters. Both states also declare that they intend to maintain their status as great powers in the region. There are however a few differences, where Russia for example aspires to stop the delimitation of its continental shelf and has more specific economic interests concerning natural resources in the region. United States on the other hand focuses more on expanding economic opportunities, working for more Arctic cooperation with the Arctic Council and to defend global mobility in the region.

What all of the strategies have in common is nevertheless that they all seemingly stem from the neorealist perspective of structural anarchy. This means that the Arctic aspirations, intentions and interests of Russia the United States all can be interpreted as goals that are centred around the concept of self-help that will help the states survive in the international system, as there is no central authority that rules over the system (Smith 2021: 16–17). One can also argue that the different aspirations are not only motivated by a desire of survival and self-preservation, but that one can detect a desire to dominate the region as both states refer to themselves as great powers that defends the rights that they think they are entitled to (Waltz 1979: 91, 118). This also aligns with the neorealist perspective that great powers often are concerned with ensuring their own security for themselves, as there is not higher authority that can work to protect them, which one could say is reflected in that both Russia and the United States are concerned with self-preserving interests such as economic opportunities and national defence in the region (Parent & Rosato 2015: 52). It is also clear that their respective identities, especially in regards to being recognised as great powers, play a vital part in shaping their Arctic interests, policies and strategies (Hopf 1998: 175, 198).

#### Balance-of-power concerns structure state behavior, even if they can’t explain everything states do.

Blagden, 18—Senior Lecturer in International Security at the Strategy and Security Institute, Department of Politics, University of Exeter (David, “Realism, Uncertainty, and the Security Dilemma: Identity and the Tantalizing Promise of Transformed International Relations,” *Constructivism Reconsidered: Past, Present, and Future*, Chapter 12, pg 205-216, dml)

The previous section documented how social variables might be taken as having the potential to transform international politics. This section now turns to an explanation of why it is so hard to fulfill such seeming transformational promise. Running throughout is the argument that while playing a particular social role or expressing a particular cultural identity are certainly state interests, they are necessarily subordinate to political survival (as a sovereign entity with control over its own foreign policy), “physiological” security (the safety from death and harm of the state’s population), and economic prosperity (a baseline level of which is necessary to ensure physiological security). Put simply, if a state and its population do not exist, it cannot achieve anything else—such as fulfilling a social role or expressing a cultural identity—either.36 And since survival, security, and prosperity all have a material base—as Wendt recognizes via his “rump materialism” (he simply does not think the material base yields determinate outcomes)—so too must states necessarily put the defense of such interests ahead of social role fulfillment if they want to be in a position to play any sort of role in future.37 That is not to suggest that states do not sometimes—or, indeed, often—make ideationally driven foreign policy choices that are detrimental to their other interests. It is simply a description of states’ incentive structure, which much of the time they end up following.

It is necessary at this point to defend the notion that there is, in fact, a material base independent of the social world and that characteristics of that material base can yield causal outcomes. After all, military technology does not descend as manna from heaven, but rather is created via human agency in response to perceived threats, and thus it necessarily contains a dose of military culture and broader social identity from the outset. The same goes for the overall share of national economic resources allocated to defense, and indeed, money itself is a socially constructed store of value, albeit one premised upon underlying materially underpinned wealth.38 Any assessment of strategic priorities is necessarily filtered through the strategic-cultural lens of the institution(s) doing the assessing; asking one’s navy for an analysis of the relative merits of sea denial versus power projection, for example, necessarily delivers an answer infused with that navy’s historical trajectory, its sense of its role in the nation and the world, its internal politics, and so forth. The broader question of whether the sea— like other geographical features—constitutes a strategic barrier or a highway similarly requires cultural interpretation.

Even technologies with such seemingly self-evident destructive power as nuclear weapons are not self-evidently “good” or “bad,” either morally or strategically, absent social interpretation. One might see them as “bad” because of the potential humanitarian consequences of their use (or because of the constraints they impose on conventional military options), or “good” because of the casualties in conventional war they prevent (and deterrence that they enable at low relative cost). Their political meaning is thus socially constructed, even if the physiological effects on human bodies of their detonation have only one possible outcome. If military technology and resources require a social component to be both developed and meaningfully deployed, then Wendt’s contention that there is indeed a “rump” material base but that it is simply indeterminate—in the absence of a friend/enemy distinction—as a cause of international outcomes becomes alluring.39

Crucially, however, each of these social choices involves a decisive material effect that is not open to interpretation. It may be debatable whether nuclear weapons are “good” or “bad,” but the effect that one will have on the city and its population of frail, carbon-based human animals over which it detonates represents a single, determinate outcome—and a state facing another state armed with them must therefore make certain necessary calculations based around that capability.40 In the same vein, while the strategic threat/opportunity constituted by geographical features, such as the oceanic moats enjoyed by the United States and United Kingdom, may be a matter of interpretation, the underlying material factor—humans’ inability to cross water without spending resources on capital (ships) that could otherwise have been spent on further ground forces—yields certain necessary outcomes. Indeed, the very foundation of relations between major powers after 1945—secure second-strike nuclear deterrence and its disincentivization of conventional aggression41—rests on a physical “fact”: the relative impenetrability of water to the electro-magnetic spectrum and the associated survivability that it provides to ballistic missile submarines.

The same goes for the decision over what share of national economic resources to allocate to defense. Choosing a proportion may indeed be a socially and ideationally informed political choice, but the underlying size of the resource pools—and the military potentiality that they underpin— rests on the total size of the state’s capital stock (both human and physical), which is not a matter of social interpretation. And while military technology is indeed developed in response to human agency, it is done so from within the technical bounds of the feasible. Such rebuttals apply more widely: while the balance of power, including resources and technology, is indeed necessarily interpreted through states’ social lenses, it nonetheless conditions the bounds of the possible even in the absence of social content. And when those possibilities include hostile use, certain behaviors are necessitated by prudent states seeking survival for their populations.

Realists should indeed be castigated if they infer predictions solely from the balance of currently existing military hardware—a thin and intellectually impoverished understanding of relative power—and critics are correct to point out that a large stock of materiel is not the same as being able to compel another to do that which they would not otherwise have done, in line with the behavioral output understanding of power commonly associated with Dahl (as distinct from the input understanding).42 But viewing total state power in terms of overall assets, defined as the state’s total stock of physical,43 financial,44 and human capital,45 does a better job of first encompassing all the relevant resources—equipment, stores of value, human bodies and brains—and, second, providing an effective measurable proxy for the underlying causes of behavioral power (given that the latter can only be observed ex post, and is therefore not an effective predictor of outcomes). None of this is to deny that there is a social element to the construction of all these power resources, or indeed that the “material” itself involves a large dose of social input, and this chapter is therefore not attempting to “settle” the debate over the precise nature of the relationship. It is simply to point out, rather, that states’ power resources and their effects are not wholly socially constructed and that the nonsocial element produces certain effects.

Turning to specific arguments over states’ pursuit of status, the notion that achieving a particular elevated status and thus fulfilling a certain international-social role might be a goal of states is relatively uncontentious.46 For instance, one insightful recent constructivist work on Britain’s pursuit of international status suggests at the outset that states’ social roles are not the same as their interests, ambitions, values, or capabilities.47 Yet the same work later asserts that social role actually produces national interests, thus implying that states cannot in fact have interests besides those constituted by identity.48 Such conceptual tensions are symptomatic of a theoretical dilemma: the more minimal former assertion is the harder to refute, yet the more ambitious latter claim is necessary if constructivists are to escape the realist retort that fulfilling a social role is merely an interest of states—and a subordinate one to materially underpinned survival at that—rather than the interest. Escaping this retort is in turn necessary if constructivists are to be able to claim that anarchy is indeed what states make of it socially, since transforming the prevailing culture of anarchy would require states to lower their guard against each other—and thus accept higher risk to their survival, at least while the hoped-for transformation was taking place—in pursuit of an international-social value.

The less contentious point—that playing a particular social role is one of multiple interests—opens the way to conceding that the most fundamental state interests remain “political” survival (of state territory and institutions), “biological” security (of the citizenry’s bodies), and preserving some baseline level of economic prosperity, since a state that cannot survive cannot achieve anything else. But if that is the case, then from these materially underpinned vital interests follows a need to be capable of defending them against potential foes—and that, if it comes to it, means accomplishing certain military missions.49 Such military capability is necessarily underpinned by material resources, even as it also has a socially constructed dimension. Such capability can be provided independently (internal balancing), via allies (external balancing), or through some combination of the two—prudent strategy, including eschewing avoidable confrontation and aligning with the preferences of powerful allies, is a key aspect of state success50—but either way, it rests on some friendly actor’s underlying resources. And reliance on external balancing brings its own dangers, as recently experienced by European NATO, when one’s allies turn coercive.51

In short, such an analysis—while conceding that social role and status are important to states, all else held equal, and that such concerns sometimes drive them to act in imprudent ways—nonetheless suggests that hedging against abandonment, coercion, or outright destruction via balance-of-power positioning is likely to remain pervasive. This is not to say that there will not be variation in the extent and severity of such competition. All manner of ideational variables might exacerbate or reduce tensions, as discussed above, and even in the absence of such social forces, overt, intensive competition may yield self-destructive outcomes if it increases another side’s insecurity and causes them to adopt a more offensively capable strategic posture in response.52 The point, rather, is simply that conflict will never be a wholly absent possibility and that that reality must condition states’ calculations—often to the point of some level of defensive hedging, if the state has the resources and technology to make that feasible—even in times of broadly cooperative relations.

A similar retort can be made against the claims that threat perception and military doctrine are both so fundamentally skewed by culture that they may be commonly and wholly disconnected from balance-of-power concerns, and which subsequently allow for an end to military balancing, mutual threat, and security competition. While this short chapter is clearly not the place for an extensive review, the success of many states— particularly resource-rich ones—in aping military technological and professional best practice would seem to suggest that much of the time states are able to achieve what Gray, borrowing from marketing theory, dubs “good enough” force postures in the face of strategic uncertainty.53 Similarly, when states do “die” in the face of foreign aggression—a rare occurrence in post-1945 international politics—it is more often as a consequence of their relative military weakness and geographical vulnerability than as a consequence of a failure to perceive a looming threat.54 Indeed, a key contribution of the neoclassical realist research program has been to demonstrate that while domestic-political variables may filter strategic behavior in multifarious and often nefarious ways, there are still underlying balance-of-power structural pressures at the international-systemic level that states usually respond to, even if they do so belatedly or imperfectly.55 In short, while Waltzian “socialization” toward accurately perceiving threats and formulating effective military doctrine may frequently be hindered—and sometimes terminally compromised—by cultural factors, as a description of the workings of the international system as a whole (as he intended his theory to be), realist predictions of enduring concern and possible competition over the distribution of material power are not undermined by this recognition.56 Tellingly, despite their strong ideational commitments toward democracy promotion and human rights enforcement under the banner of upholding international order, Western states have recently had the reprioritization of balancing against increasingly capable rivals forced upon them by developments in the balance of power, whether that be China’s rise in Asia for the United States or Russia’s (partial) resurgence in Europe for the rest of NATO.57

Finally, even national identity and the nationalism it engenders—the ideational “master variable” underpinning the nation-state system—is itself forged by the interaction of political group identity and the survival imperative under structural anarchy. To paraphrase Tilly, war makes the state, and the state makes war.58 Modern nation-states may have originated as political groups of individually weak human beings with some shared identity connection, but their choice to form states as protective war machines capable of generating the military power necessary to defend against similar political units, and the subsequent mutual reinforcement of national identity and state strength, is very much consistent with realism’s predictions of the consequences of international structural anarchy. Indeed, as noted earlier, Mearsheimer uses these grounds to argue that nationalism and realism are mutually supportive theories.59 In the post– Cold War world, moreover, mutually threatening political groups’ need to generate the military power necessary for security under anarchy—the security dilemma, in short—helps to explain the explosion of ferocious ethnonationalist and sectarian conflict within and between the new states emerging from the collapse of previously multiethnic communist federations, secular Middle Eastern autocracies, and so forth.60 Such conflict has in turn forged the identity of the states and state-like entities emerging from it. In short, while it is certainly not impossible for national identities to shift, as noted above, the process of their generation nonetheless suggests that they are endogenous to—rather than readily capable of exogenously shifting to transform—international systemic security competition and balance-of-power positioning, that they are as much a dependent variable as an independent variable.

Uncertainty and the Menacing Shadow of the Future

The previous section outlined why some of the otherwise most convincing constructivist variables at work in international politics nevertheless cannot promise to transform international politics away from a world of “realist,” security-motivated balance-of-power positioning. This section turns to discuss why this is something that social variables will continue to struggle with as long as there is an international system.

The principal barrier to states ever setting aside their inclination to guard against each other and instead embrace each other as “friends”—no matter how strong their leaders’ or citizens’ desire to transform the culture of international anarchy—is uncertainty over others’ intentions, particularly their future intentions.61 Following the logic of the prisoners’ dilemma, a state62 that trusts that another means it no harm while the other state concludes that it now has an opportunity to pursue advantage may be punished severely for its complacency, rendering such trust perilous, particularly in security affairs, where defection from cooperation could result in the end of the “game” for one party.63

The meaning and implications of this “uncertainty” assumption merit consideration, however. Human beings are constantly trying to impose certainty on a contingent world via cognitive heuristics and neural shortcuts, for the sake of their own mental well-being.64 Indeed, since humans derive meaning and value from the self-imposed certainty of ideational reinforcement, so too they can derive benefit from the entrenchment of both amity with and enmity against “others,” even when this creates other complications and dangers.65 As a result, much of international politics is influenced by habit, both the habit of friendship and the habit of animosity.66 “Uncertainty” also means different things to different people: for realists, it is a condition from which to infer fear about others’ possible behavior; for constructivists, by contrast, it may simply refer to the inherent indeterminacy of information until it is imbued with social content.67 It may be possible to build trust in others’ benign intent over time and thereby escape security competition, meanwhile, through their costly signaling: forgoing capabilities and policy options that a potential aggressor would not want to do without.68 States can also have the certain “friendship” of those with whom they are balancing against a third-party threat, and if that threat is long-lived, then so too may be the certainty of alliance.69

Illustrating this “uncertainty about uncertainty,”70 consider one of the highest profile oft-invoked security dilemmas: the Cold War escalation of U.S.-Soviet hostility, during which the most seminal security dilemma theorization took place.71 Robert Jervis—one of the concept’s foremost progenitors—subsequently questioned whether the Cold War can be understood as a security dilemma after all, understood as a tragic cycle of mutual threat between nonrevisionist security seekers driven by uncertainty over the other’s intentions. Neither side was “uncertain” over whether the other was an adversary. And as subsequent archival revelations document, each side did want to destroy the other, and correctly inferred as much of its opponent.72

Jervis’s “recantation” of the Cold War-as-security-dilemma is itself bounded, however, and this bounding sheds light on the ways in which varieties of uncertainty can still operate even between states with “certain” mutual intent. “Greedy” states versus “security-seeking” states are themselves binary ideal types that mask an underlying spectrum. Practically all states are greedy, in terms of wanting to improve their lot, if the costs are low enough.73 Conversely, few states are greedy to the point of total unconcern for security; not even Nazi Germany desired limitless global war. While there may not have been uncertainty over each side’s Cold War intent, therefore—enmity-driven desire to defeat and ultimately destroy the other—there was still uncertainty over underlying motivations. 74 A desire to exterminate an enemy population may entail quite different behavior than a desire for ideological supremacy, for example, and the two may therefore merit different policy responses, even though both fall within the domain of “hostile” intent. Such doubt over motivations—even within the cognitively “certain” domain of U.S.-Soviet enmity—still added up to a variety of security dilemma: the most salient question for Americans was not “is the Soviet Union an enemy?” but rather “what might Moscow do about situation X, in Y circumstances, at time Z?” The same is evident in major power politics today. Washington is not “uncertain” over whether or not China and Russia are its “adversaries,” defined in broad and obvious terms, but there is a high degree of uncertainty over what types of rivals they represent and their associated future strategic choices. Recognition of uncertainty’s nonbinary nature, in short, does not undermine the argument that states’ inability to know others’ future behavior with perfect reliability incentivizes them to worry about possible future dangers. Realists disagree over prospects for avoiding security competition through signaling motivations, of course,75 but all variants are united by recognizing the enduring significance of the balance of material power.76

On top of these qualifications to the uncertainty-over-intentions assumption come disagreements over the most appropriate response to such uncertainty. Conceding that we can never know another state’s future intentions with mathematical certainty, and therefore that the worst-case outcome—surprise attack by a concealed aggressor—will always remain a hypothetical possibility does not necessarily imply that security is maximized by treating such a scenario as likely. Provoking war for fear of possible future war is like committing suicide for fear of death, and given the balancing often generated by hostile behavior, provoking others into uniting against oneself through attempted power maximization can ultimately reduce one’s security.77 While worst-case contingencies always merit consideration, policy planning—particularly decisions over how much of the national resource base to devote to defense (“guns”) versus consumption and productive investment (“butter”)78—necessitates probabilistic calculations of the relative dangers of overarmament (provoking balancing alongside domestic economic immiseration) versus underarmament (attack by a better-armed adversary).79 Intense security competition can therefore be an irrational and self-defeating response to mere uncertainty over future intentions, in the absence of other threat data.80 Both “realist” and “constructivist” variables can feature among this threat data and therefore play a crucial part in determining the optimal strategic response to such intentions uncertainty, and that in turn conditions whether the potential threat posed by each side’s capabilities, be they latent or realized, manifests itself as a security dilemma. For many realists, the offense-defense balance of technology and geography determines whether uncertainty over others’ intentions merits military confrontation and determines the (in)stability of states’ strategic relations.81 For constructivists, the solidarity/enmity borne of sociocultural similarity/difference may be equally decisive.

But neither of these observations—that uncertainty neither carries a single meaning nor prescribes a single strategy—undermines the core claim that survival has a material base that necessitates continual security-motivated concern for one’s position in the balance of power. Survival may indeed be “multiply realizable,” with social/ideational variables informing the path taken, alongside various “realist” variables. But given all states’ need to safeguard a materially based hierarchy of interests without wholesale reliance on others’ politically contingent (and therefore capricious) benevolence—whether that be potential abandonment by erstwhile allies, potential attack by erstwhile neutrals, or potential coercion by either—their position in the balance of power will always remain relevant to their future security. And given that situation, the conditions for mutual threat and an associated security dilemma to re-emerge are unlikely to be permanently expunged, despite such a deterioration going unrealized indefinitely in many cases due to other overlying factors.82 Fear of future conflict—at least against some state, if not against any specific state—thus remains an endemic feature of international politics. And much of that is still down to the enduring concerns of structurally based realism: international-systemic anarchy, its absence of a reliable sovereign enforcer of global peace, and the associated dangers of offensively capable peers of unreliably benevolent intent.

Tellingly, while many contemporary states have achieved mutual “friendship,” they have rarely sustained it once the strategic factors holding them together—such as alliance against a mutual threat, shared membership of a great(er) power’s dependency network, or some other mutually beneficial exchange—have disappeared. This suggests that such “friendship” is as much a dependent variable (an outcome of realist balancing behavior) as an independent variable (a transformational force in international politics).83 Even within the zone of friendship that had come to characterize the European “community” by the late 1980s, for example—probably the deepest case of intersubjective recognition, cooperation, and sovereignty pooling to date—Britain and France still worried intensely about the potential power imbalances created by German reunification, and they were not content until reunified German power was subordinated via a restated US commitment to NATO.84 As noted previously, moreover, via both Trump and Brexit—ideationally motivated shifts in foreign policy orientation85—Euro-Atlantic security relations have recently displayed a dramatic backsliding, raising the specter of alliance breakdown and coercive confrontation. The relative power of all sides is critical to their ability to resist/dispense such coercion and safeguard future security even in the possible absence of alliance support. Even within the EU, the ability of members to resist or dispense coercion comes down to relative power: witness Greece’s experience at German hands in the context of the Eurozone crisis, and contrast it with the lack of sanction for Franco-German breaches of EU rules.86 And between NATO and Russia, a 1990s moment of optimism over developing friendship has retrenched to coercive confrontation as an outcome of each other’s choices.87 All these developments—which can be interpreted as negative movement along the spectrum between cooperation and conflict—illustrate the continuing centrality of relative power to safeguarding a hierarchy of national interests without dependence on the changeable commitments of others.

As a consequence, the base conditions for the security dilemma will always exist between sovereign states under anarchy, even if it lies wholly dormant for most states most of the time, thanks to overlying factors. Interstate friendship does not render deterioration to a security dilemma impossible, and neither does interstate animosity preclude stable and durable cooperation.88 So while identity—which in any case is “sticky” and slow to change—certainly matters to security relations, it is unlikely to trump some combination of power and informational variables.89 Of course, if international relations were transformed by the emergence of a single world-state, the system would no longer be anarchic and the units-formerly-known-asstates would not need to rely on relative power for their security, and thus such competition would end.90 That requirement, however, does not look likely to be fulfilled anytime soon.

Conclusion

Conflict and cooperation is not some binary “either/or” condition, but rather a spectrum. So too the security concerns borne of uncertainty over motivations are not some irreversible “on/off” switch, be that permanently severe or permanently solved. There is certainly far more peace in the world than the most pessimistic readings of realism would seem to imply,91 and ideational similarity and solidarity—as well as the power and informational variables beloved of realists—clearly have something to do with this. Interests within the parameters of continuing to survive are socially constituted, and even the route to survival itself represents an ideationally informed choice. But the need to safeguard a materially underpinned hierarchy of interests if states are to continue to exist—a necessary prerequisite to performing any kind of social role—still incentivizes them to value their position in the balance of power as a safeguard against future dangers. Of course, states can and do disregard certain incentive structures in favor of others.92 But until all states are known to have done so—a high bar indeed—the potential for security competition to re-emerge in the international system will continue to exist. And knowing that, states will continue to prize the capabilities to provide for their own security . . . and so on, creating enduring conditions for security dilemmas to one day reappear, even though they go overlain by other factors in most international relationships most of the time.

Both realists and constructivists therefore have work to do, in terms of both refining their paradigmatic cores and recognizing the necessity of analytically eclectic cross-pollination to explain many of the most pressing questions of real-world international politics. Realists must do more to incorporate identity as a variable that produces systemically significant variation in behavior rather than as some adjunct bolt-on, whether that be via the post-1990s boom of neoclassical theorization or attempts at microfoundationally elaborated structural realism.93 Porter’s work on the interaction of power and habit in determining US grand strategy is a good recent example, while—as noted earlier—Snyder’s Myths of Empire remains a key benchmark.94 Constructivists, for their part, must continue to investigate the relationship between states’ potentially infinite array of socially constituted interests, their materially underpinned hierarchy of core survival requirements, and the enduring concern for relative power that the latter generates. Along the way, both sides must be circumspect in their appeals to allegedly “smoking-gun” examples. For realists to claim that structure alone explains World War II or the Cold War, for example— missing the universalist ideologies of German Nazism, Soviet communism, or US liberalism—would be a stretch indeed. Equally, constructivists’ most beloved examples—amicable US-Canadian relations along an easily passable land border, the relative underarmament of Germany and Japan, greater American fear of a few North Korean atomic bombs than hundreds of British thermonuclear warheads, the rise of European Union, and so forth—can all be readily explained with reference to balances of capability and information. “Analytic eclecticism” is easy to profess, but the most pressing contemporary questions of world politics require that theorists practice it too.

For those not interested in resolving paradigm wars or “isms” debates, meanwhile, the intersection of material-structural pressures on state behavior with socially constituted foreign policy preferences provides ample scope for investigating crucial real-world questions of our time. Viewed in rationalist terms, this might involve investigating the role of social variables in informing leaders’ utility functions, and thus their preference orderings under the overall structural constraint of needing to ensure continued survival. Just how far could the United States meddle in the Middle East at the behest of domestic interests, for example, before it critically harmed its power position vis-à-vis China? Extending the previous point, has US unipolarity created unique space for a “crazy” foreign policy that disregards the balance of power—both by the United States itself and by close US allies—and will this change if or when unipolarity wanes?95 Relatedly, just how far can the likes of Germany and Japan sustain their pacifistic foreign policy orientations in the face of US relative decline or disengagement and the likely associated need for them to provide more for their own security? Changing tack, how does a small power like Sweden—say—make its trade-off between providing mobile forces for an EU Battlegroup (a cause it values), on the one hand, and maintaining large amounts of conscripts and armor on its eastern border to hedge against Russia (a threat that it cannot be rid of), on the other? Are UK efforts to rebrand as an “aid superpower” facilitated by a nuclear deterrent and the US alliance, say, providing leeway to follow an ideational foreign policy under the cover of a “good enough” military umbrella? In short, there is scope for any number of midlevel theories of foreign policy under the constraint of still recognizing that interstate balance-of-power considerations continue to structure the international system.