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BORDERS

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Articles

Actions Speak Louder Than Words: The Impact of International Organizations on Public Behavior
Adam Cullen

Climate Securitization: Trends in Norm Diffusion Through Network Analysis
Anna Bychkova

Small-Scale Agreements, Large-Scale Impacts: The Impact of Local Ceasefires on Conflict-Wide Ceasefires
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Domestic Explanations for Autocratic Conflict Onset on Territorial Disputes
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The Spoils of Nature: When International Oil Pricing Matters
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Politicizing Foreign Aid: A Review of Political Partisanship's Impact on Foreign Aid Flows
Trevor Norton, Timel Rodriguez, And Marzieh Kazemi

Global Justice and Sovereignty: The Problem with Structural Sovereignty and Constitutive Identities
Autumn Perkey

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We extend our gratitude to the dedicated authors, peer reviewers, and editorial team whose expertise and commitment have contributed to the creation of this journal. Their tireless efforts have ensured the highest standards of academic rigor and intellectual engagement. We also express our appreciation to the mentors and institutions that have supported this endeavor, recognizing the importance of fostering academic research in the field of international relations.

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Actions Speak Louder Than Words: The Impact of International Organizations on Public Behavior

Adam Cullen

Abstract In the wake of COVID-19 and potentially catastrophic climate change, international organizations have recommended that the public alter its behavior in some significant ways. Despite this, international relations literature has focused solely on how International Organizations (IOs) can change the public's views rather than their actions. I rectify this omission by looking at the interaction between the signaling of IOs and three other messengers: domestic elites, the United Nations and federal courts. Drawing on elite cueing and IO legitimacy literature, I theorize that domestic elites and the UN will be effective at altering the public's behavior, while courts will not. To test my hypotheses I administer a randomized survey experiment to approximately 3,000 citizens of 10 UN member states. The survey tests whether citizens are willing to adopt more sustainable methods of transportation based on the recommendation of an environmental IO, with each treatment group receiving statements of support or opposition from the messengers being studied. Finally, I conclude and draw policy implications regarding the most effective ways to get the public to change their behavior.

Introduction

"Actions speak louder than words" has become a tired cliche, but it is still true in politics. In the United States, we often hear around election time that the only poll that counts is the one that is taken on election day. To put that in simpler terms, it doesn't matter who people say they are going to vote for, only who they cast their vote for when they take action and go to the polls. Recent political events have also made it necessary in the eyes of international organizations for the public to change its behavior rather than just their views. The World Health Organization (WHO) and Center for Disease Control (CDC) were urging the public to adopt public health measures, such as wearing masks, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic was a once-in-a-generation event, this dynamic is true of many environmental organizations as well. For example, while groups like Greenpeace largely focus their attacks on corporations, they also urge individual restraint on overfishing and deforestation, among other practices.

Why, then, does so little international relations literature focus on people's behavior rather than just their views? What are the most effective signaling tactics to get people to change their behavior? Public opinion of international organizations is one of the

most studied topics in IR literature; there have been countless theories posited on what makes IOs legitimate and how they can boost their standing with audiences (Chapman 2009; Dellmuth and Tallberg 2021; Greenhill 2018; Panke et al. 2022; Tingley and Tomz 2021). However, this breadth of work has not carried over to the logical next step of how people act, rather than just how they think.

Opinion is surely easier to study than behavior because it is easier to measure, and it also takes a lot less effort on all sides to change people's minds than it does to inspire any sort of action. However, recent events have highlighted the importance of studying the latter. The question of whether governments or international organizations can actually affect the public's decision-making has come into sharp focus in recent years since both the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and increased alarm surrounding the catastrophic effects of climate change. Even during the height of the pandemic, many members of the public flouted guidance from groups like the WHO or the CDC. When looking back at the pandemic and other similar issues, it is important to determine why so many members of the public did not follow the guidelines, and what could have been different in the IOs' messaging to better assure compliance.

The growing effects of climate change also necessitate more emphasis on organizations' role in ensuring behavioral compliance on an individual level. Some sustainability measures necessitate as much compliance on an individual level as they do on a state level, or at the very least, could be hampered by large swaths of individual resistance. Take, for example, the issue of sustainable transportation and infrastructure. Obviously, it is mostly the role of the government and private firms to update a nation's infrastructure to a landscape that is green and long-lasting. However, individual citizens also need to take a number of actions for these programs to be as successful as they can be. These include voting for politicians who support such programs or actively changing their own commute methods to ones that are more environmentally friendly. Governments and IOs surely want to change people's minds in favor of their programs, but to be as successful as possible, they need to change people's behavior as well.

Determining when and why people trust an IO's messaging is essential to the discussion of whether an IO's decision-making can actually trickle down to that of the common person. Answering these questions will help us determine in what situations IOs can actively get the public to change their behavior. This aspect of IOs' role has garnered more academic attention since the onset of COVID-19 (Khemani 2020), but the signaling tactics that IOs employ in these scenarios remain largely unexplored. Also unexplored is the interaction between IOs and other groups of political messengers, particularly those on the domestic level. How do people react differently when an organization's advice is supported (or contradicted) by their domestic representatives? Few scholars have addressed this question, either in regard to elected representatives or other actors like judicial institutions.

I attempt to answer these questions by looking at the signaling tactics employed by three different groups: domestic elites, the United Nations, and legal institutions. I theorize that cueing from domestic elites will be the most effective at getting the public

to change their behavior. To test my theory I conduct a randomized survey experiment of roughly 3,000 citizens in 10 randomly selected UN member states stratified by region. The experiment features a scenario in which an international organization has recommended that citizens make an effort to switch to more sustainable methods of transportation, variously supported and opposed by each group being studied. Finally, I draw several policy implications regarding IO signaling tactics and environmental measures.

Literature Review

International relations literature is filled with theories that seek to argue the ways in which IOs can improve their opinion of themselves and the policies that they seek to promote. Having legitimacy in the eyes of the public is generally thought to be necessary for IOs to remain relevant, grow, and maintain compliance with international law and norms (Barnett and Finnemore 1999; Tallberg and Zurn 2019). Additionally, different messaging tactics have been proposed as ideal for getting the public on an organization's side, including offering policies in the language of specific states' security interests or letting the elites of particular states handle the messaging on the IO's behalf (Chapman 2009; Dellmuth and Tallberg 2020). These authors have produced a wealth of valuable work on IO legitimacy and messaging, but the outcome variables in all their papers are related to the public's views, not their actions.

There are mixed results regarding how much sway an IO has over public opinion on a particular issue. There are numerous works alleging that approval by groups like the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) can dramatically improve public opinion on the use of military force in a particular conflict (Thompson 2006; Maliniak and Tierney 2014; Greenhill 2018). These works broadly argue that IOs can lend prestige and legitimacy to domestic decisions that may otherwise be controversial (Hurd 2002). However, there are an equal number of works that argue that IOs have a constraining effect due to rising populist and anti-globalist sentiments within the global community (Dellmuth et al 2021; Inglehart and Norris 2017; Rodrik 2017). This inconsistency makes it difficult to parse both the most effective messaging tactics an IO can utilize and broadly whether IOs are effective messengers at all.

Along with the inconsistencies of this relationship, few authors have looked at the interaction between an IO and other signalers. Elite cueing is an important topic in addressing this question. Put simply, elite cueing is the idea that members of the public base their opinion on political issues on signaling they receive from political elites. There has been debate over which direction of the relationship is more significant: the views of the audience influencing elites (Inglehart and Norris 2017; Rodrik 2017), elites influencing audiences (Dellmuth and Tallberg 2020; Dur and Schlipphak 2020; Merkley and Stecula 2020; Naoi and Kume 2015; Nelson and Steinberg 2018) or a two-way relationship (Sanders and Toka 2013). Elites can also influence how citizens view IOs, with authors arguing that domestic elites can influence public perception of IOs much more than IOs themselves (Dellmuth and Tallberg 2020). Due to the public's general lack of complex policy knowledge, it is often assumed that elites get

to "frame" the issues for them, casting them in intensely partisan terms even if the audience does not understand them (Dur and Schlipphak 2020; Merkley and Stecula 2020; Naoi and Kume 2015). In particular, partisan elites can make use of in-group and out-group biases to get their constituents onto the side of the issue they are pushing (Bisgaard and Slothuus 2018; Merkley and Stecula 2020). Negative partisanship can make people oppose issues, like measures to address climate change, that, in theory, should be apolitical. It is clear that domestic elites have an impact on the way people think about issues, even when they have little knowledge of the issue or if it contradicts an individual's prior views. However, few have looked at how the messaging of an IO and the messaging of domestic elites on the same issues interact with one another.

None of these works take the next step and ask how this public opinion translates into the citizens' behavior. This would seem to be the logical next question, yet few authors in the literature I have reviewed broach it. When does public opinion of an IO translate into identifiable action? What messaging tactics (or messengers) are most effective in this pursuit? Answers to these relevant questions are lacking within the existing scholarship. If we are to truly understand the effect international organizations have on the public, we need to understand why people behave the way they do, as well as why they think as they do.

Theory and Hypotheses

I test three different mechanisms that may condition the effect an international organization's decision has on citizen behavior: elite cueing, endorsements from other IOs, and endorsements from judicial institutions. Each are institutions that could reasonably have some effect on how the public thinks about an issue, but has different sources of legitimacy and utilizes different signaling tactics. Domestic elites can speak to the public's partisanship and nationalism, recasting the organization's decision using partisan heuristics that domestic audiences can more easily understand. International organizations, especially large and well-known ones like the United Nations, can portray themselves as having higher importance than individual governments and representing the global consensus on a particular policy. Legal institutions portray themselves as unbiased arbiters of the law, free from the political squabbles that influence political parties and even other IOs.

As most citizens will be getting their information filtered by at least one of these sources, I theorize that the IO's decision will not have a significant effect on citizens' behavior in a vacuum. As we have seen from literature analyzing the rise of populist and anti-globalist movements, public trust in international organizations is generally low compared to their trust in domestic elites, especially those from their own political party (Dellmuth et al 2021; Inglehart and Norris 2017; Rodrik 2017). I also believe that the IO statement alone will not be enough information for respondents to mentally situate what it would mean for their daily lives. Some level of interpretation from actors they have a stronger connection to will be needed to have the understanding and strength of opinion necessary to actually change their behavior. For both these reasons, I argue that citizens are unlikely to change their behavior if they are only

provided with the IO's statement.

H1: *Respondents are unlikely to change their behavior based solely on the organization's statement.*

Elite Cueing

In most cases in which an IO issues a policy statement or mandate, domestic audiences will not have the technical knowledge necessary to completely understand or interpret what the decision means for them. They will have to rely on their domestic representatives to interpret the decision for them. Public audiences will not be getting their information directly from the mouth of the IO but from domestic representatives they trust. Whether these domestic elites support the IO's decision or not, it is their spin on the issue that domestic audiences will be hearing and basing their own opinion on. The majority of the public will fall back on partisanship, even against policies that are against their own best interests or that contradict their prior beliefs.

This will have an especially strong effect when elites choose to frame the issue in partisan terms. Prior literature has shown that domestic elites can turn even complex, apolitical issues into intensely partisan ones (Naoi and Kume 2015; Nelson and Steinberg 2018). I argue that even when citizens do have some basic understanding of the issue, they will fall back on partisanship if the representatives of their party take a different stance. Even high-information voters have been shown to make use of partisan heuristics when making political decisions, especially regarding whom they vote for (Walder and Strijbis, 2023). I argue that this effect will hold for other political behaviors, such as the choice of whether to follow environmental guidelines or the choice of whether to protest against or support an IO decision. As previously discussed, partisan elites can make substantial use of in-group bias and negative partisanship to get their base on their side of an issue. We have seen this specifically in regard to environmental issues, as conservatives have strongly opposed regulations and harshly criticized or mocked those on the left who disagree. Most citizens will not have the experience or knowledge to look at an IO's decision beyond the framework of their domestic, partisan politics, so this type of framing can be highly effective. For these reasons, I predict a strong correlation between the position domestic elites take on a policy and whether citizens will adhere to it.

H2: *Citizens are more likely to alter their behavior based on an IO's decision if domestic elites support the decision.*

H3: *Citizens are less likely to alter their behavior based on an IO's decision if domestic elites oppose the decision.*

Endorsement from the United Nations

I have argued previously that, based on past literature, it seems that the public has little trust in international organizations as a whole. However, this varies based

on the particular organization being studied, and the United Nations, probably the most well-known and studied IO, has consistently been shown to have a positive effect on public opinion regarding a particular issue. Large organizations like the UN can portray themselves as a responsible big brother of sorts to smaller institutions and even to domestic governments; endorsement from them can lend legitimacy to decisions by those actors, even for citizens who were initially skeptical (Grieco et al 2011). Those who do not have great trust in the leadership of their own country can look to more like-minded leaders of other nations or organizations to situate how they should feel on an issue. The UN can, in effect, lend some of the legitimacy it holds in the eyes of the public to these other policymakers and organizations.

IOs can also portray themselves as representing the global consensus on an issue. Again, this is particularly the case for those with near universal membership like the UN and could be useful in helping support the message of a smaller, lesser-known group. Thompson (2006), among others, has argued that the UN is a particularly good policy messenger amongst IOs because of its wide recognition and large, heterogeneous membership base. These will be particularly helpful for a smaller, environmental organization that lacks the reach or diversity of membership that the UN does. A smaller environmental group cannot reasonably claim to represent a worldwide consensus on a policy, but the UN can. For these reasons, I predict a strong correlation between the position the United Nations takes on a policy and whether citizens will alter their behavior to adhere to it.

H4: *The endorsement of the United Nations will make it more likely that citizens alter their behavior based on the primary IO's decision.*

H5: *The opposition of the United Nations will make it less likely that citizens alter their behavior based on the primary IO's decision.*

Endorsement from Legal Institutions

Finally, I look at the endorsement of legal institutions. It is important to look at this separately from other international organizations because of how they are characterized in both IR literature and the media. To many, courts are among the most legitimate of institutions, free from many of the biases that plague more politically oriented arguments, or at least should be (Grossman 2013). I argue that legal institutions upholding the IO's decision or mandate will have little effect on whether citizens change their behavior. This runs contrary to much of what has been theorized in the prior literature, which has stated that trust in international courts remains quite high in part due to their apoliticism (Grossman 2013; Voeten 2013).

However, the legal field is highly technical and often uses language, which creates higher barriers to entry for understanding amongst the general public. I believe this high level of technicality will make it difficult for the general public to relate the information to their day-to-day lives and may even open up the institutions to a degree of anti-intellectual sentiment, as fields that require higher levels of education often are (Merkley 2020; Motta 2017). Additionally, I believe that the apolitical nature

of courts' messaging will not be as effective as the highly partisan tone struck by domestic elites. Although courts are, of course, political actors in reality, many legal bodies try to portray themselves as apolitical, neutral arbiters of legality. Respondents will not have as strong a reaction to the courts' relatively neutral language as they will to representatives of their own political party supporting or denouncing a policy more aggressively. For these reasons, I believe that the endorsement of a court will not have a strong effect on whether citizens alter their behavior.

H6: *The endorsement of legal institutions will not have a significant effect on whether citizens alter their behavior based on the primary IO's decision.*

H7: *The opposition of legal institutions will not have a significant effect on whether citizens alter their behavior based on the primary IO's decision.*

Research Design

These hypotheses will be tested via a randomized survey experiment, the results of which will be evaluated through an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) linear regression. A random sample of 10 UN member states, stratified by region using the UN's geoscheme categorizations, will be taken to establish which nations the survey will take place in. After these countries are determined, a random sample of 300 citizens in each country will be taken, and each will be randomly assigned to a treatment group. There will be seven groups: one control group and two treatment groups to test each of the three independent variables. Each respondent will be asked to provide their age, gender, ethnicity, approximate income, and which political party they most identify with. They will then be given the paper's proposed scenario.

Scenario

The proposed scenario will revolve around the recommendation of a behavioral change made by a fictitious environmental group. The mandate or statement issued by the environmental group in this scenario will specifically focus on citizens changing their methods of transportation to those that are more climate-friendly. Transportation was chosen as the topic because, unlike many other environmental regulations, changing one's primary method of transportation, such as driving, walking, or cycling, is something that is actually actionable for most ordinary citizens. However, despite the ability to make changes on an individual level, transportation and infrastructure policy is still a major component of addressing climate change on an international scale.

The treatment groups will each get a different vignette describing the policy, each testing a different hypothesis. The control group will get a simple description of the issued decision, with no added information: "An environment advocacy group has issued a statement recommending that all citizens significantly cut down on air and car travel and replace them with more sustainable alternatives, such as walking, cycling, or driving electric vehicles. They also stated that governments should pass new laws providing tax incentives to those who make these changes in an effort to

promote sustainable transport. Does this recommendation make you more likely to change your own transportation methods?" All treatment groups will receive this blurb and be asked if they would change their behavior, but each treatment group will then receive different information. To test the elite cueing mechanism, two treatment groups will receive the above statement: "In response, (leader of your political party) has issued a statement supporting/denouncing the environmental group's decision." To test the IO endorsement mechanism, two treatment groups will receive "In response, the United Nations Secretary-General issued a statement supporting/denouncing the environmental group's decision. Does this recommendation make you more likely to change your own travel patterns?" To test the judicial mechanism, two treatment groups will receive "In the aftermath of the announcement, a federal court has ruled that it would be legal/illegal for the government to enact these tax incentives for those who follow the environmental group's decision."

Outcome Variable

The outcome variable for this study is the respondents' change in behavior. This will be measured using a five-point Likert scale, as respondents will be asked how likely they are to switch to more sustainable modes of transport. The five response choices will be "not at all likely," "somewhat unlikely," "unsure," "somewhat likely," and "definitely likely." In this study, change in behavior is measured as one's willingness to switch to more sustainable forms of transportation.

To capture a change in behavior as opposed to a change in beliefs in a survey experiment, the scenario must be something that can be acted upon fairly easily. When looking at environmental issues, sustainable transportation methods are something in which change of opinion has very little identifiable impact compared to actually taking action and changing one's routine. Changing from driving to cycling, walking, or using public transport is something that is possible for most people because there are few financial barriers.

Explanatory Variable

There are three primary explanatory variables for this study: *domestic elite cueing*, *endorsement by an international organization*, and *determination of legality from an international court*. Domestic elite cueing is operationalized as public support or opposition to the policy from the leaders of the major domestic political parties. To properly test the causal mechanism, it must be clear that the elite cueing comes from a partisan source. To see if elite cueing is as effective as theorized, the elites must be respected and trusted by the respondents. Presumably, the elites each respondent trusts the most are the leaders of their own political party, with whom they see eye-to-eye on most political issues.

Endorsement by an international organization is operationalized as the UN Secretary-General issuing a statement affirming or opposing the environmental group's decision. The United Nations was chosen as the IO in this scenario because of its high profile and the prior literature suggesting that the UN can make certain policies

more legitimate in some instances. To truly measure the influence of an international institution, the respondents must have some familiarity with the institution and its role in the geopolitical landscape. This level of familiarity will be much higher for the UN than most other organizations.

Endorsement by a judicial institution is operationalized as a federal court ruling that it is legal or illegal for the government to pass tax incentives for following the environmental group's recommendations. The causal mechanism revolves around whether members of the general public will be swayed by judicial institutions' very technical and highly specialized knowledge. The decision to focus specifically on the legality of the potential policies was made to put emphasis on the judicial institutions' particular scholarship and expertise, setting them apart from the institutions tested in the second mechanism.

Control Variables

Each respondent's current *primary method of transport* will be controlled for, as some respondents may already use the sustainable transport methods recommended in the scenario. The respondents will be asked what mode of transport they utilize most often in their daily lives. These are people who would respond that the information would not change their behavior, but not because of the information I provided them. This could skew our results and thus must be controlled for. Additionally, the *type of community* (urban, suburban, or rural) each respondent lives in will be controlled for. This variable will help capture the infrastructure environment each of the respondents lives in, a pivotal factor in the types of transportation options available. Different modes of transportation will be more convenient, more affordable, or more available depending on how developed the area each respondent is living in is. This variable will use the Degree of Urbanization measure developed and utilized by organizations including the European Union, World Bank, and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Finally, demographic factors such as *age*, *gender*, *political party*, and *socioeconomic status* will be controlled. All demographic questions will be included in the survey questionnaire administered to each respondent. These factors could determine either which transportation options are feasible for an individual or their views regarding said options, so it is essential that they are accounted for.

Challenges and Feasibility

The main challenge I anticipate with this study is that people's responses to the survey may not match their actions. It is easy to simply say that you will change your behavior when asked, but it takes a lot more effort to take actions that will upend your daily routine. This could lead to an overestimate of how many people will actually change their behavior when looking at the survey responses and regression results. An attempt to mitigate this has been made in the phrasing of the questions on the survey. Respondents are not asked whether they *will* change their behavior but rather whether

the provided information makes them *more likely* to change their behavior. This will make interpretation and analysis of the regression results easier.

Additionally, there may be an issue of the respondents feeling led to respond in a certain way by the questions. If the respondents understand that these changes truly would make a positive impact on the climate, they may feel uncomfortable admitting that they would not change their behavior, even if that is the case. This is mitigated in several ways. First, no concrete information or statistics are provided in the vignettes that quantify the environmental impact these policies will have. The respondents will instead have to decide whether they trust the words of the environmental group, domestic elites, the UN, or federal courts. To that end, the second part of the vignettes that the treatment group receives will also not contain specific numbers and simply stick to which parties support or oppose the measures. Hopefully, this will assist in measuring the relationship between the respondents' trust in these actors and their behavior rather than what the respondents feel is the morally correct answer.

Discussion and Conclusion

The policy implications of this study are numerous, especially as environmental action becomes increasingly necessary in the face of rising climate change. Firstly, this study can help further clarify the directionality of influence between elites and the public. Looking at the change in effect when the support or opposition of domestic elites is introduced can help clarify how much people base their political actions on pure partisanship. If my hypotheses are supported, this supports the notion that citizens base their political opinions and behavior on that of the partisan elites they most trust. This suggests that the public does not make decisions based purely off of ideology in the traditional sense, but rather goes along with the party they already identify with on some important issues. This should inform future work on the relationship between ideology and behavior, particularly whether pure partisanship can override prior views and ideologies.

My work can also differentiate the effect that courts have compared to other IOs and institutions, if the effect is, in fact, different. My survey experiment will produce different results for the change in behavior inspired by the UN compared to the change inspired by courts. There is inconsistency within the literature as to whether judicial institutions should be looked at separately from other IOs and governmental bodies. Including both variables in the study and disaggregating them can show whether the public at large views them in different or similar ways.

Additionally, this study can help IOs as well as politicians determine the most effective messaging tactics for their policies, particularly regarding environmental issues. Messaging coordination between IOs and domestic elites, if they are on the same page on the policies, may be necessary to ensure compliance to the fullest extent. Domestic politicians can essentially act as interpreters of the IO's decision for unfamiliar or skeptical domestic audiences. IOs should take this into account when devising messaging or signaling tactics for their various initiatives and should promote partnerships with domestic actors on this front. This could inspire more

self-awareness on the part of some IOs, helping them realize that they do not have the reach or vantage point to effectively inspire changes within the public.

My study also presents several avenues for future research. Further research should continue to look at the effectiveness of incentives for sustainability policies. The proposed scenario includes the prospect of tax incentives for those citizens who utilize sustainable transport methods. Along with the changes when various other messengers are introduced, the initial results of this survey will show a baseline level of support for these incentives in conjunction with the environmental group's statement. Other authors can use a similar setup but with different incentives included to test the differing effects of each, as well as with different policies than the one used in this experiment. This will be useful to policymakers seeking the best ways to incentivize behavioral changes amongst their constituents.

Finally, future researchers should look at this relationship between messaging and behavior in the context of other issues, as well as other aspects of environmental policy. I argue that a similar survey experiment to mine could be used to measure the differing effects that each messenger has regarding different policies. Chief among these should be public health policy in the aftermath of the pandemic. While the inaction of some major governments is surely the biggest culprit, the unwillingness of many members of the public to change their behavior in accordance with safety guidelines had catastrophic global consequences. One can argue that domestic elites played a large role in this, as many right-leaning politicians around the world harshly criticized and defied the advice from the WHO and other organizations. Would more people have followed the mandates in the absence of this elite cueing? Performing a similar experiment revolving around public health mandates could answer this question and help unveil where the source of people's hesitancy emanated from.

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Climate Securitization: Trends in Norm Diffusion Through Network Analysis

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Abstract Why do some actors securitize climate change, and do other actors securitize in response? Through what methods is the norm of climate securitization diffused, and what factors influence the diffusion? This study seeks to answer these questions specifically through how proximity to the UNSC influences processes of norm diffusion of climate securitization through learning and emulation as well as agenda control. As states and IOs increase in proximity to the UNSC, more flow of information is expected to occur, and the norm of climate securitization spreads through learning and emulation. Additionally, states and IOs in proximity to the UNSC will be more hesitant to securitize as they fear the loss of agenda control and power to the UNSC. I examine the process of norm diffusion of climate securitization through a Stochastic Actor-Oriented Model (SAOM) network analysis, which produces parameter probabilities for the likelihood of securitization and is measured through text analysis of climate policy decisions. My study has important implications for climate compliance, securitization, and equitable climate policy.

Introduction

The trend to securitize climate change in order to evoke greater change has been ongoing, yet its effects have been understudied. Some studies have found securitization of climate change to be ineffective, citing inefficiency or inaction concerns following securitization, yet many IGOs and nations continue to securitize (Methmann & Rothe, 2012; Dellmuth et al., 2017; Oels, 2013; Trombetta, 2008; Warner & Ingrid, 2019). Recently on April 18th, NATO reinforced its commitment to the environment and security, stating, "The earth's rapidly changing climate and an increase in weather extremes have led NATO to accelerate its efforts in environmental security and environmental protection" (NATO, 2024). However, some actors, such as many small island developing states like Papua New Guinea, chose not to securitize. Why do some actors securitize climate change, and do other actors securitize in response? Through what methods is the norm of climate securitization diffused, and what factors influence the diffusion?

This research investigates the norm diffusion of the securitization of climate change through Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs), specifically how proximity to the UNSC influences climate securitization and how mechanisms of learning and emulation and agenda control affect securitization. Climate security refers to any threats to nations, communities, and individuals as a cause of climate change

(Dellmuth et al., 2017). The securitization of climate change refers to the framing of climate change issues as posing grave security threats to nations, communities, and individuals, requiring urgent action (Warner & Ingrid, 2019). The literature examines climate security from angles of state and human security. State security pertains to safeguarding sovereignty, military, power, diplomacy, and peace within the international system (Dellmuth et al., 2017). NATO and the UNSC are regarded as two IGOs where a state climate security approach is utilized (Dellmuth et al., 2017). Human security, on the other hand, focuses on individuals and communities with policy areas of development, disaster risk reduction, human rights, and migration (Dellmuth et al., 2017). UN agencies are often cited for applying this approach with a focus on human insecurity rather than conflict management (Dellmuth et al., 2017).

In order to answer the question of why actors securitize or if they securitize in response to other actors, examining norm diffusion will provide valuable insights into how the norm of climate security diffuses globally and how indirect enforcement mechanisms of climate security policy operate. Literature exists on the norm diffusion of climate change issues at the international level, but not on the norm diffusion of climate change securitization at the international level. Examining norm diffusion of the securitization of climate change can provide valuable insights into why securitization of climate change occurs and what motivates its spread, especially as some research has found securitization of climate change to be ineffective. My research extends arguments of agenda control beyond examination of P5 and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and moves to an extensive network analysis of 534 IOs and 213 states that incorporates norm diffusion mechanisms to better understand how the norm of securitization spreads across many countries and IOs, especially at the international level and through IOs, which is largely understudied.

I argue that the network proximity of an IO or state to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) increases the flow of information, which will contribute to the norm diffusion of the securitization of climate change through learning and emulation. States and IOs closer in proximity to the UNSC, measured through formal and informal connections, have a higher likelihood of securitizing climate change through causal mechanisms of learning and emulation and agenda control. Proximity to the UNSC allows for more flow of information, which leads to norm diffusion of climate securitization. Furthermore, states and IOs further from the UNSC will fear the loss of power and agenda control if they securitize, so norm diffusion to those actors further from the UNSC will be less likely.

First, I will discuss the existing literature on norm diffusion, followed by the literature on securitization, and finally with those on the specific norm diffusion of climate change and climate change securitization. I identify a gap in the literature on how the norm of climate change securitization diffuses. Then, I will expand upon my theory and hypotheses. I will proceed with a discussion of my research methodology. Finally, I will conclude by discussing the implications of my study.

Literature Review

Norm Diffusion

Finnemore's (1998) norm 'lifecycle' sets up the framework for norm diffusion used broadly across international relations literature, including climate change norm diffusion. The lifecycle details the evolution of a norm from "norm emergence", to "norm acceptance", to "norm cascade", and finally "internalization" (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). The "tipping point," which takes a norm from "norm emergence" to "norm acceptance," is especially important as it also relies on the involvement of various actors that have the ability to influence how the norm is perceived and make it a "norm" (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998).

Policy and norm diffusion occurs through processes of coercion, competition, emulation, and learning. Norm diffusion occurs through coercion when several powerful actors influence others through a forceful "top-down" approach via incentives or being hegemons of ideas, such as how preferential trade agreements have the ability to influence states' human rights stances (Hafner-Burton, 2005; Dobbin, Simmons, & Garrett, 2007). Competition between state rivalries can also create norm diffusion when actors merge and focus on policies that will bring the most benefit for them; common in economic policy (Drezner, 2001). Norm diffusion occurs through emulation when smaller actors seek to replicate the actions of global or regional leaders, especially in cases of uncertainty where more legitimate or successful organizations can serve as models, usually those geographically or culturally close to them (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Elkins & Simmons, 2005). Finally, norm diffusion can proceed through learning when there is a concrete goal or problem that needs to be addressed, and actors are able to develop theories and solutions and evaluate their effectiveness (Elkins & Simmons, 2005).

Several factors, including interconnectedness and domestic politics, influence how norms and policies are diffused and the effectiveness of their diffusion. Diffusion among IOs is greatly increased through interconnectedness, as this allows for easy flow and exchange of information that can facilitate norm diffusion through any of the four processes discussed above (Sommerer & Tallberg, 2019; Zhukov & Stewart, 2013). IOs have the ability to create social networks, which influence how their member states shape politics. Furthermore, network position proximity in IGO networks is found to increase policy diffusion more strongly through networks facilitating policy learning than those that facilitate emulation (Cao, 2010). International policy diffusion is also greatly influenced by domestic politics, including political opportunity and economic factors such as deregulation and privatization (Biesenbender & Tosun, 2014; Graham et al., 2012).

Securitization

In examining securitization, the decision to securitize and frame climate change as a security concern is reliant on various factors, both domestic and international. Regional security contexts, as well as vulnerability to climate change, are shown to correlate with the framing of climate change in a human security context (Krampe &

Mobjörk, 2018). Furthermore, the decision to securitize or not can reflect a state's strategic decision to decide and control an agenda at an international level (Arias, 2022). Many may be hesitant to securitize if the Security Council will be in charge of the response because they will lose authority over decision-making (Scott, 2012). I build on Arias's work of agenda control and add novel contributions of norm diffusion rather than simple framing, incorporating diffusion mechanisms, examining both states and IOs versus just P5 versus SIDS, and doing extensive network analysis that paints a more holistic and realistic picture of the international climate network. These contributions are valuable because they allow the argument of agenda control to be generalizable to more IOs and states. The P5 and SIDS don't exist in a closed network, so examining all the connections that exist allows for a better understanding of the mechanisms behind climate securitization.

In studying the effectiveness of the securitization of climate change, scholars have identified several dimensions with which to determine its effectiveness, including the output of norms from the regime, behavioral outcomes and effects, and the overall substantive impact related to climate change (Dellmuth et al., 2017). The apocalyptic and existential language used in climate security contexts does not reflect significant policy changes, but instead piecemeal and technical solutions as would typically occur with risk management strategies (Methmann & Rothe, 2012; Oels, 2013). The Copenhagen School has found that there has been an overall "failed securitization" of climate change; however, other scholars have pointed instead to how security practices have become influenced and challenged by climate change in a "climatization" of security (Oels, 2013; Trombetta, 2008). There is a gap in the literature more broadly about integrated governance and the way in which climate change and security interact with themselves and other issues areas (Dellmuth et al., 2017).

The case of the Dutch Delta Advisory Commission's attempt to securitize climate change was found to be unsuccessful as it attempted to create a sense of urgency, but it was not followed with subsequent urgent action, demonstrating the disingenuity of the apocalyptic discourse used and fueling distrust (Warner & Ingrid, 2019). The public began to be pushed in the opposite direction and deny and disengage with the problem entirely, which can be labeled as the problem of the "policy boomerang", where labeling an issue an attempt to appeal to an audience, in this case, securitizing climate change in order to instill urgency, cannot be controlled with how it is received by the audience (Warner & Ingrid, 2019; van Buuren & Warner, 2014). While utilizing the "security" label in climate change was intended to gain leverage, it had the opposite effect and backfired, which demonstrates the importance of domestic and international audiences in responding to the security framing in order for it to be successful (van Buuren & Warner, 2014). While these examples illustrate the ineffectiveness of the securitization of climate change, there is an overall lack of both quantitative and qualitative studies explaining why states continue to securitize despite these concerns and how the norm of climate security spreads, especially at the international level.

Norm Diffusion of Climate Change Securitization

Looking more closely at norm diffusion in the context of securitizing climate change, much literature has examined regional and national diffusion of climate change policy more broadly, but a gap exists in examining norm diffusion of the securitization of climate change from an international to state level and the factors that influence it.

International agreements, international learning collaboration, and integration of epistemic communities facilitate norm diffusion of climate policy. International policy diffusion can occur through multilateral agreements such as the Paris Climate Agreement, which contributed to the norm diffusion of adaptation through encouraging commitments and increasing transparency (Lesnikowski et al., 2017). In advanced democracies, air emission standards are diffused via the process of learning at international conventions, and additional implementation of standards is reliant on international pressure (Biesenbender & Tosun, 2014). Studies also find that international harmonization and transnational communication facilitate the convergence of environmental domestic policy, but regulatory competition does not (Holzinger et al., 2008). While these arguments explain climate policy as a whole, factors that influence the securitization of climate change have been less studied. At the regional level, epistemic communities, such as those in the EU, greatly contributed to the norm diffusion of the securitization of climate change in the EU (Zwolski & Kaunert, 2011). However, to my knowledge, no studies exist surrounding factors that influence international policy diffusion of the securitization of climate change, yet this has the potential to influence climate security the most.

Some say that global climate policies are sought to push an agenda and national governments have the ability to depoliticize climate change through norm diffusion (Yazar et al., 2023). The politicization of climate change is seen as one of the two main factors that will affect the ability to address climate change at the level of international institutions (Depledge & Feakin, 2012). The use of policy diffusion in a strategic manner, for example, to advance the framing of climate change in a security context, requires further examination (Yazar et al., 2023).

Insufficient research exists surrounding how policy diffusion of the securitization of climate change occurs, especially from the international to national level, and studies mostly consist of theory rather than findings. Some studies have examined the extent to which climate policy is securitized, but have not tested the mechanisms through which it occurs. The Copenhagen School considers an issue fully securitized when the issue becomes one of "emergency" status and can bypass traditional democratic processes and politics due to security concerns (Scott, 2012). Climate security, as of 2020, is in the first stage of the norm's life cycle, so identifying what factors lead to successful norm diffusion of securitization is vital to understanding its progression (Odeyemi, 2020). While scholars make predictions as to why certain countries may be more receptive to securitization, including how convinced they are that climate change is a security issue and who will dictate and fund mitigation responses, they do not directly test these theories, which is what my study aims to do (Scott, 2012; Odeyemi, 2020).

Theory and Hypotheses

I argue that the network proximity of an IO or state to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) increases the flow of information, which will contribute to norm diffusion of the securitization of climate change through learning and emulation. Specifically, the closer an actor is to the UNSC, the more norm diffusion of climate securitization will occur. My main independent variable is network proximity to the UNSC. My dependent variable is norm diffusion of climate securitization. My causal mechanisms are learning and emulation, as well as agenda control.

Conceptually, a network of IOs and states simply refers to the connections that exist between them. For example, many regional IOs, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), two regional African IOs, are in a network with other IOs in that region, as well as with larger IOs such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and state actors such as Ethiopia and Ghana.

Past literature has found that interconnectedness increases the flow of information between IOs and contributes to norm diffusion, so I expect the same causal mechanism to follow regarding norm diffusion of the securitization of climate change (Sommerer & Tallberg, 2019; Cao, 2010). As connections between the UNSC and IOs and states increase, the transmission of ideas and policy related to the securitization of climate change will also increase. Learning will occur as a result of being present at conferences and being part of international agreements. IOs and states alike will look to their external environment in order to learn new approaches to climate change and, from the policy decisions of others, emulate behaviors. Proximity to the UNSC will increase the flow of information, which will present more opportunities for learning and emulation and lead to the norm diffusion of climate securitization.

Following the second causal mechanism of agenda control, I expect IOs and states that are closer to the UNSC to be more likely to securitize climate change as a response to the UNSC securitizing because those actors that are further from the UNSC will fear loss of power and decision-making to the UNSC. Once an issue becomes securitized, IOs like the Security Council may gain authority to pursue responses as the issue becomes one of global security, and traditional politics and policymaking may be undercut (Scott, 2012; Odeyemi, 2020). Arias (2022) finds that P5 states are more likely to securitize as opposed to SIDS because of fears of loss of control to the UNSC. Extending this argument, IOs that are closer to the UNSC will generally expect the UNSC to work alongside them and securitize because they do not fear loss of decision-making authority. NATO does not fear losing power to the UNSC because it works together alongside the UNSC to promote similar security and climate goals. The closer the IO is to the UNSC, the more power it will also have in the diffusion of information from the UNSC, so it is able to pursue its ideas without fear of loss of power. States that are closer to the UNSC are also likely to securitize because they can expect to have more agenda-setting power within the UNSC if securitization does lead to decisions being made largely through the UNSC. For example, the US will not fear securitization because it has great power in the UNSC; however, a smaller state

like Libya may be more hesitant to securitize because it does not have great power in the UNSC.

Network connections between the UNSC and IOs consist of nodes of formal connectivity of similar state memberships and institutional linkages and also of informal connectivity, such as similar issue area, geographical proximity, and headquarters location (Sommerer & Tallberg, 2019). For example, regarding institutional linkages in security policy, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the European Union (EU) form a functional networking relationship that synergizes policy outputs and creates better success (Biermann, 2008). Informal connectivity between IOs includes similar issue area in security and conflict as they operate in shared spaces on the same issues and may have similar norms and methods. Shared geographical proximity is another form of informal connectivity because they share cultural and language norms. If a norm is spread to one IO, it may spread to the other because of existing, past diffusion of shared norms. Furthermore, informal connectivity between IOs also includes the proximity of headquarters to New York, the headquarters location of the UNSC. For example, many IOs such as the UN, UNICEF, and the World Economic Forum with headquarters in New York may experience norm diffusion because of the potential shared experiences and company cultures related to being headquartered in the same city.

Proximity provides opportunities for learning because the flow of information is increased, so IOs have more access to models and ideas of other IOs and are more likely to adopt them. Climate security is a relatively new concept, so learning about it from other IOs creates an increased chance that the IO will adopt it themselves. Emulation is also a likely byproduct of formal connectivity because IOs look to others similar to them for policy information. As IOs securitize climate change, other IOs are more likely to emulate their response and securitize as well, regardless if the securitization was effective, but rather if the securitization occurred. Informal connectivity has the potential to lead to learning and emulation because geographical proximity creates shared experiences. If an IO in a region securitizes climate policy, others in the same region may expect similar results, learn from their behaviors, and emulate their policy. As more IOs adopt climate security framing and policy, the norm will continue to evolve and become more commonplace among other IOs.

Similar mechanisms occur of norm diffusion of climate securitization from the UNSC to states through formal and informal connections. Formal connections, including being a P5 member and having similar memberships in organizations with institutional arrangements with the UNSC as well as informal connections of regional proximity, are likely to lead to norm diffusion of climate securitization. Formal connections as a part of a network of a state document the interactions of states with other states as well as IOs, which allow for the flow of information. Informal connections as a part of a network of a state point to the shared cultural and language norms, as they do with IOs, which point to a greater norm similarity and a greater willingness to adopt new similar norms.

Processes of emulation and learning from the IO to the state occur via attendance at conventions as well as participation in international agreements. Learning processes such as attending international conferences provide the opportunity to understand more complex issues, such as climate change, and how it relates to security. General climate change policy, specifically air emission standards, has been diffused at international conferences through means of both emulation and learning, so I expect climate security to follow similar mechanisms (Biesenbender & Tosun, 2014). For example, the annual UN climate change conferences (COPs) include the participation of various state and non-state actors and lead the way for innovative climate change ideas, such as the securitization of climate change, to spread. Furthermore, participation in the Paris Climate Agreement (PCA) has been shown to increase norm diffusion of climate change ideas broadly through increased transparency and encouraging commitments, so climate change securitization may become more normalized through the PCA as concerns of loss of agency may dissipate through learning and emulation (Lesnikowski et al., 2017). If countries see that others are adopting a climate securitization approach as part of their nationally determined contributions (NDCs), they are more likely to do the same.

Coercion and competition, two mechanisms aside from learning and emulation that are named in the norm diffusion literature, are not expected to be the driving motivating forces behind the diffusion of climate securitization because of the voluntary nature of climate goals at the IO level as well as the lack of necessity for a rivalry to achieve such goals (Hafner-Burton, 2005; Dobbin, Simmons, & Garrett, 2007; Drezner, 2001). Climate change agreements, such as the PCA, rely on indirect enforcement mechanisms, which are not legally binding, so states are not as easily coerced into securitizing as with other issue areas, such as trade, where agreements are legally binding. As well, climate change securitization is not a policy decision to compete for as one state's decision to securitize does not affect another state's decision to securitize in the same way that tax policy, for example, may affect other investor tax policies because the costs and benefits to do so do not change as they do with tax policy. Learning and emulation are more likely to be present than competition and coercion.

Learning and emulation are likely to occur in IOs as securitization becomes more commonplace as a whole. The idea of integrating fields of security and climate change and the impact of this integration is relatively new and understudied, but more and more organizations, such as NATO and the UNSC, are adopting this approach. Through networks, IOs and states become more exposed to systems thinking approaches where security and climate change are inherently linked. Some deem this process as the "climatization" of security, which has the same impact of increasing the norm diffusion of climate securitization as more fields get linked and more IOs and states get exposed to these linkages (Oels, 2013; Trombetta, 2008). As more policymakers learn about the security impacts of climate change, they are more likely to securitize climate change. Some say the linkage of climate and security is ineffective, but norm diffusion is not reliant upon how effective the norm actually is, but rather whether it is socially

accepted, especially by experts in epistemic communities (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Dobbin, Simmons, & Garrett, 2007). Securitization has failed to be successful in certain instances because it has been followed by policy inaction to move forward with the securitization of climate change (Oels, 2013; Trombetta, 2008; Warner & Ingrid, 2019; van Buuren & Warner, 2014). However, these concerns point to the efficacy of securitization, but not whether or not states securitize. While they may prevent some states from securitizing, states generally don't know how the securitization will be received or what policy will be put in place until after they decide to do so, so it will not fully prevent the norm diffusion of climate securitization.

H1: *As the network proximity of an IO to the UNSC increases, so does the norm diffusion of climate securitization to an IO.*

H2: *As a state's network proximity to the UNSC increases, so does the norm diffusion of climate securitization to that state.*

Research Design

In order to conduct a network analysis, I will follow Kinne and Bunte's (2018) Stochastic Actor-Oriented Model (SAOM). I model my independent variable of network proximity to the UNSC as a measure of several formal and informal connections after Sommerer and Tallberg (2019). The Stochastic Actor-Oriented Model (SAOM) is useful in evaluating networks using statistical inference by simulating network characteristics (Kinne & Bunte, 2018; Kalish, 2019). Norm diffusion of climate security is conceptualized as the likelihood that a "securitization tie" will occur based on a high frequency of securitization language of the IO or state. Frequency of securitization is a text analysis measure of climate security wording found in policy decisions. The unit of analysis in this study is IO-year and actor-year. I will examine 534 IOs and 213 nations from the Correlates of War Intergovernmental Organizations dataset between 1970 and 2014 since those are the only available IOs and states in the dataset and climate security will only be relevant after 1970. Climate security language is examined for those same states and IOs, but from years ranging from 1970-2023 in order to accurately capture recent advancements in climate security. The measures of the IV of proximity to the UNSC should not be drastically different in 2014 versus 2023, so the data will still be valid and relevant.

The SAOM will determine if an actor will maximize its utility in the network in response to an IV. Essentially, is a securitization tie likely to happen given the proximity to the UNSC? Networks are created of connections, or nodes, and the "degree distribution" refers to the frequency of a node's ties within the network (Kinne & Bunte, 2018). In the SAOM, actors, in this case, IOs and states, are treated as actors with attributes with ties, or nodes, that form a network (Kalish, 2019). The decision of the central actor is based on the structure of the network, their own attributes, and the attributes of other actors (Kalish, 2019). The SAOM uses data from a point in time to determine if a hypothesized effect will produce a network structure and actor attributes at later time points (Kalish, 2019). Network ties and actor attributes are determined from an established set of "rules" (Kalish, 2019). Each decision by an

actor to optimize its network or act on an attribute is called a ministep (Kalish, 2019).

The following equation will be employed in the network analysis:

$$f_i^{\text{net}}(x, z) = \sum\nolimits_k \beta_k^{\text{net}} s_{ik}{}^{\text{net}}(x, z),$$

where actor i seeks to optimize its network in a ministep.

This equation represents how well the network operates for actor i given network state x and i's level of the attribute z. The outcome is dependent upon parameter β_k^{net} and effect s_{ik}^{net}. An effect is a function of the attributes of actors sending or receiving ties, or a subgraph count in the network neighborhood of the focal actor in a specific ministep. The parameter value, estimated using the method of moments, of a given effect converts into probabilities for change in actor i's network and attributes (Snijders, 2001). This approach results in a set of parameter values and standard errors linked to effects that connect changing actor qualities and network ties, producing results most consistent with the panel measurements (Kalish, 2019).

In order to apply the SAOM to my analysis, network state x will include 534 IOs and 213 countries as provided in the Correlates of War-Intergovernmental Organizations dataset. A network analysis will be run for each actor in relation to the UNSC. Attributes and effects will be the various measures of proximity to the UNSC as well as control variables. In order to quantify proximity to the UNSC, I code formal and informal connections following Sommerer and Tallberg's (2019) categorization. Formal connections will include overlapping memberships and institutional arrangements. Informal connections will include similar issue area, regional proximity, and headquarter proximity.

In order to establish a variable for overlapping or shared memberships between the UNSC and other IOs, data from the Correlates of War-Intergovernmental Organizations (COW-IGO) at the country-year unit of analysis will be used. Pairwise comparisons between 534 IOs and 213 states will produce overlaps in membership. If the number of identical memberships within a dyad (UNSC and IO) is between 0-20 percent, it is coded 0. If the number of identical memberships within a dyad is between 20-40 percent, it is coded 1. If the number of identical memberships within a dyad is between 40-60 percent, it is coded 2. If the number of identical memberships within a dyad is between 60-80 percent, it is coded 3. If the number of identical memberships within a dyad is between 80-100 percent, it is coded 4.

A formal connection between the UNSC and states is being a P5 member. This is coded as a binary variable. Another variable of formal connections of institutional arrangements will be gathered from the *Yearbook of International Organization* with information about various partnership agreements, observer status, memoranda, and more. This will be a binary variable with partnership linkages between the UNSC and IOs. If a state is part of an IO with institutional linkages to the UNSC, this will also be coded as a binary formal connection.

Similar issue area will also be accounted for as an informal connection. If the IO falls under the security/conflict functional orientation, it will be coded 1; otherwise, it will be coded 0.

In order to quantify the informal connection of regional proximity, IOs will be assigned similarity scores based on the world region of the P5 (Asia, North America, and Europe). For countries, being part of the same world region as a country in the P5 will result in high similarity scores. Finally, the informal connection of having headquarters in the same location for IOs will result in having a score of 1 if they are within 50 miles of New York since that is the location of the UNSC headquarters. This data will be taken from the *Yearbook of International Organization*.

Additional attributes that will also act as control variables in this network analysis will include military, political, and economic factors as modeled after Kinne and Bunte (2018). This data is gathered for each country-year from the World Bank dataset (unless otherwise specified). Military factors include military power, shared military threats, and NATO membership. Political factors include regime type (taken from Freedom House), UNGA voting similarity (taken from UN voting data), and former colonial ties. Economic factors include GDPPC and bilateral trade. Following Sommerer and Tallberg's (2019) controls for the success of an IO, I will also control for the accession of new member states as states will join IOs that are more successful. Successful IOs are defined as ones in which a state has joined in the past 5 years, and the measure will be binary. I also control for factors that may affect the implementation of climate security policy such as OECD membership, level of NDC implementation, and resource reliance. Level of NDC implementation will be a 0-3 variable indicating the degree of ambitiousness of NDC proportional to GDP as well as greenhouse gas emissions, proportional to their NDC goal, also coded 0-3. This data is found via the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) NDC Contribution Registry ("Nationally Determined Contributions Registry"). Resource reliance is measured as having more than 25 percent of GDP in total natural resources rents from World Bank data.

The dependent variable of securitization of climate change is measured through the likelihood of a "securitization tie" occurring in the network analysis. A securitization tie occurs when the UNSC and the actor in question both securitize. The UNSC always securitizes, but the variance in whether the actor in question (IO or state) will securitize will be defined through frequency of climate security language. I utilize text analysis to examine the extent to which securitization language is used in conjunction with climate language in formal policy decisions of IOs and states, binding or non-binding. This novel dataset will contain statements of climate and climate security across 534 IOs and 213 countries, the same ones as the COW-IGO dataset. These measures are more relevant to examine climate security norm diffusion as the framing and content of policy is more important as opposed to governance structures. Each IO and state will be ranked on a scale of 0 to 20, binned based on the frequency of the appearance of climate security language. A securitization tie will occur when the frequency is in the higher ranks of the 0 to 20 scale. Model 1 will include the total measures of frequency of climate security language found within policy decisions while Model 2 will include the proportion of climate security language compared to all climate language in policy decisions.

Data for this text analysis will be drawn from each individual IO and country from Nexis Uni and processed with MAXQDA. Reports of policy decisions by IOs and countries will be analyzed one actor at a time. Keywords of "climate change," "adaptation," "resilience," "mitigation," "greenhouse gases," "weather," and "carbon," if identified to be used in a climate policy context by an IO or country, will represent the appearance of climate language. Keywords of "climate security," "hazard," "climate migration," "conflict," "risk," and "climate vulnerability," if identified to be used in a climate policy context by an IO or country, will represent the appearance of climate security language.

The resulting outputs from the SAOM will be parameter scores measuring the likelihood of a securitization tie, whether or not both the UNSC and the actor in question will securitize. Parameter estimates are the coefficients indicating the degree of correlation/causality between the IV (proximity to UNSC) and DV (both securitizing). Higher parameter scores indicate a higher likelihood of a securitization tie based on proximity to the UNSC.

Potential concerns with this experimental method may include problematic conceptualization of certain variables or time frame concerns, but this model is still effective in determining how the norm of climate security diffuses. It may be problematic to say that securitization is binary, but little precedent exists for quantifying norm diffusion at an international level. This is the first study to employ this network analysis at such a large scale to measure securitization, so this measure is sufficient, and future research can disaggregate it further. Furthermore, there is a time gap between the DV and IV, but the IVs have not changed significantly while DVs have, so it will still be representative of norm diffusion of climate securitization.

I attempt to avoid sample bias and selection effects through incorporating a large sample of IOs and states, but it cannot be guaranteed that results are completely unbiased. Potential confounders of domestic factors of securitization as well as the scope of the issue area of IOs may lead states to securitize less than others, but the controls I include should account for many potential confounders. However, the large number of controls can contribute to multicollinearity or mixed findings, so this should be considered when interpreting the results.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study examines the norm diffusion of climate securitization, specifically how proximity to the UNSC influences processes of learning and emulation as well as agenda control. As states and IOs increase in proximity to the UNSC, a greater flow of information is expected to occur, and the norm of climate securitization spreads through learning and emulation. Additionally, states and IOs further in proximity to the UNSC will be more hesitant to securitize as they fear loss of agenda control and power to the UNSC. I examine the process of norm diffusion of climate securitization through my network analysis and text analysis, contributing to the larger body of climate security and norm diffusion literature.

The Paris Climate Agreement has faced great criticism for relying on indirect

enforcement mechanisms. Studying climate change normatively is important as climate policy is reliant on indirect enforcement mechanisms, so if the securitization of climate change becomes a norm, it could have a greater impact on policy and would be easier to implement (Keohane & Oppenheimer, 2016). The ability to understand the indirect enforcement mechanism of complying with a norm (in this case, securitization of climate) can point to ways to enforce climate compliance.

Climate change is not intrinsically linked to security, so understanding how others frame climate change in a security context and its importance is vital for the diffusion of climate security policy and norms. It could point to how actors can have greater or lesser means to enforce climate policy, security policy, and climate security policy. It can also be useful to understand norm diffusion and the mechanisms through which climate securitization becomes more commonplace as it could point lawmakers and various bodies to ways to control the norm diffusion of climate securitization.

Facing increasing criticism of the effectiveness of climate securitization, understanding how the norm of climate securitization travels can be useful in understanding how it is implemented as well as where exactly climate securitization is ineffective. Understanding norm diffusion mechanisms can allow for greater identification of failures and point to potential ways to improve or make the securitization process more efficient and effective.

Finally, this study contributes to the discussion of equitable climate policy. If IOs and states fear securitizing climate because they will lose control to the UNSC, this points to grave equity concerns in addressing climate change. If the world is to undergo a true "just transition" away from fossil fuels, it must do so equitably. States, especially those affected the most, are likely to be further away in proximity to the UNSC. They face the gravest climate security concerns, yet they may be hesitant to securitize based on concerns of loss of power. If they can securitize without the fear of loss of agency, their ability to address climate change can be improved. Working to effectively address climate change is incredibly important, and understanding how norm diffusion of climate securitization occurs can point to ways in which the most vulnerable populations can be protected and supported.

Future studies can extend this work to conduct a more thorough investigation of the underlying causal mechanisms, including the incorporation of case studies. While learning and emulation are expected to be the leading causal mechanisms for norm diffusion, more work can disaggregate data to figure out which norm diffusion mechanisms operate here. Furthermore, while agenda control is expected to be another leading causal mechanism, future work can further test this argument more directly. As the norm of climate securitization continues to diffuse, understanding its mechanisms, efficacy, and impact is incredibly important to addressing climate change equitably, efficiently, and effectively.

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Small-Scale Agreements, Large-Scale Impacts: The Impact of Local Ceasefires on Conflict-Wide Ceasefires

Olivia Haring

Abstract When do local ceasefires lead to the onset and success of conflict-wide ceasefires? Drawing on the literature on ceasefires, mediation, and bargaining, I explore the understudied influence of local ceasefire agreements on broader processes of peace and conflict resolution. I argue that internal mediation provides unique advantages in local ceasefire negotiations that allow it to more effectively reveal information and contribute to confidence building, thus leading to the onset and success of a subsequent conflict-wide ceasefire. External mediation, however, undermines the ability of a local ceasefire to resolve commitment problems and contribute to gradual confidence building. International pressure combines with the limited scope and lower compliance costs of local ceasefires to create false incentives to comply with the ceasefire. This harms the ceasefires' ability to contribute to the resolution of bargaining problems and makes external mediation less likely to lead to the onset and success of a conflict-wide ceasefire. I test my argument using an extension of the Civil Conflict CeaseFire (CF) Dataset, which covers all ceasefires conducted globally from 1989 to 2020. This article presents important implications for the potential negative impact of external mediation beyond simply ceasefire failure.

Introduction

Despite recent research investigating ceasefires, local ceasefires, which only apply to a portion of the battlefield of a conflict, remain understudied (Lundgren et al., 2023). Although all local ceasefires are meant to limit conflict in a specific area, they do not all impact progress toward lasting peace in the same way. This can be seen in the contrast between the local ceasefire in Wunlit, Sudan, mediated by the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC), and the local ceasefire in Homs, Syria, mediated by the UN.

The Wunlit Peace and Reconciliation Conference in Sudan contributed greatly to the process of peace. The conference, held from February 27 to March 8, 1999, was intended to address escalating violence between the Dinka and Nuer communities in the area. This escalation was sparked by a split along ethnic lines in the SPLM/A, one of the major rebel groups fighting the Sudanese government. In 1991, Riek Machar, an ethnic Nuer, split from the mainstream SPLM/A, which was led by John Garang, an ethnic Dinka. The conflict between the mainstream SPLM/A and the faction led by Machar spilled over into local communities, fueling conflict between the Dinka and

Nuer communities near the village of Wunlit. Fighting continued to escalate, sparking concerns about famine, until 1999, when the NSCC mediated the Wunlit Peace and Reconciliation Conference in an attempt to de-escalate the conflict and improve the humanitarian situation. Although the focus of the conference was building peace between local chiefs and villages, the NSCC still sought the approval of the rebel groups and included both local SPLM/A representatives and Machar faction observers in the negotiations. The conference was ultimately successful, resulting in a ceasefire agreement for the Nuer and Dinka communities in the area (Bradbury et al., 2006).

The Wunlit ceasefire ultimately contributed directly to de-escalating conflict between the mainstream SPLM/A and the group led by Machar. The NSCC replicated this ceasefire in several other areas experiencing similar ethnic conflicts sparked by conflicts between rebel groups, including in Waat and Liliir. These efforts by the NSCC continued to de-escalate the conflict between the two rebel groups. This culminated in the NSCC mediating a meeting explicitly intended to link their local efforts to national peace processes (Bradbury et al., 2006). Shortly after this meeting, the mainstream SPLM/A and Machar's faction signed an agreement to cease fire and reunite into one group under Garang (Sudan's Peace Process, 2002). This conflict-wide ceasefire was clearly facilitated by the local Wunlit ceasefire and its successors in Waat and Liliir.

The UN-mediated local ceasefire in Homs, Syria, presents a contrast with the Wunlit ceasefire. In early 2013 parts of the city of Homs, which housed several rebel groups and many civilians, fell under siege by the National Defense Force and the Syrian National Army. By early 2014, the situation had generated humanitarian concerns, with over 2,000 civilians trapped without sufficient food, water, or medical care. Several attempts had already been made to address the situation in the old city, with varying degrees of success; however, none managed to produce a ceasefire that was comprehensive enough to alleviate the situation. This time, several local groups in Homs formed a committee and reached out to the UN to request mediation. The UN was able to broker a ceasefire in the old city to allow for the evacuation of civilians and distribution of humanitarian aid from February 7 to 12, 2014. The ceasefire was largely successful in facilitating evacuations but did not ultimately lead to significant progress toward peace. After the ceasefire elapsed, fighting resumed (Turkmani et al., 2014). The ceasefire also failed to spark any progress towards peace on the national level, with the next major attempt at conflict-wide peace, mediated by the UN in Geneva in 2016, failing to produce any agreement (Collin, 2018).

Although the ceasefires in Wunlit and Homs share many similar characteristics, one contributed to broader peace processes while the other did not. The existing literature does not specifically discuss when local ceasefires may or may not contribute to broader processes of peace, but other relevant findings suggest that both ceasefires should have had similar impacts. Both ceasefires were pursued to alleviate humanitarian concerns in the areas they applied to, so neither was pursued for a purpose that would make one more likely to contribute to peace than the other (Clayton & Sticher, 2021; Sticher and Vukovic, 2021). Both Homs and Wunlit were part of a larger process of peace in their local areas, and both of these larger processes involved repeated attempts at local

ceasefires between the relevant parties with varying levels of success. As such, both contexts should have had similar likelihoods of producing a successful conflict-wide ceasefire (Lundgren et al., 2023; Clayton, 2013; Clayton, Nygård, Rustad, et al., 2023). The ceasefire in Homs included monitoring by the UN, which should have made it even more likely to be successful and contribute to confidence building between the parties (Fortna, 2003). Yet, this was the local ceasefire that failed to contribute to a conflict-wide ceasefire. Finally, local ceasefires, in general, are found to contribute to confidence-building between the parties (Lundgren et al., 2023). It is reasonable to expect this confidence building, if it occurs, to contribute to advancing broader peace processes and thus increase the likelihood of a conflict-wide ceasefire occurring. Wunlit was noted to have this expected effect, but Homs did not appear to contribute to confidence-building (Bradbury et al., 2006; Turkmani et al., 2014).

The most significant difference between the local ceasefires in Wunlit and Homs is their mediation. The Homs ceasefire was mediated by the UN, a mediator that is clearly external to the conflict (Turkmani et al., 2014). The Wunlit ceasefire, in contrast, was mediated by the NSCC, which was a coalition of local Sudanese churches. This coalition was an internal mediator coming from within the country (Bradbury et al., 2006). However, the existing literature implies that this difference should not lead to their different outcomes either. Although internal mediation is found to improve the success of local ceasefires, external mediation has no significant effect on the success of local ceasefires (Karakus & Svensson, 2020). This is despite contradictory findings that external mediation harms the success of conflict-wide ceasefires as it imposes false incentives to enter an agreement before bargaining problems have been resolved (Werner & Yuen, 2005). If externally mediated local ceasefires are no less likely to succeed, then it could be assumed that they are also no less likely to contribute to the resolution of bargaining problems and thus advance progress toward a conflict-wide ceasefire. However, if that is the case, why did the ceasefire in Wunlit lead to a successful conflict-wide ceasefire while the ceasefire in Homs did not? This puzzle leads to the question motivating my research: why do some local ceasefires lead to the onset and success of a conflict-wide ceasefire while others do not?

Literature Review

Ceasefires have received significant attention in past literature, particularly in recent years, however several gaps remain. Existing literature considers the role of conflict-wide ceasefires in broader peace processes but has yet to consider how local ceasefires contribute to these processes. This gap persists despite acknowledgment of the influence of contextual factors surrounding the ceasefire on its onset and success. Finally, the minimal literature that addresses local ceasefires presents several contradictions, with literature investigating conflict-wide ceasefires suggesting that local ceasefires may function differently from conflict-wide ones.

One portion of the past research is largely theoretical, attempting to illustrate the role of ceasefires within broader conflict dynamics. However, this research fails to consider local ceasefires. Rather than consistently serving the same purpose or

occurring during the same stage of conflicts, ceasefires can arise across a range of bargaining contexts and are designed to address the information or commitment problems that are present at that stage (Clayton & Sticher, 2021; Sticher and Vukovic 2021; Sticher, 2022). These works emphasize that ceasefires are not just motivated by a genuine desire for peace but are also pursued as a strategic tool for combatants to advance their military goals (Clayton & Sticher, 2021; Sticher and Vukovic, 2021; Richmond, 1998). Despite their potential to undermine the progression of conflict, Sticher (2022) argues that ceasefires can play a role in advancing progress toward peace by providing information and building trust between combatants. This section of the literature largely focuses on conflict-wide ceasefires and fails to consider how the role of local ceasefires may differ.

Previous research has identified many factors that influence ceasefire onset. The characteristics of a rebel group, such as their relative strength or international support, can impact their likelihood of entering an agreement (Clayton, 2013; Clayton, Nygård, Rustad, et al., 2023). Additionally, the involvement of a mediator can increase the likelihood that a ceasefire will occur as they can provide political cover for the leader (Clayton, Nygård, Rustad, et al., 2023). Insider-partial mediators specifically can increase the likelihood of a ceasefire through their existing knowledge about the parties and incentive to act honestly due to their potential for continued interactions with the parties (Svensson & Lindgren, 2013). The costs of the conflict and potential ceasefire also influence the likelihood of ceasefire onset. Like continuing conflict, agreeing to a ceasefire imposes costs on combatants (Clayton, Nygård, Rustad, et al., 2023). High costs of conflict, such as high civilian victimization and conflict intensity, increase the likelihood of a ceasefire as combatants attempt to minimize these costs (Clayton, Nygård, Rustad, et al., 2023). However, the audience costs leaders may face for agreeing to a ceasefire with unpopular concessions can lead them to continue the conflict instead, even if they prefer the ceasefire (Sticher, 2021). This research centers almost exclusively on conflict-wide ceasefires, failing to consider local ceasefires. This is especially relevant given that the limited nature of local ceasefires may impact their costs.

Finally, a combatant's past interactions may impact its likelihood of entering a ceasefire. In an investigation of rebels in Myanmar, Dukalskis (2015) found that older rebel groups were less likely to enter a ceasefire with the government in part due to their longer history of negative interactions with the government. States can also build a reputation for upholding ceasefires. A state that upholds a ceasefire with one rebel group demonstrates to others that it is committed to cooperation, making other groups more likely to enter a ceasefire (Bara & Clayton, 2023). Despite this acceptance that the past interactions proceeding conflict-wide ceasefire agreements matter, researchers have yet to consider the impact of local ceasefires as one such interaction.

Ceasefire success has also been widely investigated in the existing literature. The provisions of a ceasefire agreement have been widely considered. Fortna (2003) finds that the specific measures in a ceasefire agreement, such as the establishment of a demilitarized zone, peacekeeping, and dispute resolution procedures, impact the

agreement's success. Agreements with stronger, more specific, and more detailed provisions are more likely to be successful in minimizing incentives to break the ceasefire and reducing uncertainty (Fortna, 2003). Regarding local ceasefires, Lundgren et al. (2023) find that stepwise implementation measures increase the likelihood that the ceasefire will lead to de-escalation. Karakus and Svensson (2020) find that confidence-building measures improve the success of local ceasefires. However, they also find that other measures of agreement quality, including specificity and separation of troops, have no impact on the success of local ceasefire agreements, contrasting with the findings of Fortna (2003) (Karakus & Svensson, 2020). This presents a contradiction between the findings on local and conflict-wide ceasefires. This indicates that the two kinds of ceasefires may function differently, demonstrating the importance of further research.

A second contradiction between past findings on the success of conflict-wide and local ceasefires is the impact of mediation. Although 3rd party mediation can make a ceasefire more likely to occur, it can also make it more likely to fail. Werner and Yuen (2005) find that conflict-wide peace agreements prompted by external pressure are more likely to fail since the combatants have not yet become certain about the consequences of continuing to fight, and the agreement is less likely to reflect the true military situation. Karakus and Svensson (2020) investigate local ceasefires specifically and find, similar to Svensson and Lindgren (2013), that insider mediators lead to more successful ceasefires. However, in contrast to Werner and Yuen (2005), they find that external mediation has no significant effect on ceasefire success (Karakus & Svensson, 2020). This contrast further indicates the need to explore the differences in dynamics between conflict-wide and local ceasefires.

Finally, the influence of the context surrounding a ceasefire has also been found to impact its success. A ceasefire between parties with a history of past ceasefires together is more likely to lead to a decrease in conflict intensity, as repeated local ceasefires can encourage gradual trust-building between the parties (Lundgren et al., 2023). Contextual factors outside of the dyad in question can also impact ceasefire success. Braithwaite and Butcher (2023) find that non-rebel resistance to a government can make rebel groups more likely to break their ceasefire with the government as the resistance changes the balance of power. This literature clearly acknowledges the importance of the context surrounding ceasefire agreements and has begun to uncover contradictions between the dynamics of conflict-wide and local ceasefires but has yet to investigate how local ceasefires fit into broader processes of conflict.

Theory and Hypotheses

I argue that the type of mediation used in a local ceasefire influences its likelihood of leading to the onset and success of a subsequent conflict-wide ceasefire. I first establish my expectations of how non-mediated local ceasefires lead to the onset and success of conflict-wide ceasefires. I then discuss internally mediated ceasefires, which are mediated by actors that come from within the conflict in question and externally mediated ceasefires, which are mediated by actors from outside of the

conflict in question (Svensson & Lindgren, 2013).

I argue that non-mediated local ceasefires, like conflict-wide ceasefires, contribute to the resolution of bargaining problems, thus advancing progress toward peace. Conflict-wide ceasefires are found to reveal information, such as the strength of the parties' leadership and intention to keep fighting and contribute to the resolution of commitment problems, including by signaling a credible commitment to the peace process (Sticher & Vuković, 2021; Sticher, 2022; Clayton & Sticher, 2021). Local ceasefires still involve negotiations and concessions between the parties, and so are also capable of revealing information and signaling credible commitment. However, since local ceasefires cannot end a conflict on their own, this resolution of bargaining problems increases the likelihood that the conflict parties will pursue a conflict-wide ceasefire.

The limited nature of local ceasefires also leads to functions distinct from those of conflict-wide ceasefires. Local ceasefires are particularly noted for their ability to contribute to gradual trust-building between conflict parties. They serve as smaller steps in the peace process, allowing parties to gradually build confidence in one another and de-escalate their conflict (Karakus & Svensson, 2020; Lundgren et al., 2023). I argue that the limited nature of local ceasefires aids in this gradual trust-building process. Since local ceasefires do not completely suspend a conflict, the parties face lower costs for complying with a local ceasefire than a conflict-wide one. A limited agreement entails fewer concessions to an opponent, so a local ceasefire is less likely to generate backlash from a leader's constituents (Sticher, 2021). The explicit limits of local ceasefires also allow leaders to avoid seeming weak to their opponents while still engaging in the ceasefire (Sticher & Vuković, 2021). Finally, it is possible for local ceasefires to present a less costly commitment problem than conflict-wide ceasefires as they do not fully tie their participants' hands, allowing them to continue fighting elsewhere. These dynamics allow local ceasefires to begin addressing bargaining problems and building trust even in contexts where a conflict-wide ceasefire is unlikely.

Internal and external mediation have diverging impacts on the ability of local ceasefires to resolve bargaining problems. Internal mediation improves a local ceasefire's ability to resolve information problems, while external mediation worsens it. Internal mediators are more likely to have a preference on the issue of the conflict, allowing them to reveal information more credibly to the involved parties as they do not have an incentive to misrepresent information to get the parties to sign an agreement (Kydd, 2006; Svensson & Lindgren, 2013). External mediators are unconnected with the conflict outside their role as mediators, so are unlikely to have such a preference. Given that local ceasefires have limited ability to resolve the underlying issues of a conflict, it is even more likely that an external mediator pursuing a local ceasefire rather than a conflict-wide one will be neutral or have the sole goal of ending the conflict, making it unlikely that they will benefit from bias. Even when internal mediators have a largely humanitarian purpose, they are still likely to have some bias. Their connections to the situation allow them to present themselves as representatives of the civilians in harm's way, showing bias towards the specific actions desired by

the civilians rather than any outcome that will produce an agreement. For example, a team of local professionals in Aleppo, Syria, convinced the government and rebel forces fighting over a power plant of their credibility as mediators by emphasizing that their goal was the restoration of power to the city for civilians (Turkmani et al., 2014).

Internal mediators are also better able to reveal information that the parties have an incentive to misrepresent. To do this, the mediator must have significant knowledge of the conflict and the parties involved (Wiegand et al., 2021; Svensson & Lindgren, 2013). Insiders are likely to have or be able to obtain information about the parties' capabilities and resolve through their personal connections and experiences in the conflict, while external mediators lack these advantages (Svensson & Lindgren, 2013; Karakus & Svensson, 2020). In local ceasefires, mediators also need significant information about the local context to guide parties to an optimal agreement and provide new relevant information. First, local ceasefires are frequently highly concrete, including provisions such as the reopening of specific roads or joint use of utilities such as water (Pospisil, 2022; Bradbury et al., 2006). Second, knowledge about the needs of local civilians and the local roots of conflict can be leveraged to produce more sustainable agreements (Turkmani et al., 2014). Internal mediators are much more likely to have access to this kind of information, allowing them to effectively facilitate deals and contribute to trust building. External mediators, in contrast, are more likely to lack this local knowledge, making them less able to effectively guide the parties to an optimal agreement.

The reputation of mediators also plays a role in the resolution of bargaining problems. Mediators can build reputations through repeated interactions with conflicting parties, incentivizing honesty and improving their credibility (Svensson & Lindgren, 2013; Karakus & Svensson, 2020; Kydd, 2006). Insiders will have repeated future interactions with the conflict parties and so have the possibility of facing reputation costs (Svensson & Lindgren, 2013; Karakus & Svensson, 2020). However, external mediators are not likely to interact with the conflict parties after negotiations, so they do not have the same level of credibility (Svensson & Lindgren, 2013). Additionally, internal mediation teams in local ceasefires frequently include local professionals or religious leaders who can leverage an existing reputation within the area to enhance their credibility (Pospisil et al., 2020). For example, mediation teams in Syrian local ceasefires included medical professionals who leveraged their reputations for objectivity to build trust between themselves and the conflict parties (Turkmani et al., 2014). This makes internally mediated local ceasefires more able to resolve information problems and so more likely to advance progress toward peace. External mediators, however, lack existing local reputations and knowledge, making them less able to produce agreements that make such progress.

External mediation is at a disadvantage compared to internal mediation but also falls short in resolving commitment problems and undermines the gradual trust-building of local ceasefires. International pressure can lead conflict parties to accept an agreement that does not actually reflect their expectations of how the conflict may end (Werner & Yuen, 2005). These false incentives have a distinct effect on local

ceasefires. As previously discussed, external mediation does not impact the success of local ceasefires but harms that of conflict-wide ones (Werner & Yuen, 2005; Karakus & Svensson, 2020). I argue that this is because international pressure from external mediation combined with the limited scope and compliance costs of local ceasefires create incentives for the parties to comply with the local ceasefire even when it may not reflect their true expectations. Since the parties face lower compliance costs and can continue the conflict elsewhere, they are incentivized to comply with the ceasefire to alleviate the international pressure. This effect is further worsened by the use of leverage. The use of leverage by a mediator to induce an agreement is effective in bringing agreements about but worsens its long-term impacts (Beardsley, 2011). As local ceasefires are limited, external mediators are less likely to pursue them with a primary goal of creating a lasting peace, but rather with a goal such as humanitarian action. As such, the mediators will be more likely to rely on leverage to induce a quick agreement, sacrificing the improvement of commitment problems. The external imposition of a local ceasefire undermines its role in gradual trust building between the parties, turning the lower costs that allow it to be pursued in more fraught bargaining contexts into a facilitator of insincere compliance. This leads externally mediated local ceasefires to be less likely to contribute to advancing progress toward peace.

Overall, internal mediators have specific biases, knowledge, and reputations that allow local ceasefires to better resolve information problems and enhance gradual trust building. These advantages in resolving bargaining problems make it more likely that the involved parties will be willing and able to pursue a subsequent conflict-wide ceasefire. As more progress has been made in resolving bargaining problems, a subsequent conflict-wide ceasefire is also more likely to be successful. External mediation, however, lacks the information revealing the benefits of internal mediation and undermines key functions of local ceasefires. It creates false incentives to comply which undermine the resolution of commitment problems and gradual trust building. These disadvantages in resolving bargaining problems make externally mediated local ceasefires less likely to lead to a subsequent successful conflict-wide ceasefire. This leads to my hypotheses:

H1a: *Local ceasefires with internal third-party mediation are less likely to lead to a subsequent conflict-wide ceasefire than non-mediated local ceasefires.*

H1b: *Local ceasefires with internal third-party mediation are less likely to lead to a subsequent successful conflict-wide ceasefire than non-mediated local ceasefires.*

H2a: *Local ceasefires with external third-party mediation are more likely to lead to a subsequent conflict-wide ceasefire than non-mediated local ceasefires.*

H2b: *Local ceasefires with external third-party mediation are more likely to lead to a subsequent successful conflict-wide ceasefire than non-mediated local ceasefires.*

Research Design

To test my hypotheses, I will conduct an analysis investigating the onset and success of subsequent conflict-wide ceasefires. To begin this section, I will discuss the data utilized, the variables included, and then the models utilized. The data I

utilize in this analysis is an extension of the Civil Conflict CeaseFire (CF) Dataset introduced by Clayton, Nygård, Strand, et al. (2023). The original dataset includes a global set of ceasefires in civil conflicts from 1989 to 2020. An arrangement qualifies as a ceasefire when it includes a written or verbal commitment from at least one actor to stop, not simply reduce, violence and a concrete time when the cessation will begin. The original dataset emphasizes conflict-wide ceasefires, but also includes 286 local ceasefires (Clayton, Nygård, Strand, et al., 2023).

I build upon this data for my analysis. The original dataset utilizes the Factiva news database, which includes both major news networks and local reports, to gather its data. The authors used the search terms "cease-fire", "ceasefire", "cessation of hostilities", "suspension of hostilities", and "truce" (Clayton, Nygård, Strand, et al., 2023). The database includes reporting in local languages, but the CF dataset was only able to include reports already in English (Clayton, Nygård, Strand, et al., 2023). I extend this dataset, following their initial method, by including any relevant reports in several other languages, including Spanish, French, and Arabic.

There are potential issues with the use of news reports as a data source. News reports may not reflect every ceasefire that occurs in a conflict. Ceasefires in particularly dangerous or remote areas, with a particularly short time span, and with a limited geographic range, are less likely to be reported on by journalists, and so may be missing from the data. However, conflict parties do place significant importance on announcing their ceasefires, minimizing this effect somewhat (Lundgren et al., 2023; Clayton, Nygård, Strand, et al., 2023). I expect this effect to be minimized even further by my inclusion of sources in languages other than English. Highly limited, local ceasefires may be more likely to only receive reporting in local language news while being overlooked in international English-language reporting, compared to conflict-wide ceasefires, which have a broader impact.

Independent Variable

The independent variable in both of my analyses is the presence of external or internal mediation in local ceasefires. I define external mediation based on the works of Svensson and Lindgren (2013) and Karakus and Svensson (2020). A mediator is external when they come from outside of the state in conflict and internal when they come from within the state. Common examples of external mediators include IOs such as the UN and other states, while common internal mediators include religious leaders and local NGOs. For each ceasefire, I code a 0 if there is no mediation, 1 if there is external mediation, and 2 if there is internal mediation. I utilize data from the CF Dataset (Clayton, Nygård, Strand, et al., 2023) on which actors served as mediators in each conflict and then classify them according to the above definition.

Dependent Variables

My investigation has two dependent variables. The first concerns the subsequent occurrence of a conflict-wide ceasefire following the local ceasefire in question. I obtain this data from the original CF Dataset and my extension. Using the dataset, I determine if each local ceasefire is followed by a conflict-wide ceasefire between the

same dyad. In order to distinguish between conflict-wide ceasefires that are related to the local ceasefire and those that are not, I only consider conflict-wide ceasefires that occur within one year of the beginning of a given local ceasefire to be "subsequent". This limit accounts for the possibility of longer negotiation processes while avoiding associating unrelated ceasefires. However, I also include a six-month standard and a two-year standard for use in robustness checks to account for the possibilities that the one-year standard may allow for the influence of unrelated factors or may not allow for all indirect influences of mediation type in local ceasefires to play out. I include a binary variable indicating if each local ceasefire had a subsequent conflict-wide ceasefire at each standard.

My second dependent variable is the success of subsequent conflict-wide ceasefires. For each subsequent conflict-wide ceasefire identified, I indicate in a binary variable if it was successful or failed. The initial dataset bases its measure of ceasefire success on statements from the ceasefire parties and international actors. A ceasefire is coded as failed if there were reports from the ceasefire parties or international actors of failure. If these are absent, it is coded as successful. The CF dataset emphasizes reports of ceasefire failure rather than the number of battle deaths, as it is possible for a ceasefire to fail before battle deaths rise or continue to be pursued by the parties despite violations. However, limitations in reporting mean this method limits the number of ceasefires in the original dataset with a clear end that can be coded (Clayton, Nygård, Strand, et al., 2023).

To account for these issues, I utilize a different standard for ceasefire success. Drawing on the dataset on local ceasefires in the Syrian civil war introduced by Karakus and Svensson (2020), I include a measure of success that accounts for both the observed behavior and publicized statements of the ceasefire parties. A ceasefire is coded as failed if there are reports from the parties or international actors of failure or if a 25-battle death threshold is met while the ceasefire is meant to be active. If none of these conditions are met, then the ceasefire is coded as successful. Battle death data is obtained from the UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset, which is geocoded and attributed to specific dyads, minimizing the chance that a ceasefire will be coded as failed incorrectly (Sundberg & Melander, 2013). This measure accounts for both reporting gaps and failure prior to a resurgence of battle deaths while increasing the sample size.

Controls

I include several controls in my analyses. First, I control past ceasefire interactions between the parties, both in terms of local ceasefires and conflict-wide ones. A history of ceasefires has been acknowledged in the literature to potentially influence the onset and success of subsequent ceasefires (Lundgren et al., 2023; Clayton, 2013; Clayton, Nygård, Rustad, et al., 2023). Using data from the original CF Dataset and by extension, I include both a control for past local ceasefires and a control for past conflict-wide ceasefires for each ceasefire examined. Additionally, I include several country-level controls that are standard in the literature studying conflict, including the regime type from the V-Dem dataset, the GDP per capita from the World Bank,

and the population from the World Bank (Svensson & Lindgren, 2013; Clayton & Sticher, 2021; Coppedge et al., 2024; The World Bank, 2024).

I also include several controls to attempt to address the nonrandom selection of external mediation. Drawing on Clayton (2013), I include several controls to account for the possibility that external mediation is more likely in more difficult contexts with more severe conflicts. A binary variable indicating if the incompatibility of the conflict is territorial, from UCDP data, is included as external mediators may be more likely to intervene in such conflicts (Clayton, 2013; Svensson & Lindgren, 2013). Conflict intensity, measured in battle deaths, and conflict duration prior to the ceasefire are also included to address the selection effect using data from UCDP. Additionally, conflict intensity and duration can also impact the likelihood that a ceasefire will occur and be successful (Karakus & Svensson, 2020; Clayton, Nygård, Rustad, et al., 2023).

Model

To investigate my hypotheses, I analyze the impact of mediation type in a local ceasefire on subsequent conflict-wide ceasefire occurrence and success. This sample includes all local ceasefires that are available in the data. Drawing on Clayton (2013), I utilize a Sartori selection estimator model. Conflict-wide ceasefires may be more likely to occur in contexts where they are also more likely to succeed. Past literature investigating subjects with similar issues with selection effects frequently uses a Heckman selection model, but this model requires an additional variable that is expected to impact the first phase but not the second (Clayton, 2013). However, it is difficult to find such a variable that impacts the onset of conflict-wide ceasefires but not their success. A Sartori selection estimator model, however, does not require this variable, thus making it more appropriate for this analysis (Clayton, 2013). The occurrence of a subsequent conflict-wide ceasefire represents the first phase within the model, and the success of subsequent conflict-wide ceasefires represents the second phase. I run this model using the one-year standard for subsequent conflict-wide ceasefires in my main analysis, and I use the same model with the six-month and two-year standards for robustness checks.

Although I attempt to account for a number of factors that may influence this research, there are additional issues that must be acknowledged. Despite my controls to address the possible selection effect of external mediation, it should still be kept in mind when interpreting these results. There is also a possibility that local ceasefire occurrence is nonrandom as well and could be more likely in contexts where a successful conflict-wide ceasefire is more or less likely. For example, they may be more likely to be used as a strategic tool and thus be used before both parties want to pursue a lasting peace. This effect should be considered when interpreting these findings.

Discussion and Conclusion

This research provides a number of implications that can inform both academic research and real-world policy. First, this paper elaborates on the role of local ceasefires in broader processes of peace and conflict resolution. It demonstrates that local ceasefires can play a very important role in progress toward more comprehensive and lasting peace and thus should not be overlooked by academics or policymakers. Local ceasefires are not isolated phenomena that rarely have impacts beyond their region but rather can greatly contribute to the resolution of bargaining problems and building of trust between conflict parties, contributing to progress towards peace on the conflict level.

This research also addresses an important contradiction in the existing literature and highlights the differences in dynamics and functions between local and conflict-wide ceasefires. By clarifying why external mediation is harmful to the success of conflict-wide ceasefires but not that of local ceasefires, this article begins to clarify when local ceasefires can be expected to function similarly to conflict-wide ones and when they warrant their own dedicated investigation.

The argument and findings of this paper also emphasize the potential for ceasefire efforts to have a negative impact on progress toward peace independent of their failure. Just because a local ceasefire was upheld does not mean that it can be assumed to have a positive or even neutral impact on the broader progress toward peace. This is particularly relevant to policymakers, emphasizing the need to consider the broader impacts of localized conflict resolution efforts in addition to determining if they are upheld in order to gain a full understanding of their impact and success.

The failure of externally mediated local ceasefires to drive the onset and success of conflict-wide ceasefires demonstrates to policymakers that external mediation is a tool that must be used with care. However, these findings do not mean that external mediation should never be used in local ceasefires. External mediation can play an important role in quickly facilitating local ceasefires for humanitarian responses, but policymakers should keep the potential negative impacts in mind when deciding if external mediation should be pursued. If facilitating a lasting peace is the immediate goal, external mediation can be detrimental.

Finally, the argument presented in this paper can provide guidance for policymakers on how to minimize the negative impacts of external mediation. By avoiding the detrimental characteristics of external mediation while emulating the advantageous qualities of internal mediation, policymakers could improve their ability to contribute to broader peace processes through external mediation efforts. For example, an external mediation effort could attempt to minimize its use of leverage over the parties while emphasizing building local connections to increase their credibility in order to produce a more successful long-term impact.

This paper additionally presents several avenues for future research. It is important to investigate what other characteristics or contexts may influence how local ceasefires contribute to broader peace processes, as this is an impact of local ceasefires that have been neglected in the past literature prior to this investigation. It may also be useful to

investigate the other ways in which the dynamics of local ceasefires differ from those of conflict-wide ceasefires to further inform their use as a tool for conflict resolution.

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Domestic Explanations for Autocratic Conflict Onset on Territorial Disputes

Leonardo Gonzalez

Abstract This research explores the underlying domestic factors influencing autocratic regimes' decisions to initiate conflict over territorial disputes. Specifically, the study investigates why some autocracies escalate territorial disputes into military conflicts while others refrain, despite similar external conditions. The central hypothesis posits that the level of threat posed by opposition groups, conceptualized as their unity and strategic coherence, significantly affects these decisions. Employing a logistic regression model on data from territorial disputes between 1947 and 2000, this paper introduces the novel variable "opposition level of threat," operationalized through the coordination level of opposition strategies. This study challenges conventional perspectives that focus primarily on external triggers and regime type, arguing instead that internal political dynamics play a crucial role in autocratic decision-making processes. The findings suggest that autocratic regimes are more likely to pursue militarized conflict as a diversionary tactic when facing a highly unified and threatening opposition. This research contributes to the international relations literature by highlighting the impact of domestic political threats on autocratic foreign policy decisions and provides actionable insights for policymakers engaged in diplomacy and conflict resolution with autocratic states.

Introduction

Territorial disputes often serve as a breaking point for international conflict, yet the decision to escalate such disputes into military engagements varies significantly among autocratic regimes. A striking example of this variation can be observed in the case of Argentina and its decision to invade the Malvinas Islands in 1982. This military action was initiated by the ruling military junta to assert sovereign claims but also possibly to divert the Argentinian public's attention from domestic economic and political crises. In contrast, the ongoing territorial dispute between Venezuela and Guyana has seen fluctuating tensions but, as of yet, has not escalated to full-scale military confrontation despite Venezuela's autocratic governance and substantial internal challenges.

Furthermore, both autocracies have been very similar in three aspects: first, in their respective times, both countries suffered from great GDP contraction; so, both autocracies were in great economic crises. Second, the economic crises did not impede both countries from heavily repressing their populations and political dissent, with some Argentinian NGOs claiming that during the time of the military junta, the Argentinian state disappeared around 30,000 people (International Commission

on Missing Persons, 2024) while in Venezuela there have been more than 19,000 extrajudicial killings (Human Rights Watch, 2022). In terms of political imprisonment, Argentina's regime held around 3,349 people, and the Venezuelan regime detained about 15,700 people across a ten-year period (Catoggio, 2010; Amnesty International, 2023). Third, neither country passed, or has passed, major reforms to its political system. In Argentina, the military junta held a firm grip on political power through the arms with no elections, while in Venezuela, the ruling party has maintained power through repression and the co-optation of major political party electoral cards, practically disqualifying them from running for office.

This empirical puzzle raises a critical question in the study of international relations: why do some autocratic states go to war over territorial disputes while others do not? The variation in autocratic decisions to go to war over a territorial dispute suggests that factors beyond mere possession of disputed territory are at play. Moreover, the existing literature on conflict onset has extensively explored the influence of regime type, national capability, and the strategic importance of territory. Similarly, there are some specific domestic drivers that existing literature has explored, such as repression and domestic unrest that propel some autocratic regimes towards aggressive military actions.

This research aims to delve into a different domestic explanation for such divergent behaviors among autocratic states in the context of territorial dispute conflict initiation. This article is based on the diversionary theory of war framework. I assume that both government and opposition groups behave strategically and rationally to seek power. By analyzing internal political dynamics between opposition coordination and government responses to challenges against incumbents, economic conditions, and the salience of the disputed territories within autocratic regimes, this study seeks to uncover the underlying factors that influence decision-making processes regarding war initiation. The cases of Argentina and Venezuela provide a comparative basis to examine how internal pressures, in terms of the opposition groups' level of threat, and regime survival strategies manifest in foreign policy decisions, particularly in the pursuit of territorial expansion as a way to divert from domestic issues.

Consequently, I argue that the presence of domestic unrest and the state's capability or its inability to repress dissent are not enough to explain why leaders make the policy choice to divert domestic attention to a war over a territorial dispute. Contrarily, an unexplored variable, such as the opposition level of threat, which I define as the level of coordination in a single strategy that opposition groups may have, determines how truly threatened the autocrats will self-perceive. I further explain this in the theory section as I incorporate theoretical implications of this new variable in conjunction with the other variables aforementioned in this article.

To test this argument, I employ a quantitative analysis approach through the use of a logistic regression model given that my dependent variable (conflict onset) has a binary nature of yes (or 1) and no (or 0). For my main independent variable – opposition level of threat – I create a novel dataset that runs from 1947 to 2000 and measures the level of unified strategies by opposition groups through a three-step

scale (low, medium, and high). The sample used in this article comprises territorial disputes from 1947 to 2000. There are a total of 348 territorial disputes in the dataset. This dataset ends in 1995; however, I extend it to include those territorial disputes until the year 2000. Lastly, the unit of analysis is dyad-year.

Ultimately, this study contributes to the current international relations literature through extending a deeper understanding of internal state mechanisms and dynamics, as well as autocratic leadership decision-making that can result in conflict initiation over territorial disputes. This not only enriches the theoretical framework of conflict studies; more specifically, the diversionary theory of war but also offers practical insights for policymakers engaged in diplomacy and conflict resolution in regions prone to territorial disputes under autocratic rule. By addressing the complexities of domestic factors influencing autocratic decision-making, this research shows the necessity for a nuanced approach in international relations and conflict prevention strategies in order to reduce conflict onset.

I divide this study into the following sections: First, I conduct a literature review where I explore the body of knowledge on conflict onset, the dynamics behind territorial disputes, autocratic regime characteristics, and opposition behavior within autocratic regimes. Second, I state my theory that addresses the previously posed research question. Third, I delve deeper into the characteristics of the research design employed in this article. Lastly, I share the theoretical contributions of this article to the body of knowledge in the international relations literature as well as the policy implications on conflict onset and how domestic factors influence foreign policy decisions.

Literature Review

There has been a constant and extensive interest from scholars regarding the study of the causes of war or explanations as to why wars occur. This is not strange given that war is the political phenomenon that takes the most lives and wreaks havoc on entire nations. Some of the works that have been produced by scholars have focused on rationalizing why war occurs through a bargaining model (Fearon, 1995; Lake, 2010). Others have delved into analyzing the distinct combinations of dyads involved in the conflict, and which types of regime initiate conflict more often than others (Wright & Diehl, 2016; Goertz & Diehl, 1992; Peceny & Butler, 2004). For example, Wright and Diehl (2016) argue that mixed regime dyads will be more likely to enter conflict given the different significance that the disputed territory may have for each regime type within the dyad, thus reducing the bargaining space. Similarly, Vasquez (1993) argues that domestic politics influence the decision of a state to go to war over a territory in terms of how much that state can mobilize its own people for (1) public support and (2) claim legitimacy and build momentum.

Other scholars, who look at domestic explanations for war, are proponents of the diversionary theory of war, where leaders that face increased domestic pressure and discontent enter into conflicts that are somewhat justifiable to divert the public's pressure away from domestic grievances and towards an external enemy (Oakes,

2012; Tir, 2010). However, there are many accounts where scholars have major disagreements in terms of quantitative evidence (Tarar, 2006; Jung, 2014; Tir, 2010; Chiozza & Goemans, 2004) that back up the theoretical claims that the diversionary theory of war provides in famous case studies, such as the Malvinas War between Argentina and the United Kingdom (Oakes, 2012).

That being said, there are some scholarly works that have attempted to find evidence in terms of this theory, which in turn has created a myriad of works that evaluate different explanatory variables such as domestic unrest (Oakes, 2012), foreign targets (Jung, 2014), government popularity (Tir, 2010), or even demonstrating leadership competence (Tarar, 2006). Some other studies go as far as contemplating the ethnic composition and military capacity of target states (Haynes, 2016; Haynes, 2017).

Diving deeper into some of the explanations, some scholars have explored the roles of repression and its relationship with regime survival and legitimation (Escribà-Folch, 2017; Lachapelle, 2022). Also, other studies have focused on the behavior of authoritarian regimes in terms of conflict initiation (Bas & Orsun, 2021; Weeks, 2012; Pickering & Kinsangani, 2010). Similarly, Altman & Lee (2022) argue that the careerist drive of some military officers functions as a motivation to initiate conflict over territorial disputes for the sake of being watched seizing territory since this bolsters their own careers as commanders. All these researchers have served as a way to address common and unanswered questions regarding conflict initiation while others have delved deeper into the domestic explanations for autocratic war onset as well as domestic explanations driving the diversionary theory of war.

Thus, an empirical gap still exists in the literature given the wide variety of explanations for diversionary war occurrence, which is sometimes supported by evidence in case studies, but at large, differing theories have found support in large-*N* empirical studies. Consequently, generating a lack of consensus among scholars. In order to address this, I argue that a key, unexplored variable might have a better explanation as to why diversionary wars occur in autocracies. This variable is the opposition level of threat; namely, opposition coordination under a single strategy with clear goals. From a rationalist perspective, when autocracies are faced with increased threat, they will have a menu with a handful of options as to how to proceed in order to survive. In the next section, I delve deeper into my theory.

Theory and Hypotheses

This paper integrates scholarly work on conflict onset in dyadic militarized interstate disputes (MIDs), autocratic regime types, and autocratic regimes' opposition movements carried out by scholars in the international relations realm. It remains true that these works have contributed in several ways to the literature; for example, some scholars have found that some dyadic combinations of states are more prone to conflict than others (Huth & Allee, 2002; Peceny & Butler, 2004; Wright & Diehl, 2016). Several others have delved into the regime type characteristics of autocracies and how political institutions shape autocratic behavior (Bernhard, 2022; Miller, 2015; Miller, 2017; McLellan, 2022). Other scholars have researched how the different domestic

actors (i.e., opposition groups and the government) act in autocracies in respect to one another (Arriola, 2009; Gandhi & Przeworski, 2007; Helms, 2023; Ong, 2022). Moreover, this paper incorporates the theoretical framework of the diversionary theory of war from the perspective of autocratic leaders having a myriad of policy choices in order to survive (Oakes, 2012).

That being said, this theory rests on four key assumptions. First, autocratic leaders are rational actors whose primary goal is to remain in power. This survivalist maxim influences their decision-making processes, particularly when they face threats. The rational choice theory suggests that when internal pressures mount, leaders may employ strategies that can divert attention from domestic issues (Fearon, 1995; Oakes, 2012). One such strategy is the initiation of a military conflict, which can unify the public and truncate the opposition's efforts for regime change (Oakes, 2012).

Second, opposition groups in autocracies usually have a clear objective: to achieve political power through regime change or significant policy shifts (i.e., political reforms). These groups, which include political parties, civil organizations, and unions, adopt various strategies to challenge the regime. Their effectiveness and the threat they pose often depend on their ability to unite under a cohesive strategy and mobilize significant portions of the public. The stronger and more unified the opposition, the more pressing the need for the regime to find avenues to undermine this threat. A historical example of this is represented by the actions of the Multipartidaria in Argentina in the times of the military junta. The Multipartidaria was able to gather among their ranks the main five political opposition parties including the Justicialist Party (Peronist), and the Radical Civic Union (Socialdemocrats), who were the main parties, and held huge influence in the different civil organizations and labor unions that existed then. This permitted the opposition in Argentina to unify their strategy with the goal of reforming the political system, and thus, liberalize the state to permit elections.

Third, opposition groups may initially have diverse goals and methods, and a common threat from an autocratic regime can lead to a temporary alignment of interests, creating a unified front. This unity; however, it is not a given. The autocrats always have options to repress and crush dissent, or even co-opt a part of the opposition's leadership. Thus, opposition groups should not be treated as already unified, and the variation in applicable strategies in the opposition groups influences how threatened autocrats are. For example, different opposition groups in Venezuela have had a series of agreements with Maduro's regime in terms of electoral participation that has permitted them to be included in the national assembly and other policy-making bodies while other opposition groups have been heavily repressed and their leaders disqualified from running for office. Thus, one could make the argument that the repressive actions of the government not only benefit itself but also benefit some opposition parties that are looking to increase their power in respect to other opposition parties.

Fourth, the interplay between a threatened government and a unified opposition often leads to significant foreign policy decisions. When domestic stability is

threatened by a strong opposition, autocratic leaders may initiate conflicts over issues like territorial disputes. Such conflicts serve not only to distract the public from domestic grievances but also to diminish the opposition's momentum by creating a different focus for national discourse.

Thus, I claim that the opposition's capability to unify itself under a single strategy with clear goals represents a greater threat to the government than the isolated presence of domestic unrest, or the inability of the state to repress dissent due to a diminished extractive economic capacity. In order to illustrate my claim, I break down the causal chain: First, we find the presence of some domestic grievances that can have both political and economic nature. For example, in the puzzle, both Argentina in the 1980s and Venezuela in the past decade have suffered great economic contractions while also experimenting with the truncation of their political rights; in the Argentine case, due to the rise of the military junta. In the Venezuelan case, due to the authoritarian drift of the ruling party coalition in Venezuela.

Second, these grievances generate domestic unrest which can be translated into protests, violent or non-violent, and other types of activism that affect political stability within these types of regimes. It is important, though, to state a distinction between civic unrest and unrest that is guided by the political opposition. For example, a labor strike due to decreasing wages should not have the same goals as a strike with political goals behind it. Argentina is a good example of this: in 1969 student and labor movements rioted against the economic policies of the military junta. These protests, also called 'Cordobazo', despite having an underlying economic grievance, also were politically tainted due to the coordination between student and labor unions against the military government. On the contrary, Venezuela's teacher's union has been involved in the early semester of 2024 in a gremial struggle for higher wages against the government without receiving the logistical support of any other organized opposition groups. To further illustrate: the 'Cordobazo' in Argentina ended up with the military junta changing its president while the teacher's union in Venezuela had no effect. This reality can be understood in two ways: the coordination of different groups generates further pressure against the government officials, and forces them to change the policies being implemented, either by reforming the system, or even substituting the leadership, or simply to repress. Secondly, the isolated social movements that coordinate somewhat of an unrest do not truly represent a threat to the government; thus, no reform, or policy shift takes place.

Thinking about this scenario from the government's leadership perspective, state leaders will have a menu of choices to make. For example, in the case of the 'Cordobazo', the military junta had the choice of (1) keep repressing, (2) reform the political system, (3) change leadership, or (4) initiate war against the United Kingdom over the Malvinas islands. In the decision-making, they went for changing the leadership. This can be for several reasons: continuing repression could have had a contrary effect than crushing the protestors given that there were so many organizations involved. Similarly, reforming the political system was never an option given that losing power is the ultimate cost for the leadership. Waging war, for example, was

far more costly at the moment than changing leadership given that enabling such a scenario would give the leadership many more ifs than certainty. Rather, the choice of a leadership change makes sense in this case given that the figure of the presidency was sustained by a military council rather than by a personalist figure, which in itself made it easier to create a 'change' without actually changing the structure of political power.

When does, then, the policy choice to wage war become a plausible option for the autocrats? My argument is that most opposition groups need to be coordinated under one strategy. For example, the main difference between the 'Cordobazo' and the actions taken by the opposition on the eve of the Malvinas war is that the latter was comprised by opposition parties united under one common platform and, at the same time, coordinated with student and labor movements with one strategic goal: political reform to bring democracy back. If we look at this from the government's leadership perspective, the threat that the coordinated opposition is posing against you is far higher than the other isolated riots. Thus, the 'cheaper' options, such as repression, become rather difficult since the opposition groups become more in numbers, and their range of action becomes larger. Conversely, the policy options that are 'costlier' in other circumstances become much more attractive, such as waging war over a territorial dispute. Since the opposition efforts have increased, not only in numbers, but have achieved somewhat of a wide support and consensus among political forces, then waging war over a territorial dispute holds two natural utilities for the autocrats: First, it shifts the attention of the public from the domestic grievances towards an external enemy; Secondly, it gives the autocrats the advantage of imposing the political agenda due to the rally-around-the-flag effect that waging war generates. Lastly, reforming the political system is still far costlier than waging war since it represents the demise of the political elite.

In sum, I argue that autocrats will have a myriad of options in terms of what policy to enact while facing the threat of removal from office. In some scenarios, autocrats manage to contain the threats through repression while in others autocrats will shift the attention away from domestic politics towards international conflict. The 'game-changer' in this decision is dependent on how coordinated opposition groups are under one strategy, which makes them stronger vis-a-vis the autocratic regime. The outcome of this threat, thus, may lead autocrats to wage war with diversionary purposes. All this considered, I hypothesize that:

H1: *If the opposition's level of threat is higher, then autocracies will be more likely to go to war over territorial disputes.*

Research Design

This paper is studying the effect of domestic factors in autocracies' decisions to go to war over territorial disputes. To test my hypothesis, I design a quantitative study using the dyad-year as the unit of analysis. The dependent variable is conflict onset, which is defined as the initiation of militarized interstate disputes over territory within

a given year. This variable will be sourced from the Huth and Allee (2002) dataset on territorial disputes and conflict initiation that resulted in militarized interstate disputes (MIDs), which provides detailed data on militarized interstate disputes initiated by authoritarian regimes, and ranges from 1919 to 1995. I extend this dataset following the same parameters set by the authors until the year 2000. The sample includes 348 territorial disputes. In terms of the coding of the dependent variable, it will be coded 1 if there is conflict onset while it will be coded 0 if there's none. Likewise, I have established that a minimum of 100 deaths per year is the threshold to consider conflict as an observation in a given dyad-year.

For the study of binary outcome variables, logistic regression models are particularly advantageous. This model is ideal for analyzing the DV *Conflict Onset*, which is whether a conflict starts or not in a given dyad-year. Logistic regression is specifically designed to handle such binary outcomes and offers a way to interpret how changes in factors like the threat level from opposition groups affect the likelihood of conflict. Another positive aspect is that in fitting the logistic curve, logistic regression does not require residuals to be normally distributed.

Moving forward, the study presents one main independent variable: *opposition level of threat*, which I define as the level of coordination of different opposition groups under one strategy with unique goals. This variable will be coded on a scale from 1 to 3 with 1 being low level of threat, 2 being medium level of threat, and 3 being high level of threat. I will be creating a novel dataset that will gather information from a time period of 1947 to 2000. The sources for this novel dataset will be based on speeches of political opposition leaders, news pieces stating opposition coordination, and joint actions in rallies, protests, and meetings. To illustrate this I will use examples from our two case studies: the years where the Multipartidaria was created in Argentina would represent a high (3) level of opposition threat given that all five parties, and other civic organizations acted together in a unified strategy with one common goal: the end of the military junta, and the liberalization of the political system through elections. Conversely, the years where Juan Guaidó led part of the Venezuelan opposition would be coded as medium (2) since some minority opposition groups did not join his platform. Lastly, we can use the example of Argentina during the 'Cordobazo' as an example of low (1) level of opposition threat given that most national movements had varying goals that differ from each other (Seri, 2009). Furthermore, the variable *opposition level of threat* holds great theoretical importance. While authors like Oakes (2012) explore variables such as repression, and domestic unrest, *opposition level of threat* deepens our scope in terms of the domestic factors affecting conflict onset over territorial disputes. As stated in the theory section, the *opposition level of threat* poses graver challenges to the autocrats; thus, this variable holds both theoretical and empirical importance. This variable, which is purposefully built for this paper, can incentivize leadership to engage in territorial disputes to divert attention from domestic grievances or lack of support, or even rally nationalistic support. Scholars such as Weeks (2012) have also shown how internal threats can lead to aggressive foreign policy; however, the scope taken in this article deepens the explanation in a

more nuanced manner.

Similarly, I use some control variables in this study that will help reduce bias for variable selections, and accounting for confounding variables that may originate from alternative explanations. The first control is *Regime Type*, which is classified into categories such as full autocracies and electoral autocracies will be taken from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) dataset; more specifically, from the additive polyarchy index that operates on a scale of 0 to 1. The index is operationalized by taking the weighted average of the indices measuring freedom of association, clean elections, freedom of expression, elected executive, and suffrage. The weights are constructed so as to sum to 1 and weigh elected executive and suffrage half as much as the other three. This dataset offers a comprehensive measurement of regime characteristics and changes over time, allowing for dynamic tracking of regime evolution (Coppedge et al., 2024). I argue that incorporating this variable as a control is important due to the variation and inherent characteristics that *Regime Type* holds, and thus, the effect that it might have on autocrats' decision to go to war. The political structures set up by the system shape the decision-making of the leadership in a country, and thus, their policy choices. Previous studies have shown that *Regime Type* affects both domestic policy and international conflict behavior (Geddes, Wright & Frantz, 2014).

In addition, the second control variable is *GDP*, which serves as an indicator of economic power and capability. GDP data will be obtained from the World Bank's World Development Indicators database (The World Bank, 2012). Theoretically, countries with larger GDPs will have more resilient economies, and public grievances may not be as many as in countries with low GDP; also, higher GDP may be an indicator that a regime has increased capacities to repress domestic dissent, and thus, reduce internal threats. A third control variable is the *Salience of Territory*, which reflects the importance or value of disputed territories, and will be measured using the Territorial Salience dataset (Wright & Rider, 2014). This dataset provides insights into the historical, economic, and strategic significance of territories under dispute. If a territory is highly salient, then this may influence a state decision to go to war if the benefits from a possible victory, even partial, outweigh the costs. For example, autocrats may go to war over a territory that has high importance because it is viewed as a public good given its historical or cultural importance for a country. Victory, in this case, would most likely have an effect on domestic politics by either receiving support from the public or just using the conflict as a diversionary tactic.

Moreover, *Military Capacity*, measured by the Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) from the Correlates of War Project (Chen, 2018), will also be included to control for the potential that more capable states are more likely to engage in militarized disputes. Having states that are far more capable militarily than their counterpart may be an incentive and an opportunity generator for an aggressor country in a territorial dispute. Along the same line, the study is controlling for the presence of *Formal Alliances* through the Formal Alliances Dataset from the Correlates of War Project (Gibler & Sarkees, 2004). This variable has these relevant alliance measures:

No Alliance, Only Allied to Each Other, One Side Has Outside Alliance, Both Sides Have Outside Alliances, Allied to Each Other and Outside Alliances. In the case of formal alliances, this could represent either a catalyst or an impeding factor for conflict. If the aggressor country holds key regional alliances, then it should be better positioned to attack. On the contrary, if the defender country has key alliances, then the aggressor country will show higher restraint.

Lastly, *Repression* and *Domestic Unrest* are also included as control variables given their theoretical significance. Since these variables hold a pivotal role in the diversionary theory of war, it is only natural to add them as control because they hold an alternative explanation. For repression, I will be using the Political Terror Scale dataset, which quantifies the scale and scope of political violence and repression. The scale of this dataset goes between 1 and 5 with one being countries where citizens are secure and their rights are respected. Five, on the other hand, is where the countries' population are generally and broadly terrorized by the state. Opposition is smashed, and leaders have little to no care for violent, life-threatening repression. The PTS dataset relies on information from reports from Amnesty International and the U. S. State Department (Gibney et al, 2023). Moreover, domestic unrest seeks to measure the degree of social mobilization against the government. It may be produced due to increasing discontent against enacted policies, and economic or political grievances and creates scenarios where autocrats need to make decisions of whether to repress, reform their policies, or to divert. At the same time, social unrest may shift public opinion and put autocrats in places where they need to make tough decisions, especially if they have constant, cyclical elections, where public opinion plays a major role in. Social unrest is measured through the Reported Social Unrest Index from the IMF. This index comprises reported occasions of social unrest in the media (Barrett & Bae, 2023).

Discussion and Conclusion

The theory explored in this article—linking the level of threat from domestic opposition based on their capability to unify under one strategy with clear goals to the likelihood of autocratic regimes initiating diversionary wars—has significant implications for both international relations theory and the practice of foreign policy. Firstly, this theory suggests that autocratic conflict behavior can often be understood as a strategic response to internal political dynamics rather than purely external pressures, opportunities, or even due to the failure of a bargaining process. This understanding can inform how international actors, such as foreign governments and international organizations, approach autocratic states that are experiencing significant internal opposition. For instance, international sanctions or support strategies might be applied in a way that considers the internal pressures faced by these regimes, potentially aiming to reduce the likelihood of conflict by decreasing the regime's need to divert attention from domestic issues. Conversely, deterrent policy tools such as sanctions could also be used to break down the capacity of states to wage war, or even to repress their citizens.

Secondly, the theory highlights the importance of opposition unity in influencing state behavior. This has practical implications for opposition movements within autocracies, suggesting that their level of organization and unity can not only challenge the regime domestically but also inadvertently affect the state's foreign policy decisions. For external actors supporting democratic movements, this presents a strategic dimension to consider: the support offered needs to be mindful of how it might influence the regime's stability and its consequent behavior internationally. There are many examples in the international realm of this behavior. On the one hand, Argentina ultimately decided to invade the Malvinas islands due to its utility to calm domestic turmoil, but also because it had implicit support from the U. S., their closest ally at the time. On the other hand, if the theory stated in this paper remains true, we may find the case of Venezuela with increased curiosity, where the rhetorical escalation against Guyana has increased as the opposition's drive towards a unified candidacy in the upcoming election builds up.

Conclusively, the examination of diversionary wars in autocratic regimes through the lens of domestic political threats offers a nuanced perspective on the intersection of domestic politics and international conflict. This theory supports the broader premise that internal state dynamics, particularly the strength and unity of opposition groups, play a crucial role in the process of decision-making in autocratic leaders faced with the dilemma of maintaining power. The cases of Argentina during the 1980s and Venezuela under Maduro's regime illustrate how regimes may resort to external conflicts as a mechanism to consolidate power internally when faced with significant threats from a unified opposition.

This theoretical framework not only enriches our understanding of autocratic behaviors but also serves as a critical reminder of the complexities involved in international relations and conflict studies. It underscores the need for a comprehensive approach that considers both internal political dynamics and traditional geopolitical factors when analyzing state behavior on the international stage. Moreover, it provides a different scope from major works in the study of the diversionary theory of war (Oakes, 2012) and their detractors (Schenoni, 2019) since it deepens our understanding on what factors may generate more of a threat against autocrats.

Overall, the implications of this theory are profound, urging policymakers, scholars, and international actors to consider the internal political landscape of autocracies when engaging with or analyzing these states. By acknowledging the internal drivers of conflict, international strategies can be better designed to promote stability and peace, both within and among nations.

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The Spoils of Nature: When International Oil Pricing Matters

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Abstract Existing research, particularly Lujala (2010), has established that the presence and production of hydrocarbons in a conflict zone influence both conflict duration and onset. This literature, however, fails to consider how international oil prices may condition this relationship, despite many of the causal mechanisms relying on hydrocarbons as a source of funding for rebel groups. We argue that when oil prices are high, the conflict-lengthening effect of hydrocarbons will be greater and hydrocarbon production will make conflict onset even more likely. We find in our extension of Lujala (2010), however, that hydrocarbons increase conflict duration less when oil prices are high and that oil prices have no significant effect on the relationship between hydrocarbons and conflict onset. These results greatly improve our understanding of the relationship between natural resources and conflict and present numerous avenues for future research.

Introduction

The puzzle identified in this analysis revolves around the relationship between the presence of hydrocarbons in a conflict zone and the international prices of these commodities, specifically oil. We directly build upon Lujala (2010), which determines that the location of natural resources greatly influences conflict onset and duration. The article establishes that the mere presence of hydrocarbons can significantly increase the duration and onset of conflicts, as these resources provide a lucrative source of revenue and motivation for rebel groups, thereby sustaining and prolonging their operations (Lujala 2010). This foundational understanding sets the stage for exploring how fluctuations in international commodity prices, particularly oil, further modulate this dynamic.

The exploration of how fluctuations in international commodity prices, especially for resources like oil and gemstones, impact the dynamics of armed conflicts, addresses a critical gap in the existing literature. While numerous studies have convincingly demonstrated the influence of natural resource wealth on the emergence and sustainability of rebel groups, they have largely concentrated on the static aspects of resource presence and geographical location without integrating the dynamic factor of global

. For the online appendix and other supplementary information for this article, please use this link: https://tinyurl.com/39jkkxvk

market prices. This oversight leaves a significant gap in our understanding of conflict economics, particularly in how the changing value of resources on the international market can alter the incentives for armed groups and potentially the course of conflicts themselves.

Firstly, the economic incentives for rebel groups to engage in or prolong conflicts are substantially influenced by the global prices of commodities like oil and gemstones. High commodity prices can increase the potential revenue from controlling resource-rich areas, thereby intensifying competition among conflicting parties and possibly prolonging conflicts. This dynamic suggests that the profitability of resource exploitation for rebel groups is not constant but fluctuates with global market conditions, which can either escalate or de-escalate conflict situations.

Secondly, the presence of easily extractable resources such as gemstones has been shown to affect rebel movements directly by providing them with financial means to sustain their operations. There is also some evidence that less easily extractable resources like oil may have a similar effect. However, integrating the variable of international commodity prices into this analysis could further refine our understanding of when and why these resources become significant drivers of conflict. For instance, a surge in gemstone or oil prices could make previously marginal conflicts financially viable for rebel groups, leading to an escalation in violence or the prolongation of existing conflicts.

Moreover, the distinction between onshore and offshore oil production and its impact on conflict onset and duration highlights the importance of resource location. Integrating international oil prices into this analysis could provide insights into how the value of these resources interacts with their geographical characteristics to influence conflict dynamics. For example, high oil prices might exacerbate the risk of conflict onset in regions with onshore production due to the higher visibility and accessibility of these resources to rebel groups.

Finally, the methodological focus on the spatial and temporal overlap of resources and conflict underscores the complexity of the relationship between natural resources and armed conflicts. By considering international commodity prices, researchers can add a critical temporal dimension to this analysis, capturing how shifts in the global economy can influence local conflict dynamics over time.

Expanding the analysis of armed conflicts to include the impact of international commodity prices on the economic incentives provided by natural resources like oil and gemstones offers a more dynamic and nuanced understanding of conflict economics. This approach not only builds on existing research that has established the significance of resource presence and location but also opens new avenues for exploring how global economic factors interact with local conditions to influence the course of armed conflicts.

In this paper we plan on adding a new variable to the existing models presented by Lujala (2010): international commodity prices of oil. The interaction between this new variable and hydrocarbon reserves is significant. The presence of hydrocarbons in a conflict zone has been shown to significantly increase the duration of conflicts

because hydrocarbons provide a lucrative source of present and future revenue for rebel groups, which can sustain and prolong their operations (Lujala 2010). Therefore, the international prices of oil can significantly influence the incentives for armed groups to capture and control oil-producing areas. This higher revenue can also intensify competition over control of these resources. This could lead to an increase in the duration. The interaction between hydrocarbon reserves and international commodity prices is predicted to show that the effect of hydrocarbon presence on conflict dynamics is conditional on the international prices of these commodities. Specifically, when international prices are high, the impact of hydrocarbons on prolonging conflict is expected to be stronger. Conversely, when prices are low, the financial incentive to control hydrocarbon production areas might diminish, potentially leading to shorter conflicts.

We also expect the interaction between oil production and oil prices to have a significant impact on conflict onset. Lujala (2010) argues that oil production can serve as a source of both revenue and grievance, leading to conflict onset. Financial gains from resource exploitation can make a rebellion viable, while grievances from the uneven allocation of resource rents can create the motivation to rebel (Lujala 2010). Higher oil prices exacerbate both of these dynamics, leading oil production to increase the chance of conflict even more when oil prices are high.

After replicating the results found in Lujala (2010), we extend upon her analysis to investigate the influence of international oil prices. Following her models, we analyze the impact of the interaction between hydrocarbon reserves in the conflict zone and oil prices on conflict duration. Next, we analyze the impact of the interaction between oil production on a national level and oil prices on conflict onset. These models allow for the examination of how the presence and production of hydrocarbons and their international prices influence conflict initiation and duration. Data for the new variable is identified and collected through the World Bank's commodity price data.

Our results indicate that international oil prices do overall increase conflict duration in accordance with our argument. However, hydrocarbon reserves increase conflict duration less when oil prices are high and increase conflict duration more when oil prices are low, contrary to our expectations. In contrast, we do not find that oil prices have any significant effect on the onset of conflict, either independently or through their interaction with oil production. This finding also contradicts our expectations. Taken together, these findings indicate that although rising oil prices are insufficient to spark a conflict, they can play a significant role in conditioning the effect of hydrocarbon reserves on conflict duration.

Theory

The theoretical implications of integrating international commodity prices into the analysis are profound, addressing several empirical gaps and potential shortcomings in the current understanding of resource-driven conflicts. The inclusion of international commodity prices introduces a dynamic component to the economic incentives for engaging in or prolonging conflicts. Traditional models, which focus on the presence

and production of resources, often assume static economic values for these resources. However, by incorporating fluctuating commodity prices, the model acknowledges that the economic incentives for rebel groups and governments are not constant but vary in response to global market conditions (Sambanis 2004). This dynamic perspective can explain variations in conflict duration and onset that static models cannot, highlighting the need for a more nuanced understanding of economic incentives in conflict settings.

The value of resources, determined by international commodity prices, directly impacts the viability of conflicts. High commodity prices can make previously marginal conflicts financially viable for rebel groups by increasing the potential revenue from controlling resource-rich areas (Sambanis 2004). This theoretical extension suggests that the onset and duration of conflicts are not only influenced by the presence of resources but also by their global market value, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the economic underpinnings of conflicts.

The original analysis posits that onshore oil production increases the risk of conflict onset due to its accessibility to rebel groups, in contrast to offshore production which, due to its inaccessibility, does not have the same effect (Lujala 2010). Integrating international commodity prices into this analysis could further refine the understanding of how resource wealth affects state capacity and, consequently, conflict dynamics. High oil prices could bolster state revenues from offshore production, potentially enhancing state capacity and altering the relationship between state strength and conflict risk (Colgan 2014). This suggests a more complex interaction between resource wealth, state capacity, and conflict than previously acknowledged.

By considering international commodity prices, the analysis gains both a temporal and a spatial dimension, allowing for a more detailed examination of when and where conflicts are likely to occur or persist. This addresses a significant empirical gap in the current literature, which often treats resource wealth as a static factor. The fluctuating nature of commodity prices means that the economic attractiveness of resource-rich regions can change over time, influencing the strategic decisions of rebel groups and governments alike. This theoretical extension underscores the importance of timing and location in understanding resource-driven conflicts (Colgan 2014).

The omission of international commodity prices from the analysis of resource-driven conflicts represents a significant empirical gap. By not accounting for the fluctuating value of resources, existing models may suffer from omitted variable bias. This oversight limits the explanatory power of these models and may lead to inaccurate predictions about the onset and duration of conflicts. The absence of international commodity prices in conflict analysis models not only risks overstating the role of resource presence but also neglects the potential for these prices to act as a catalyst for conflict (Colgan 2014). For instance, a spike in oil prices could suddenly render a previously low-value zone economically viable, thereby incentivizing armed groups to seize control. This oversight can significantly distort the perceived relationship between resource wealth and conflict, suggesting that models without this variable may not fully capture the economic motivations behind armed conflicts. The failure to account for these dynamic economic incentives can lead to a misunderstanding of

the conditions under which conflicts are likely to emerge or escalate.

The focus on static resource factors (presence and production) without considering commodity prices leaves room for alternative explanations of conflict dynamics. For instance, a surge in conflict might coincide with rising global prices for certain commodities, suggesting that economic opportunities, rather than merely the presence of resources, drive conflict dynamics (Carter et al., 2011). Ignoring these economic fluctuations limits the understanding of the complex motivations behind armed conflicts. Not including the role of international commodity prices leaves significant room for alternative explanations of conflict dynamics that are more economically grounded (Carter et al., 2011). For example, the economic shock theory suggests that sudden changes in a country's economic condition, such as those caused by fluctuating commodity prices, can lead to conflict (Bazzi& Blattman, 2014). This theory posits that economic instability, rather than the mere presence of valuable resources, may be a more direct cause of conflict (Bazzi& Blattman, 2014). By not considering commodity prices, existing analyses may overlook these broader economic mechanisms that can both precipitate and perpetuate conflicts, limiting the explanatory power of resource-centric models.

Additional explanations to the relationship between natural resources and conflict duration could stem from political and social dimensions that are not solely tied to the economic incentives provided by resources like oil and gemstones. For instance, the presence of natural resources might exacerbate existing political grievances or ethnic divisions, serving as a focal point around which opposition groups mobilize (Asal et al., 2016). In this view, resources do not directly finance conflict but instead act as a catalyst for mobilization by highlighting inequalities in wealth distribution or by providing a tangible objective for separatist movements. This perspective suggests that the underlying political and social structures, along with how resources are governed and the inclusivity of political institutions, play a critical role in determining whether resources will fuel conflict or contribute to peace (Asal et al., 2016).

Moreover, the environmental degradation and displacement caused by resource extraction could serve as another alternative explanation for the prolongation of conflicts (Humphreys 2005). The environmental impact of extracting resources like oil and gemstones can lead to the displacement of communities, loss of livelihoods, and degradation of essential natural resources, such as water (Humphreys 2005). These consequences can fuel resentment and resistance among local populations, potentially leading to or exacerbating conflict. In this scenario, the conflict is not directly financed by the resources themselves but is instead a response to the negative externalities associated with resource extraction (Humphreys 2005). This explanation shifts the focus from the economic value of the resources to the environmental and social costs of their extraction, suggesting a more complex relationship between natural resources and conflict dynamics.

Building upon this literature and the argument and findings of Lujala (2010), we present arguments on the impact of international oil prices on both conflict duration and onset. We argue that hydrocarbon reserves will increase conflict duration even

more when oil prices are high. These higher prices lead to higher financial gains from resource exploitation, allowing rebels to sustain conflict for longer. Higher prices also increase the potential future payoff of controlling the hydrocarbon reserves, making rebels even more motivated to continue fighting for a chance of that control. Conversely, low oil prices limit present and potential future financial gains, making rebels less capable and willing to sustain conflict. We also argue that oil production will increase the likelihood of conflict onset even more when oil prices are high. Higher revenues from resources could allow a rebel group to begin a conflict that they did not have the finances to begin before. Additionally, high oil prices may make the uneven distribution of resource rents more severe and visible, exacerbating grievances and potentially sparking conflict (Lujala 2010).

Lujala's (2010) empirical scope, primarily centered on resource presence and production, may not fully capture the multifaceted relationship between natural resources and conflicts. Limiting the scope of empirical analysis to static measures of resource wealth fails to capture the full complexity of the relationship between natural resources and conflicts. This narrow focus may overlook how changes in the global economic environment, reflected through commodity prices, can alter the strategic calculations of both state and non-state actors. For instance, a comprehensive analysis that includes commodity prices could reveal patterns of conflict escalation or de-escalation in response to global economic trends, offering insights into the timing and location of conflicts that static models cannot provide. Expanding the empirical scope to include these variables would not only enrich the theoretical understanding of resource-driven conflicts but also enhance the predictive accuracy of conflict models.

Replication

We plan to replicate Model 1 from Table II and Model 10 from Table III from Lujala's analysis (2010). The data utilized in both models is yearly and spans from 1946 to 2003. The author used Model 1 to investigate the impact of the presence of resources in a conflict area on conflict duration. Resource presence is measured with the independent variables of gemstones in the conflict area and hydrocarbon reserves in the conflict area. The control variables of mountainous terrain, forest cover, and rainy season in the conflict area are also included. These controls are included to address the potential ability of rough terrain to lengthen conflict by providing rebels with places to hide or forcing breaks in the fighting. The original analysis uses a bivariate Weibull survival model (Lujala 2010). However, due to issues with the availability of the replication data, we were unable to create the survival object necessary to run the model. Instead, we utilize a negative binomial model to investigate the same variables.

Lujala used Model 10 to investigate the dependent variable of conflict onset. It analyzes the independent variables of secondary diamonds and oil production on the country level with a logistic regression. Population, GDP per capita, democracy score, democracy score squared, mountainous terrain, linguistic fractionalization, instability, and ongoing conflict are all included as controls. The analysis also controlled for time since the last conflict onset and cubic splines, however they were found to be

insignificant and thus left out of the results table (Lujala 2010). Given this omission and issues replicating the cubic spline controls, we omit these controls from our replication. We also replicate a version of Figure 2, which presents survival estimates for conflict duration across several variables, which can be seen in the appendix (Lujala 2010).

Due to the difference in the model used, our Model 1 replication produced slightly different findings than the original analysis. Although most variables produce slightly different coefficients, most remain consistent in their positive or negative relationship and significance. The largest differences were the controls for forest cover and rainy season. Forest cover is not significant in the original analysis, but significant and negative in our replication, while rainy season was significant in the original analysis but lost significance in our replication. Our Model 2, the replication of Model 10 in the original analysis, produced highly similar results to the original analysis. Nearly all variables indicated the same significance and direction of relationship. The only significant difference was that the control for GDP per capita was insignificant in the original analysis but gained significance in our replication. This may be because the controls we omitted absorbed the significance of GDP in the original analysis, even though they failed to reach significance themselves.[1]

Extension

To extend the model in a meaningful way, considering the relationship between natural resources and conflict, integrating international commodity prices as a new variable could offer significant insights. The fluctuation in international commodity prices can have a profound impact on the economic incentives for controlling resources, which in turn could affect the onset, duration, and intensity of conflicts (Colgan 2014). For instance, a surge in the prices of oil or gemstones might increase the revenue potential from these resources, potentially exacerbating conflicts or even reigniting dormant tensions in resource-rich areas (Colgan 2014). Conversely, a decline in commodity prices could reduce the financial incentives for conflict, possibly leading to de-escalation or resolution of disputes. As such, we argue that oil presence will lengthen conflict even more when oil prices are high. We also argue that oil production will be even more likely to lead to conflict onset when oil prices are high.

Adding international commodity prices requires collecting and analyzing global price data for the specific resources in question (e.g., oil, diamonds, gold) and correlating these prices with conflict data over the same period. This approach would allow for a dynamic analysis that considers how external economic factors influence internal conflict dynamics. For example, using a dataset that includes monthly or yearly average prices for key commodities and matching this with conflict onset and duration data could provide a more nuanced understanding of the economic

1. See Figure 1 for results.

	Dependent variable:
	Duration
Mountainous terrain	0.052***
	(0.013)
Forest cover	-0.046***
	(0.015)
Rainy season	0.137*
	(0.074)
All gemstones	0.369***
	(0.066)
Hydrocarbon reserves	0.367***
	(0.058)
Constant	7.869***
	(0.083)
Observations	1,484
Log Likelihood	-13,728.680
theta	0.813*** (0.026)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	27,469.360
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

	Dependent variable:
	Onset
GDP per capita	-0.306***
	(0.099)
Population	0.140**
	(0.059)
Linguistic fractionalization	1.156***
	(0.295)
Polity score	0.013
	(0.012)
Polity squared	-0.008***
	(0.003)
Instability	0.141
	(0.189)
Mountainous terrain	0.123***
	(0.042)
Secondary diamonds	0.386**
	(0.174)
Oil production	0.407**
	(0.180)
Ongoing war	0.116
	(0.177)
Constant	-4.726***
	(0.564)
Observations	6,322
Log Likelihood	-827.494
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,676.989
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

FIGURE 1. *Replication Results for Model 1 (left) and Model 2 (right)*

underpinnings of resource-related conflicts. This extension not only enriches the analysis by incorporating global economic trends but also aligns with the literature that emphasizes the economic dimensions of conflicts, particularly those fueled by natural resources.

Furthermore, to explore the direct impact of international commodity prices on conflict without the extensive need for new data collection, one could employ a random sample of existing conflict zones known for their resource wealth. This smaller sample size would make it feasible to collect detailed data on commodity prices and examine their specific impact on these selected conflicts. Such an approach would offer a focused insight into the price-conflict nexus, providing a preliminary yet potent analysis that could guide future large-scale research efforts. This methodological creativity not only addresses the theoretical importance of economic factors in conflict dynamics but also leverages available data in a practical, innovative manner.

However, for the new variable of international commodity prices, we chose to use data from the World Bank's commodity price data, a reputable financial market data provider (Commodity markets n.d.). This decision is grounded in the reliability, authority, and comprehensive coverage these sources offer. The World Bank is renowned for its comprehensive and authoritative economic data. Its data on commodity prices are widely used in academic research and policy analysis, ensuring that our study builds on a solid and credible foundation.

This database offers global coverage and consistent methodology in tracking commodity prices. This is crucial for our analysis, which requires standardized

data across different countries and time periods to accurately assess the impact of international commodity prices on conflict. The World Bank database is regularly updated and easily accessible to researchers. This ensures that our study can use the most current data available and be replicated or updated in the future by other researchers. The database provides prices for a wide range of commodities, including oil, diamonds, and other natural resources relevant to our study. Although we do not investigate each of these in this paper, this allows for future extension for a more nuanced analysis of how different commodities might influence conflict dynamics in various contexts.

Using data from this source allows for compatibility with other economic indicators that might be included in related analyses, such as GDP per capita or growth rates, which are also available from the World Bank. This facilitates a more integrated approach to understanding the economic factors influencing conflict. By leveraging data from these established financial market data providers, our study aims to provide a robust and comprehensive analysis of how fluctuations in international commodity prices impact conflict. This approach not only enhances the credibility of our findings but also aligns with the broader academic and policy discourse on the economic dimensions of conflict.

We specifically utilize international commodity oil price data from the World Bank Commodity Price Data, otherwise known as The Pink Sheet (Commodity markets n.d.). We utilize the average crude oil price per barrel measure, which is measured in nominal US dollars. The data is annual, maximizing compatibility with the data used by Lujala in the original analysis. Given the potential for high volatility in commodity prices, we adjust the price data to reduce the impact of extreme values on the analysis using a logarithmic transformation. We also normalize the data to account for any possible trends over time.

Although Lujala's analysis spans from 1946 to 2003, the World Bank data only begins in 1960. As such, we limit the years included in our extension analyses to 1960 to 2003. In order to account for the possibility that any changes seen in our extension may be due to the different time frame rather than the addition of oil prices, we conduct another version of our replication which only includes only data from 1960 to 2003 but is otherwise identical to the replication presented in the last section of this paper. This time limited replication, the results of which can be seen in the appendix, did not produce results that were significantly different from our initial replication, indicating that our limited time span does not significantly impact this analysis.

To conduct our analyses we use similar models to our initial replication. When investigating the dependent variable of conflict duration we utilize a negative binomial model. Based on our replication of Lujala's Model 1, we first analyze the independent variable of hydrocarbon reserves in the conflict zone and add oil price as a control in addition to those used in the original analysis (2010). This model, named Model 3, allows us to observe the general effect of oil prices on conflict duration. Second, in Model 4, we add an interaction term between hydrocarbon presence and oil prices to the initial model in order to test our theory more precisely. Our controls, which

apply to both models, are mountainous terrain, forest cover and rainy season. The presence of all gemstones in the conflict zone is also included as a control as it is an independent variable in Lujala's original analysis (2010).

We follow a similar method in our analysis of conflict onset. Based on our replication of Lujala's Model 10, in our Model 5 we first analyze the independent variable of oil production using a logistic regression, including oil prices in addition to the same controls from our replication (2010). Second, in Model 6, we add an interaction term between oil production and oil prices to the same model. The controls used in both models are GDP per capita, population, Polity Score, Polity Score squared, linguistic fractionalization, instability, mountainous terrain, and ongoing war. As with our analysis of conflict duration, we keep the variable of secondary diamond production in the model, although it functions as an additional control rather than an independent variable in our analysis.

After we ran the analysis with our extension, we found mixed support for our argument on conflict duration. In our first analysis of conflict duration, in which we simply added the variable of oil prices without an interaction, oil price was positive and significant. This indicates that oil price does indeed overall increase conflict duration, consistent with our argument. The inclusion of oil prices did not decrease the significance of any of the other included variables. In fact it increased the significance of the controls for forest cover, which was insignificant in Lujala's analysis but significant in our replication, and rainy season, which was significant in both Lujala's analysis and our replication, indicating that the inclusion of this variable improves the explanatory power of the model (2010). In our second analysis we tested our argument more precisely by including an interaction term between hydrocarbon presence and oil prices. This interaction was significant but negative, contradicting our expectations. Hydrocarbon presence is found to lead to a larger increase in conflict duration when oil prices are low, and lead to a smaller increase in conflict duration when oil prices are high. In other words, the positive effect of hydrocarbon presence in the conflict zone diminishes as oil prices rise.

This finding contradicts both our expectation that high oil prices will amplify the conflict-lengthening effect of hydrocarbon presence and an implication drawn by Lujala from the original analysis (2010). Lujala asserts that her findings suggest that if the future payoff is significant enough, rebels may be willing to continue to fight for longer for the prospect of eventually being able to exploit a given natural resource (2010). Our finding suggests that instead, rebel groups with hydrocarbon reserves in their conflict zones fight less lengthy conflicts when the potential payoff is high, compared to when it is lower. This may indicate either that higher oil prices strengthen the government or the rebels, allowing one to end the conflict more quickly than when prices are low. Higher oil prices may strengthen the government to the point that they are more likely to be able to win against the rebels, militarily or through a favorable settlement. The government receives more income when prices are high, which they can utilize to improve their military capabilities and thus increase the chance of achieving victory. Regardless of if the hydrocarbons are being produced,

higher oil prices could lead to greater motivation and resolve to maintain control of these reserves, also increasing the chance that the government will end the conflict in their favor.

However, higher prices may instead strengthen the rebels, rather than the government, to the point that they can achieve a quicker victory. Higher oil prices increase the possible gains for rebel groups exploiting these resources, allowing them to increase their military capacity and thus end the conflict more quickly. The increased revenue from exploitation may also incentivize rebel groups that were not receiving revenue from oil to begin looting it to gain these increased financial benefits. This lends credibility to Lujala's assertion that her original analysis could suggest that rebel exploitation of oil production through looting and extortion is a more significant source of funding than previously believed (2010).[2]

Regardless of hydrocarbon production, higher oil prices could increase the rebels' motivation and resolve to fight for control of reserves, given the higher potential payoff. Rather than lengthening the conflict as Lujala suggests and we expected, this higher resolve could make the rebels more able to quickly resolve their conflict with the government (2010). Higher prices could also lead to tangible benefits from increased recruitment. With higher oil prices, the rebels can credibly promise greater gains for their members upon victory, encouraging more people to join. Higher prices may also increase grievances among those suffering the impacts of resource extraction which could also motivate more people to join the group. Regardless of what mechanisms drive this finding, it is clear that hydrocarbons do not have a uniform effect on conflict duration, but rather are conditioned by oil prices.

We found even less support for our argument regarding the effect of oil prices on conflict onset. In our initial analysis with simply adding the oil price variable, prices were not found to be significant. The only significant change in the rest of the variables was that secondary diamond production lost significance. We were admittedly quite confused about this result. It is possible that oil prices explain variation in conflict onset better than secondary diamonds, yet oil prices also failed to achieve significance. There may be potential for issues with multicollinearity, but international oil prices should not be correlated with any of the controls used as they are all country level. Furthermore, secondary diamonds regained their significance when we included our interaction term. The interaction between oil production and oil prices in our second analysis also failed to reach significance. Otherwise, there were no significant changes in the findings compared to the original article. This demonstrates that despite our expectations, changes in oil prices do not have a sufficient impact on rebel group viability to spark a conflict.

Although unexpected, this finding can still be explained. Beginning a conflict is a very significant and costly decision which upends the status quo. Although oil prices can influence the capabilities of rebel groups already in a conflict, these regularly

2. See Figure 2 for duration results.

	Dependent variable:	
	Duration	
	Model 3	Model 4
Hydrocarbon reserves	0.299***	0.363***
	(0.060)	(0.062)
All gemstones	0.334***	0.366***
	(0.066)	(0.066)
Mountainous terrain	0.064***	0.064***
	(0.014)	(0.014)
Forest cover	-0.067***	-0.070***
	(0.016)	(0.016)
Rainy season	0.332***	0.340***
	(0.079)	(0.078)
Hydrocarbon reserves: oil price		-0.251***
		(0.070)
Oil price	0.254***	0.362***
	(0.034)	(0.044)
Constant	7.770***	7.728***
	(0.086)	(0.085)
Observations	1,342	1,342
Log Likelihood	-12,487.040	-12,480.820
theta	0.872*** (0.030)	0.878*** (0.030)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	24,988.080	24,977.630
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

FIGURE 2. *Duration extension results.*

fluctuating prices do not provide a consistent and strong enough impact to shift a rebellion from not being viable to viability. This finding somewhat undermines the argument that resource-related grievances can spark a conflict discussed by Lujala (2010). One would expect the grievances generated by facing the harms of natural resource extraction while not receiving any of the corresponding benefits to be more significant when those gains are higher due to higher oil prices, making the onset of a conflict more likely. However, these results suggest that either higher oil prices do not generate greater grievances or that these grievances are not sufficient to drive conflict onset. Overall, our findings indicate that although oil prices do not influence conflict onset, they do play a significant role in conditioning the effect of hydrocarbon reserves on conflict duration.[3]

Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper we presented the case for the addition of international oil prices to the analysis of the impact of resources on conflict duration and onset by Lujala (2010). This paper demonstrates that the omission of this variable has the potential to hide important influences of international economic conditions on the well-established relationship between natural resources and conflict. Emphasizing the existing literature and the

3. See Figure 3 for onset extension results.

	Dependent variable:	
	Onset	
	Model 5	Model 6
Oil production	0.377*	0.378*
	(0.197)	(0.197)
Secondary diamonds	0.304	0.304*
	(0.185)	(0.185)
GDP per capita	-0.263**	-0.260**
	(0.116)	(0.116)
Population	0.163***	0.163**
	(0.063)	(0.063)
Linguistic fractionalization	1.163***	1.168***
	(0.329)	(0.329)
Polity score	0.006	0.006
	(0.013)	(0.013)
Polity Squared	-0.009***	-0.009***
	(0.003)	(0.003)
Instability	0.215	0.216
	(0.200)	(0.200)
Mountainous terrain	0.114***	0.114***
	(0.044)	(0.044)
Ongoing war	0.112	0.115
	(0.188)	(0.188)
Oil production: oil price		-0.038
		(0.165)
Oli price	-0.035	-0.014
	(0.084)	(0.125)
Constant	-4.908***	-4.908***
	(0.626)	(0.626)
Observations	5,429	5,429
Log Likelihood	-720.876	-720.849
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,465.751	1,467.699
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

FIGURE 3. *Onset extension results.*

argument and findings of Lujala (2010), we argue that hydrocarbon reserves should increase conflict duration more when oil prices are high, as higher prices enhance both the current and possible future financial gains for rebel groups from extracting the reserves. We also argue that oil production should increase the likelihood of conflict onset even more when oil prices are high, as increased revenue and grievances from higher prices can shift a rebellion from not being viable to being viable.

In regards to conflict duration, we find mixed support for our argument. Although oil prices do significantly increase conflict duration when considered alone, their interaction with hydrocarbon reserves is opposite our expectations. When oil prices are high, hydrocarbon reserves increase conflict duration less, and when oil prices are low, hydrocarbons increase conflict duration more. Our findings on conflict onset contradict our expectations entirely. We found that oil prices and their interaction with oil production do not have a significant effect on conflict onset. These findings demonstrate that the impact of commodity prices on conflict dynamics is extremely nuanced. Although shifting oil prices are not enough to spark the onset of conflict, they play an important role in conditioning the relationship between hydrocarbons and conflict duration. In fact, rising oil prices mitigate the conflict-lengthening effect of hydrocarbon reserves.

These findings both contribute significantly to the existing literature and provide avenues for future research. Our findings suggest that the relationship between resources and conflict is not as straightforward as previously thought. They also demonstrate the importance of international economic factors in conditioning the relationship between resources and conflict. Additionally, although we do not disaggregate between onshore and offshore oil production in our analysis, our findings still enhance Lujala's finding that the location of natural resources matter (2010). The indirect mechanisms of economic and political weakness should also be conditioned by oil prices, with higher oil rents to the government exacerbating the dynamics of economic weakness and political corruption that increase the likelihood of conflict onset (Lujala 2010). However, our finding that oil prices are not significant when interacted with overall oil production further suggests that this indirect mechanism has little significance.

It is important that future research further investigate the mechanisms driving our findings relating to conflict duration to be able to fully understand how we may minimize the harm of civil wars. We propose that the shortening effect of high oil prices could be explained by the prices improving the strength of either the government or the rebels, allowing the group that benefits to end the conflict quicker. Research that accounts for how these conflicts end could indicate which of these mechanisms is most impactful. Future research could also investigate the influence of international prices in conditioning the relationship between other resources, such as those that are more easily extractable, and conflict. Finally, this interaction of resources and international prices could also be present in other conflict dynamics, such as conflict intensity. Overall, this research greatly contributes to our understanding of the relationship between resources and conflict and has the potential to drive significant

further research.

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Politicizing Foreign Aid: A Review of Political Partisanship's Impact on Foreign Aid Flows

Trevor Norton, Timel Rodriguez, and Marzieh Kazemi

Abstract This study examines the domestic factors influencing U.S. foreign aid disbursements, the largest global donor. We challenge existing theories that emphasize domestic political influences, such as partisanship and economic conditions, by replicating and extending the study by Tingley (2010). Unlike previous research focusing on aid effectiveness or recipient selection, we analyze how the U.S. domestic political and economic environment impacts foreign aid. Using a time-series dataset (1990-2018), we find no significant support for the hypothesis that domestic political factors, such as partisanship and legislative polarization, influence aid disbursements. These findings suggest that trade dynamics and international relations play a more significant role in U.S. foreign aid disbursements than previously thought. Future research should explore aid commitments and the impact of major geopolitical events to better understand the complexities of foreign aid distribution.

Introduction

Foreign aid serves as a crucial income source for developing countries. In 2023 alone, approximately $245 billion[1] was disbursed to these nations to address various needs, including promoting economic development, mitigating humanitarian crises, and supporting governance and institution-building (Carnegie & Marinov, 2017; Headey, 2007; Jones & Tarp, 2016; Karras, 2005). However, while the overall aid to nations has seen a steady increase since 1960, aid disbursements from donors fluctuate frequently. While scholars have long aimed to ascertain this variation in aid disbursements, many have taken a cross-country approach or focused on analyzing aid disbursements before and after the Cold War. While these studies have been invaluable in providing further insight into the factors influencing aid disbursement patterns, with many suggesting that partisanship and ideology play significant roles in foreign aid disbursements, they may not fully capture contemporary foreign aid dynamics. Therefore, our objective is to analyze the factors driving foreign aid disbursements, particularly from the United States (US), the largest donor of foreign aid, accounting

. For the online appendix and other supplementary information for this article, please use this link: https://tinyurl.com/2bj4d7ju

1. For a visual on foreign aid disbursements since 1960, see Figure A1.

for approximately 21 percent of foreign aid disbursements in 2023.[2] This paper presents new evidence suggesting that US foreign aid disbursements are unlikely to be affected by domestic factors.

The existing literature on aid effectiveness and allocation can be best split into two separate, but perhaps not mutually exclusive, areas. To begin, there exists scholarship that examines how the dynamics between donor and recipient countries impact foreign aid allocation (e.g., Alesina & Dollar, 2000; Clemens, Radelet, & Bhavnani, 2004; Dreher et al., 2018; McKinlay & Little, 1977). Specifically, scholars have analyzed how political alignment (e.g., Alesina & Dollar, 2000; Raess, Ren, & Wagner, 2022), former colonial ties (e.g., Alesina & Dollar, 2000), the effectiveness of the aid (Boone, 1996; Dreher et al., 2019), and a donor's foreign policy interests all shape aid disbursement (e.g., Bermeo, 2017; Dreher et al., 2018; McKinlay & Little, 1977). The other substantial body of scholarship has suggested that domestic political factors play a significant role in foreign aid disbursements (e.g., Carcelli, 2021; Fleck & Kilby, 2001; Rieselbach, 1966; Thérien & Noël, 2000; Tingley, 2010). Specifically, scholars have identified that partisanship/ideology (e.g., Tingley, 2010; Milner & Tingley, 2010), legislative polarization/dysfunction (e.g., Carcelli, 2021; Friedrichs & Tama, 2022), government approval (e.g., Chen & Han, 2021), and re-election prospects (e.g., Milner & Tingley, 2010; Fenno, 1977) all significantly shape foreign aid disbursement. This specific area of the literature holds particular importance for the US, notably due to the escalating polarization and partisanship observed among political elites in the US Congress (Lewis et al., 2024). That said, while this scholarship identifies that partisanship and ideology strongly impact foreign aid disbursements, Tama (2023) finds that bipartisanship was frequently evident in foreign aid policy in the US Congress during the Trump Administration.

Given that the scholarship is still not unified in explaining the most impactful variables that influence foreign aid, this essay aims to re-explore the domestic politics hypothesis by replicating and extending Tingley's (2010) article. Tingley's analysis of data from 18 nations spanning from 1971 to 2002 demonstrates that partisanship (i.e., a party's liberal-conservative stance) significantly shapes foreign aid efforts. Specifically, Tingley's baseline findings suggest that governments tend to reduce foreign aid efforts as they become more conservative, with this effect being pronounced in aid to poorer developing countries. Tingley argues this is because conservative governments view aid as unnecessary government interference that increases bureaucracy, taxes, and dependence on the donor nation, and believe that private investments could more efficiently address the needs of recipient countries. While Tingley (2010) makes significant contributions to the scholarship regarding cross-sectional analysis of factors influencing aid disbursements, there are some aspects of his study that can be further expanded, which we aim to address.

2. For a visual on US foreign aid disbursements as a percentage of total disbursements since 1960, see Figure A2.

First, while cross-sectional analysis enhances generalizability, there is a need to further analyze domestic dynamics within specific countries, rather than solely relying on cross-sectional data. Therefore, we ground our analysis in the US. By limiting the scope of the analysis to the US, this study can better ascertain the impact of domestic political variables on the large distribution of foreign aid. Second, there is a need for more comprehensive analyses that incorporate a broader range of political variables, including those related to domestic political structures. By focusing on the US, we can utilize available ideological data for political elites (both in Congress and the President). Additionally, given the significant variation in the process of foreign aid distribution, focusing on a single country can provide clearer insights into the true variables that impact foreign aid distribution. Lastly, given the varying explanations of what impacts foreign aid, there is a need to synthesize much of the existing literature's theoretical mechanisms to ascertain the significance of the identified domestic variables that influence foreign aid disbursements.

This essay proceeds as follows. First, we introduce our theoretical framework, which extends Tingley's (2010) original theory by incorporating additional theoretical and causal mechanisms from existing literature. Next, we discuss our replication of Tingley's (2010) study, using his data and methods. This is followed by an explanation of our extensions to Tingley's (2010) data and a description of our empirical methodology. We then present our findings. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of the policy implications of this research and offer concluding remarks.

Theory

To address the aforementioned puzzle and gaps in the existing literature, this scholarship expands on a foundation of research exploring the influence of domestic political factors on foreign aid disbursements. Focusing on the central themes of economic factors and political ideology, we aim to synthesize this literature to identify the most significant mechanisms shaping contemporary foreign aid flows in the US. To achieve this, we extend Tingley's (2010) theoretical explanations to encompass those found within contemporary literature. In line with the scholarship analyzing how domestic political factors impact foreign aid, we make two arguments. First, we argue that economic factors, specifically economic growth and trade, significantly impact foreign aid disbursements (H1a and H1b). Second, we argue that ideological factors, including conservatism and polarization, also play a crucial role in shaping foreign aid policies (H2a and H2b). For clarity, we divide this section into three parts. First, we discuss Tingley's theoretical framework as it pertains to foreign aid efforts. Second, we will discuss the ideological hypotheses, focusing on the impact of conservatism and political polarization on foreign aid decisions. Third, we will discuss the economic hypotheses, examining how economic growth and trade influence foreign aid disbursements.

Tingley (2010) Theory. Tingley's (2010) article relies on one hypothesis: increases in government conservatism lead to decreases in foreign aid efforts. The

argument here is that conservative (Republican) governments are less likely to give foreign aid for three main reasons. First, foreign aid represents government interference in both donor and recipient economies. Conservatism in many countries, particularly in the US, advocates for a limited and relatively small government. Core Republican values in the US generally oppose government intervention, favor lower taxes, and advocate for reduced government spending (e.g., Cronin & Fordham, 1999; Milner & Tingley, 2010). Foreign aid violates these values as it involves the redistribution of resources by the government to non-citizens, usually requiring increased taxes and government spending. Second, in a similar vein, conservatives are less likely to believe that foreign aid benefits the US. This is not only because conservatives believe that private investment (without government involvement) would be more effective, but also because conservatives generally hold nationalist views and often perceive the world order as a zero-sum game (Daniel, 2022; Ford & Goodwin, 2017; Pryke, 2012; Tamir, 2019).

On the other hand, liberal (Democratic) governments are inclined to hold more favorable views of foreign aid. First, in contrast to the anti-government stance of conservatives, liberals advocate for an active role of the state in economic affairs, aiming for egalitarian outcomes and increased government involvement in the economy. This aligns with the notion that addressing global issues, including poverty and instability, can ultimately benefit the US by promoting global security, enhancing soft power, and generating positive economic effects (Bell, 2014; Moravcsik, 2009). Second, liberals believe that foreign aid can effectively address market failures, particularly in providing public goods in developing nations. This approach counters the laissez-faire nature of conservatism, as core liberal beliefs emphasize the necessity of government involvement in providing social safety nets and promoting higher levels of economic cooperation (Boyd, 1988; Steinberg & Saideman, 2008). In sum, regardless of a government's international position, liberal economic beliefs often translate into greater support for foreign aid.

> **H1** (*replication*): Increased government conservatism will lead to decreases in foreign aid efforts.

Ideological Hypothesis. Extending Tingley's (2010) theoretical framework, recent scholarship has identified the impacts of legislative polarization on foreign aid. Specifically, Carcelli (2021) has noted that increased legislative polarization prevents Congress from passing traditional foreign aid legislation, leading to the incorporation of foreign aid appropriations into omnibus spending bills. In this unorthodox legislative environment, legislators add provisions called free-rider limitations, which are introduced to navigate congressional polarization and ensure that specific legislative goals are met despite broader gridlock. For example, in highly polarized environments, Congress may include riders specifying the countries and types of aid allowed, effectively using appropriations bills to legislate foreign policy indirectly.

However, extending this scholarship, we suggest that as legislative polarization

increases in Congress, leading to increased dysfunction and gridlock, the number of appropriations overall will decrease. Relying on existing scholarship, researchers have found that polarization directly leads to a decrease in the total amount of legislation, as legislators become more extreme and unwilling to collaborate on bipartisan initiatives (Sinclair, 2008; Theriault, 2008; Woon & Cook, 2015). This is primarily due to the impacts of unorthodox lawmaking, where legislators are rewarded for voting in line with party policies and punished for cooperating with the opposition, both by their constituencies and party elites (e.g., Sinclair, 2008, 2017; Theriault, 2008). Furthermore, returning to the aforementioned core values of conservatism versus liberalism, and given the economic nature of foreign aid, such aid is more likely to face increased scrutiny in more ideologically extreme and polarized environments. As a result, unless foreign aid can be attached to larger omnibus appropriations, the likelihood of passage for stand-alone foreign aid legislation is significantly decreased, leading to lower overall foreign aid appropriations.

> **H2:** As legislative polarization increases, foreign aid disbursement will decrease.

Economic Hypotheses. The final hypotheses in this theoretical discussion concern how domestic factors impact foreign aid disbursements. While Tingley (2010) does control for economic factors, the main focus of his theoretical framework and results are regarding the ideological impacts of foreign aid. Aiming to fill this theoretical gap, we provide an alternative argument to the ideological hypotheses, suggesting that economic factors are what impact foreign aid disbursements. First, we argue that as economic conditions deteriorate in donor nations, the less likely they are to give aid, especially in democracies like the US. This is because if a country is experiencing poor economic conditions, the domestic constituency will place legislators under higher scrutiny, pressuring them to focus on domestic issues prior to international issues. We argue that legislators are likely to bend to this constituency pressure to mitigate the risks of losing re-election, leading to decreased spending on foreign aid.

> **H3**: Poor economic conditions (decreased GDP growth) lead to decreased foreign aid spending.

To capture additional economic factors that may impact foreign aid disbursements, we argue that increased trade (imports + exports) will lead to increased foreign aid disbursements, especially for economies that are heavily dependent on imports, such as the United States. High-trade donor economies are more likely to increase foreign aid because it aligns with their economic interests. For example, if country A (e.g., United States) imports a significant amount of products from country B (e.g., Mexico), and country B experiences a serious natural disaster, country A is likely to provide increased foreign aid to prevent economic destabilization in country B. This is because economic instability in a key trading partner can negatively affect country A's

economy. Similarly, if country A exports a substantial amount of products to country B, it has an incentive to provide more foreign aid to promote economic development in country B. This aid can encourage increased spending on country A's products, thereby benefiting country A's economy. In other words, we hypothesize that the level of trade between donor and recipient countries can significantly influence foreign aid disbursements, with high-trade donor economies more inclined to provide aid to safeguard and enhance their economic interests.

H4a: Increased trade openness (imports + exports/GDP) in donor nations will lead to increased foreign aid disbursements.

H4b: Increased imports will lead to increased foreign aid disbursements.

Replication

To empirically quantify his hypothesis (**H1**), Tingley (2010) uses an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis to evaluate the relationship between the independent variable, government ideology (*IdeoAll*), and the dependent variables, foreign aid disbursements. Tingley employs fixed effects, which control for unobservable variables that are constant over time but vary between countries, thereby accounting for unobserved heterogeneity that could potentially bias the results. He also clusters standard errors by country, which helps to account for autocorrelation and heteroskedasticity within each country. Furthermore, Tingley uses first differences estimations to analyze changes in government ideology and aid effort over time. Finally, Tingley employs simulation results to assess the robustness of the statistical model; however, these simulations are not thoroughly discussed or included in his replication materials.

Overall, in our replication of Tingley's study, we found some discrepancies in the results, particularly with the *GDPGrowth* variable, which was significantly larger in our analysis compared to Tingley's original data. This difference likely stems from a previously acknowledged error in Tingley's dataset, which he noted might affect outcomes. After the original article was published, Tingley issued an erratum outlining the issues in his dataset and how they affected the results. The error was caused by counting some forms of foreign aid twice when calculating the recipient states. While Tingley re-ran the regression models using the amended data to adjust for this inaccuracy and posted the results in the erratum, he did not make the corrected data publicly available, and we were unable to acquire it from him. As a result, our replication is based on his original dataset since we do not have access to the corrected version.

However, despite these variations, our findings were mostly consistent with Tingley's (2010) results, particularly in the significance of control variables. For the portion we chose to replicate, we focused on Tables 1 and 2, covering dependent

variables such as Total Aid, Multilateral Aid, LDC/OLIC,[3] and LMIC/UMIC.[4] Our replication results are reported in Tables A1 and A2 and Figure A3. While we did not obtain the exact same results as those published in Tingley (2010), we are highly confident that our replication results are accurate and reflective of the true effects, considering the noted data issues in Tingley's original study.

Extension: Variables and Model Specifications

To test the statistical significance of our hypotheses (**H1**-**H4**), we have extended much of Tingley's (2010) initial dataset. Our extended dataset spans from 1990 to 2018, covering 28 years, similar to Tingley's 31-year dataset, which spans from 1971 to 2002. Additionally, rather than conducting a cross-country analysis as Tingley did, our data focuses on the US. This provides three significant benefits: First, a US study benefits from highly accurate legislator/presidential ideological data. Second, a single-country case study provides further insight into domestic institutional and constituency impacts on foreign aid disbursements. Third, the US is consistently the largest provider of foreign aid, so the results of a case study on the world's largest aid distributor would have significant implications.

Variables. Regarding the variables employed in our study, we decided to exclude five variables, *D.RTCABCUM*, *D.LTCABCUM*, *IdeoAll*, *ColdWar*, and *Generosity*, due to their irrelevance to our analyses. Specifically, first, we do not use *D.RTCABCUM* or *D.LTCABCUM* because these variables represent the change in the cumulative percentage of cabinet seats held by conservative/liberal parties. In the US, cabinet seats are assigned by the President, so changes in cabinet seats should be highly correlated with Presidential ideology. Second, we decided not to use the *IdeoAll* measure, instead favoring the *IdeoGov* measure, as the US is a two-party system, and *IdeoAll* calculates the ideological score for all parties in an election, weighting each party's ideology by their percentage of the total vote. Third, we do not use the *ColdWar* variable because our data starts in 1990. We instead replace this variable with a *Post_911* variable. Finally, we decided not to use the *Generosity* variable, which quantifies the extent of a country's welfare policies, reflecting the level of social benefits provided to citizens. In the US, there was minimal variation in this data, so we decided to omit it.

That said, we do rely on three of the same variables that Tingley uses: *IdeoGov*

3. Least Developed Countries/Other Low-Income Countries.
4. Lower Middle-Income Countries/Upper Middle-Income Countries.

(*P_Ideology*),[5] *GDPGrowth*,[6] and *Openness*.[7] This is because these variables assist in answering our two arguments by examining some of our hypotheses. Specifically, regarding the ideological argument, the *P_Ideology* variable represents the ideological score of the President, which is used to examine how the executive ideological score impacts foreign aid disbursements (**H1**). Second, regarding the economic argument, we continue to use the *GDPGrowth* and *Openness* variables. The *GDPGrowth* variable will capture how the domestic economic environment in the donor nation changes foreign aid disbursements (**H3**). Additionally, the *Openness* variable captures how trade influences foreign aid output (**H4**).

What is more, to control for potential confounding variables while also adding variables identified as significant by existing literature, we extended Tingley's (2010) dataset to include seven new variables: *C_Polarization*,[8] *Imports*,[9] *Impending_Elec*,[10] *Gov_Approval*,[11] *Divided_Gov*,[12] *Post_911*,[13] and *Interaction*. First, to address the theoretical argument outlined in **H2**, we employ *C_Polarization* to ascertain the impacts of legislative polarization on foreign aid efforts. Second, we include the variable Imports to address **H4b**, which suggests that as aid disbursements increase, nations aim to mitigate disruptions to the trading system by increasing imports. The remaining four variables, *Impending_Elec*, *Gov_Approval*, *Divided_Gov*, and *Post_911*, are control variables. First, we control for impending elections (*Impending_Elec*) because we expect foreign aid disbursements to decrease closer to an election, as legislators aim

5. While Tingley (2010) uses the *IdeoGov* variable, we aim to avoid severe statistical complexities, such as the operationalization of factor analysis, using the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP). Consequently, we replace this variable with the *P_Ideology* variable, which measures presidential ideology constructed from DW-NOMINATE scores, ranging from -1 (most liberal) to 1 (most conservative). Although this measure differs from the original, DW-NOMINATE is arguably a more accurate measure of ideology.

6. This data is taken directly from the World Bank and represents the annual GDP growth (percentage change).

7. This variable expands on Tingley's (2010) method of creating Openness. Openness = the US imports + exports / GDP. Import/Export data is acquired from the Correlates of War data for years before 2014 and Trade.gov data from years 2014 onward.

8. This variable represents polarization, calculated as the absolute difference in the median legislator ideology between the Republican and Democratic parties. The calculation is based on data from both the Senate and the House of Representatives. All other parties, including independents who may caucus with a larger party, were excluded from the analysis.

9. This variable represents the total amount of imports to the US. Import/Export data is acquired from the Correlates of War data for years before 2014 and Trade.gov data from years 2014 onward.

10. This is a binary variable coded as 0 if there is no general election during that year, and 1 if there is.

11. This is an aggregate variable that represents the average public approval ratings for both the US Congress and the Presidency over the period from 1990 to 2018. The Congressional approval ratings are sourced from a series of Gallup Surveys specifically focused on the legislative branch, with each rating averaged per Congressional session to maintain consistency with the chosen unit of analysis. Similarly, Presidential approval ratings are compiled from Gallup Surveys available through the American Presidency Project.

12. This is a binary variable coded as 0 if the government is divided, meaning Republicans hold either one chamber of Congress and the Democrats hold the other, or the President is of the opposite party. It is coded as 1 if the government is unified, indicating that all chambers and the president are controlled by one party.

13. This is a binary variable coded as 0 for 2001 and prior, and 1 for 2002 and beyond.

to maintain a face of fiscal responsibility under increased scrutiny from constituencies (Lowry, Alt, & Ferree, 1998; Milner & Tingley, 2010). Second, we control for divided government (*Divided_Gov*) to analyze its impacts, as some scholars suggest it leads to decreased legislative productivity, potentially resulting in fewer foreign aid legislation (e.g., Friedrichs & Tama, 2022; Saeki, 2009). Third, as Tingley (2010) controlled for *ColdWar*, we control for Post-9/11 (*Post_911*) because some scholars suggest aid disbursements fell after the Cold War but increased during the War on Terror. Fourth, we include an interaction term (*Impending_Elec*Gov_Approval*) to examine whether the combination of lower government approval and an impending election affects aid disbursements.

The Model and Specifications. To evaluate the statistical significance of our variables, we conduct an OLS regression analysis, considering the continuous nature of our dependent variables. We run a total of 16 models for the main analysis: four models each for the dependent variables *Total_Aid*, *Total_Multilateral*, *LDC_OLIC*, and *LMIC_UMIC*.[14] The first model for each dependent variable includes only the variables replicated from Tingley (2010): *Pres_Ideo*, *Openness*, and *GDPGrowth*. The second and third models incorporate all additional variables (*Divided_Gov*, *Post_911*, *C_Polarization*, *GDPGrowth*, *Impending_Elec*, *Gov_Approval*) with the exception of the inclusion of the *Openness* (*Imports*) and the exclusion of the *Imports* (*Openness*) variable for the second (third) model. The regressions with the fourth model for each dependent variable include the Interaction variable (*Impending_Elec*Gov_Approval*) and exclude the *Impending_Elec* and *Gov_Approval* variables to eliminate any multicollinearity. The fourth model results can be found in the appendix.

Extension Results and Discussion[15]

Returning to our first hypothesis (**H1**), replicating Tingley's (2010) hypothesis, we move to reject this hypothesis. In the vast majority of the models, there was no significant relationship between executive ideology and aid efforts. Furthermore, in many of these models, the coefficient is in the opposite direction, suggesting that as executives become more conservative, the US gives more aid. This pattern holds constant in our models with additional variables and even in the replication model (Model 1), indicating that contemporary US foreign aid disbursement is not based on partisan leaning, offering opposing results from Tingley (2010).

Regarding our second hypothesis (**H2**), which argues that increased legislative polarization leads to decreased foreign aid disbursements, extending scholarly works

14. For a visual on aid disbursed by type, see Figure A4.
15. Results for this section are reported in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1: Total & Multilateral Aid Distribution

	Dependent variable:					
	Total_Aid			Total_Multilateral		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Pres_Ideo	0.109	-0.033	-0.113	0.085	-0.037	-0.111
	(0.130)	(0.092)	(0.087)	(0.133)	(0.094)	(0.091)
Divided_Gov		0.013	0.085		-0.010	0.069
		(0.090)	(0.081)		(0.091)	(0.085)
Post_911		0.647***	0.401**		0.631***	0.378**
		(0.151)	(0.163)		(0.154)	(0.171)
C_Polarzation		0.047	-0.437*		0.099	-0.372
		(0.136)	(0.231)		(0.139)	(0.242)
Openness	0.650***	0.037		0.639***	-0.016	
	(0.127)	(0.122)		(0.130)	(0.125)	
Imports			0.782**			0.727**
			(0.318)			(0.332)
GDPGrowth	-0.360**	-0.172**	-0.150**	-0.365**	-0.182**	-0.166**
	(0.130)	(0.078)	(0.068)	(0.132)	(0.080)	(0.071)
Impending_Elec		-0.044	-0.060		-0.004	-0.021
		(0.076)	(0.067)		(0.077)	(0.070)
Gov_Approval		-0.291***	-0.186**		-0.308***	-0.208**
		(0.087)	(0.088)		(0.089)	(0.092)
Constant	0.000	0.000	-0.000	0.000	0.000	-0.000
	(0.124)	(0.069)	(0.061)	(0.126)	(0.070)	(0.063)
Observations	29	29	29	29	29	29
R^2	0.603	0.901	0.924	0.586	0.897	0.917
Adjusted R^2	0.555	0.862	0.894	0.537	0.856	0.884
Residual Std. Error	0.667 (df = 25)	0.372 (df = 20)	0.326 (df = 20)	0.681 (df = 25)	0.379 (df = 20)	0.341 (df = 20)
F Statistic	12.640*** (df = 3; 25)	22.859*** (df = 8; 20)	30.370*** (df = 8; 20)	11.806*** (df = 3; 25)	21.828*** (df = 8; 20)	27.624*** (df = 8; 20)
Note:						*p**p***p<0.01

Table 2: LDC and OLIC & LMIC and UMIC Aid Distribution

	Dependent variable:					
	LDC_OLIC			LMIC_UMIC		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Pres_Ideo	-0.094	-0.149**	-0.188**	0.455***	0.190	0.051
	(0.132)	(0.070)	(0.073)	(0.136)	(0.151)	(0.152)
Divided_Gov		-0.042	0.019		0.093	0.156
		(0.068)	(0.068)		(0.147)	(0.141)
Post_911		0.541***	0.370**		0.678**	0.372
		(0.114)	(0.136)		(0.247)	(0.284)
C_Polarzation		0.313***	0.029		-0.461*	-1.177***
		(0.103)	(0.193)		(0.223)	(0.402)
Openness	0.653***	-0.089		0.481***	0.311	
	(0.129)	(0.092)		(0.134)	(0.200)	
Imports			0.387			1.326**
			(0.266)			(0.553)
GDPGrowth	-0.355**	-0.173***	-0.172***	-0.294**	-0.142	-0.080
	(0.131)	(0.059)	(0.057)	(0.136)	(0.128)	(0.119)
Impending_Elec		-0.035	-0.048		-0.135	-0.151
		(0.057)	(0.056)		(0.124)	(0.116)
Gov_Approval		-0.299***	-0.242***		-0.122	0.043
		(0.066)	(0.073)		(0.142)	(0.153)
Constant	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	-0.000
	(0.125)	(0.052)	(0.051)	(0.130)	(0.113)	(0.105)
Observations	29	29	29	29	29	29
R^2	0.593	0.944	0.947	0.561	0.736	0.770
Adjusted R^2	0.544	0.921	0.926	0.509	0.630	0.678
Residual Std. Error	0.675 (df = 25)	0.280 (df = 20)	0.273 (df = 20)	0.701 (df = 25)	0.608 (df = 20)	0.567 (df = 20)
F Statistic	12.122*** (df = 3; 25)	42.035*** (df = 8; 20)	44.537*** (df = 8; 20)	10.665*** (df = 3; 25)	6.968*** (df = 8; 20)	8.381*** (df = 8; 20)
Note:						*p**p***p<0.01

such as Carcelli (2021), there was some variation in our results. To be cautious, we reject this hypothesis. While there was statistical significance for coefficients pointing in the correct direction (negative) in the third models for the *Total_Aid* and *LMIC_UMIC* dependent variables—suggesting that as legislative polarization increases, foreign aid disbursements decrease—there was either no significance or the coefficients pointed in the wrong direction for the other variables and models. This inconsistency suggests that polarization has no clear impact on foreign aid disbursements. That said, these results do not disprove Carcelli's findings—in fact, our results may further support her theoretical framework and results. This is because, even in an extremely polarized and gridlocked legislature, foreign aid is still being disbursed, likely due to the free-rider limitations that tag foreign aid appropriations to larger omnibus legislation.

Concerning our third hypothesis (**H3**), which argues that in poor economic climates, foreign aid is likely to decrease, we have great confidence in rejecting this hypothesis. This result was perhaps our most surprising, as theoretically, in poor economic climates, donor nations would be less willing to give aid to avoid constituency political pressure and to maintain fiscal responsibility. However, while the *GDPGrowth* variable is significant in nearly every model, it points in the opposite direction. This finding suggests that as GDP growth increases, the US gives less foreign aid, and vice versa. Additionally, even when controlling for an impending election or government approval in models 1-3 and the interaction in model 4, these controls were also not found significant. In fact, while government approval (*Gov_Approval*) is significant in several models, it points in the opposite direction, suggesting that as government approval increases, foreign aid disbursements decrease, and vice versa. This inverse relationship is surprising and suggests that in the US, legislators do not

feel constituency pressure, nor do they feel obligated to maintain fiscal responsibility during poor economic conditions. This confirms a bastion of scholarship's theoretical frameworks that international affairs, especially those concerning finances, are matters of high politics (Sienknecht & Vetterlein, 2023).

Finally, regarding our final hypotheses (**H4a** and **H4b**), we found overall mixed results. To begin, **H4a**, which argues that increased trade openness in donor nations will lead to increased foreign aid disbursements, can be rejected. While *Openness* in the replication models (model 1) is significant and moving in the correct direction—suggesting that as trade (imports + exports/GDP) increases, foreign aid disbursements increase—this significance is diminished when additional controls are added. As a result, we cautiously reject **H4a**, given that it was not significant when included in a model with other variables.

In contrast, **H4b**, which posits that increased US imports will lead to increased foreign aid disbursements, can be accepted. In all third models for the dependent variables, except for the *LDC_OLIC* variable, increased US imports did lead to increased foreign aid disbursements. Specifically, for the *Total_Aid* variable, the coefficient suggests that for every million (billion) dollar increase in imports, the US disburses $782 thousand (million) more in foreign aid. While these results differ from Tingley's (2010) findings, as we did not find *Openness* to be significant, the significance of the *Imports* variable suggests that increased reliance on global imports leads the US to increase foreign aid disbursements, perhaps to stabilize global trade in the event of disasters. However, the null finding for *Imports* for the *LDC_OLIC* dependent variable is interesting, as one might expect that the least affluent nations would need foreign aid the most to stabilize trade in the event of a natural disaster, given the lack of money available for infrastructure rebuilding or social safety nets.

Post 9/11 Aid. Similar to Tingley (2010), who controls for the Cold War, we control for 9/11, given some scholarship suggesting that US foreign aid disbursements decreased following the end of the Cold War but have increased again since the onset of the War on Terror (e.g., Howell, 2012; Howell & Lind, 2009; Miles, 2012). The results of the Post 9/11 variable (*Post_911*) are highly significant, and the coefficient is positive, suggesting that since 9/11, the US has significantly increased foreign aid. While an analysis of why the US has increased foreign aid post-9/11 is outside the scope of this paper, we introduce two conjectures. First, while the Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union has ended, there may be a separate (perhaps less pronounced) Cold War between the US and China. For example, this result could suggest that the US has given a significant amount of foreign aid to compete with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a global development strategy involving infrastructure development and investments in nearly 70 countries and international organizations. Second, the War on Terror included efforts to reorganize government structures in countries like Afghanistan and Iraq. This may have led to substantial increases in foreign aid directed towards these and other countries to support anti-terrorism initiatives, reconstruction, and development.

Implications, Conclusion, and Future Directions

What impacts foreign aid disbursements? Existing scholarship suggests that domestic factors, such as fluctuations in ideology or poor economic conditions, play a significant role. However, in the US, the largest provider of foreign aid, scholars have identified that foreign policy remains largely bipartisan. Notably, during the Trump Administration, foreign policy saw a significant increase in bipartisanship. Furthermore, existing scholarship has primarily focused on the impacts of Openness on foreign aid disbursements rather than how imports independently impact foreign aid disbursements. Given these puzzles and gaps in the existing scholarship, we analyzed the statistical significance of two competing arguments on foreign aid distribution.

This research offers a quantitative analysis examining the impacts of domestic factors, specifically political ideology and economic conditions, on foreign aid disbursements in the US. Using contemporary data (1990-2018), we found no significant support for the domestic political factors hypotheses (**H1**-**H4**). First, our results suggest that ideological factors do not significantly impact foreign aid disbursements. While Tingley (2010) found significant results for the relationship between government ideology and foreign aid disbursements on an international level, this result does not hold true in the context of the US. Similarly, we did not identify a significant relationship between legislative polarization and foreign aid disbursement. While scholars have found that increased legislative polarization has led to extreme legislative gridlock in the US Congress, our results suggest that legislative polarization has an insignificant impact on foreign aid disbursements. This is likely because foreign aid may still be passed through dysfunctional processes, such as the utilization of free-rider limitations and attaching foreign aid bills to omnibus appropriations legislation.

Regarding the economic hypotheses, a significant finding from this study was the lack of support for **H3**. While one might expect that foreign aid would decrease in poor economic climates due to domestic pressure and the need to maintain fiscal responsibility, our study found that foreign aid actually increased during these times. While the outcomes of **H4a** were insignificant, suggesting there is no relationship between trade and foreign aid distribution, the findings of **H4b** yielded some significance. That said, however, this provides mixed support for the domestic factors hypothesis, as we believe that **H4b** partially measures the dynamics between donor and recipient countries. This is because a portion of this hypothesis builds on dependency/economic self-interest literature, which posits that donor countries may increase aid to stabilize trade relations and protect their own economic interests while also benefiting recipient nations.

While the results of this study are surprising, we propose two conjectures to explain these unexpected findings and encourage future scholars to explore these areas further. First, it is possible that aid commitments, rather than disbursements, may tell a different story. Since the US typically honors aid commitments, there may not be a strong association between these factors and aid disbursements. Instead, the domestic political factors discussed in this study may cause more variation in aid commitments. Exploring aid commitments rather than disbursements would also provide the benefit

of offering a 'real-time' analysis of the factors discussed in this essay, as disbursement timing can vary depending on the legislation. Second, since aid disbursements fell after the conclusion of the Cold War but have increased again since 9/11 and the War on Terror, it is possible that aid disbursements will fall again following the Biden Administration's official end to the campaign in Afghanistan, and therefore the War on Terror, in 2021. Future scholarship should analyze whether this trend continues, as it would suggest that major geopolitical events, like the Cold War or the War on Terror, cause increased efforts to distribute aid. If this trend does not end, however, scholars should examine why. For example, it is possible that the US is increasing aid disbursements to compete with China's BRI.

While this essay did not yield significant support for our proposed theory, it offers important insights into the factors that impact foreign aid disbursements by the US, the largest aid disburser in the world. Specifically, we did not find significant evidence that domestic political factors influence foreign aid disbursements. However, we have identified potential areas for future research to explore further, including those in the comparative context. For example, it would be interesting to ascertain whether this null finding is unique to the US or if it can also be found in other countries, especially larger economic superpowers. We encourage scholars to investigate these areas, as this would provide a deeper understanding of what influences foreign aid disbursements.

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Global Justice and Sovereignty: The Problem with Structural Sovereignty and Constitutive Identities

Autumn Perkey

Abstract Current literature demonstrates that the relationship between global justice and sovereignty is dependent upon how sovereignty is applied. Considering John Rawls's work on sovereignty, he defines sovereignty as a product of states that is limited by successful internal governance. The problem arises in what ought to be done when there is poor internal governance. I will examine the theoretical work on sovereignty and its relationship to indigenous sovereignty. This will help demonstrate that sovereignty is a structural, rather than an ideological problem. Sovereignty, being a structural element and ordering principle, proves to be problematic. The problem of global justice may be the limitation created by sovereignty as associated with a structural phenomenon and the multitude of variations in sovereignty's conceptualization, and what sovereignty implies. Building upon the work of Thomas Nagel, Joshua Cohen, Charles Sabel, and John Rawls, this paper focuses on the example of the limitations of sovereignty faced by indigenous people to demonstrate why constitutive identities limit the effects of sovereignty and global justice.

Introduction

The complex association between global justice and sovereignty is dependent upon how sovereignty is applied. How sovereignty is applied determines how we interpret the relationship between the concept of global justice and its relationship to sovereignty. Considering John Rawls's work on sovereignty in *The Law of Peoples*, he defined sovereignty as a product of states that are limited by morality. He demonstrated sovereignty as morality and as a product of states by utilizing an example of famine; "... famines are often themselves in large part caused by political failures and the absence of decent government." (Rawls, 2001). This helps demonstrate that there is a correlation between good governance and internal justice. In essence, he tied the concept of global justice to successful internal governance. This definition limits global justice to being defined by the concept of the nation-state, and this is dissatisfying. By limiting global justice as a relationship to the governance provided by the nation-state, global justice becomes limited to specific types of internal governance and negates resolving potential large-scale injustices. The problem arises in what ought to be done when there is poor internal governance. If we limit the complex association between sovereignty and global justice to be dependent upon the success of national justice,

is global justice even possible? How can we reconcile the differences between the necessity of sovereignty and the desire for global justice? Can we have global justice with the concept of sovereignty or is it limited by the structure of sovereignty itself? One further thing we must consider is the implication of whether sovereignty is a structural element of society or is it an ideology.

Consider the implications that can be drawn from literature on violence and the effects of dehumanization, specifically infrahumanization as demonstrated by Emanuele Castano and Roger Giner-Sorolla. Castano and Giner-Sorolla explored the effects of infrahumanization in violence, or "the denial to an individual or group of some of the characteristics that make us human, rendering the target less than human, if not wholly non-human," to demonstrate that individuals dehumanize others to maintain a reduction in collective guilt (Castano & Giner-Sorolla, 2006). This introduces the potential for internal domestic entities to commit horrendous acts without the feelings of guilt and responsibility associated with conducting such acts. If you were to run over your neighbor's dog, it may not be easy to drive off and leave a mangled and desecrated corpse in the middle of the road, but you could do it. However, *hopefully*, you would feel some sense of guilt for committing such an act. But what happens when senses of guilt are removed? While there may be just domestic policies in some states, that does not mean that all nation-states have the potential or even the possibility of being just. To reconsider John Rawls's ideal theory once more, "[o]ur hope for the future of our society rests on the belief that the social world allows a reasonably just constitutional democracy existing as a member of a reasonably just Society of Peoples" (Rawls, 2001). Rawls demonstrated the understanding that his conception of sovereignty was limited by the necessity of dependence upon a specific type of society under which it would be successful. But the world is not a work of fiction and that necessitates respect for the facetious reality we are in. So, if sovereignty cannot be applied outside the domestic sphere without leading to increased injustice, do we need it? Or is sovereignty just a quest for hegemony?

Opinion is surely easier to study than behavior because it is easier to measure, and it also takes a lot less effort on all sides to change people's minds than it does to inspire any sort of action. However, recent events have highlighted the importance of studying the latter. The question of whether governments or international organizations can actually affect the public's decision-making has come into sharp focus in recent years since both the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and increased alarm surrounding the catastrophic effects of climate change. Even during the height of the pandemic, many members of the public flouted guidance from groups like the WHO or the CDC. When looking back at the pandemic and other similar issues, it is important to determine why so many members of the public did not follow the guidelines, and what could have been different in the IOs' messaging to better assure compliance.

John Rawls's *The Law of Peoples* demonstrates that we can have justice in the domestic sphere, however, the question of how we handle justice outside the domestic sphere and the relationship to domestic justice versus global justice is left in an incongruous state (Rawls, 2001, 11). We have seen in situations, such as that of

indigenous peoples, that reality is contritely different, and domestic justice can be arguably absent. There is a salient dilemma in the concept of a sovereign nation caring for its' own internal justice when the added effects of internal division may alter what collective justice should be defined as. An example to consider here is the infamous "drowning child" by Peter Singer, the question he focuses on is that if the cost to us is little, ought we not save the child? (Singer, 1997). Whether justice is being managed in a utilitarian format can be largely associated with who is defining the cost. If the one defining the cost is the elites who control the nation-state and define sovereignty, the problem of global justice may be that the concept of sovereignty itself is unsatisfying. While many have argued for or against the potential of a world state, there needs to be another means of compromise (Wendt, 2003). The salient notion needs to be that the structure of sovereignty may limit the potential to achieve global justice, and if that is the case do we need it? And what ought to replace it? If not sovereignty? Then what? If the ordering element we introduce provides sufficient grounds to prevent justice and enable wrongdoing, how can the element be useful, let alone just? If sovereignty is wrong, do we have a legitimate replacement, and if not, how do we fix it? If sovereignty is unfulfilling and a world state is infeasible, then what? The ideal notions of John Rawls help develop sovereignty as both a means and an end, by defining sovereignty as a product of states that is also limited by morality it becomes a structural element of society and an ideology (Rawls, 2001). But what should sovereignty be? And does defining sovereignty as an ideology or a structural element make it useful?

I will examine the theoretical work on sovereignty and its relationship to indigenous sovereignty. This will help uncover the issue of establishing justice without resulting in justice as a form of collective action or the use of a monopoly of force through a quest for hegemony. Also, it will help demonstrate that sovereignty is a structural, rather than ideological problem. The necessity of sovereignty being a structural element or ordering principle, rather than an ideal principle for achieving the best ideological ends proves to be problematic. The problem of global justice may be the limitation put upon sovereignty as associated with a structural phenomenon and the multitude of variations in sovereignty's conceptualization. To deal with the question of the relationship between sovereignty and the potential for global justice, I will utilize the work of Thomas Nagel (2005), Joshua Cohen and Charles Sabel (2006), and John Rawls (2001).

First, I will briefly unpack John Rawls's conception of sovereignty as a product of states and its association to morality. Second, I will introduce Thomas Nagel's concept of sovereignty by necessity. Third, I will discuss the work of Joshua Cohen and Charles Sabel, focusing on the tension of the conception of sovereignty compared to Rawls's. Fourth, I will utilize the example of the trouble caused by the limitations of sovereignty faced by indigenous people to demonstrate why constitutive identities limit the effects of sovereignty and global justice—meaning that the type of constructed tribal sovereignty that has been granted by a nation-state authority limits the authoritative capacity of tribal institutions hindering internal domestic justice. Much

like dehumanization and infrahumanization limit the effects of experiencing collective guilt, so too can constitutive identities affect sovereignties' ability to help establish global justice. A comparable example to consider is the effectiveness experienced in decolonized versus colonized institutions and the legitimacy of their authority. The question to be considered here is if sovereignty is ultimately helpful for indigenous groups against settler states. Fifth, I will offer a means of the conception of sovereignty between the extremes of the limitations of the nation-state and a world state concerning the effect of constitutive identities, which relates to the antagonism between concepts of self.[1] Also, in this section, I will argue that rather than the alternative of a world state, the formation of ethical accountability contracts may be a desirable alternative. In conclusion, I will finalize with closing remarks and where this leaves us.

Rawls's Sovereignty and Justice of Social Cooperation

Thomas Nagel phrases John Rawls's relationship between sovereignty and justice rather eloquently; ". . . for the most part, the ideal of a just world for Rawls would have to be the ideal of a world of internally just states" (Nagel, 2005). Rawls introduces the first problem with his conception of justice by linking sovereignty to the domestic state, while he may not call it a problem, it nonetheless introduces complexities to justice that are limited by that correlation. One specific complexity is the necessity of well-ordered people to pursue a mutual advantage (Rawls, 1971). An external global mutual advantage is dissonant with the concept of internal social mutual advantage; it is hard to gain social cohesion within a domestic state let alone at a global level. For example, consider ordering pizza with your mates, there is always the one oddball who wants pineapple on his pizza. What do you do with him? Exclude him for not agreeing to your conception of the perfect pizza. In an ideal world, we would figure out how to "split" the pizza in a way so that everyone gets what they want. Since everyone is an individual actor, this should be relatively easy. However, Rawls does acknowledge this saying; ". . . although a society is a cooperative venture for mutual advantage, it is typically marked by a conflict as well as by an identity of interests."(Rawls, 1971). To continue utilizing the pizza example, the underlying problem comes in when it is not just you and your mates, but also you, your mates, and your mates' kids. Rawls's concept negates this second layer to "an identity of interests" through a focus on the nation-state.

Rawls denotes that this is problematic by defining specific characteristics of what he defines as a well-ordered society, namely that a society must have a universal agreement on what principles are just and that the social institutions exist to meet those principles (Rawls, 1971, 4). The aspects of Rawls that need to be considered here are his appeals to the social contract, the concept of distributive justice, and his tie

1. Constitutive identities will be defined later, for the time being the importance is the effect that identity has on the relationship between self, state, and sovereignty.

to rational beings (Rawls, 1971, 4). The correlation between these three components defines sovereignty as a structural component of justice and a moral one. But this brings us back to the point, is sovereignty a structural element, an ideological point, or a mix of both? For Rawls, it is both, but does this work?

Traditionally, when we consider the social contract, we immediately perceive the work of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. However, there is a unique element in which Rawls utilizes social theory in the domestic state that helps explain why sovereignty is necessary for the success of internal justice. For Rawls, the interest is in providing "a way of assigning rights and duties in the basic institutions of society and . . . defin[ing] the appropriate distribution of the benefits and burdens of social cooperation" (Rawls, 1971). This is all well and good, simply stated, we need institutions that handle the division of profits and losses to establish social cohesion. For example, consider dating culture, it is one thing when a man and woman go out and the expectation is that the man pays for everything. In contrast, going on a date where each party pays their way, the burden is shared. While Rawls does include a specific distribution of sharing burdens, this is beyond the scope of the date example. But Rawls goes one step further with his organization of distributive justice, he adds to the association a necessity of having a "free and rational" people (Rawls, 1971, 9).

Immediately, we should question exactly what is meant by a "free and rational" people and what this could mean for establishing global justice. When we distinguish that there is a difference in the ability to act justly based on who is defined with the capacity to act or think rationally, we are limiting the potential for justice globally. Rawls has tied the association between a people being free with the capacity to be rational as a means of pursuing justice. What happens in the situation when we alienate internal actors as not being defined as rational actors and therefore lacking the capacity to contribute freely?

The problem of the alienation of the capacity to act is exactly why Rawls needs the "veil of ignorance," or the idea that any individual characteristics are removed from your perception (Rawls, 1971, 11). This can be conceptualized by imagining being blind, you denote no color to your skin, race is a non-event, and your biological sex is unidentifiable. Regardless of the "veil of ignorance," the application of the social contract for Rawls introduces limitations on who can act in a manner about justice as the individual still must be "free and rational," so what exactly is justice for Rawls?

Justice is the distribution between advantages and disadvantages, for Rawls, justice is fairness (Rawls, 1971). This is problematic because distributive justice introduces the attempt to equalize a predominately unequal system. Just because some people are in a better position to assume more of the burdens of society, for example, those who are substantially well off, it does not mean they will assume more of the burdens. Ability to do something, does not always translate to the willingness to do so. Rawls may counter this by asserting that individuals need to be "rational and mutually disinterested" (Rawls, 1971, 12). However, while Rawls notices the problem with expecting reciprocal utility, there is not a good solution to counter it—making others better at personal cost to yourself is still dissatisfying. If you could save a stranger's

life by giving them a kidney, should you? Highly individualistic countries will find it problematic to have an external rather than internal locus of control—an internal locus of control is having control over your own fate, while an external locus of control means fate is defined by the intervention of others. For example, let's utilize the abstract concept of the American dream. While the basic idea of the American dream is the ability to move on a continuum through social classes, the underlying cultural characteristics relate to the euphemism "hard work pays off"—meaning if you work hard enough you can place yourself in a better position in society or move between social classes. Distributive justice is problematic because it introduces and depends upon the idea that a rational actor will support the difference principle and the just savings principle as recommended by John Rawls.

The just savings principle states that "inequalities [should] be arranged. . . to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged" and the difference principle states that there is a need to "maximize the sum of advantages" (Rawls, 1971, 266). That's all well and good, but why would anyone agree to it? Good people often do bad things because they feel good, can altruism counter this globally? There is a problem with the association between rationality and morality, we are assuming that rational actors will behave morally. I'd rather have my cake and eat it too, I'd rather be able to earn a livable wage and gain the potential benefits from working than give those benefits to someone less fortunate. While this pessimistically seems overly self-interested, consider the reality, an American family is generally better off than a family living in a developing nation. However, even though that family is generally better off, they may still be living under the standards of the society in which they are associated. There is a difference between an American family of four living at $20,000 a year versus $60,000, but both would be substantially better off than those living in a developing nation. Under the concept of distributive justice, global justice would require both families' contribution to lessen the burdens on the family living in a developing nation (if extrapolated beyond the nation-state).

How can we reconcile the difficulties in domestic justice along with the complexities of sovereignty? Not by assuming people want to behave morally. However, to Rawls's credit, he was writing with the goal of internal domestic justice, rather than towards a globalized just world. Rawls's focus on internal domestic justice alleviates the necessity of sovereignty being a system-level phenomenon, focusing instead on sovereignty as the starting point. For Rawls, the nation-state is the starting point, not the special responsibilities we owe to human civilization. The other implication that is problematic for Rawls, is that just as he begins at the domestic level of analysis forgoing important system-level implications, he also negates any actors below the domestic level, for example, American Indians and their conception of sovereignty within a domestic sovereign nation.

Thomas Nagel and Sovereign Necessity: Critique of the "Political Conception" and Cosmopolitanism

Moving away from the Rawlsian ideal theory of sovereignty as a product of states and limited by morality, Thomas Nagel focuses on the reason for sovereignty as due to its necessity. For Nagel, the world is inherently unjust and because the world is inherently unjust there is the necessity of a tool, namely sovereignty, with the legitimacy to utilize a monopoly of force to assure collective cohesion (Nagel, 2005). Nagel's key argument focuses on the concept of sovereignty and the relationship between internal justice versus external justice. Rather than refute traditional sovereignty, which has become a foundational basis for international contracts, such as the United Nations, Nagel focuses on the necessity of sovereignty for justice outside the domestic sphere.[2] Specifically, Nagel focuses on the concept of "socio-economic justice" and how this can be applied on a world scale (Nagel, 2005, 114). His focus is a two-fold examination of the "relationship to justice and sovereignty and the scope and limits of equality as a demand for justice" (Nagel, 2005). He draws the distinction between Cosmopolitan concepts of global justice and his concept of political conception, which is statist. He situates his theoretical work through a critique of Hobbesian cosmopolitanism and Rawls's political demands of the nation-state, openly critiquing the cosmopolitan view and Rawls's "political conception" of justice (Nagel, 2005).

The critique Nagel offers against the cosmopolitan view of justice is centered around the universality that it would require; for there to be a cosmopolitan just world there would need to be a form of global sovereignty (Nagel, 2005, 118-9). However, he is also quick to state that one way to bring this to fruition is through the creation of a federal system of accountability with "special responsibilities toward one another" (Nagel, 2005, 120). That's all well and good, but the likelihood of agreeing to either global sovereignty or a federal system of accountability seems problematic, that is most likely why Nagel chooses to counter by critiquing Rawls's internally just states and the application to sovereignty as a form of morality.

The interesting element here is the relationship between global justice and sovereignty being limited to distributive qualities, and if so, what does this mean for humanitarian concerns—such as genocide and racial extermination? While Nagel denotes this is outside his scope, it is an important aspect to consider if the focus of global justice being tangible is limited to distributive or socio-economic means. Nagel's focus on justice concerning "socioeconomic justice" seems misguided with his argument (Nagel, 2005, 114). It is much more persuasive if he focused on the criminal conduct of war, which he was quick to mention and displace as not his interest area (Nagel, 2005). Applying a focus on war rather than "socioeconomic justice" may have offered a better foundation for disregarding the possibility of conquest

2. Agenda item 112 (b) from the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly on February 27, 1996. "Respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States in their electoral processes"

in the "scope of sovereign authority" (Nagel, 2005, 146). While this question may be out of scope for Nagel's focus, I think it is important to note that if conquest is no longer a viable option for establishing coercive authority, what is? Underlying Nagel's argument, I would presume that he would counter by saying that international institutions have the capacity to use power to create international legitimacy, thus replacing the necessity of a pathway for conquest. It is interesting to note how Nagel justifies using a concentration of power through unjust institutions as a means of transformation from illegitimacy to legitimacy using institutional power. However, I find this answer dissatisfying as it makes the world of conquest and prestige seem replaced by one of cloaks and daggers.

A specific intersection between the work of John Rawls and Thomas Nagel is the focus on distributive elements of justice as tied to the capacity of the nation-state. Nagel goes a step further to argue that sovereignty helps create stability, which given that Westphalian sovereignty is a base principle of international law, is probably true. While Rawls may assert that it only applies within a society, Nagel would counter with the claim that internally just states are great, but sovereignty enables stability, which morality alone is not enough, and justice requires a structuring element (Nagel, 2005, 115-6).

The tension between Nagel and Rawls is found in the association (relationship) between justice and morality. Nagel critiques this by focusing on Rawls's turning justice into "an associative obligation," utilizing the example of "one does not have to marry and have children," it is a special type of relationship (Nagel, 2005, 121). This is the salient notion for Rawls that there are specific relationships that we have a duty to, but not all. The concept of associative duties introduces complexity in introducing global justice beyond internally domestic nation-states because if there is no special association then there is no obligation. However, it is worth noting that while Nagel utilizes the association between sovereignty and necessity, this contributes to the problems with the structure of sovereignty, but also describes its necessity. Sovereignty, for Nagel, is tied to the nation-state, and because it is the primary form of political legitimacy it is a necessity for structuring the potential for justice by creating stability through group cohesion (Nagel, 2005, 113).

This is where the line between Rawls and Nagel becomes intriguing. Rawls focuses on the association of having specific associative duties, or obligations to others, while Nagel perceives that there are "some conditions of justice [that] do not depend on associative obligations"—namely socioeconomic justice (Nagel, 2005, 126). Nagel's respect for the statist nature of global justice demonstrates respect for the current world order. Rather than trying to manipulate the solution before the problem, or as a colloquialism, put the cart before the horse, he is minding the reality the world is currently structured under, namely the structure of sovereignty. Part of his rationale for sovereignty is having a legitimate concentration of power with collective coercive cohesion and authorization (Nagel, 2005, 138). This says that the citizens grant the authority of the state to be under its subjugation, while also holding the state accountable (responsible) for fulfilling some sense of basic internal equalities.

Specifically, Nagel says; ". . . in the dual role each member plays both as one of the society's subjects and as one of those in whose name its authority is exercised. One might even say that we are all participants in the general will" (Nagel, 2005, 128). Here is where the argument extrapolates to Nagel's critics and how equality (or specifically what level of equality) should be held beyond internal states.

One further point to contemplate about Nagel's focus on "socioeconomic justice" (2005, 114) is the difference he denoted between the Cosmopolitan view of justice and his political conception. The difference between the Cosmopolitan view and Nagel's political conception brings to light is the difference between economic justice and moral justice (Nagel, 2005, 119). But is a Utilitarian view of global justice possible outside a world state or world government? This is what makes Nagel's argument feasible, he offers a single virtue for global justice, rather than a comprehensive utility. This concept is critiqued by Joshua Cohen and Charles Sabel, denoting how Nagel drifts from his strong statist argument (Cohen & Sabel, 2006). In essence, Nagel's focus on utilizing institutions to create legitimacy creates justice as defined by those who have the authority and legitimacy to set the agenda. Rather than just be what states make it, justice is a social construct of the powerful. My concluding question is: is justice more than a social construct and are there universally acceptable forms of justice beyond the base minimum of humanitarian aid?

Nagel proposes a universal nature to justice, however, his means to achieve this is through the necessity of a not-necessarily just agent. While this may be beyond a traditional agent and structure problem, it does bring light to the previously mentioned statement as a critique of Rawls; good people often do bad things if it benefits them. Again, I'd rather have my cake and eat it too. However, this may be the reality of the problem with sovereignty, it is necessary to control the behavior of agents from extrapolating beyond normal levels of inappropriate inhumanity. Universal justice may not be possible, but maybe there is a certain level of common decency that sovereignty protects, even if that decency is surrounded by death, destruction, and generally ill intent. Nevertheless, the very necessity of the statist nature that Nagel introduces, is the exact critique that Joshua Cohen and Charles Sabel focus on.

Cohen and Sabel: Statist Critique

While Thomas Nagel focused on situating his theoretical work against Rawlsian justice and the cosmopolitan view, Joshua Cohen and Charles Sabel focused on offering a critique of Nagel—focusing on his association with a strong statist nature (Cohen & Sabel, 2006). The first problem that Cohen and Sabel denote with the definition and utilization of sovereignty by Nagel is the dependence upon a "co-authorship of coercive law" (Cohen & Sabel, 2006, 148). While they generally support the conclusion drawn by Nagel, the problem for them rests heavily on his strong statist nature (Cohen & Sabel, 2006). Cohen and Sabel point out an important denotation about the problem of such a strong statist focus; ". . . it is now a mistake to assign the state so fundamental a role in political morality" (Cohen & Sabel, 2006, 149). Nagel's

strong statist notion is exactly what hinders the inclusion of constitutive identities into having agency in a nation-state utilizing sovereignty as a tool of political legitimacy. Cohen and Sabel specifically say; "[s]trong statism is founded on the thesis that norms of justice only apply to people who stand to one another in certain relations: in particular as members of a single state, subject to the same coercively enforced rules, and presented as sharing responsibility for those rules" (Cohen & Sabel, 2006, 151). This is a critical problem for both Rawls and Nagel as it grants legitimacy on specific grounds, immediately resulting in the exclusion of the other. To revisit the earlier stated pizza example, it's great to exclude the one oddball who wants to order pineapple on his pizza, not so great or just to also exclude his children. So, rather than global justice just being an element of the necessity and legitimacy tied to sovereignty, there is an underlying association tied to the identity of those under the sovereign's guidance. It is less a matter of the adherent structure of sovereignty alone and is more a matter of who is defined as protected and provided justice by the sovereign versus who the sovereign decides to subjugate to alienation and otherness about justice.

Indigenous Sovereignty

After contemplating the work of John Rawls and Thomas Nagel, it is worth denoting the importance the state plays in utilizing sovereignty. Cohen and Sabel have offered a critique of the focus on strong statism through a relationship to cooperation and pluralism (Cohen & Sabel, 2006). While Rawls had specific moral and structuring implications for the use of sovereignty, Nagel viewed sovereignty as a necessity. However, there are problems with both assertions. The focus on the state as the distributor of justice allows for potential exclusions to happen due to the structuring potential of sovereignty. It relates to who has the capacity and agency to act and who is defined as being sovereign. While the focus has the potential for establishing global justice, the example of Indigenous sovereignty by Kouslaa T. Kessler-Mata (2017) is a useful counterexample to consider.

Federalism has its unique problems for creating justice in the domestic sphere. One implication of this is the limitations because of prohibiting self-governance of American Indians. Kouslaa T. Kessler-Mata denotes this complication as a result of ". . . 'extraconstitution' and simultaneously 'limited' nature, to acknowledge both its origins outside of the context of the US constitutional framework and its marked diminishment from a concept of absolute and exclusive self-government as in a Westphalian understanding of sovereignty" (Kessler-Mata, 2017, 29). In this instance, internal justice in the domestic sphere is limited by the application of sovereignty not being utilized in the traditional sense. The alternative that Kessler-Mata mentions through the work of Philip Pettit's theory of freedom is maintaining "a relationship between citizens and [a] nation where the primary role of the state is 'to ensure a dispensation of non-arbitrary rule,' thereby protecting individuals against arbitrary

interference in their daily lives" (Kessler-Mata, 2017, 39-40).[3]

Why is this important for the potential to establish global justice? If there are problems with the utilization of sovereignty within the nation-state due to the exclusion of protections of certain individuals to act freely, it is problematic that there is potential for justice to be extrapolated globally. So, how do we handle these issues with sovereignty?

Federal Accountability and Respect to Constitutive Identities

To restate the concerns the previous theoretical work brings to light are questions such as is global justice possible? How can we reconcile the difference between the need for sovereignty and the desire for global justice? Should we have sovereignty? Has sovereignty become just a quest for hegemony? If not sovereignty, what ought to replace it? There is a salient disconnect between the idealized world depicted by Rawls and the reality of the world we live in. While it would be preferable to assume that nation-states could serve as protectors of internal justice thus removing the necessity of global justice it does not occur. It is the equivalent of the colloquium of leading a horse to water but not being able to force it to drink. We can expect a sovereign nation to behave with morality and justice, but that doesn't mean they will.

Sovereignty introduces the problem that justice becomes dependent upon the concept of internal justice. Rawls demonstrated this through his focus on utilizing the social contract, the concept of distributive justice, and the necessity of a "free and rational people" (Rawls, 1971). However, as I have already denoted, the focus on a "free and rational people" by its very definition is an exclusionary element. By creating the limitation that only certain moral actors are relevant to establishing justice, we discredit those who may have the potential to behave justly even if they do not fit the specific criteria. While Rawls does counter this with the example of Kazakhstan, it is still highly limited in the capacity to find justice outside the domestic sphere. Both Rawls and Nagel depend upon some form of legitimacy from the tool of the nation-state and the relevancy of sovereignty. As previously mentioned, there is a tension between the concept of sovereignty being a structural or ordering element and being an ideology. However, the problem may not be with sovereignty itself or the potential for it to be a quest for hegemony, but rather a problem with the elites who lead. The humorous notion is often made that communism is a fantastic ideology, too bad it always fails. Sovereignty has the potential to be the same way, as both an ideology and a structural element, but it is all about who has the agency to determine how to utilize sovereignty. So, what does this mean for global justice?

For a society to be just, it must be just based on internal institutions and actions rather than external behaviors. Justice at this point is defined by the limitations and wills of those who define what will be viewed as just action. For example, consider

3. It is also worth noting that this example needs to be extended and extrapolated.

actions taken during times of war, while the justification of war is beyond the scope of this paper, this example will suffice to prove a point, when an attack is launched that places the lives of non-combatants at risk, who is responsible for protecting those non-combatants? Not the ones involved in deciding to launch the attack because the cost of the attack has already been viewed as a necessity for the potential benefits—a profit-and-loss version of the value of human lives. However, considering the Iraq war, Iraq may not take kindly that the U.S. felt it necessary to launch an air strike on a town that contained several non-combatants or civilians, as an illusion of achieving the removal of military targets (Jaffer, 2016). The problem this introduces is that sovereignty is protected by the leader of the nation-state, but that does not imply that other states are forced to respect it. So, what?

There needs to be a means that allows for sovereignty to exist preventing violation of the nation-state but still allowing for protections of the humans within it against both internal and external actors. Thomas Nagel mentioned one of the only implications outside the concept of a world state, a federal system of responsibility. While Nagel did not associate it with those exact terms, a system of aggressive accountability within the structure of sovereignty may be the only means to save the ordering system. However, we have often seen this fail through the example of the League of Nations and the United Nations—what power or legitimacy were these two institutions given to demonstrate authority and help establish global justice? There needs to be more than the concept of crimes against humanity because that concept is lackluster at best and still leaves several instances where those crimes go ignored and unpunished. How can we justify cases of genocide and ethnic cleansing? We often hear the syllogism and think of the children, there is no debate that a child being murdered in any form is unjust. However, a universal value for the protection of human lives is often negated and left in the hands of intervention from nation-states and their leaders. In this case, we are living in a Rawlsian world of internally just states but leaving the rest of the world to its own accord.

Conclusion

Rather than assume that there is an easy fix to the problem the structure of sovereignty introduces, it is worth mentioning that the implication of a world state is also not a reasonably viable solution. Even Nagel mentions how dissatisfying a goal this would be instead mentioning the necessity of a federal system in his critique of cosmopolitanism; “cosmopolitan justice could be realized in a federal system, in which the members of individual nation-states had special responsibilities toward one another that they did not have for everyone in the world” (Nagel, 2005, 120). We can consider the world state as an ultimately desirable and ideal outcome, as it enhances the potential for institutional buildup—meaning it allows for a world state to exist with proper institutions to support it. However, the problem the concept of collective world state introduces is that unity may not always be desirable. Conscious collective unity may be as problematic as sovereignty itself. We must be aware that while a world

state may be desirable, concepts such as this introduce the classic problems seen in in-group versus out-group identification. So, rather than enhance group cohesion, the concept of a world state is likely to leave us in a perpetual state of proxy conflicts.

While Alex Wendt has argued for the inevitability of the emergence of a world state with the legitimacy to use organized violence, he leaves the handling of human agency to the very end, denoting that there will remain struggles for recognition (Wendt, 2003). The salient notion needs to be that the very structure of sovereignty may limit the potential to achieve global justice, and if that is the case do we need it? Alex Wendt denoted the importance that agency would still play in a global world state and that may very well be the problem. Sovereignty itself may be redeemed if we focus, rather on the application of justice about sovereignty, and instead focus on justice about the agent/structure debate. And what ought to replace it? If not sovereignty? Then what? If the ordering element we introduce provides sufficient grounds to prevent justice and enable wrongdoing, how can the element be useful, let alone just?

The ending question remains of not what is wrong with sovereignty, but if sovereignty is wrong, and we do not have a legitimate replacement, how do we fix it? However, fixing sovereignty is beyond the scope that can be handled here, and instead, the hope is that we denote that sovereignty as a structural element is just as problematic as the moralistic and ideological concerns sovereignty has introduced.

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