



The Future of Global Affairs

Managing Discontinuity, Disruption
and Destruction

Edited by

Christopher Ankersen · Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu

Foreword by Helen Clark and Vera Jelinek



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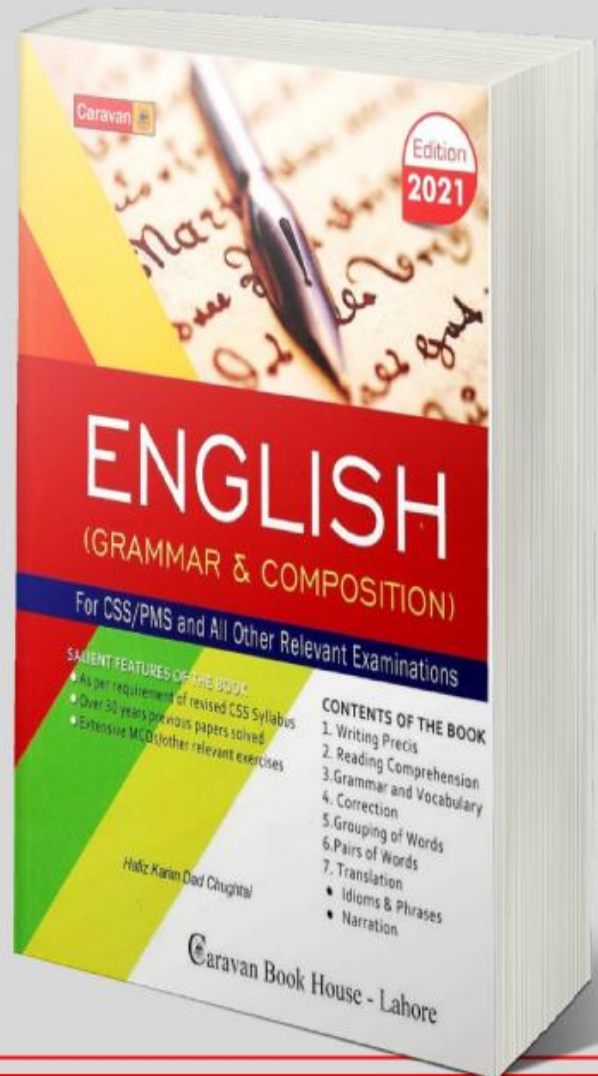
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The Future of Global Affairs

“*The Future of Global Affairs* is an exciting and balanced contribution to the debate about the potential trajectory of a world in flux. Tinged more with concern than utopian optimism, this volume captures a panoramic view of our cacophonous and disorderly world that is on the verge of disequilibrium and potential destruction unless key political actors, institutions, and processes can find a way to adapt global affairs to an increasingly plurilateral and intermestic era. A must-read for serious IR scholars; written in a way that is understandable to the lay person.”

—W. Andy Knight, *Ph.D., FRSC, University of Alberta*

“What is the future of the state? Is multilateralism overrated as an answer to the diverse ills plaguing the global system? How might climate change disrupt geopolitical alliances that have been essential to peace in different regions of the world? Inspired by these and other urgent questions, this simultaneously illuminating and profoundly unsettling book traces the contours of the ascendant geopolitics, illustrating how one class of events can have contrasting resonances and implications around the world. Each chapter explores a different facet of global affairs, offering perspectives that, though not rosy, serious students of world politics will do well to take to heart.”

—Ebenezer Obadare, *Professor of Sociology, University of Kansas*

Christopher Ankersen ·
Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu
Editors

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Editors

Christopher Ankersen
Center for Global Affairs
School of Professional Studies
New York University
New York, NY, USA

Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu
Center for Global Affairs
School of Professional Studies
New York University
New York, NY, USA

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FOREWORD BY HELEN CLARK

The United Nations (UN) was founded 75 years ago to advance peace, human rights, and development—a mandate as relevant today as it was in 1945. Its most remarkable year in recent times in achieving global consensus on a better future for all was 2015. That year, agreement was reached on Agenda 2030 and its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, and the Paris Climate Agreement. The New Urban Agenda was agreed the following year at the UN’s Habitat III Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development. Taken together, these constitute an ambitious agenda, which if implemented in full would transform the prospects of the world’s peoples and ecosystems.

This ambition is consistent with the UN’s impressive track record of agenda-setting—the UN was credited by the UN Intellectual History Project for having been an incubator of new and powerful ideas which have shaped norms, policies, and practice in many areas. It has been a platform for the negotiation of a substantial body of international law, and it has enabled much practical development, and humanitarian work. In earlier years, it played a significant role in supporting decolonization, which in turn led to the expansion of its membership from the 51 member states present at its founding to the 193 of today.

That is not to say that the UN’s record has been without blemish. The 1994 genocide in Rwanda and the 1995 massacre in Srebrenica—also

called a genocide by many—where peacekeepers were present and did not act to save lives, will always be a stain on its reputation. Ongoing issues of sexual and gender-based violence by peacekeepers and in individual UN organizations are a disgrace. Despite those shortcomings, however, we should not lose sight of the fact that the reason for the UN's existence is to contribute to global public goods, and these days, in doing so, to contribute to the protection and management of the global commons.

Yet this premier institution in the multilateral system is now under significant strain. Our world is preoccupied by a wide range of conflicts, other geopolitical and geoeconomic tensions, environmental crises, and disease outbreaks. In zones of conflict, there continue to be loss of life, poor services, and little hope for many. Displacement crises are protracted, and the numbers of those forcibly displaced are at record levels—now over seventy million. Essential humanitarian relief is a first call on official development assistance, leaving less for the poor in low income but more stable countries. And, on reflection, the major international agreements reached in 2015 could not have been concluded today; such is the impact of political change since then in key capitals from Washington DC to Brasilia and beyond.

The current situation makes reaching the SDG targets a stretch. In 2030, we could well see some six percent of the world's population still living in extreme poverty—far from the target of eradication. The absolute numbers of hungry people in the world are increasing—according to the World Food Programme, the total stands at around 820 million, or one in every nine people on earth. UNESCO reports suggest that one in every six children will not be able to achieve the SDG target of having twelve years education by 2030.

While the SDGs were always an aspirational agenda, to fall so short of their targets not only makes a mockery of them, but also calls into question the seriousness of the member states which committed to them and the credibility of the international system. The same is true of the woeful underperformance on implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement, which the 2019 Madrid climate change Conference of Parties made plain. If solemnly reached agreements are followed by little action, what, many will ask, is their point?

For a variety of reasons, the UN has also found it hard to address new waves of conflict effectively. Its conventional response of dispatching peacekeepers where there is a peace to be kept is often inadequate—peacekeepers may be sent where there is no peace to keep, and they may be

neither equipped to act nor have a mandate to act to stem the violence which greets them. In a number of the currently raging conflicts, there is no mandate for UN peacekeepers to be present at all. All too often these conflicts are in effect proxy wars, with the powerful patrons who back warring parties having little interest in international mediation.

Additionally, the UN is largely a bystander as key parts of the nuclear weapons control architecture are being dismantled. An egregious example is that of the Iran nuclear deal which was endorsed by the UN Security Council. The US withdrawal from the agreement was a direct challenge to the authority of the Council which all UN member states are bound to uphold. The expiry of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty between the United States and what is now Russia is a major threat to peace and security, but one which the multilateral system in its current state is not equipped to address.

Challenging as the outlook for the multilateral system currently is, however, it would be wrong to walk away from it. Its institutions need to be maintained for times when geopolitics are more conducive to making them effective. Disengaging only contributes to their decline in relevance. Meanwhile thought should be given to how to reinvigorate the system. Not all parts of it are useful. Some need a fundamental overhaul and reorientation. Some entities barely continue on life support, and would be better absorbed or eliminated altogether. Others need radical improvements to their efficiency and effectiveness.

To date, neither the UN nor the Bretton Woods Institutions have been able to address the nature of their outdated governance systems comprehensively. For example, the UN Security Council configuration with its five permanent members designated in 1945 does not remotely reflect today's geopolitics. When the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund changed their leaders last year, there was no serious questioning of where the new heads would come from. They were preordained to be an American and a European, respectively. Obsolete governance structures undermine the credibility of these institutions.

The international system could strive to become more inclusive by embracing a wider range of actors, beyond member states. A pioneer in that was the International Labour Organization. From its inception in 1919, it has had tripartite membership consisting of governments, unions, and employer organizations. Other non-UN bodies, such as the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, GAVI—the Vaccine

Alliance, and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative have representation from governments, civil society, and the private sector on their governing bodies.

It is a challenge for the UN and its core institutions to reform their governance—they remain very much member state-driven and divisions between those states run deep. Embracing a more inclusive approach to the governance of the system would be useful in getting broader engagement in global affairs and thereby securing our common future. Our world faces profound challenges with which no single country can deal effectively on its own. Shared problems need effective global governance to address them. The negotiators of the UN Charter in 1945 understood that. It is incumbent on the leaders of today in this 75th anniversary year of the UN's founding to show the same vision in renewing a multilateral system which can be representative and effective in the twenty-first century.

From the bedrock of evidence-based policy to the wisdom of gender equality to the looming climate tragedy, this volume's approach to the issues facing the world serves as a useful primer. It stresses the risks and opportunities posed by disruption and discontinuity, and highlights the interconnectedness and urgency required if we are to get this right and avoid the destruction of the global system.

Christchurch, New Zealand
March 2020

Helen Clark

FOREWORD BY VERA JELINEK

The idea for a Center for Global Affairs at New York University had been brewing in my head for many years prior to its establishment in 2004, but gained momentum with the seismic and rapid shifts occurring in the field. With the end of the Cold War, the events of 9/11, and the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, it became increasingly evident that “international affairs” was no longer an adequate rubric to describe, understand, and cope with the rapidly changing landscape. The number of players, even in terms of traditional states, were expanding exponentially from the 51 original United Nations members to 193; Non-Governmental Organizations had evolved to become contenders in shaping and influencing policies; the private sector and international organizations were setting new norms. And that speaks only to the actors shaping international relations.

The impact of horizontal forces that were either ignored or previously played a minor role was also coming to the forefront. The role of gender, peacebuilding, refugee flows, climate change, energy, terrorism, transnational security, the internet and communication, among many other factors, begged for closer scrutiny and study. New trends became evident: nonalignment lost its salience as the world moved first to unipolarity and then multipolarity, multilateralism flourished and gained an edge over bilateral arrangements, regional organizations expanded, and globalization trumped borders and promoted a freer movement of capital, ideas, people, and goods.

Despite criticism from traditionalists, by 2004, we felt the need to create a curriculum, which was based on the conviction that the world's challenges could not be understood and resolved from the standpoint only of relations among states but had to take into account the role of non-state actors, regional organizations, corporations, urban and rural communities, as well as non-traditional diplomatic channels. Time has proved that we were justified in launching a graduate program in Global Affairs.

Fifteen years on, there is a backlash to such a cosmopolitan—some might say “globalist”—point of view. Ethnic slurs, nationalist ideologies, demagoguery, exclusionary rather than inclusive politics, polarization within and between states, barriers to the free flow of trade and other “isms” reminiscent of the 1930s, not just in Europe and Asia but also here in the United States, have reared their ugly heads.

That, however, does not mean the end of the liberal era. I am an unreserved optimist: what we are seeing now is nothing more than a blip. Eventually, hopefully sooner than later, it will become clear that the overwhelming challenges that the world faces can only be tackled with a unified approach. We here at the Center for Global Affairs, and by that I mean an amazing faculty, many of whom have contributed to this book, will continue to do battle to help the next generation understand, cope with, and resolve global problems. We will continue to do so from the transdisciplinary, flexible, and constantly evolving perspectives that lie at the heart of the Center's founding and continue to shape its curriculum and mission to this day.

No greater proof than the contents of this gem of a volume is needed to attest to the tumultuous changes in global affairs and the Center's pivotal role in the shaping of practice and the study of Global Affairs.

Vera Jelinek
Divisional Dean
Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies
New York University
New York, USA

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The genesis of this edited book project was to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the Center for Global Affairs (CGA), and be a *estschrift* to honor the vision of its founder, Dean Vera Jelinek. CGA's faculty warmly embraced the idea and also provided ambitious and encouraging inputs. Based on that, the initial conception further evolved into a volume that would offer a glimpse into the future of global affairs across the concentrations and specializations that the Center offers.

It is of course, one thing to plan an edited volume but quite another to bring it to fruition; and we are deeply grateful and indebted for the support and contributions of the many individuals who made it possible. First, under the tutelage of Dr. Jelinek, CGA has become a home for global scholars and citizen to hone their skills, and apply lessons from the classroom into the policy world. Her enthusiastic support helped to get this project off the ground. Second, our heartfelt thanks to faculty colleagues who carved out time from their busy teaching, researching, and engagement schedules to contribute insightful chapters.

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Finally, we would like to dedicate this volume to CGA's students, staff, and faculty—past, present, and future—who have collectively put this Center on the global affairs map. Their continuing involvement will be vital to the discipline of Global Affairs in these interesting times.

Christopher Ankersen
Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Christopher Ankersen is a Clinical Associate Professor at the Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University. His research focuses on international security and civil-military relations. He has experience as a military officer, consultant, and UN civil servant in Europe and Asia. His Twitter handle is @ProfAnkersen.

Christian Busch is a Clinical Assistant Professor, and Director of the Global Economy concentration at the Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University. His latest publication is *The Serendipity Mindset*. His Twitter handle is @ChrisSerendip.

Anne Marie Goetz is a Clinical Professor at the Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University. She researches gender issues in democratization and peacebuilding processes in East Africa, South and South East Asia, and has worked for the UN on gender and governance, peace and security. Her twitter handle is @amgoetz.

Thomas Hill is a Clinical Associate Professor at the Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University. He also serves as director of the Peace Research and Education Program (PREP). The Twitter handle for PREP is @NYUPeace.

John V. Kane is a Clinical Assistant Professor at the Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University. His research

interests include public opinion and experimental methodology. His research has been published in numerous peer-reviewed academic journals, and featured in leading media outlets. His Twitter handle is @UptonOrwell.

Carolyn Kissane is the Academic Director, and a Clinical Professor where she leads the Energy and Environment concentration at the Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University. Her Twitter handle is @CarolynKissane.

Michael F. Oppenheimer is a Clinical Professor, and leads the IR Futures concentration at the Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University. His latest book is *Pivotal Countries, Alternate Futures*. He is a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations. His Twitter handle is @MFOppenheimer.

Jens Rudbeck is a Clinical Associate Professor, and the head of the International Development and Humanitarian Assistance concentration at the Center for Global Affairs, New York University. His research focuses primarily on processes of democratization and regime change in developing countries. His Twitter handle is @JensRudbeck

Michael Shank is an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University, and Communications Director at the Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance. His Twitter handle is @Michael_Shank.

Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu is a Clinical Associate Professor, and leads the United Nations specialization at the Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University. Widely published, he has over 25 years of experience in policy research related to the United Nations. His Twitter handle is @wpssidhu.

Jennifer Trahan is a Clinical Professor, and head of the Human Rights and International Law concentration at the Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University. She is a prolific scholar on issues of international justice and international law, including the veto power of the UN Security Council.

Pano Yannakogeorgos is a Clinical Associate Professor at the Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University, and is leading the launch of the new Masters of Science in Global Security, Conflict and Cyber. Previously he was Founding Dean of the Air Force Cyber College at Air University.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Navigating Uncharted Waters

Christopher Ankersen and Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu

“The world,” according to, United States President Donald Trump, “is a very dangerous place.”¹ While this might be dismissed as characteristic hyperbole from, perhaps, the most sciolistic leader of our times, it inadvertently underlines the existential challenges posed by the multitude of seismic shifts since the start of the twenty-first century. While Trump’s sentiment is perceived by many as characteristic of the international arena, the ways in which it is dangerous are changing. Three distinct trends are discernable. First, there are growing intrastate conflicts, which range from urban violence to terrorism, the takeover of ungoverned spaces by extremist groups, secessionist movements, and civil wars. These have erupted on every continent and have mostly been conducted with small arms and light weapons, though some conflicts have also witnessed the use of chemical and biological weapons. The period has also seen maturation of the “Forever War” that started on 9/11, accelerated after the invasion of Iraq, and now sees US forces continue to fight terrorism

C. Ankersen (✉) · W. P. S. Sidhu
Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University,
New York, NY, USA
e-mail: christopher.ankersen@nyu.edu

W. P. S. Sidhu
e-mail: wpssidhu@nyu.edu

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from Afghanistan to the Philippines to Somalia. In most of these conflicts innocent civilians have become hapless targets.

Second, the post-Cold War honeymoon is finally over; there are deepening tensions between major international rivals, evident in the increasing interstate conflicts and proxy wars both between regional actors as well as global powers, including some nuclear-armed states. Prominent among these are messy military entanglements in and around Syria involving Russia, the United States, Iran, Israel, and Turkey, with the potential of serious escalation. Similarly, Iran and Saudi Arabia are pitted against each other in Yemen, while China is challenging all the littoral powers in the South China Sea. These contestations are over territorial, ideological, and normative disputes, including varying interpretations of international norms and laws. Coupled with modernization programs and doctrines that might allow for use of nuclear weapons, the nature of the emerging pattern of interstate conflict is contributing to global disorder. Indeed, the latest Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) released by the United States has led many to worry that the long “nuclear peace” might give way to renewed nuclear competition, if not all-out nuclear war. These concerns are exacerbated by an exceedingly impulsive, disruptive, and twitter-happy chief executive in Washington. Simultaneously, China, always expected to become a dominant global actor, has done so mainly through its massive economic leverage and growing military clout, and is providing diplomatic and financial support for alternatives to the liberal democracy and the post-1945 development script, through a combination of checkbook diplomacy, military intimidation, and leadership of key UN agencies.

Third, there is a slew of old and new transnational threats—both manmade and natural—that no single nation—however powerful—can manage on its own. These range from pandemics (such as the ongoing COVID-19 and earlier Ebola outbreaks), natural disasters (wildfires and floods), climate change induced catastrophes, global criminal networks, international extremist organizations, cyber and other forms of attacks, and global proliferation networks. Indeed, despite dire warnings of a climate crisis, the rate at which CO₂ is entering the atmosphere and contributing to the global warming has not slowed in the last decade and a half; this even before the imprudent burning of the Amazon forest. Moreover, cyber and emerging technologies underline the ability of the individual to construct and disrupt global developments. The iPhone, which is younger than the Center for Global Affairs, now numbers over

a billion, allowing an unprecedented flow of information—and disinformation—to reach people all over the globe, including in the hands of the unparalleled number of migrants fleeing violence or seeking better opportunities.

These trends reflect disruptions and discontinuities in global affairs, as well as the potential destruction of the world as we know it. These formidable trends would have been difficult to manage even in ordinary circumstances, but they are exacerbated by several emerging characteristics that are contributing to global disorder.²

First, there is the emergence of uber-national, populist leaders and governments who, while putting their own nations first, are challenging the globalization that they helped build. This has led some of them to opt out of international agreements and treaties that they had signed up to. Moreover, many of these leaders and nations are either outrightly rejecting multilateralism or are, at the very least, questioning and challenging international processes, norms, and institutions.

Second, these developments are unfolding against a fragile global economic backdrop marked by unprecedented trade wars. The Great Recession of 2008 shook confidence in global capitalism, and required extraordinary interventions by states and international organizations, introducing austerity measures that have exacerbated inequalities and deepened the social divides. The next impending recession in the era of COVID-19, given the advent of nationalist and populist governments hell-bent on brazenly rejecting the inevitable march of globalization, and willing to embark on unwinnable trade wars, might prove to be even more destructive at the national, regional, and global level.

Third, is the emergence of a disorderly multipolar world. While on the one hand the world is moving toward political, economic, technological, and normative multipolarity, on the other the ability to project power globally still remains the domain of one power—the United States. This means that while countries like Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, and South Africa can shape the emerging rules of global governance, they do not have the ability to enforce them. Unless these powers can become security providers, “multipolarity” in the security realm will be a misnomer.

Fourth, a similar multipolarity is apparent in decision-making of most domestic, regional, and global rules. This is on account of the emergence of many stakeholders—beyond the traditional state—in the decision-making process at the national, regional, and global levels. These

stakeholders, including, civil society, private sector, rich foundations and individuals, and cities pose challenges but also hold solutions to the global disorder. At the very least the traditional state-led, top-down decision-making process now also has to contend with non-state-led, bottom-up decision-making processes with the inevitable clash. This is evident in many of the emerging international negotiations and treaties.

Fifth, the rapid pace of technology evolution and diffusion, with the ability to empower individuals, small groups, and even weak states has the potential of creating asymmetrical competition. Coupled with the earlier characteristics of nationalism, multipolarity, and multistakeholderism, there is a seemingly insurmountable gap between the emerging technological capabilities and the ability to create norms and institutions to manage or govern them. The case of He Jiankui, a researcher at Southern University of Science and Technology in Shenzhen, who used CRISPR (Clustered regularly-interspaced short palindromic repeats) to create the first gene-edited twins (Lulu and Nana) in his clinic exemplifies this dilemma.

Finally, while propaganda was always a decisive instrument in global affairs, the advent of 24 × 7 global social media, coupled with fact-less news or “fake news,” armies of trolls, and the ability to influence millions across borders instantaneously poses new disruptive threats. This is highlighted by the revelations of Russia’s interference in the 2016 US elections, and similar fears for the 2020 hustings.

Not all news is bad, of course: The period witnessed the culmination of the Millennium Development Goals and the launch of their successors, the even more ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the realm of international law and human rights the activism of the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court, and the Special Rapporteurs initiative have raised accountability of some of the most powerful nations and leaders, even though the enforcement of many decisions remains woefully inadequate. Similarly, even as Aramco’s public listing falls short of expectations, the surge toward renewable energy is noteworthy. In 2004, same-sex marriage was recognized in only a handful of jurisdictions; now that list has 29 countries on it. The #MeToo movement has helped to raise awareness of, and erode impunity for, sexual abuse and harassment in a variety of professions around the world. The decades-long civil war in Colombia came to a peaceful end (although the peace arrangement remains fragile). Thinkers like Steven Pinker remind us that, on aggregate, we live in a richer, healthier, less

violent age now than our ancestors.³ Billions of people have been lifted out of absolute poverty, diseases like small pox and polio have been eradicated or nearly so. Life expectancy for most of the world has been extended. This has not come about automatically or by accident: it has required dedicated planning and consistent efforts from a whole range of actors, working top-down, bottom-up, and inside-out all at once. Lessons have been learned, forgotten or ignored, and relearned in the process. This progress has been measurable and welcome, but should in no way be regarded as permanent. Any hope for continued improvement will rest on deliberate, and collective effort.

The fragility of progress is evident in the United Nations (UN) Secretary General's warning that the SDGs, hailed as the pinnacle of a desire for global improvement for all, are in grave danger, as no country is on target to reach them by 2030.⁴ Similarly, the erstwhile hope contained within the wishy-washy 2015 Paris agreement and climate targets was revealed just four years later in Madrid to have been insufficient, as several nations clung to the illusion that incremental remedies in the face of a climate emergency were still plausible. The global trade regime, embodied in the World Trade Organization, is on the precipice of irrelevance: tariffs and counter-tariffs look ready to resume, and its dispute resolution mechanism has come under concerted attack from Washington. In the COVID-19 era, the need for global responses seems apparent, but today the centrality of the UN across a range of topics is seriously undermined by the contempt for multilateralism shown by the current US administration and other key governments around the world. Some believe that the very world order—liberal, rule-based, or a vehicle for soft US-hegemony—is, at the very least, set to shift or, in the extreme scenario, is likely to entirely collapse. Within that world order, what was once regarded as the “end of history”—the supremacy of the liberal democratic form of governance—now appears more fragile than ever, with populism on the rise everywhere and authoritarian regimes retrenching around the globe. Ironically, the biggest threat to the liberal democratic order is coming from within and is led by those who were until recently its custodians. In 2018 Freedom House, for instance, reported its twelfth consecutive drop in overall freedom, noting a reduction in a number of rights.

What are we to make of this? Will the future of global affairs be the extension of current trends? Or will we see more disruptions, discontinuities, and even destruction of the existing world order? The complexity

of global affairs (as the sum of real-world activity) requires a multidimensional point of view, and an interdisciplinary set of tools, techniques, and concepts if it is to be understood and influenced.

Global Affairs (as an academic field) was in its infancy in the immediate afterglow of the Cold War; now it has expanded in scale and sophistication. While Global Affairs incorporates perspectives from traditional academic disciplines, such as Development, Political Economy, International Law, and International Relations, it does so in a synthetic way that allows dynamic and polysemic issues, such as energy and the environment, human rights, and gender relations to be treated holistically. Global Affairs is marked not only by a variegated set of foci, but has increasingly incorporated rigorous and robust means of inquiry and analysis. Indeed, the field in 2019 bears little resemblance with that of 2004 when the term first came into vogue, at least among practitioners. How will Global Affairs as an intellectual and practical enterprise evolve in the coming years? What is next for the discipline and will the field be able to keep pace with its topsy-turvy subject matter?

The aim of this volume is to address these questions, but not to produce a series of identical chapters, each more or less a literature review attempting to distill a “state of the discipline.” Rather, the chapters will reflect the diversity of approaches and subjects that coexist within a necessarily multidisciplinary body of thought that is Global Affairs. Some chapters will be case studies of particular events or episodes; others may seek to address wider themes evident in trends and tropes. Each chapter in this volume will offer a slice of a wider picture, allowing readers to appreciate the breadth of the field and depth of inquiry into particular aspects of it.

While the chapters span the spectrum of Global Affairs, all of them speak to the broad theme of the future both in terms of real-world events, and the study of them. Despite its heterogeneity, the volume itself will reverberate with recurring themes, some of which will guide its development, many of which will emerge as the research—and the discussions that stem from it—progresses. Those themes include:

- Whose ideas matter in Global Affairs?
- Which actors will have the greatest impact?
- Will cooperation or competition prevail?
- Has multilateralism peaked?
- Will sovereignty be a problem or a solution?

- Are there lessons we can learn from the past to help build a better future?

Before tackling those questions, though, it is worthwhile spending time on the concepts that underpin this enterprise. We now turn to explorations of what constitutes global affairs; how we might look at the future; and how the exercise of power is changing.

WHAT IS GLOBAL AFFAIRS?

The sum of human activity occurring on a planetary scale is clearly too broad and deep to be encapsulated easily. When we, as a species, have attempted to create an overarching narrative to describe and explain what happens at this scale, we have done so in cosmological or theological ways. Suprahuman forces set our world in motion and are responsible for all that takes place or will take place. All can be understood only through the all-seeing, the all-knowing, the all-powerful. Mysteries abound but the world is a unified whole. Divination, elevation, or intercession are our only hope at understanding or influencing the world.

In our states and in our academies, on the other hand, our proclivity is to divide and conquer. And so governments have foreign ministries, trade bureaus, aid agencies, and defense departments. Universities, likewise, are divided into faculties and disciplines. Each of these categories promises to make tackling global affairs more manageable through specializing; the game-winning strategy is supposedly one of uber-specialization. It is our contention that such hyper-focus, a commitment to drilling down into the component aspects of global affairs, may blind us to the larger patterns at play. Library shelves are full of tomes extolling the various traditional subject-first approaches to world issues. However, Economics without Politics, Law without History, Development without Gender all fail to encompass the comprehensiveness that is Global Affairs.

Global affairs are, simply put, the activities that take place across the world, outside the scope of a single state. Indeed, as we argue in this volume, global affairs are beyond the scope of any and all states. While global affairs have existed for centuries, it is only recently that they have been recognized as such. Rather than merely looking at the world as the sum of diplomacy or trade, foreign ministries were forced to acknowledge the existence of other activities and other actors after the end of the

Cold War. After decades of strict us versus them approaches, untidy problems began to be noticed; untidy because they did not fit into existing organizational mandates or categories. And so foreign ministries began creating new divisions and desks to deal with these so-called new or non-traditional challenges. What was included in those miscellaneous bureaux began modestly enough: things like human security, sustainable development, post-conflict justice, etc. Rather than the black and white world of war and peace, there was a recognition—long overdue—that global affairs was far more complex than previously conceived.⁵

Building on this appreciation of complexity, Global Affairs,⁶ as an academic field of study seeks to be more holistic, harnessing the special knowledge contained in Economics, International Law, and International Relations (as examples), and amplifying their analytical power through combination with other approaches. For instance, no discussion of the global economy can be complete without reference to world energy markets. And, as is increasingly clear, only looking at energy as a commodity, and ignoring its effects on the environment and human development is inadequate, to say the least. Indeed, a singular focus on politics or economics, will yield a poorer result than a more well-rounded approach, inclusive of social and cultural aspects of global affairs.

As such, this volume is committed to surveying the future of global affairs from a number of perspectives, looking to point out connections where they occur. When looking at security, for example, we have to consider the role of gender. When considering the UN, we have to see it across all its facets, not just the Security Council, the Secretariat, or any one of its specialized agencies. When considering global actors, we must include more than just states, incorporating the needs and contributions—both positive and negative—of corporations, NGOs, and individuals.

Finally, it is vital that we expand our focus beyond the West and acknowledge the truly global nature of global affairs. The ideas, aspirations, and challenges of many states and peoples around the world have tended to have been sidelined by International Relations, or, when considered, shoe-horned into existing structures (e.g., East versus West, North versus South), neglecting the needs of billions of people, relegating countries to bit parts, with only significance if and when they might further an agenda other than their own. A large part of this belated recognition must include an appreciation that, while change may be a global constant, it impacts us all in different ways. Beyond irresponsibly

assigning people roles as victims, potential customers, likely terrorists, or future challengers, Global Affairs must dedicate itself to authentic engagement with the ideas and agency of the entire planet. Besides, as recent trends, especially in the time of COVID-19, have shown, norm creation is increasingly being driven by actors from the global South—both state and non-state—as well as by middle or small powers, rather than hegemons. The discipline will be well served to recognize and take on board these perspectives.

POWER, STATE, AND SYSTEM

The state, contrary to assertions of its demise or irrelevance, continues to remain the primary actor in the contemporary world. Its central role in global affairs is not going to change in the short term. Indeed, we are constantly reminded of the allure of the state, partly because those groups which are not states often clamor to become them. This is as true for the Islamic State as it is for the people of Bougainville. If this were not enough evidence of the utility of being a state, we could look at how statehood is actively being denied to the Kurds and others (by several of their neighboring governments). Statehood remains coin of the global realm. Only states can occupy full-voting seats at the UN General Assembly. Only states can receive loans from the World Bank. States are flexing their muscles on and offline, using their power to control the flow of information and the behavior of their citizens. Iran was able to shut down its internet in the Autumn of 2019. The Chinese state has interned a million of its citizens, and is building up structures in the South China Sea. The US state is building a wall along its southern border and operates a fleet of thirteen aircraft carriers. How many battalions, we might we ask, has the Pope? Or Amazon? Or Ali Baba? Or Amnesty International? However, state collapse or failure—notably in Afghanistan, Haiti, and in several countries in Africa—is also indicative that the weaker ones also pose danger to themselves, others states, and their peoples.

Additionally, we should not be blind to the fact that states, while seeming indelible, are not the only actors on the global stage. Unarmed firms like Google, Facebook, Nestle, and Exxon control resources and have influence well beyond the reach of many of the nearly 200 states now extant. What is more, with that economic clout, they are often able to hold sway over states, convincing them to legislate in ways which favor their commercial interests. Moreover, now individuals too

have the wherewithal to achieve change on their own, or to influence states to adopt their agenda. Technology has lowered the barrier of entry, providing non-state actors or individuals the ability to buy, sell, communicate, and even attack like never before. While individuals like Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, and Elon Musk illustrate the economic potential of individuals, Greta Thunberg, Malala Yusufzai, and Nadia Murad highlight that the conviction and voice of a single person, even without billions of dollars, can resonate across oceans and over borders. Perhaps even more effective at mobilizing action are civil society groups, such as the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)—a coalition of 500 nongovernmental and civil society organizations in 101 countries—that spearheaded the process, which culminated in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons or the NGO Ban Killer Robots, which has animated the debate on autonomous weapon systems, convincing diplomats from states around the world to echo their message in the chambers of the Conference on Disarmament within the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

How can we make sense of this? One way is to expand our understanding of power and look beyond the usual dimensions of military and political, which so far have tended to favor states. Michael Mann's four-fold sources of social power formulation is instructive here.⁷ To the traditional three aspects of power he adds a normative or ideological power. And it is, perhaps, here where we have seen the biggest change. Increasingly states are regarded as lacking in normative power, both from without and within their borders. "Sovereignty First" movements have exposed the naked interests of individual states, leaving little room for cooperation, sacrificing collective action on the altar of beggar thy neighbor. State-run disinformation campaigns, preferences for short-term gains tied to election cycles or regime security have tarnished the legitimacy of the state. This normative power is now diffused, and scattered among other actors. In some cases, people appear to place more trust in corporations. Billions of users of platforms, such as Google or Facebook willingly give up large swathes of their private data—information they would object to falling into the hands of domestic law enforcement or foreign espionage agencies. Similarly, some regional and international organizations also command legitimacy and are considered more trustworthy than even some of their member states, perhaps on account of their seemingly "supranational" ambit. UNICEF and the Red Cross, for instance, enjoy the trust of many around the world. This diffusion is

uneven, however. A slim majority of Britons appear to have lost faith in the regional umbrella provided by their membership in the EU: for them, Brussels no longer exercises normative power.

How can we account for this and how far is this trend likely to go? French President Emmanuel Macron worries that there is potential for the West to lose its dominant position in the world, as the normative appeal of its values ebbs away. For some, this represents the end of an era. For others, particularly those outside the West, it is seen as comeuppance or merely a timely readjustment of the ideological poles.

Either way, it is worth noting that the current manifestation of the state-centric system of global affairs, constructed largely by the victors of the Second World War, and tweaked by them at the end of the Cold War, is showing signs of strain. Rather than an inevitable and permanent structure, it needs to be seen as a complex ecosystem, dynamic, and exceedingly fragile. If not maintained, it will be transformed into something else. Whatever comes of it, it is unlikely to remain as it is, nor return to some status quo ante of a golden age. New voices have emerged and are emerging, ready to help shape what comes next, ready to assume and implement the full range of economic and social power to achieve their goals, even though some of these impinge on the power of the state.

HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND THE FUTURE?

This volume presents not just the current state of global affairs but also attempts to peer into the near future.⁸ Individual authors were left to decide what that future might look like, and whether to focus more on the world or the field of Global Affairs as an academic pursuit. The aim is not to predict precise possibilities, but to sketch out plausible threats and opportunities, and foreground what we can do today to avoid or exploit them.

While acknowledging the unknowability of what is yet to come, it is possible to make some remarks here about how the future is understood within this volume. First, the future is not necessarily linear. Rather than being an incremental path from the past, through the present, and on to the future, it is quite possible that we might see oscillations, serious disruptions, discontinuities, and/or even destruction. It is not a uniquely twenty-first-century phenomenon. Looking back on human existence we have seen repression, revolutions, and recurrences.

In a related sense, we must avoid the temptation of believing that time is teleological: progress toward some inevitable end is not guaranteed, even if we allow for the occasional loop-the-loop or cul-de-sac. History is not over and tomorrow may not be bright. A particular manifestation of this pathology can be seen in technological solutionism; an unfounded belief that technology will make the future a perfected version of today.⁹ Equally, though, fatalism is most probably inaccurate and most definitely unhelpful. Humans have agency, even if it is constrained by the structures we have built within global affairs. Certainly, the choices we make today—to abrogate treaties; not to invest in greener technologies—have implications and may bring about a different future, but not necessarily one that we were expecting or will like...or even survive.

Change usually comes incrementally, in small quanta, either positive or negative. The concept of human security, though enshrined in the 1945 UN charter, came into practice only after the end of the Cold War in 1990 in the form of the Human Development Index. Similarly, real wages have not increased a great deal within the industrial world. On the contrary, income inequalities have increased. Sometimes, though, those small changes lead to big impacts. The global temperature is currently set to rise by a mere 3 °C; but when that does occur, it will render much of the globe uninhabitable and lead to mass extinctions.¹⁰ Small changes are not the only option though. Occasionally, large changes take place: revolutions, market collapses, world wars are all real possibilities, even if we do not notice their antecedents.

A final reminder is that we need to do our best to avoid the Scylla of presentism (“it has never been like this before”) and the Charybdis of historicism (all events are determined by history). We certainly can detect echoes of past situations which are, at least, analogous to today. Decision-makers have always been faced with complexity; surprises have always happened. Thus, the future will be very different than the past or the present.¹¹ To believe otherwise is fantasy.

DISRUPTION, DISCONTINUITY, AND DESTRUCTION

As the subtitle of this volume connotes, we see a variety of possible outcomes in the near future. That we are at an inflection point seems apparent, but the form of that change is not yet evident. While we will not be lured into making precise predictions, we believe that three broad options are likely to manifest. These three options need not be universal

in scope and all three may overlap and coexist, with different outcomes extant in different issues or geographic areas. While we are not confident in forecasting what comes next, we are reasonably confident that tomorrow's global affairs will not look like today's.

One possibility is disruption. This implies a change—either temporary or permanent—in the way that global affairs are conducted, even though the system remains mostly unchanged. Such disruptions could be normative, political, economic, social, or technological. Previous examples of disruptive ideas might be the antislavery movement, communism, and fascism, while today globalization is, clearly, a disruptive economic phenomenon. Technological disruptions, such as the innovations of the industrial revolution, advent of aviation, space travel, and artificial intelligence are, clearly, dual use and could be used for both constructive or destructive purposes. Indeed, disruptions possess both progressive and regressive potential. However, they do not necessarily have a systemic impact; they merely affect the way that key actors operate within it.

Another distinct possibility is discontinuity, which indicates a break from the past, that may or may not result in a systemic change (depending on the impact of disruption or destruction). At a minimum, discontinuity might see the emergence of new powers within the existing system. Thus, China's growing profile and clout within the UN system might reflect this discontinuity. At a maximum, discontinuity might also lead to the cessation or suspension of some aspects of the global system and/or the creation of alternative systems. Again, China's establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and its role in creating the New Development Bank (along with Brazil, Russia, India, and South Africa), partly in response to being dissatisfied with the limited role in the existing international financial institutions, exemplifies longer-term discontinuity. Similarly, the Group of 20 countries assuming a greater role in peace and security issues, as an alternative to an unreformed Security Council, also marks discontinuity.

Finally, there is destruction, which suggests the permanent demise of the existing system of global order. Historically, such destruction was prompted by great power conflict at a global level. Thus, the collapse of the European *ancien regime* in the wake of the First World War and the death of the League of Nations following the outbreak of the Second World War are examples of institutional destruction. Until the end of the Second World War, such man-made destruction was inevitably followed by the construction of a new institution to manage global order, as evidenced in the creation of the UN. However, after the advent of the nuclear age in 1945, any future direct conflict among nuclear-armed great

powers might result in cataclysmic global destruction, and the inability to create a successor to the UN. Today, apart from nuclear war, the climate change crisis, and, indeed, COVID-19 like pandemics also poses an existential threat to the planet and absolute systemic collapse.

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

Michael Oppenheimer argues that rather than disruption or destruction, the decline in US leadership represents a discontinuity of the system since 1945 and uncertainty of what might replace it. His chapter elaborates that the future of IR will emerge from three intersecting forces: globalization (but without liberal rules, institutions, and leadership); multipolarity (the end of American hegemony and wider distribution of power among states and non-states, even as power itself is redefined); and the proliferation of distinctive, national, and subnational identities (what Sam Huntington called the “non-westernization of IR”). Any two of these forces are compatible with stability: multipolarity (inherently more prone to conflict than other configurations of power, according to Kenneth Waltz) and globalization can work in a world of convergent values and effective conflict management (Congress of Vienna). Divergent values and multipolarity can work in an autarchic world of isolated units; divergent values and globalization can be reconciled by hegemonic power. But all three forces operating simultaneously will produce a future of increasing internal polarization and cross border conflict, diminishing economic growth and poverty alleviation, weakened global institutions and norms of behavior, and reduced collective capacity to confront emerging challenges of global warming, accelerating technology change, nuclear weapons innovation and proliferation. As in any effective scenario, this future is clearly visible to any keen observer; we have only to believe our own eyes.

Christopher Ankersen’s chapter examines whether the resurgence of sovereignty first principles among some states could undermine the salience of the supranational identities. For a long time, the scholarly view of the planet has been decidedly Western and state-centric. Increasingly, though, that perspective is being understood as partial, at best, and problematic, at worst.¹² Ankersen posits that the future of global affairs will be somewhat more inclusive; more voices will join the choir. We need to expand our focus to include not only the state, but the coalitions, alliances, and international organizations created by them, so that we can better appreciate what is actually taking place on the planet. The outcome,

he predicts, will not be harmonious, though: inclusive means additive, not integrated. The erstwhile commitment to multilateralism that was a key feature of the world order since 1945 has faded, only to be replaced by a more self-interested view. The arrangements that states will find themselves in will not be fixed, but transitory, much like the images formed by a kaleidoscope. Stable alliances and global agreements will be replaced by temporary hook-ups. This does not bode well for our ability to tackle global challenges, such as those posed by pandemics like COVID-19.

These megatrends are occurring against the backdrop of the weaponization of facts. John Kane's chapter tackles how the phenomenon of truth is being played out in global affairs now and in the future. Despite a growing appetite for "evidence-based" thinking and policymaking, we are nevertheless grappling with the challenges of living in an era of "fake news." Kane is concerned that we are heading for a "post-truth" world in which "nothing matters" except whatever we *want* to believe. Kane explains the implications of that and how scholars and citizens alike need to guard against falling into the trap of relativism. Toward that end, he provides a practical framework for critically evaluating information, and is confident that it is only through the objective pursuit of knowledge about our world as a *shared* value can we begin to talk with, rather than past, one another about the most pressing issues of our time.

Turning our attention to the global economy, Christian Busch sees that, in today's fast-changing world, the role of business, government, and civil society actors is being redefined. Enormous challenges related to climate change, inequality, populism, and technology necessitate public and private sector organizations to rethink their responsibilities and approaches. This provides opportunities as well as challenges. Based on in-depth research on private and public sector organizations, as well as a review of the most relevant developments related to the global economy over the last 15 years, this chapter lays out a framework of how an enlightened kind of capitalism can emerge based on novel approaches of private and public sector organizations. Analyzing the past and future of global affairs via the prism of the global economy, this chapter shows how purpose-orientation, co-opetition, innovative multi-stakeholder-partnerships, and community-led approaches grounded in an enlightened self-interest will shape the future of global affairs in the decades to come. It captures how in a world of discontinuities and

disruptions—in which the only constant is change—individuals and organizations can develop the capacity to deal with the unexpected and play an effective role in tackling society’s most pressing challenges.

Similarly, the loose regime of laws, customs, and norms, governing global affairs is at an inflection point, reflecting a discontinuity. Jennifer Trahan focuses, in particular, on the International Criminal Court (ICC), as well as the creation of a variety of inelegantly named “mechanisms” for compiling evidence of atrocity crimes in Syria, Iraq, and Myanmar. As to the ICC, she argues that it is at a key crossroads, having already weathered extensive political “push back” against its work—a campaign for mass withdrawals (particularly for the withdrawal of African states) from the Court, as well as a campaign to reassert immunity for heads of state. Yet, the Court continues to face serious resistance to its work, as exemplified by scathing and destructive attacks against the Court, including by US government officials, especially when the Court attempts to prosecute state actors. Such difficulties have been exacerbated by the recent rejection by the ICC’s Pre-Trial Chamber of the Prosecutor’s application to proceed with investigation of crimes committed in Afghanistan. As to the “mechanisms” created to compile crime evidence of atrocities committed in Syria, Iraq, and Myanmar, Trahan raises the question of whether the creation of such mechanisms (rather than creation of international or hybrid tribunals) represents a retreat for the field of international justice, forced to adapt to a more hostile political landscape. A key challenge for the international community will be to ensure such evidence collection successfully feeds into systematic prosecutions before courts and tribunals that respect due process and do not implement the death penalty. The chapter concludes that in the future we will, more than ever, need the ICC and other accountability mechanisms in the face of still far too many atrocity crimes being committed, including by state actors.

As in the case of international law, the gendered assumptions driving much of global affairs led to a fundamental rethinking of the traditional areas of international relations and politics, and led to the emergence of the disruptive ‘Feminist Foreign Policy’ (FFP) agenda. Anne-Marie Goetz’s chapter asserts that the defense of “national sovereignty” has allowed states to shield patriarchal preferences, not only blocking women’s rights but contributing to some of the most destructive features of national and international decision-making. For FFP to deliver a significant course correction in international affairs, its practitioners must accept that ending diplomatic silence on abuses of women has costs. It

can bring diplomatic isolation or trigger domestic protest since it may make transnational business arrangements, including arms deals—the fuel for protracted conflicts—contingent on respect for women’s rights.

Clearly, there is a need to counter and, perhaps, even reverse these trajectories of conflict. Thomas Hill believes that overcoming a widespread misunderstanding of what is needed to build peaceful societies stands as one of the greatest global challenges of our time. Governments typically over-invest in military approaches to state security while much-smaller investments in development programs meant to improve human security and resilience to conflict are short termed and apolitical. Education often is overlooked as a possible peacebuilding mechanism, and when it is not, is treated, quite literally, as a children’s matter. Hill argues that building a global constituency that understands, supports, and engages effectively in peacebuilding will require a radical shift toward a new form of education for youth. Conflict Transformation Education (CTE)—characterized by thoughtful deliberation and dialogue, an emphasis on creativity, an acknowledgment of its explicit political nature, and efforts to develop cross-communal peacebuilding constituencies—stands as higher education’s possible answer to over-securitization. Recent participatory action research with higher education actors in Iraq, Colombia and Kuwait offer helpful examples of how scholars and students based in those contexts already have been using CTE methods to counteract dominant narratives about the inevitability of violence, and to create and reinforce notions of shared fate that are prerequisites to building and sustaining peace.

Founded on the recognition of the interdependence of enduring security, peace, development, and human rights, a global consensus was reached, in the form of SDGs, which represent a landmark event. As Jens Rudbeck explains, when the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were established in 2000, there were 63 low-income countries in the world. Fifteen years later, there are only 33 left. While such a dramatic decline suggests that poverty and hunger are becoming problems of the past, it is far too early to declare mission accomplished. Rather than disappearing poverty and hunger are increasingly concentrated in countries characterized by violent conflict and unstable state institutions. Today, half of the world’s poor and hungry live in conflict-affected societies compared to a decade and a half ago when four-fifth of them lived in stable, low-income countries. These new dynamics raise difficult questions about how to solve the most pertinent development issues.

Rudbeck explores the changing patterns of core development issues and critically assess the nature of the solutions proposed by the international development community. Whereas the 2015 MDGs were about reducing poverty and building human capital for the poor, the 2030 SDGs focus on building inclusive, peaceful, resilient and prosperous societies. However, even as no country can claim to have found a path to sustainable development, an important new element in the SDGs is the idea that the goals are universal for all states.

A key driver toward a sustainable future is technology dependent and a technology-driven disruption is underway: we are moving from a purely physical globe to an increasingly virtual one. As Pano Yannakogeorgos explains, the consequences of this compression have brought on an unprecedented global interconnectedness and interdependence never before known among peoples and locales. Underpinning new possibilities for economic development and innovation are vulnerable and unstable information and communication technology (ICT) operational technology (OT) and platform IT (PIT) infrastructures which holistically are termed “cyberspace.” The integrity of this domain is essential to economic development, national security, public safety, and modern civic discourse worldwide. Seeking to exploit vulnerabilities in a fragile technological ecosystem are nation-states, terrorist groups, criminal gangs, and other malicious substate actors. Cyber competition among these actors is always evolving. The terrain is blurred between public and private entities, the targets and exploits are in a constant state of upgrade, and competitors are indistinct and ubiquitous. The state-centered international system is thus under immense pressure as existing security frameworks and stability measures become more outmoded. Yannakogeorgos offers an analysis of the altering landscape of political, military and economic competition in and by means of cyber. Using recent events and documented experiences as examples, he reveals our dependence on networks, and, more worryingly, the fragility of these networks. Yannakogeorgos concludes with suggestions for how the global community may manage risks to assure that cyber is an economic enabler, enhancing human prosperity rather than a source of instability and conflict.

Parallel disruptions, as Carolyn Kissane explains, are already evident in the contours of the geopolitics of energy, which have radically transformed over the last two decades. In the early years of the twenty-first century, policy discussions centered around the existential threat posed by peak oil supply. In capitals across the world, policymakers wondered

how they could best prepare their states for declining oil production. The scarcity of supply was the risk, and the multitude of economic and political sensitivities associated with energy security drove countries to seek new ways of securing hydrocarbons. Kissane explores the energy transition and examines how the geopolitics of energy is experiencing a new stage of discontinuity, exposing both new risks and opportunities for producers and consumers of global energy.

Great Thunberg's high-profile Atlantic crossing by yacht highlighted the potential climate risks associated with energy transition, and did so in a highly personal way. Thus, Michael Shank argues that the response to the climate crisis is no longer the purview of national policymakers only, since presidents and prime ministers are backing out of the Paris climate agreement—a pact that intended to locate the focus of greenhouse gas emissions reduction in the hands of national governments. Increasingly, subnational actors—cities, states, businesses, universities, hospitals, religious organizations, and other nonprofit sectors in both the global North and South—are taking the lead and filling the void left by national governments. As part of this locus shift, personal behavior change is increasingly discussed among these subnational actors—and by the storytellers within society (e.g., media)—and, as a result, social norms encouraging sustainable consumption (e.g., plant-based diets, slow fashion) are becoming more mainstream in the climate action space, complementing the more traditional and expected environmental choices (e.g., recycling, LED lightbulbs, carbon-light transit). While some frontiers continue to remain stigmatized (e.g., family planning), the invigorated action among subnational actors is ambitious and inspiring. Shank explores the systems-level transformations happening within one particular sector of subnational society—global cities in the global North and South that are taking aggressive action on climate change—since the majority of the world's population resides in cities and since cities are responsible for the majority of the world's energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. Shank concludes by tracing out the potential shift, within these cities, toward behavior change strategy and how behavioral economics and social psychologies may be useful in motivating residents within these cities to further reduce subnational sector emissions.

How might any of these global challenges—marked as they are by tension and contestation—be managed? Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu contends that, despite the advent of new challenges, actors, and institutions in the post-9/11 age, the United Nations (UN) still remains

the multilateral center of global affairs. Indeed, in spite of threats from within and without, the UN continues to shape the global discourse on peace and security, development, and human rights. Over the past 15 years the adoption of Security Council resolution 1540, the SDGs, the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Responsibility to Protect principles, the creation of UN Women, as well as the successful negotiation of the Arms Trade Treaty and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, are indicative of this trend. However, the implementation of these norms, agreements, and treaties remains uneven at best and nonexistent at worst. Moreover, the present trend of countries pursuing “nation first” policies while questioning multilateralism and global governance is likely to further impair the UN’s operational role. Sidhu examines the UN’s efforts in managing global disorder and discontinuities, and the prospects of establishing a new world order over the coming decades.

This volume offers a rather somber appreciation of the future of global affairs. Destruction is not inevitable; however, navigation the multitude of discontinuities and disruptions will require concerted collective action at all levels, linking from the individual to the global. To spur the necessary policy innovations in global affairs, the discipline of Global Affairs also needs to be more comprehensive: we stress the need to replace the twin shackles of state-only policy and practice, and siloed academic analysis with a transdisciplinary approach. The real challenge will be doing so in a global, inclusive, and cooperative manner, which has not been the hallmark of the discipline subjected to the parochial, exclusive, and confrontational dominant discourse until now.

NOTES

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2. Sidhu, W. P. S. 2018. “Global trends: disruptive, dangerous and disorderly”, *Mint*, 26 February.
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4. Report of the Secretary-General on SDG Progress 2019, Special Edition. New York: United Nations. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24978Report_of_the_SG_on_SDG_Progress_2019.pdf.
5. Goodhand, Jonathan. 1999. "From wars to complex political emergencies: Understanding conflict and peace-building in the new world disorder". *Third World Quarterly*, 20:1, 13–26.
6. In keeping with the convention used elsewhere in academic writing, especially in International Relations, when referring to the state of the 'real world' we use global affairs with lower case letters. When referring to the academic field of Global Affairs we use upper case letters.
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The Turbulent Future of International Relations

Michael F. Oppenheimer

Four structural forces will shape the future of International Relations: globalization (but without liberal rules, institutions, and leadership)¹; multipolarity (the end of American hegemony and wider distribution of power among states and non-states²); the strengthening of distinctive, national and subnational identities, as persistent cultural differences are accentuated by the disruptive effects of Western style globalization (what Samuel Huntington called the “non-westernization of IR”³); and secular economic stagnation, a product of longer term global decline in birth rates combined with aging populations.⁴ These structural forces do not determine everything. Environmental events, global health challenges, internal political developments, policy mistakes, technology breakthroughs or failures, will intersect with structure to define our future. But these four structural forces will impact the way states behave, in the

M. F. Oppenheimer (✉)
Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University,
New York, NY, USA
e-mail: mo41@nyu.edu

capacity of great powers to manage their differences, and to act collectively to settle, rather than exploit, the inevitable shocks of the next decade.

Some of these structural forces could be managed to promote prosperity and avoid war. Multipolarity (inherently more prone to conflict than other configurations of power, given coordination problems)⁵ plus globalization can work in a world of prosperity, convergent values, and effective conflict management. The Congress of Vienna system achieved relative peace in Europe over a hundred-year period through informal cooperation among multiple states sharing a fear of populist revolution. It ended decisively in 1914. Contemporary neoliberal institutionalists, such as John Ikenberry, accept multipolarity as our likely future, but are confident that globalization with liberal characteristics can be sustained without American hegemony, arguing that liberal values and practices have been fully accepted by states, global institutions, and private actors as imperative for growth and political legitimacy.⁶ Divergent values plus multipolarity can work, though at significantly lower levels of economic growth—in an autarchic world of isolated units, a world envisioned by the advocates of decoupling, including the current American president.⁷ Divergent values plus globalization can be managed by hegemonic power, exemplified by the decade of the 1990s, when the Washington Consensus, imposed by American leverage exerted through the IMF and other U.S. dominated institutions, overrode national differences, but with real costs to those states undergoing “structural adjustment programs,”⁸ and ultimately at the cost of global growth, as states—especially in Asia—increased their savings to self insure against future financial crises.⁹

But all four forces operating simultaneously will produce a future of increasing internal polarization and cross border conflict, diminished economic growth and poverty alleviation, weakened global institutions and norms of behavior, and reduced collective capacity to confront emerging challenges of global warming, accelerating technology change, nuclear weapons innovation and proliferation. As in any effective scenario, this future is clearly visible to any keen observer. We have only to abolish wishful thinking and believe our own eyes.¹⁰

SECULAR STAGNATION

This unbrave new world has been emerging for some time, as US power has declined relative to other states, especially China, global liberalism has failed to deliver on its promises, and totalitarian capitalism has proven effective in leveraging globalization for economic growth and political legitimacy while exploiting technology and the state's coercive powers to maintain internal political control. But this new era was jumpstarted by the world financial crisis of 2007, which revealed the bankruptcy of unregulated market capitalism, weakened faith in US leadership, exacerbated economic deprivation and inequality around the world, ignited growing populism, and undermined international liberal institutions. The skewed distribution of wealth experienced in most developed countries, politically tolerated in periods of growth, became intolerable as growth rates declined. A combination of aging populations, accelerating technology, and global populism/nationalism promises to make this growth decline very difficult to reverse. What Larry Summers and other international political economists have come to call "secular stagnation" increases the likelihood that illiberal globalization, multipolarity, and rising nationalism will define our future. Summers¹¹ has argued that the world is entering a long period of diminishing economic growth. He suggests that secular stagnation "may be the defining macroeconomic challenge of our times." Julius Probst, in his recent assessment of Summers' ideas, explains:

...rich countries are ageing as birth rates decline and people live longer. This has pushed down real interest rates because investors think these trends will mean they will make lower returns from investing in future, making them more willing to accept a lower return on government debt as a result.

Other factors that make investors similarly pessimistic include rising global inequality and the slowdown in productivity growth...

This decline in real interest rates matters because economists believe that to overcome an economic downturn, a central bank must drive down the real interest rate to a certain level to encourage more spending and investment... Because real interest rates are so low, Summers and his supporters believe that the rate required to reach full employment is so far into negative territory that it is effectively impossible.

...in the long run, more immigration might be a vital part of curing secular stagnation. Summers also heavily prescribes increased government spending, arguing that it might actually be more prudent than cutting back

– especially if the money is spent on infrastructure, education and research and development.

Of course, governments in Europe and the US are instead trying to shut their doors to migrants. And austerity policies have taken their toll on infrastructure and public research. This looks set to ensure that the next recession will be particularly nasty when it comes... Unless governments change course radically, we could be in for a sobering period ahead.¹²

The rise of nationalism/populism is both cause and effect of this economic outlook. Lower growth will make every aspect of the liberal order more difficult to resuscitate post-Trump. Domestic politics will become more polarized and dysfunctional, as competition for diminishing resources intensifies. International collaboration, ad hoc or through institutions, will become politically toxic. Protectionism, in its multiple forms, will make economic recovery from “secular stagnation” a heavy lift, and the liberal hegemonic leadership and strong institutions that limited the damage of previous downturns, will be unavailable. A clear demonstration of this negative feedback loop is the economic damage being inflicted on the world by Trump’s trade war with China, which—despite the so-called phase one agreement—has predictably escalated from negotiating tactic to imbedded reality, with no end in sight. In a world already suffering from inadequate investment, the uncertainties generated by this confrontation will further curb the investments essential for future growth. Another demonstration of the intersection of structural forces is how populist-motivated controls on immigration (always a weakness in the hyper-globalization narrative) deprives developed countries of Summers’ recommended policy response to secular stagnation, which in a more open world would be a win-win for rich and poor countries alike, increasing wage rates and remittance revenues for the developing countries, replenishing the labor supply for rich countries experiencing low birth rates.

ILLIBERAL GLOBALIZATION

Economic weakness and rising nationalism (along with multipolarity) will not end globalization, but will profoundly alter its character and greatly reduce its economic and political benefits. Liberal global institutions, under American hegemony, have served multiple purposes, enabling states to improve the quality of international relations and more fully

satisfy the needs of their citizens, and provide companies with the legal and institutional stability necessary to manage the inherent risks of global investment. But under present and future conditions these institutions will become the battlegrounds—and the victims—of geopolitical competition. The Trump Administration's frontal attack on multilateralism is but the final nail in the coffin of the Bretton Woods system in trade and finance, which has been in slow but accelerating decline since the end of the Cold War. Future American leadership may embrace renewed collaboration in global trade and finance, macroeconomic management, environmental sustainability and the like, but repairing the damage requires the heroic assumption that America's own identity has not been fundamentally altered by the Trump era (four years or eight matters here), and by the internal and global forces that enabled his rise. The fact will remain that a sizeable portion of the American electorate, and a monolithically pro-Trump Republican Party, is committed to an illiberal future. And even if the effects are transitory, the causes of weakening global collaboration are structural, not subject to the efforts of some hypothetical future US liberal leadership. It is clear that the US has lost respect among its rivals, and trust among its allies. While its economic and military capacity is still greatly superior to all others, its political dysfunction has diminished its ability to convert this wealth into effective power.¹³ It will furthermore operate in a future system of diffusing material power, diverging economic and political governance approaches, and rising nationalism. Trump has promoted these forces, but did not invent them, and future US Administrations will struggle to cope with them.

What will illiberal globalization look like? Consider recent events. The instruments of globalization have been weaponized by strong states in pursuit of their geopolitical objectives. This has turned the liberal argument on behalf of globalization on its head. Instead of interdependence as an unstoppable force pushing states toward collaboration and convergence around market-friendly domestic policies, states are exploiting interdependence to inflict harm on their adversaries, and even on their allies. The increasing interaction across national boundaries that globalization entails, now produces not harmonization and cooperation, but friction and escalating trade and investment disputes.¹⁴ The Trump Administration is in the lead here, but it is not alone. Trade and investment friction with China is the most obvious and damaging example, precipitated by China's long failure to conform to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles, now escalated by President Trump into

a trade and currency war disturbingly reminiscent of the 1930s that Bretton Woods was designed to prevent. Financial sanctions against Iran, in violation of US obligations in the Joint Comprehensive Plan Of Action (JCPOA), is another example of the rule of law succumbing to geopolitical competition. Though more mercantilist in intent than geopolitical, US tariffs on steel and aluminum, and their threatened use in automobiles, aimed at the EU, Canada, and Japan,¹⁵ are equally destructive of the liberal system and of future economic growth, imposed as they are by the author of that system, and will spread to others. And indeed, Japan has used export controls in its escalating conflict with South Korea¹⁶ (as did China in imposing controls on rare earth,¹⁷ and as the US has done as part of its trade war with China). Inward foreign direct investment restrictions are spreading. The vitality of the WTO is being sapped by its inability to complete the Doha Round, by the proliferation of bilateral and regional agreements, and now by the Trump Administration's hold on appointments to WTO judicial panels. It should not surprise anyone if, during a second term, Trump formally withdrew the US from the WTO. At a minimum it will become a "dead letter regime."¹⁸

As such measures gain traction, it will become clear to states—and to companies—that a global trading system more responsive to raw power than to law entails escalating risk and diminishing benefits. This will be the end of economic globalization, and its many benefits, as we know it. It represents nothing less than the subordination of economic globalization, a system which many thought obeyed its own logic, to an international politics of zero-sum power competition among multiple actors with divergent interests and values. The costs will be significant: Bloomberg Economics estimates that the cost in lost US GDP in 2019-dollar terms from the trade war with China has reached \$134 billion to date and will rise to a total of \$316 billion by the end of 2020.¹⁹

Economically, the just-in-time, maximally efficient world of global supply chains, driving down costs, incentivizing innovation, spreading investment, integrating new countries and populations into the global system, is being Balkanized. Bilateral and regional deals are proliferating, while global, nondiscriminatory trade agreements are at an end. Economies of scale will shrink, incentivizing less investment, increasing costs and prices, compromising growth, marginalizing countries whose growth and poverty reduction depended on participation in global supply chains. A world already suffering from excess savings (in the corporate sector, among mostly Asian countries) will respond to heightened risk and

uncertainty with further retrenchment. The problem is perfectly captured by Tim Boyle, CEO of Columbia Sportswear, whose supply chain runs through China, reacting to yet another ratcheting up of US tariffs on Chinese imports, most recently on consumer goods:

We move stuff around to take advantage of inexpensive labor. That's why we're in Bangladesh. That's why we're looking at Africa. We're putting investment capital to work, to get a return for our shareholders. So, when we make a wager on investment, this is not Vegas. We have to have a reasonable expectation we can get a return. That's predicated on the rule of law: where can we expect the laws to be enforced, and for the foreseeable future, the rules will be in place? That's what America used to be.²⁰

The international political effects will be equally damaging. The four structural forces act on each other to produce the more dangerous, less prosperous world projected here. Illiberal globalization represents geopolitical conflict by (at first) physically non-kinetic means. It arises from intensifying competition among powerful states with divergent interests and identities, but in its effects drives down growth and fuels increased nationalism/populism, which further contributes to conflict. Twenty-first-century protectionism represents bottom-up forces arising from economic disruption. But it is also a top-down phenomenon, representing a strategic effort by political leadership to reduce the constraints of interdependence on freedom of geopolitical action, in effect a precursor and enabler of war. This is the disturbing hypothesis of Daniel Drezner, argued in an important May 2019 piece in *Reason*, titled “Will Today’s Global Trade Wars Lead to World War Three,”²¹ which examines the pre-World War I period of heightened trade conflict, its contribution to the disaster that followed, and its parallels to the present:

Before the First World War started, powers great and small took a variety of steps to thwart the globalization of the 19th century. Each of these steps made it easier for the key combatants to conceive of a general war.

We are beginning to see a similar approach to the globalization of the 21st century. One by one, the economic constraints on military aggression are eroding. And too many have forgotten—or never knew—how this played out a century ago.

...In many ways, 19th century globalization was a victim of its own success. Reduced tariffs and transport costs flooded Europe with inexpensive grains from Russia and the United States. The incomes of landowners

in these countries suffered a serious hit, and the Long Depression that ran from 1873 until 1896 generated pressure on European governments to protect against cheap imports.

...The primary lesson to draw from the years before 1914 is not that economic interdependence was a weak constraint on military conflict. It is that, even in a globalized economy, governments can take protectionist actions to reduce their interdependence in anticipation of future wars.

In retrospect, the 30 years of tariff hikes, trade wars, and currency conflicts that preceded 1914 were harbingers of the devastation to come. European governments did not necessarily want to ignite a war among the great powers. By reducing their interdependence, however, they made that option conceivable.

...the backlash to globalization that preceded the Great War seems to be reprised in the current moment. Indeed, there are ways in which the current moment is scarier than the pre-1914 era. Back then, the world's hegemon, the United Kingdom, acted as a brake on economic closure. In 2019, the United States is the protectionist with its foot on the accelerator. The constraints of Sino-American interdependence—what economist Larry Summers once called “the financial balance of terror”—no longer look so binding. And there are far too many hot spots—the Korean peninsula, the South China Sea, Taiwan—where the kindling seems awfully dry.

MULTIPOLARITY

We can define multipolarity as a wide distribution of power among multiple independent states. Exact equivalence of material power is not implied. What is required is the possession by several states of the capacity to coerce others to act in ways they would otherwise not, through kinetic or other means (economic sanctions, political manipulation, denial of access to essential resources, etc.). Such a distribution of power presents inherently graver challenges to peace and stability than do unipolar or bipolar power configurations,²² though of course none are safe or permanent. In brief, the greater the number of consequential actors, the greater the challenge of coordinating actions to avoid, manage, or de-escalate conflicts. Multipolarity also entails a greater potential for sudden changes in the balance of power, as one state may defect to another coalition or opt out, and as a result, the greater the degree of uncertainty experienced by all states, and the greater the plausibility of downside assumptions about the intentions and capabilities of one's adversaries. This psychology,

always present in international politics but particularly powerful in multipolarity, heightens the potential for escalation of minor conflicts, and of states launching preventive or preemptive wars. In multipolarity, states are always on edge, entertaining worst-case scenarios about actual and potential enemies, and acting on these fears—expanding their armies, introducing new weapon systems, altering doctrine to relax constraints on the use of force—in ways that reinforce the worst fears of others.

The risks inherent in multipolarity are heightened by the attendant weakening of global institutions. Even in a state-centric system, such institutions can facilitate communication and transparency, helping states to manage conflicts by reducing the potential for misperception and escalation toward war. But, as Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu argues in his chapter on the United Nations, the influence of multilateral institutions as agent and actor is clearly in decline, a result of bottom-up populist/nationalist pressures experienced in many countries, as well as the coordination problems that increase in a system of multiple great powers. As conflict resolution institutions atrophy, great powers will find themselves in “security dilemmas”²³ in which verification of a rival’s intentions is unavailable, and worst-case assumptions fill the gap created by uncertainty. And the supply of conflicts will expand as a result of growing nationalism and populism, which are premised on hostility, paranoia, and isolation, with governments seeking political legitimacy through external conflict, producing a siege mentality that deliberately cuts off communication with other states.

Finally, the transition from unipolarity (roughly 1989–2007) to multipolarity is unregulated and hazardous, as the existing superpower fears and resists challenges to its primacy from a rising power or powers, while the rising power entertains new ambitions as entitlements now within its reach. Such a “power transition” and its dangers were identified by Thucydides in explaining the Peloponnesian Wars,²⁴ by Organski (the “rear-end collision”)²⁵ during the Cold War, and recently repopularized and brought up to date by Graham Allison in predicting conflict between the US and China.²⁶

A useful, and consequential illustration of the inherent challenge of conflict management during a power transition toward multipolarity, is the weakening of the arms control regime negotiated by the US and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Despite the existential, global conflict between two nuclear armed superpowers embracing diametrically opposed world views and operating in economic isolation from each

other, the two managed to avoid worst-case outcomes. They accomplished this in part by institutionalizing verifiable limits on testing and deployment of both strategic and intermediate-range nuclear missiles. Yet as diplomatically and technically challenging as these achievements were, the introduction of a third great power, China, into this two-country calculus has proven to be a deal breaker. Unconstrained by these bilateral agreements, China has been free to build up its capability, and has taken full advantage in ramping up production and deployment of intermediate-range ground-launched cruise missiles, thus challenging the US ability to credibly guarantee the security of its allies in Asia, and greatly increasing the costs of maintaining its Asian regional hegemony. As a result, the Intermediate Nuclear Force treaty is effectively dead, and the New Start Treaty, covering strategic missiles, is due to expire next year, with no indication of any US–Russian consensus to extend it. The US has with logic indicated its interest in making these agreements trilateral; but China, with its growing power and ambition, has also logically rejected these overtures. Thus, all three great powers are entering a period of nuclear weapons competition unconstrained by the major Cold War arms control regimes. In a period of rapid advances in technology and worsening great power relations, the nuclear competition will be a defining characteristic of the next decade and beyond. This dynamic will also complicate nuclear nonproliferation efforts, as both the demand for nuclear weapons (a consequence of rising regional and global insecurity), and supply of nuclear materials and technology (a result of the weakening of the nonproliferation regime and deteriorating great power relations) will increase.

Will deterrence prevent war in a world of several nuclear weapons states, (the current nuclear powers plus South Korea, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Turkey), as it helped to do during the bipolar Cold War? Some neorealist observers view nuclear weapons proliferation as stabilizing, extending the balance of terror, and the imperative of restraint, to new nuclear weapons states with much to fight over (Saudi Arabia and Iran, for example).²⁷ Others,²⁸ examining issues of command and control of nuclear weapons deployment and use by newly acquiring states, asymmetries in doctrines, force structures, and capabilities between rivals, the perils of variable rates in transition to weapons deployment, problems of communication between states with deep mutual grievances, the heightened risk of transfer of such weapons to non-state actors, have grave doubts about the safety of a multipolar, nuclear-armed world.²⁹ We can at

least conclude that prudence dictates heightened efforts to slow the pace of proliferation, while realism requires that we face a proliferated future with eyes wide open.

The current distribution of power is not perfectly multipolar. The US still commands the world's largest economy, and its military power is unrivaled by any state or combination of states. Its population is still growing, despite a recent decline in birth rates. It enjoys extraordinary geographic advantages over its rivals, who are distant and live in far worse neighborhoods. Its economy is less dependent on foreign markets or resources. Its political system has proven—up to now—to be resilient and adaptable. Its global alliance system greatly extends its capacity to defend itself and shape the world to its liking and is still intact, despite growing doubts about America's reliability as a security guarantor. Based on these mostly material and historical criteria, continued American primacy would seem to be a good bet, if it chooses to use its power in this way.³⁰

So why multipolarity? The clearest and most frequently cited evidence for a widening distribution of global power away from American unipolarity is the narrowing gap in GDP between the US and China. The IMF's World Economic Outlook forecasts a \$0.9 trillion increase in US GDP for 2019–2020, and a \$1.3 trillion increase for China in the same period.³¹ Many who support the American primacy case argue that GDP is an imperfect measure of power, that Chinese GDP data is inflated, that its growth rates are in decline while Chinese debt is rapidly increasing, and that China does poorly on other factors that contribute to power—its low per capita GDP, its political succession challenges, its environmental crisis, its absence of any external alliance system. Yet GDP is a good place to start, as the single most useful measure and long-term predictor of power. It is from the overall economy that states extract and apply material power to leverage desired behavior from other states. It is true that robust future Chinese growth is not guaranteed, nor is its capacity to convert its wealth to power, which is a function of how well its political system works over time. But this is equally the case for the US, and considering recent political developments is not a given for either country.

As an alternative to measuring inputs—economic size, political legitimacy, technological innovation, population growth—in assessing relative power and the nature of global power distribution, we should consider outputs: what are states doing with their power? The input measures are useful, possibly predictive, but are usually deployed in the course of making a foreign policy argument, sometimes on behalf of a reassertion

of American primacy, sometimes on behalf of retrenchment. As such, their objectivity (despite their generous deployment of “data”) is open to question. What is undeniable, to any clear-eyed observer, is a real decline in American influence in the world, and a rise in the influence of other powers, which predates the Trump administration but has accelerated into America’s free fall over the last four years. This has produced a *de facto* multipolarity, whether explainable in the various measures of power—actual and latent—or not. This decline results in part from policy mistakes: a reckless squandering of material power and legitimacy in Iraq, an overabundance of caution in Syria, and now pure impulsivity. But more fundamentally, it is a product of relative decline in American capacity—political and economic—to which American leadership is adjusting haphazardly, but in the direction of retrenchment/restraint. It is highly revealing that the last two American presidents, polar opposites in intellect, temperament and values, agreed on one fundamental point: the US is overextended, and needs to retrench. The fact that neither Obama nor Trump (up to this point in his presidency) believed they had the power at their disposal to do anything else, tells us far more about the future of American power and policy—and about the emerging shape of international relations—than the power measures and comparisons made by foreign policy advocates.

Observation of recent trends in US versus Russian relative influence prompts another question: do we understand the emerging characteristics of power? Rigorously measuring and comparing the wrong parameters will get us nowhere at best and mislead us into misguided policies at worst. How often have we heard, with puzzlement, that Putin punches far above his weight? Could it be that we misunderstand what constitutes “weight” in the contemporary and emerging world? Putin may be on a high wire, and bound to come crashing down; but the fact is that Russian influence, leveraging sophisticated communications/social media/influence operations, a strong military, an agile (Putin-dominated) decision process, and taking advantage of the egregious mistakes by the West, has been advancing for over a decade, shows no sign of slowing down, and has created additional opportunities for itself in the Middle East, Europe, Asia, Latin America, the Arctic. It has done this with an economy roughly the size of Italy’s. There are few signs of a domestic political challenge to Putin. His external opponents are in disarray, and Russia’s main adversary is politically disabled from confronting the problem. He has established Russia as the Middle East power broker. He

has reached into the internal politics of his Western adversaries and influenced their leadership choices. He has invaded and absorbed the territory of neighboring states. His actions have produced deep divisions within NATO. Again, simple observation suggests multipolarity in fact, and a full explanation for this power shift awaiting future historians able to look with more objectivity at twenty-first-century elements of power.

When that history is written, surely it will emphasize the extraordinary polarization in American politics. Was multipolarity a case of others finding leverage in new sources of power, or the US underutilizing its own? The material measures suggest sufficient capacity for sustained American primacy, but with this latent capacity unavailable (as perceived, I believe correctly, by political leadership) by virtue of weakening institutions: two major parties in separate universes; a winner-take-all political mentality; deep polarization between the parties' popular bases of support; divided government, with the Presidency and the Congress often in separate and antagonistic hands; diminishing trust in the permanent government, and in the knowledge it brings to important decisions, and deepening distrust between the intelligence community and policymakers; and, in Trump's case, a chaotic policy process that lacks any strategic reference points, mis-communicates the Administration's intentions, and has proven incapable of sustained, coherent diplomacy on behalf of any explicit and consistent set of policy goals.

RISING NATIONALISM/POPULISM/AUTHORITARIANISM

The evidence for these trends is clear. Freedom House, the go-to authority on the state of global democracy, just published its annual assessment for 2020, and recorded the fourteenth consecutive year of global democratic decline and advancing authoritarianism. This dramatic deterioration includes both a weakening in democratic practice within states still deemed on balance democratic, and a shift from weak democracies to authoritarianism in others. Commitment to democratic norms and practices—freedom of speech and of the press, independent judiciaries, protection of minority rights—is in decline. The decline is evident across the global system and encompasses all major powers, from India and China, to Europe, to the US. Right-wing populist parties have assumed power, or constitute a politically significant minority, in a lengthening list of democratic states, including both new (Hungary, Poland) and established (India, the US, the UK) democracies. Nationalism,

frequently dismissed by liberal globalization advocates as a weak force when confronted by market democracies' presumed inherent superiority, has experienced a resurgence in Russia, China, the Middle East, and at home. Given the breadth and depth of right-wing populism, the raw power that promotes it—mainly Russian and American—and the disarray of its liberal opponents, this factor will weigh heavily on the future.

The major factors contributing to right-wing populism and its global spread is the subject of much discussion.³² The most straightforward explanation is rising inequality and diminished intergenerational mobility, particularly in developed countries whose labor-intensive manufacturing has been hit hardest by the globalization of capital combined with the immobility of labor. Jobs, wages, economic security, a reasonable hope that one's offspring has a shot at a better life than one's own, the erosion of social capital within economically marginalized communities, government failure to provide a decent safety net and job retraining for those battered by globalization: all have contributed to a sense of desperation and raw anger in the hollowed-out communities of formerly prosperous industrial areas. The declining life expectancy numbers³³ tell a story of immiseration: drug addiction, suicide, poor health care, and gun violence. The political expression of such conditions of life should not be surprising. Simple, extremist "solutions" become irresistible. Sectarian, racial, regional divides are strengthened, and exclusive identities are sharpened. Political entrepreneurs offering to blow up the system blamed for such conditions become credible. Those who are perceived as having benefited from the corrupt system—long-standing institutions of government, foreign countries and populations, immigrants, minorities getting a "free ride," elites—become targets of recrimination and violence. The simple solutions of course, don't work, deepening the underlying crisis, but in the process politics is poisoned. If this sounds like the US, it should, but it also describes major European countries (the UK, France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic), and could be an indication of things to come for non-Western democracies like India.

We have emphasized throughout this chapter the interaction of four structural forces in shaping the future, and this interaction is evident here as well. Is it merely coincidence that the period of democratic decline documented by Freedom House, coincides precisely with the global financial and economic crisis? Lower growth, increasing joblessness, wage stagnation, superimposed on longer-term widening of inequality and declining mobility, constitute a forbidding stress test for democratic

systems, and many continue to fail. And if we are correct about secular stagnation, the stress will continue, and authoritarianism's fourteen-year run will not be over for some time. The antidemocratic trend will gain additional impetus from the illiberal direction of globalization, with its growth suppressing protectionism, weaponization of global economic exchange, and weakening global economic institutions. Multipolarity also contributes, in several ways. The former hegemon and author of globalization's liberal structure has lost its appetite, and arguably its capacity, for leadership, and indeed has become part of the problem, succumbing to and promoting the global right-wing populist surge. It is suffering an unprecedented decline in life expectancy, and recently a decline in the birth rate, signaling a degree of rot commonly associated with a collapsing Soviet Union. While American politics may once again cohere around its liberal values and interests, the time when American leadership had the self-confidence to shape the global system in its liberal image is gone. It may build coalitions of the like-minded to launch liberal projects, but there will be too much power outside these coalitions to permit liberal globalization of the sort imagined at the end of the Cold War. In multipolarity, the values around which global politics revolve will reflect the diversity of major powers, their interests, and the norms they embrace. Convergence of norms, practices, policies is out of the question. Global collective action, even in the face of global crises, will be a long shot. To expect anything else is fantasy.

UNBRAVE NEW WORLD AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

At the outset of this chapter we described these structural forces as interacting to produce more conflict and diminished prosperity. We also predicted a world with shrinking collective capacity to address new challenges as they arise. What specifically will such a world look like? We address below three principal challenges to global problem solving over the next decade.

Interstate Conflict

In the world experienced by most readers of this volume, conflict is observed within weak states, sometimes promoted by regional competitors, by terrorist groups, or by great powers, acting through surrogates or by indirect means. Sometimes, as in Syria, this conflict spills over to

contiguous states and contributes to regional instability, and challenges other regions to respond effectively, a challenge that Europe has not met. Much of this will continue, but the global significance of such local conflicts will be greatly magnified by increasing great power conflict, which will feed—rather than manage or resolve—local instabilities and will in turn be exacerbated by them. Great powers will jockey for advantage, support their local partners, escalate preemptively. Conflicts initially confined to failing states or unstable regions will be redefined by great powers as global in scope and significance.

This tendency of states to view local conflicts in the context of a zero-sum, global struggle for power is familiar to students of the Cold War, but now with the additional challenges to collective action, expanded uncertainty and worst-case thinking associated with the power transition to multipolarity. We can easily observe increased conflict in US–China relations, as we will in US–Russia relations as future US administrations try to make up for ground lost during the Trump presidency, especially in the Middle East. We can observe it among powerful states with mutual historical grievances, now with a weakening presence of the hegemonic security guarantor and having to consider the renationalization of their defense: Japan–South Korea, Germany–France. We can observe it among historical rivals operating in rapidly changing security landscapes: India–China. We can observe it within the Middle East, as internal rivalries are appropriated by regional powers in a contest for regional dominance. We can observe it clearly in Syria, where the regime’s violent suppression of Arab Spring resistance led to all-out civil war, attracted outside support to proxy forces by aspiring regional hegemons Saudi Arabia and Iran, enabled the rise of ISIS, and eventually to great power intervention, principally by Russia. In a world of effective great power collaboration or American primacy, the Syrian civil war might have been settled through power sharing or partition, or if not, contained within Syria. The collapse of Yugoslavia, occurring during a period of US “unipolarity” and managed effectively, demonstrates the possibilities. Instead, with the US retrenching, Middle East rivals unconstrained by great powers, and great power competition rising, the Syria civil war was fed by outside powers, then metastasized into the region, and—in the form of refugee flows—into Europe, fundamentally altering European politics. Libya may be at the early stages of this scenario.

This is not the end of the Syria story. Russia has established itself as a major player in Syria and the Middle East's power broker, the indispensable country with leverage throughout the region. China is poised to reap the financial and power benefits of Syrian reconstruction. The US has just demonstrated, in its act of war against the Iranian regime, its willingness, without consultation, to put its allies' security in further jeopardy, accentuating the risks of security ties with Washington and generating added opportunities for Russia and China. The purpose here is not to critique US policy, but to point out the dramatically shifting power balance in a critical region, toward multipolarity. The dangers of such a shift will become apparent as some future US president attempts to reassert US influence in the region and finds a crowded playing field.

Can a multipolar distribution of power among several states whose interests, values, and political practices are divergent, all experiencing bottom-up nationalist pressures, all seeking advantages in the oversupply of regional instability, be made to work? I think not. Will this more dangerous world descend into direct military confrontation between great powers, and could such confrontation lead to use of nuclear weapons? Here the question becomes, what will this more dangerous world actually look like; what instruments of coercion will be available to states as technology change accelerates; how will states employ these instruments; how will deterrence work (if at all) among several states with large but unequal levels of destructive capacity, weak command, and control, disparate—or opaque—strategies and simmering rivalries; can conflict management work in a world of weak institutions? The collapse of the Cold War era nuclear arms control regime, the threat to the Non-Proliferation Treaty represented by the demise of the JCPOA, and multiple indications of an accelerating nuclear arms race among the three principle powers, augurs badly. Given the structural forces at play, and without predicting the worst, we are indeed entering perilous times.

Global Poverty and Inequality

Despite the challenges of volatility and disruptive change inherent in globalization, the world under American liberal leadership has managed a dramatic reduction of extreme poverty. According to World Bank estimates, in 2015, 10 percent of the world's population lived on less than \$1.90 a day, down from nearly 36 percent in 1990.³⁴ In fact, as of September 2018, half the world is now middle class or wealthier.³⁵ The uneven success of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) exemplifies this achievement, and demonstrates what is possible when open markets are managed through strong global institutions, effective leadership and interstate collaboration. What this liberal hegemonic system did not achieve, however, was a fair distribution of the gains from globalization within states, and among those states that for various reasons were not full participants in this system.

This record of partial achievement leaves us with a full agenda for the next fifteen years, but without the hegemonic leadership, strong institutions, ascendant liberalism or robust global growth that enabled previous gains. There are powerful reasons to question the sustainability of these poverty reduction gains, leading to doubts about the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, which have replaced the MDGs as global development targets.³⁶ (See Jens Rudbeck's chapter and Sidhu's UN chapter for SDGs). Skeptics have pointed to slowing global growth, specifically in China, whose demand for imported commodities was a major factor in developing country growth and job creation; growing protectionism in developed country markets, fueled by bottom-up forces of nationalism, and from top-down by a weakened global trading regime and increased geopolitical rivalry; the effects of accelerating climate change on agriculture, migration and communal conflict in poor countries; and the growth burst among poor countries from the rapid transition to more efficient use of resources, a transition that is now slowing down.³⁷

Perhaps the greatest concern in this scenario is a general deterioration in the developing country foreign investment climate. Foreign direct investment (FDI) has been a major contributor to growth, job creation, and poverty alleviation among poor countries. It has incentivized growth-friendly policies, reduced corruption, introduced technology and effective management practices, and linked poor countries to foreign markets through global supply chains.³⁸ It has stimulated growth of indigenous manufacturing and service companies to supply new foreign investments.

It has been the major cause of economic convergence between rich and poor countries. From 2000 to 2009, developing economies' growth rates were more than four percentage points higher than those of rich countries, pushing their share of global output from just over a third to nearly half.³⁹ However, FDI flows into poor countries are imperiled by the structural forces discussed here. Political instability arising from slower growth and environmental stress will increase investors' perception of higher risk, reinforcing their developed country bias. Protectionism among developed countries will threaten the global market access upon which manufacturing investment in developing countries is premised, causing firms to pare back their global supply chains. As companies retrench from direct investment in poor countries, the appeal to those countries of Chinese debt financed infrastructure projects, under the Belt-Road Initiative with little or no conditionality, but at the risk of "debt traps," will increase.

Global Warming

The question posed at the beginning of this section is whether the international system, evolving toward multipolarity and rising nationalism, will find the collective political capital to confront challenges as they arise. Global warming is the mother of all challenges, and the weakness in the system's capacity to respond is clear. With the two major political/economic powers and greenhouse gas emitters locked in deepening geopolitical conflict (and with one of them locked in climate change denial, possibly through 2024), the chances of significantly slowing global warming or even ameliorating its effects are very slim. We are reduced to the default option, nation-specific adaptation to climate change, which will impose rising human, political and economic costs on all, and will widen the gap between rich countries with adaptive capacity (of varying degrees), and the poor, who will suffer deteriorating economic, political, and social conditions. (For a contrary, optimistic view see Michael Shank's chapter, which credits new actors—like cities—as playing a more constructive role in climate mitigation.) This would bring to a close liberal globalization's greatest achievement; the raising of 1.1 billion people out of extreme poverty since 1990,⁴⁰ with all its associated gains in quality of life (in the WHO Africa region, for example, life expectancy rose by 10.3 years between 2000 and 2016, driven mainly by improvements in child survival and expanded access to antiretrovirals for treatment of HIV).⁴¹

Several forces are at work here. The problem itself is graver—in magnitude and in rate of worsening—than predicted by climate scientists. The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the major source of information on global warming, has consistently underpredicted the rate of climate deterioration. This holds true even for its “worst-case scenarios,” meaning that what was meant as a wake-up call has in fact reinforced complacency.⁴² (see Michael Shank’s chapter for further discussion of climate change). The IPCC, in its 2019 report, has tried to undo the damage by emphasizing the acceleration in the rate of warming and its effects, the only partially understood dynamic of climate change, and—given wide uncertainty—the possibility of unpleasant surprises yet to come. This strengthens the scientific case for urgency—to both severely limit greenhouse gas emissions, and to increase investment in ameliorating the effects.

Unfortunately, the crisis comes at a moment when the climate for collective action is ice cold. Geopolitical competition incentivizes states to out produce each other, regardless of the environmental effects. Multipolarity complicates collective action. Economic stagnation mandates job creation, making regulation politically toxic. Bottom-up nationalism/populism causes states to pursue “relative gains,” meaning that if the nation is seen as gaining in a no-holds-barred economic competition with others, the negative environmental effects can be tolerated. A post-Trump presidency would help, with the US rejoining the Paris Agreement, and lending its weight to tighter regulation, increased R and D, and stronger economic incentives to reduce carbon emissions. Keep in mind, however, that President Obama was fully behind such efforts, but in a deeply polarized America was unable to implement measures needed to fulfill the Paris obligations through legislation, and his executive orders to do this were swiftly overturned by Trump.

CONCLUSION

It may be tempting to hope that post-Trump, the US can regain its global leadership and exert its considerable power in a liberal direction, but with enough self-awareness of its relative decline to share responsibility with others. This was, I believe, the broad direction of the Obama strategy, evidenced by the JCPOA and the Trans-Pacific Partnership: liberal, collective solutions to global problems, as US dominance receded.

This would constitute an optimistic scenario, and it confronts two major problems: can US internal politics support it (can, for example, the country *legislate* controls on carbon, essential for the global credibility and durability of such commitments); and is the world ready to reengage with American leadership, given the damage to its reputation and the structural forces discussed in this chapter?

My educated guess is no, on both counts. The rot within is extensive, the concrete evidence clear in the economic inequality/immobility numbers, the life expectancy numbers, the deep political polarization, between the two major parties, between regions, between cities and rural areas. We are in fact a long way from fitness for global leadership, and the recognition of this by others will accelerate the decline of American influence. The rest of the world is well on its way toward adjusting to post-American hegemony, some by renationalizing their defense, or by cutting deals with adversaries, by building new alliances or by seizing new opportunities for influence in the vacuum left by American retrenchment. The evidence for this will accumulate. Observe the current and emerging Middle East, where all these post-hegemonic strategies are visible.

If we discount the possibility of restored American primacy, we are left with the four structural forces, the problems—of power transition, economic growth, conflict resolution—inherent in their interaction, and the suboptimal way the emerging world will react to new challenges, of climate change most importantly.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What global forces will intersect to define the next fifteen years?
2. What is a multipolar distribution of power, and what challenges does this pose for international relations?
3. What is the meaning of ‘illiberal’ globalization?
4. What are the causes and consequences of rising populism?
5. How do you imagine the US-China relationship will evolve over the next decade?
6. What are the prospects for the elimination of extreme poverty, as called for by the Sustainable Development Goals?

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CHAPTER 3

A Kaleidoscopic Future: The State and Assemblages in Global Affairs

Christopher Ankersen

Global Affairs takes as its object of analysis the entirety of the planet, the sum of all human activity across such fields as politics, economics, law, and development. While the effects observed occur at scale, the component parts (both those responsible for taking action and those upon whom action is taken) are smaller. That is, the affairs of the globe are not undertaken by the globe acting as one; instead, subordinate elements (individuals, states, non-state actors, alliances, say) work to produce system-level outcomes. If we believe that those elements are static, we might say that the picture of global affairs today resembles that of a stained glass window. Individual pieces of glass are meticulously trimmed, artfully placed together, and held in place by a rigid frame. Movement is neither desirable, nor possible; the resultant image is fixed. In this way, change can only take place through destruction, one of the three possibilities laid out in the Introduction to this volume. If we look at the history of previous world orders in global affairs, we might appreciate

C. Ankersen (✉)

Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University,
New York, NY, USA

e-mail: christopher.ankersen@nyu.edu

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this analogy. For instance, the window that was the League of Nations broke into pieces in the run up to the Second World War, later replaced by the tableau that came to be called the Post-War, or Liberal International, Order.

However, this is not the only way to see the world. We might see Global Affairs as an image produced by a kaleidoscope: a captivating, yet contingent, picture formed by a plethora of smaller components, coming together—temporarily—to create a pattern. While major change is an impossibility in a window, it is a hallmark of a kaleidoscope. That change, though, exists at the level of the image, not the components. Moreover, a kaleidoscope does not contain a homogeneous array of pieces; rather, it uses a wide variety of shapes, sizes, and colors to form intricate combinations. And so as we examine these kaleidoscopic assemblages, we need to focus on two aspects: the component pieces and the gestalt patterns they form. Here I can be unambiguous: the most important component in future global affairs will remain the state. It will continue to act as the *sine qua non* of international life.¹ However, we must abandon the myth that all states are the same, or even equal, or have the same dreams for the future. Moreover, we cannot deduce that simply because states remain important that the patterns they create will also remain static. Instead of treating the state as a static unit, we should ask ourselves what purpose it might serve in the future. What role will it play? What goals will it pursue? What strategies will it employ? What arrangements will it become part of?

If our focus is solely on the state, the future of the Global Affairs will be dominated by questions related to wondering who will be the rulers and who will be the rivals in the future. And while these questions are important, they are somewhat anodyne. The names and faces may change, and the frequency and speed of transition may rise and fall, but the pattern (rise, rule, retrench, repeat) is well inscribed in history. If we expand our focus to include not only the state, but the coalitions, alliances, and international organizations created by them, we can observe more elliptical movements. Will the groupings of states extant today—many of which are artifacts of the immediate post-1945 moment—remain relevant? Or will states look to change alignment or create new groupings, in order to further their interests?

For a long time, the scholarly view of the planet has been decidedly centered on Western experience. Increasingly, though, that perspective is being understood as partial, at best, and problematic, at worst. I argue that the future of global affairs will be somewhat more inclusive; that is to say that more voices will join the choir. Put another way, while we

should continue to examine the state, we should not assume that it exists in some generic, universal form. The reality is that there are powerful states and there are weak states; there are states wedded to the idea of furthering the welfare of their citizens and there are states that have been hijacked by kleptocratic regimes and individuals.

I argue that, far from an era marked by a harmonious end of history, the future will be cacophonous, with some actors joining and rejoining with others to sing different songs, or the same song, perhaps in a different key and at a different tempo. As is becoming clear now, identity is not what “other people” do. The West itself is coming to the realization that there is not a common score to be followed. Many people—ordinary and elite alike—have radical visions of themselves, their place in the world, and how their country and economy should be governed. While there will be no clash of civilizations, there will not be a concert of nations either, or at least not a universal one.

This chapter will begin with an examination of the state, then discuss the kinds of patterns and interrelations the state will play in the future, and conclude with a description of what this means for global affairs. In summary, we can see that disruption and discontinuity are all on the cards.

THE STATE OF THE STATE: DYNAMIC BUT ENDURING

Regardless of the starting point one uses, the state plays a vital, central role in contemporary global affairs.² Currently there are 193 states recognized as part of the United Nations, with dozens of other candidates waiting in the wings.³ This represents a fourfold increase since 1945, with approximately 40 states coming into existence since 1990 alone. With one exception, states alone are the holders of sovereignty, the ability to act and be treated as independent, equal participants in global affairs.⁴ Indeed, those fighting civil wars or seeking independence often aspire to become states, precisely so that they may be granted these rights.⁵ Statehood has its privileges and forms the solid core of international relations today. By way of proving this point, analysts often measure the power and importance of non-state actors (be they NGOs, companies, insurgencies, or terrorist groups) in terms of how closely they resemble states.⁶

Of course, it is evident that states have never been the *only* actors in global affairs. Religious movements (the Catholic Church, Islam), ideas (nationalism, liberation), individuals (Osama Bin Laden), and chartered companies (The East India Company, Standard Oil) have all left their

mark. So, then, what can explain the focus on the state as the prime actor in global affairs? The first is that states (and their leaders and governments) want it that way. States have long represented an effective means of concentrating and instrumentalizing social power⁷ and using that power in the pursuit of accumulating resources.⁸ The current world order, created in the aftermath of the Second World War, was made by states, for states, with states in mind. The United Nations' Charter may begin with "We, the Peoples" but it was written, adopted, and funded by "We, the States." States, and their particular perspectives, have remained significant, if not *primes inter pares*, in terms of not only international diplomacy, but also economics, and development.⁹ They alone control which entities can be recognized as states, who can sit at the United Nations, and to whom taxes and tariffs should be rendered. The proverbial foxes are in charge of the henhouse and they like it that way.

The second reason states have maintained their place within global affairs is due to analytical lacunae on the part of many scholars. Preference, for the most part, has been given to structural conditions as the context for, and even the cause of, competition or cooperation between states.¹⁰ Scholars prefer to focus on what Waltz refers to as the "Third Image" when examining global affairs: they look intently at the system, and at the expense of the unit actors within it.¹¹ In an apparent paradox, the centrality of the state has been paralleled by the absence of mainstream analysis of it: it is largely a black box that competes or cooperates in an anarchical environment, aiming only ever to survive and prosper. States are, at once, the prime movers in global affairs *and* simultaneously powerless against the immutable laws of the universe. Clearly such an intellectual position is unsustainable.¹² David Lake reminds to guard against "assuming that [the state's] role in the real world and in our theories is constant."¹³

That said, the demise or retreat of the state has long been foretold within academic circles. Beginning as a murmur in the 1970s and reaching a crescendo after the end of the Cold War, observers have described and/or wished for the end of the state as the primary actor in international affairs.¹⁴ As Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane point out, "[a] good deal of intersocietal discourse, with significant political importance, takes place without governmental control."¹⁵ Susan Strange, writing in the 1990s, noted that far from occupying a commanding and solitary position on the world stage, "[g]overnments must now bargain not only with other governments, but also with firms...while firms now bargain

both with governments and with one another.”¹⁶ Both these phenomena have only increased in the decades since they were published.

Part of the reason for that has been the impact of globalization, regarded by some as an inherently contra-state process, one that was believed to be “an extension of the idea of liberty and as a chance to renew the fundamental rights of the individual” and a force that could place “limits on the power of government.”¹⁷ Some, like McKinsey business strategist Kenechi Ohmae, believed that the increased flow of information and money around the world indeed signaled—as the title of his 1995 book proclaimed—*The End of the Nation State*.¹⁸ Put less breathlessly, Linda Weiss was on solid ground when she claimed that “the state is no longer in vogue.”¹⁹ Lest one think that these sentiments belong to an earlier age, it is possible to detect their persistence even now.²⁰

Such pronouncements were commonplace, but not the only view. Some saw globalization as a state *modifying* process, not a state *nullifying* one. Ian Clark posits “that the state occupies a middle ground between the internal and external and is itself both shaped by and formative of the process of globalization.”²¹ Others note the asymmetry of globalization, remarking how both it and the state were never universally consistent, favoring the West and the North at the expense of the global South.²² (For an opposing view, especially in terms of how globalization spurred South–South cooperation, see Waheguru Pal Sidhu’s chapter in this volume). While this is assuredly true, it is worth noting, as Michael Mann does, that among all the other things that have been globalized, so has the state.²³ The notion of sovereign, territorial units has spread across the planet, eclipsing other forms of political organization.

At the same time, though, globalization was joined by the rise of both the sub- and supra-national entity, both vying, some believe, to undermine the power of the state. Groups such as Al Qaeda or ISIS’s caliphate challenge state effectiveness and weakened claims of sovereignty. If these non-state actors could act freely, inflict casualties, and even occupy and administer territory, what did they say about the centrality and omnipotence of the state? Also working at the substate level have been cities and provinces. National policies have in many instances been thwarted by actions taken by cities acting on the global stage. The most prominent examples, of course, can be seen in the context of climate change, as is discussed in Michael Shank’s chapter in this volume. Similarly, the EU, the IMF, and the International Criminal Court appeared to be able to defang

the state, working from above, hemming in, cajoling, or otherwise influencing the autonomy of the fundamental building block of global affairs. By 2015, states around the world were under siege on multiple fronts.

While, as noted above, it is impossible to speak of a “universal state,” today we see that the many states are choosing to fight back, even if only by conducting a rearguard action. The so-called “sovereignty first” movement has become popular in several states around the world, with proponents ranging from China (“Hong Kongers crossed a red-line, Xi warns”²⁴), to Brazil (“The Amazon is ours!”²⁵), to Britain (“Take Back Control!”). In the United States, Donald Trump campaigned successfully on a ticket that decried the “false song of globalism.” He made his position clear when he said “[t]he nation-state remains the true foundation of happiness and harmony. I am skeptical of international unions that tie us up and bring America down. And under my administration, we will never enter America into any agreement that reduces our ability to control our own affairs.”²⁶ Since his term in office began in 2017, President Trump has largely kept to his word, invoking “America First” not only as a slogan, but as a blueprint for foreign policy decisions, whether they are related to trade arrangements or support for the United Nations.²⁷ Observers are divided as to whether these moves represent cynical elite manipulation of the electorate or are a manifestation of the power of a frustrated populace.²⁸ There are likely many contributing factors, ranging from disenchantment on the part of those who believe that globalization has not benefited them, to the realization, pointed out long ago by Hedley Bull, that as bad as the state may be, alternatives have so far not proven to be panacea either: “Violence, economic injustice, and disharmony between man and nature have a longer history than the modern state.”²⁹ But, all that aside, it is clear that the state is back as a vehicle, if not the only engine, for action in global affairs.

This resurgence, however, should not lull us into thinking that the future will be business as usual, with unitary states firmly in charge and homogenous in function and composition. It is not now, nor has it ever been, the case that “a state is a state is a state.” It is also important to point out that there may well now be challenges, such as global heating or cybercrime, that are beyond the ability of single states to solve, and that pushing for a state-centric approach in light of this is “fragmented” and “dysfunctional.”³⁰ Sadly, so far this has not altered the faith that many have in the advantages that a statist approach brings to world politics. Even more tragically, it is unlikely to do so in the near future, either.

We can see in the present the seeds of the future. Specifically, we can observe that many states are choosing to adopt one or more of three options. First, some states are increasing and consolidating their sovereign prerogatives. States around the world are imposing tariffs, closing their borders, leaving political unions, exploiting the natural resources within their borders, and using coercion to discipline their citizens and others (which often amounts to flagrant human rights abuses, whether against Rohingya, Uighurs, or Latin American migrants.)³¹

The second track is to seek out unilateral or bilateral strategies, rather than multilateral fora to achieve their objectives. US President Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord was the most visible indication of this, but it has been accompanied by other similar actions, including leaving the Trans-Pacific Partnership, threatening to leave the Universal Postal Union, and renegotiating (and renaming) the North American Free Trade Agreement. Rather than creating a truly multilateral system, China, too, has designed their Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a "hub and spoke" arrangement made up of a series of case by case bilateral agreements between Beijing and the participating states.³² What is more, states are using other states to achieve their goals. China using Greece (a state that they helped bail out financially when other terms seemed untenable) to advance their position amongst the European Union (EU)³³ or Turkey attempting to improve its maritime claims in the Mediterranean by sealing a deal with Libya are examples of this "state to state" strategy.³⁴

The third and perhaps most startling track states are pursuing is to outsource many of their foreign policy objectives to sub- or non-state agents, be they arms-length commercial companies (such as Huawei), plausibly deniable proxies (such as Russia's use of Little Green Men in their campaign in eastern Ukraine or China's use of armed "maritime militias" in the South China Sea), or reliant, though not necessarily reliable, allies (such as Pakistan's support for the Taliban in Afghanistan).

An interesting inversion of this trend actually helps cement the centrality of states. Non-state actors—individuals, civil society organizations, and commercial firms—are clearly important actors in global affairs. Energy companies and space firms have capacities which outstrip those of several states, making and spending money—and providing services—that only states could have conceived of a few decades ago. Coalitions of NGOs and the Red Cross movement have banded together and are driving a global campaign to outlaw autonomous weapons' systems.

A teenage Swede has captured the world's imagination as a climate champion. What ties these disparate actors together is their reliance on states to provide the legal and other means necessary to enable their goals. As out of this world as SpaceX may be, it relies on domestic tax structures, as well as a state-funded space program, for its success. The Campaign to Stop Killer Robots does not act independently; it is not made up of an army of Sarah Connors defeating Terminators. Instead, building on the model of the anti-landmine treaty of 1997, it requires states to draft, sign, and ratify a binding convention. Greta Thunberg's influence is heartfelt, powerful, and widespread, but as she herself has said, without state action, her exhortations are useless.³⁵ While many believe individual actions (such as reducing consumption and voting) are key to addressing the climate emergency facing the planet, there is evidence to suggest that in order to reach the scale that is needed in time to make a difference will take government, and indeed state, action.³⁶ Even where states are not the initiators or drivers of change, they are still the required change actor in global affairs.

What does this mean? In short, it means that not only is the state back, but that it will continue to undertake all the kinds of things it has in the past. Unlike the sterile models populated by billiard balls or thick interdependencies, the future will likely see states at the center of a tangled, complicated, confusing, and complex set of initiatives, challenges, responses, and coping mechanisms. This will require that Global Affairs is up to the task of not only mapping this mess, but helping to bring understanding to it.

Before we progress, it is worth stating that while I believe the state will endure as the fundamental unit of global affairs, this does not amount to an endorsement of what the state represents. For instance, while many see the state as the nexus of security, it cannot be ignored that for many around the world, the state itself represents a threat and a source of profound insecurity.³⁷ This seeming paradox exists in several aspects simultaneously. The state has been a vehicle for the advancement of human rights, enacting laws, both domestic and international, that recognize and provide at least a modicum of protection for individuals. At the same time, though, as J. Ann Tickner points out, "international politics has always been a gendered activity in the modern state system."³⁸ Furthermore, just because the state endures, does not mean that it is equal to the kinds of challenges we will face in the future. As we will see, the ways in which states are working together is changing. The degree

to which those changes will be positive or negative will depend to a large degree on the intentions and the objectives of states, regardless of whether we measure those by material or ideational metrics.³⁹

THE WEST WAS ONE: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO END AN ERA?

Within global affairs there are a number of key dates: 1648 signifies the birth of the state system; 1919 marks the formal beginning of the study of something labeled International Relations; 1945 is Janus-faced standing astride the end of the Second World War and the start of US hegemony; 1989 denotes the end of the Cold War. Future historians might well add 2016 to that list and use it as a shorthand for the end of the so-called liberal international order.⁴⁰ No date is perfect: declines are often gradual affairs and calendars imprecise instruments. Hence, it was possible for some observers to spot the signs early on.⁴¹ But, in any case, by early 2017 the nail was definitively in the coffin, delivered by the Russian foreign minister in a speech to the Munich Security Conference. “The historic era that could be called the post-Cold War order has come to an end,” Sergey Lavrov intoned.⁴² Adding to this feeling that the current order is passing, we can point to the death of the global trade regime as effectively occurring in December 2019, when the World Trade Organization’s appellate organ ceased to function, owing to a US veto over nominees on the basis that the body had too much power of member states. As an observer remarked, “This means, in essence, that the gold standard for dispute resolution in the global economy has ceased to exist.”⁴³ If this is so, we are seeing an end to both the pillars of the so-called liberal global order: the distinctly interdependent architectures for security and prosperity created in the wake of the bipolar Cold War.

If true, this would represent a significant discontinuity—if not destruction—in global affairs, and certainly be seen as cause for pause, if not outright alarm. Pining for what is lost, though, should not occupy much of our time. Instead, we need to figure out what is now in store. Acharya and Buzan believe that what comes next “is probably not *post-Westphalian*, because the core package of sovereignty, territoriality and nationalism looks well placed to survive and prosper. What it will unquestionably be is *post-Western*, not in the sense that the West will disappear as Rome did, but that it will become just one among several centers

of wealth, power and cultural authority.”⁴⁴ (For further discussion on multipolarity, see Michael Oppenheimer’s chapter in this volume.)

What happened to precipitate such a significant shift? Some believe that misinformation, and even disinformation, are to blame.⁴⁵ Others highlight that a combination of relative resource growth and a decline in moral authority lie at the heart of the change.⁴⁶ French President Emmanuel Macron believes that the most recent manifestation of the West has become too reliant on the leadership of the United States; in its shadow, the other countries of the Occident turned passive. Now that America has turned its focus away from the collective project, “there is a large risk that, in time, geopolitically we disappear, or in any case that we are no longer masters of our own destiny.”⁴⁷ While this sounds dramatic, it is perhaps not surprising coming from the leader of France, a country that, even in the more self-assured era of the West opted out of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s tightest strictures. Even the solidarity of September 11, 2001 changed rapidly: the spirit of “nous sommes tous américains”⁴⁸ culminated in France sitting out of the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

So what are we to make of this? What could a non-Western, or even a non-liberal, world look like? Some, like Lavrov believe we should be looking for “a post-West world order...in which each country develops its own sovereignty within the framework of international law, and will strive to balance their own national interests with those of their partners, with respect for each country’s cultural, historical and civilisational identity.”⁴⁹ Indeed just such a “multiplex world” is what Acharya believes we are seeing at what he labels “the end of the American World Order”: if one doesn’t like what is on offer in any one theater, one is free to choose what’s playing somewhere else, or even to produce and screen an offering of one’s own.⁵⁰ Others are not so sure: “now that we are reaching the end of the era of Western domination of world history, it may not be so wise to continue policies that belonged to a different era.”⁵¹ Kishore Mahbubani suggests modifications to the current system, such as strengthening the UN General Assembly and energizing the G-20, rather than abandoning what he regards as the good or useful pieces of post-1945 order.

From the perspective of global affairs, the future will be an amalgam of both of these positions. There will be neither a radical departure from the preexisting international system, nor a simple “fine tuning” of what is currently in place. We will witness a discontinuity. The normative position held by the West and America in particular has faded and will continue to do so. What is important to note, though, is that it is not being

replaced by a different normative position, but rather by the absence of one. Lavrov does not want to impose a Russian vision on the globe, he merely wants the Western one diluted, or better yet, deleted.⁵² Similarly, while Xi Jinping is clear about presenting an unambiguous world view for the Communist Party and for China, he is less interested in taking the necessary steps to force the rest of the world, or even Asia (with the obvious exceptions of Taiwan and the South China Sea), to adopt it. What participants in the BRI are gaining is not a world view, but rather the space to pursue their own, as long as they do not impinge on China's interests. Besides, it is not clear what an "international order with Chinese characteristics" would look like. Chinese scholars are much more likely to identify their approach to IR as Realist than are their American counterparts.⁵³ Chinese defense thinkers reference Carl von Clausewitz, J.F.C. Fuller, George Kennan, and Fernand Braudel more than they do Sun Tzu.⁵⁴

The choice of world order is not limited to one between an American or a Chinese version. Some stump for other models of regional, if not, world order. An Indo-Russian order for Asia, "unlike the American and Chinese versions, is neither inspired by antagonism toward any particular country nor achieved through the violation of international law or trade practices. Moreover, the third order is reflective of the geopolitical realities in the region, based on a multi-polar, rules-based, mutually beneficial framework."⁵⁵ Japan's concept of a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' mentions infrastructure investment and confidence building measures, but is notably devoid of any concerns for democracy or human rights.⁵⁶ It bears repeating here that the most salient characteristic common to all of these visions is that they are partial, rather than totalizing. There appears to be little appetite to replace one universal script with another.

In this way, we are unlikely to see the near future as a struggle for global dominance. America's resources are not in such decline that it is powerless; far from it. Rather than a race to be the next global hegemon, the future will see continued fragmentation and perhaps even the establishment of de facto "spheres of influence." If "America First" remains the stated policy of the United States, this opens up opportunities for others to pursue similarly selfish ends. While recent authors may portray world politics as the relentless replacement of one chief power by another,⁵⁷ the actual options are much more diverse than a "cut and paste" of the past 75 years.⁵⁸ Furthermore, we must move beyond projecting visions of the past onto the future, assuming the persistence of patterns, assigning roles

to others as if they were merely bit players. As Subrahmanyam Jaishankar recently retorted, “I find the idea of being someone else’s pawn in some ‘Great Game’ terribly condescending. I certainly don’t plan to play the counterweight to other people. I’m in it because of my own ambitions.”⁵⁹ India is not alone in wanting an increased role in the management of future global affairs.

A KALEIDOSCOPIC FUTURE, BUT NO ENDURING IMAGE?

Given, then, this plurality of views, what can we expect in the future? What might global affairs look like in the next turn of the kaleidoscope’s cylinder? While the death of globalization is much touted these days, I argue that this is misdirected. Globalization ebbs and flows and produces both gains and losses. Globalization will continue in the future, but will take a less cosmopolitan tone than is currently the case.⁶⁰ What that will look like in concrete terms is an even more pronounced state-first approach. Global affairs will be increasingly multipolar but decreasingly multilateral. Instead of investments in comprehensive institutions (like the UN or the WTO), we will see an increased reliance and preference for unilateral, bilateral, and plurilateral arrangements. Rather than compacts founded on common values (as NATO purports to be) we shall see coalitions held together only by common interest. As the Indian minister of External Affairs proclaimed, “Comfort is the new commitment.”⁶¹ In keeping with this, we will see a patch work of arrangements, changing with geography as well as issue. In some areas (such as Southeast Asia) we will see a hub and spoke system (with China as the hub) sit alongside the regional arrangement that is ASEAN. The line between hub and spoke plurilateralism and a return to a tributary system is already blurring. We have seen an increasingly transactional approach to diplomacy, not only from China (Sri Lanka learned to its chagrin what happens when “no-strings attached” loans are not repaid)⁶² but also from the United States (President Trump’s claim that he made Saudi Arabia pay for the deployment of American service personnel is most likely false, but may portend a transition to this kind of approach in the future).⁶³

Multilateralism will not disappear altogether, or not at first. So-called middle powers, those who are excluded from the club of major powers able to command a place as a hub to someone else’s spoke, will continue to turn to the United Nations as a means of furthering their own interests and values. Indeed, many observers have pinned their hopes for

a revitalized multilateralism on middle power states.⁶⁴ These countries (traditional middle powers, such as Australia, Canada, Norway, Switzerland will be joined by new arrivals, such as South Korea and the United Kingdom⁶⁵) benefit from the strength in numbers that such institutions provide them. The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) is a telling example of this. A trade agreement consisting of eleven medium and small states, the Partnership aims to reduce tariffs and liberalize arrangements for the participants, accounting for approximately 14 percent of the world's GDP. However, it must be remembered that its original goal was very much to contain one strong state's—China's—potential trade dominance.⁶⁶ Moreover, one strong state—the United States—abandoned the deal, taking with it over 25 percent of global GDP. As the great powers retreat from investing in these kinds of global arrangements, the middle powers will have to pick up the slack in terms of not only participation but also financing.⁶⁷ Moreover, while they can do well to mobilize support for a range of milieu goals,⁶⁸ they will struggle to provide the necessary leadership or even capacity in some cases.

Convincing a great power to join them will depend on the particular issue and will then be hostage, as has always been the case, to the particular goals espoused by that power. It is not just the US which has gone off their commitment to the UN. Russia too has worked to stymie international efforts to provide aid to Syria, for instance.⁶⁹ In contrast, China appears to have an increasing appetite for leadership roles within the UN system. While the headlines and titles of recent reports verge on the hyperbolic, it is not inaccurate to claim that, “China is increasingly using its economic, political, and institutional power to change the global governance system from within.”⁷⁰ What is interesting to note here is that both China and the United States appear to regard these efforts, not as investments in the global governance, but a form of competition between the two states. This certainly marks a disruption from the notion of a liberal world order, and has been regarded by some as a return to some of the characteristics of the Cold War.⁷¹

Multilateral arrangements will not only suffer from withdrawals (and it must be remembered that it was withdrawals that ultimately doomed the League of Nations) but also of “zombie membership.” While a retreat by the Americans may be debilitating, the lingering presence of Turkey in NATO is likely to be equally paralyzing. Neither fully in, nor wholly out of the Alliance, Ankara will have a chilling—if not a spoiling—effect on

NATO's ability to act in unison. As promising as collective arrangements are, the reality will be that they are only able to move at the speed of their slowest member. States act as both engine and brake to these multilateral vehicles.

The presence of such an array of different and differing arrangements will lead to situations of competing, or at least "passive aggressive co-existence" among several organizations. Having the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank as options will allow certain states to "shop around" for the best deal for them, undermining any chance at establishing or maintaining a global approach to rules-based development. This will likely lead to even fewer normative strings attached to loans, and less conditionality in terms of global finance and development.

While these new more dynamic, seemingly come-as-you-are arrangements will be more inclusive, there will still be states that are not accommodated. The notion of a rogue state will not disappear; indeed, given the range of choices available to countries like Iran, North Korea, and Syria, coupled with a reduction in the solidarity among powers willing to do anything about their behavior, the world will have to rely on temporary balance of power and coalitional efforts to deal with these things even more than is the case today.

The end result of this is that global challenges will not be tackled effectively. Already a third of the way to the deadline, we can see that "we are off track for meeting many of the [sustainable development] goals by 2030."⁷² Sadly, but predictably, this also means that a climate disaster will not be averted. The rapid loss of glacier coverage and Arctic sea ice, as well as the catastrophic brush fires in Australia, are an indicator that the danger of climate change is not only real, but already upon us. As we have seen in Madrid (at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Twenty-Fifth Conference of the Parties, known as COP25), even the very sovereign-friendly voluntary arrangements introduced in the Paris Agreement are insufficient to galvanize real action.⁷³ As depressing as it may be, the only silver lining that can be clung to is that some manifestation of the climate emergency will shock states out of their selfish slumber and jolt them into the necessary, significant collective effort it will require to salvage some form of hospitable environment for the world.

What is more, not only will global action not be advanced, existing norms will continue to be eroded. Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 will ultimately serve as the death-knell to the norm of nonintervention, already under stress after the 2003 US invasion of Iraq. The lack of consensus over how, or even if, to punish Russia for this act of aggression, has certainly concerned states bordering the Baltic Sea.⁷⁴ But more than that, it sends worrying signals to Hong Kong and Taiwan that their days of autonomy and independence are numbered. China may have to be careful and how and when it "reincorporates" these territories, but it is no longer sure of stiff opposition from the international community. As the people of Syria and Yemen realize, to their despair, the sun appears to have set on the doctrine of Responsibility to Protect, if not discredited in theory, demonstrably defunct in practice.⁷⁵ Likewise, the peoples of Kashmir and Rakine are now more aware than ever that there are at the mercy of states, and no longer under any illusion of global protection. They, like us, will have to wait and see what image forms when the kaleidoscope next turns. For, while the near future appears to be grim, it is unlikely to be permanent.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How important is the state in global affairs currently? What are its main challengers for primacy? What are its advantages and disadvantages?
2. What poses a bigger danger to the global system: weak states or powerful states?
3. Does the world need a hegemon to remain stable?
4. How is change effected in the global system?

NOTES

1. For an extended discussion of the centrality of the state in International Relations theory, see Lake, David A. 2008. *The State and International Relations*. In *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199219322.003.0002>.
2. For discussions of the processes by which this occurred, readers may wish to consult Teschke, Benno. 2002. *The Myth of 1648: Class, Geopolitics, and the Making of Modern International Relations*. London: Verso; Wallerstein, Immanuel. 2006. *World Systems Analysis: An Introduction*.

- 4th ed. London: Duke University Press; and Acharya, Amitav and Barry Buzan. 2019. *The Making of Global International Relations: Origins and Evolution of IR at Its Centenary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Currently the UN recognizes 193 member states, and 2 observers. The CIA tracks a total of 267 states, dependent territories and other 'world entities.' See Central Intelligence Agency. 2019. *The CIA World Factbook*. Washington: CIA. Most recently, the people of Bougainville voted for independence from Papua New Guinea in a non-binding referendum, highlighting that 'being a state' is still a desirable objective.
 4. The Sovereign Order of Malta, as a result of the Concert of Europe following the deposition of Napoleon in 1815, holds sovereignty but possesses neither territory nor population. In many respects it acts like, and is accorded the status of, a state.
 5. See, for instance, Chen, Lung-chu. 2016. *The U.S.–Taiwan–China Relationship in International Law and Policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Visoka, Gëzim. 2018. *Acting Like a State: Kosovo and the Everyday Making of Statehood*. London: Routledge.
 6. See, for example, Weiss, Thomas G., et al. 2013. *The Rise of Non-State Actors in Global Governance Opportunities and Limitations*. A One Earth Future Discussion Paper; Mishali-Ram, Meirav. 2009. Powerful Actors Make a Difference: Theorizing Power Attributes of Nonstate Actors. *International Journal of Peace Studies*, 14.2: 55–82.
 7. Mann, Michael. 2012. *The Sources of Social Power: Volume I: A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 8. Tilly, Charles. 1985. War Making and State Making as Organized Crime. In *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Robert B. Evans et al. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 9. See Scott, James C. 1998. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
 10. This has taken the form of either the 'Neo-Neo Debate' or the 'Neo-Neo Synthesis', referring to the similarities in approach between Neorealist and Neoliberal International Relations Theory, particularly as studied in the US. See Jervis, Robert. 1999. Realism, Neoliberalism, and Cooperation: Understanding the Debate. *International Security*, 24.1: 42–63; and Ramos, Leonardo. 2013. Some Critical Reflections on Charles Glaser and the Neo-Neo Synthesis. *estudos internacionais*, 1.2: 319–328.
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The Empiricism Strikes Back: Strategies for Avoiding a Post-truth World

John V. Kane

For those who simply want to know “the Truth” about any given issue, these are trying times. Despite a seemingly infinite well of knowledge at our fingertips, we struggle to determine what information is real and what is “fake.” The advent of the Internet, for all its benefits, allows for even faster transmission of even less substantiated claims. From cultivating far-right politics in Sweden¹ to spreading anti-Rohingya propaganda in India,² the use of Internet to spread questionable or inaccurate information is a challenge faced by citizens and governments around the globe, with growing concern that we are collectively careening toward a “post-truth” world.³ Indeed, we are confronted on all sides with pervasive misinformation and disinformation,⁴ entertained by false beliefs,⁵ trapped inside media “echo chambers,”⁶ and perplexed by rampant conspiracy theories.⁷

An ability to critically evaluate information has, therefore, become not only an absolutely essential skill in the present era, but also a means of

J. V. Kane (✉)
Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University,
New York, NY, USA
e-mail: jvk221@nyu.edu

self-empowerment; in particular, empowerment against propagandists who privilege persuasiveness over accuracy. Yet, two formidable (and perhaps mutually reinforcing) obstacles render such self-empowerment quite difficult. First, most of us are highly motivated to believe information that accords with our worldview (or with what we *want* to be true), and to disbelieve information we would prefer *not* to be true.⁸ Second, frankly, critically evaluating information is difficult. Even assuming one possesses the requisite motivation to do so, evaluating evidence can require considerable amounts of time, effort, energy, and, as any researcher will admit, sometimes does not even lead to a conclusive outcome. In effect, the first obstacle likely *pulls us toward* fallacious reasoning, while the second *pushes us away from* sound analytical thinking. When viewed alongside the powerful incentives facing the purveyors of misleading information, this state of affairs is ominous indeed.

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the former obstacle, and make the second more tractable. Specifically, we must first appreciate the nature and consequences of the so-called *motivated reasoning* (MR), realizing that this is not an affliction that is exclusive to one kind of people—it is a global epidemic.⁹ However, merely being *aware of* our biases in consuming information is not the same as knowing how to more objectively evaluate it. Thus, the second part of the chapter aims to provide practical guidance for consuming information. The simple steps discussed below can prove useful in better assessing the legitimacy of claims that often have real consequences for our daily lives.

A PROBLEM OF MOTIVATION

We are, on a daily basis, confronted with a seemingly endless array of claims; an agglomeration of assertions. Parents, friends, teachers, politicians, news media—all make ostensibly factual statements about reality. Medication *X* is good for this; policy *Y* led to that; doing *Z* will have this result. We can refer to these as *empirical* claims insofar as they concern the state of the world *as it actually exists*. By implication, therefore, empirical claims can conceivably be investigated, precisely because we can compare what is stated against what we actually observe in reality.

We rarely encounter such claims as a “clean slate,” however. We each have our own understandings of the world, and thus our own desires to continue believing something (e.g., because it is fundamental to our own sense of self). In short, claims from without quickly run up against our motivations within.

Is it safe to assume that we can simply set these motivations aside when we encounter empirical claims? A vast array of evidence offers a resounding “No.” Rather, most of us are susceptible to so-called *motivated reasoning*, wherein our primary goal, after encountering a particular piece of information, is to arrive at a *preferred conclusion*.¹⁰ As a simple example, suppose we are inclined to support a particular political candidate. The literature on motivated reasoning would predict that we are likely to *accept positive* information, and *dismiss negative* information, about this candidate, and/or actively seek out information (e.g., from preferred information sources) that confirms what we prefer to hear (so-called “confirmation bias”).¹¹ In a very real sense, this is the exact opposite of the scientific enterprise: the “conclusion” is known at the outset, and thus all subsequent data collection, and cognitive processing of that information, is essentially a farce.

Worse still, this process can occur outside of our conscious awareness. When engaged in motivated reasoning, in other words, we do not consciously tell ourselves that we are reasoning in a biased fashion; rather, our *emotions* often precede and guide our conscious reasoning.¹²

Thus, a logical consequence of motivated reasoning is the habitual discounting of (or complete inattention to) empirical evidence, precisely because such evidence may run contrary to our preferred conclusion. Further, even when we (begrudgingly) accept an objective fact that we do not like (e.g., about economic performance during a particular politician’s tenure), our ultimate conclusion (e.g., vote choice) often *remains unchanged*. As Bisgaard¹³ argues, based upon findings from experiments conducted in both the United States and Denmark, “Sometimes, it is the acceptance of inconvenient facts that creates the cognitive dissonance necessary for fueling ...motivated reasoning.”¹⁴ In other words, we often choose to disregard facts we do not like because they cast a negative light on something we *do* like (a political group, candidate, policy, issue, etc.), but even when we have no choice but to accept these facts, we may simply then become motivated to rationalize them away, leaving our other views perfectly intact. Motivated reasoning, in other words, leads us to either dismiss inconvenient facts outright, or to make the facts fit our beliefs rather than the other way around.

Again, the central problem here is that the conclusion is essentially predetermined, and we have an endless quantity of information at our fingertips (thanks, Internet) to select from to help us justify this conclusion. It must be emphatically stressed, though, that motivated reasoning

is *not* a problem confined to one area of the world, one group of people, or one side of the political spectrum.¹⁵ For example, recent experimental research finds that, when presented with various political articles to read, Japanese citizens spend a significantly greater amount of time reading the articles that they agree with compared to those they disagree with, and that this degree of bias was similar to that of German voters (though noticeably less than American voters).¹⁶

As a second example, liberals and conservatives in the United States have *both* been shown to engage in motivated reasoning. Nisbet, Cooper, and Garret¹⁷ find that liberals were resistant to new information that conflicted with their views on hydraulic “fracking” and nuclear power, while conservatives were resistant to information about climate change and human evolution. Echoing the point above, the authors also found that both liberals and conservatives experienced more negative emotions upon being confronted with scientific information that conflicts with their existing views.¹⁸ On the issue of climate change specifically, activists on the political right have spread inaccuracies about the degree of scientific consensus on anthropogenic planetary warming,¹⁹ while activists on the political left have spread inaccuracies about the projected effects of climate change on human life.²⁰ Worse still, Frenda et al.²¹ find evidence of both liberals and conservatives reporting that they remembered events that did not actually happen. For example, conservatives were about ten percentage points more likely (than liberals) to “remember” seeing an image of former U.S. President Obama shaking hands with former Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, while liberals were roughly 20 percentage points more likely (than conservatives) to remember former U.S. President Bush vacationing with a baseball player in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. (Again, neither of these events actually happened.)

Like everyday citizens, policymakers and politicians also engage in motivated reasoning. In the United States, Bolsen et al.²² found that policy advisors were ideologically polarized in their beliefs about global warming. Similarly, in a clever study by Baekgaard et al.,²³ the researchers found that Danish city councilors exhibited clear evidence of engaging in motivated reasoning. Using a series of experiments on topics involving public versus private service provision, the authors find that these politicians’ prior beliefs on these topics were strongly predictive of whether they correctly interpreted objective information. In other words, when it came to interpreting information about how public versus private services

were performing, these politicians often saw what they wanted to see rather than what was actually there.²⁴

In short, motivated reasoning is not something that only *other* people do—in one context or another, *we all reason in a motivated fashion*. In some cases, the consequences can be fairly benign (e.g., when we feign a “debate” with ourselves about whether or not to have a second helping of our favorite dessert); but in cases involving global affairs, where we, as citizens, can impact policies, social relations, and environmental sustainability, the need to reason free of such biases and predispositions is paramount.

As noted above, often when we encounter a claim we do not want to be true, we might avoid thinking about it at all, and instead resort to simply dismissing the claim outright. This is yet another form of motivated reasoning and, indeed, we have a variety of tools to quickly employ toward this end. We can, for example, attack the source as biased and untrustworthy; we can accuse the source of hypocrisy; or we can simply raise an alternative claim, effectively changing the subject to something else we would rather be talking about (elegantly referred to in today’s parlance as “whataboutism.”²⁵)

Yet, different as they are, such devices share a common function: they *relieve us of the need to seriously consider the claim*. It must be wholeheartedly acknowledged, though, that evaluating a claim (especially an unpleasant one) is *difficult*; certainly more difficult than, for example, simply attacking the source. And yet, when we fail to seriously consider claims, we potentially sacrifice our analytical mind in the interest of entertaining a false reality.

EVALUATING CLAIMS: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

The challenge of determining “the Truth” is not only that we have strong, competing incentives to engage in motivated reasoning, but also that, quite simply, critically evaluating information is difficult: It requires time, careful thought, and can sometimes lead to more confusion than resolution. With this in mind, the following section aims to provide practical guidance for giving claims serious consideration and assessing their accuracy, as opposed to simply believing or disbelieving them based upon how they comport with our own predispositions, motivations, and world-views. For ease of exposition, this next section will occasionally reference two diametrically opposed characters: the Scientist and the Propagandist.

These two individuals differ dramatically in their objectives. The primary aim of the Scientist is to figure out the “Truth” as best it can be determined, whereas the primary aim of the Propagandist is to propagate a particular idea.

The Cardinal Rule: Beware the Motivated-Reasoning Monster!

Throughout the series of steps listed below, the motivated reasoning (MR) monster²⁶ will be eager to rear its ugly head. We must be vigilant, however, and attempt to execute these steps as though we stand to receive a reward for arriving at an accurate answer. In other words, we must always be conscious of the MR monster as well as its objective (i.e., to have us arrive at the conclusion we would prefer to be true, evidence notwithstanding). When we feel ourselves growing confident that our preferred conclusion is the correct one, it is precisely at that moment that we must muster all of our energy to battle the monster by challenging our beliefs, demanding more evidence, and playing devil’s advocate against ourselves.

On a personal note, this was my experience while reading a clever study on the validity of astrology by McGrew and McFall.²⁷ I found myself gleefully reading the results, but I soon realized that the MR monster had snuck up on me; I had let my analytical guard down because the results were so consistent with what I already believed.

One easy way in which the MR monster can undermine our critical thinking ability is when things we regard as “good” are paired with other things we regard as “good,” and/or when things we regard as bad are paired with other things we regard as bad. When such a pairing occurs, it is likely that we will be more inclined to believe a claim is true; it will just *feel* correct. For example, regardless of the quality of evidence provided, when a politician we dislike is accused of doing something bad, we will be more inclined to believe it, but when someone we like is accused of doing something bad, we will have a more difficult time believing it. I refer to this as the “Good With Good, Bad With Bad” (GWGBWB) fallacy.

As intuitive as it might be, notice that I have yet to provide any *evidence* for the GWGBWB claim. Therefore, out of respect for empiricism, I fielded a small study ($n \sim 600$) using M-Turk, a popular crowdsourcing site for fielding brief surveys.²⁸ In the study, I asked U.S. respondents to evaluate the degree to which they felt one of the following two unsupported claims were true: “Placing strict limits on welfare [i.e., government

spending on social welfare] *lowers* drug-related crime” and “Placing strict limits on welfare *increases* drug-related crime.” While “drug-related crime” is likely to be viewed negatively by virtually everyone, strict limits on welfare (e.g., cutting public spending on the poor) is likely to be viewed relatively negatively by liberals, but relatively positively by conservatives. Thus, if the GWGBWB fallacy is at work, liberals and conservatives should exhibit different patterns in terms of their belief in these unsupported claims.

Figure 4.1 displays the probability of believing each claim is true among liberals, conservatives, and (for reference) moderates. As expected, liberals and conservatives are noticeably different in terms of their likelihood of believing these unsupported claims: conservatives are twice as likely as liberals to believe that *restricting welfare* (good) *lowers crime* (also good), while liberals are twice as likely as conservatives to believe that *restricting welfare* (bad) *increases crime* (also bad).²⁹ Particularly in the

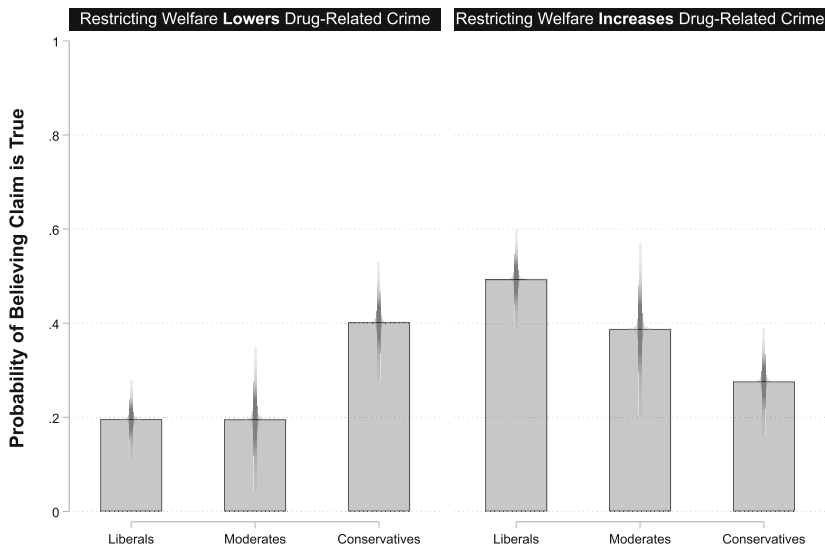


Fig. 4.1 Ideological differences in believing an unsupported claim is true (Source Author’s creation based on data collected from U.S. adults. Notes Left half of figure shows results for one claim, while right half of figure shows results for the opposite claim. Bars indicate proportion of group believing that the claim is “likely to be true.” Bars include 95% confidence intervals)

latter case, we can see that both conservatives and liberals diverge from moderates who, presumably, would be less inclined to view “restricting welfare” as either good or bad. These results reinforce the point that many of us can be, in essence, *predisposed* to believe particular claims so long as they pair things we regard as good (bad) with other things we regard as good (bad). And, consistent with the literature cited above, the pattern occurs across the political spectrum—it is not a trick that only liberals, or only conservatives, fall prey to.

What if we made people aware of their biases? Would that help to tame the MR monster? In an effort to investigate these questions, I fielded an additional study in the United States ($n \sim 500$) that was nationally representative in terms of age, race, region, and gender. Respondents were again asked to indicate the degree to which they believe the claim that “Placing strict limits on welfare *increases* drug-related crime” is true. However, half the respondents were also given the following warning: *Before answering, please note that studies have statistically shown that people tend to answer questions like these in a biased way: liberal-minded people and conservative-minded people will tend to answer based upon their own beliefs and “gut instinct” rather than based on actual scientific evidence.*

As Fig. 4.2 demonstrates, there is some modest, but encouraging, evidence that such a warning made a difference in how respondents evaluated the accuracy of the claim. First, notice that in the “Control” conditions (in which there was no warning), liberals were far more likely to believe the claim than conservatives. (This echoes the GWGBWB finding from the M-Turk study discussed above.) However, compared to liberals in “Control” condition, liberals in the “Warning” condition were roughly 11 percentage points less likely to believe the claim was true. Though modest in size, the direction of this change is exactly what we should have expected if such warnings help to tame the MR monster. Yet while we should have also expected conservatives in the “Warning” condition to have a noticeably higher probability than conservatives in the “Control” condition, the increase was only by 1 percentage point.

While the noteworthy findings here are primarily confined to liberals, the larger point is that there is some reason for hope: encouraging (at least some) people to be accurate appears to be able to lead them to more critically evaluate information.³⁰ Indeed, in the “Warning” condition, liberals and conservatives responded far more similarly than they did in the “Control” condition. With this result in mind, the following sections describe

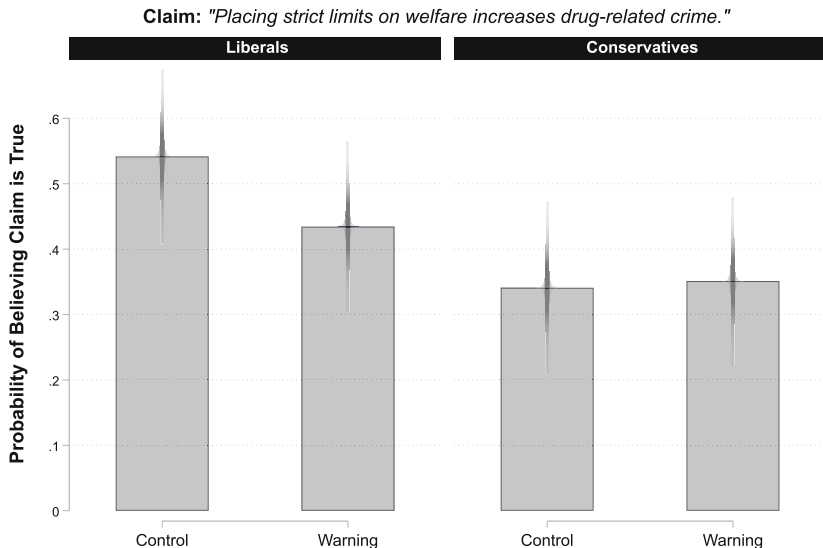


Fig. 4.2 A small, but encouraging, effect for warning of motivated reasoning bias (*Source* Author's creation based on data collected from U.S. adults. *Notes* Left half of figure shows results for liberals, while right half of figure shows results for conservatives. Bars indicate proportion of group believing that the claim ["Placing strict limits on welfare increases drug-related crime."] is "likely to be true." Bars include 95% confidence intervals)

six concrete steps for evaluating claims with the goal of arriving at an *accurate* (rather than merely an ideologically preferred) conclusion.

Step 1: Does It Actually Matter?

When encountering a particular claim that piques our interest, we first have to be brutally honest with ourselves and ask: would it actually make any difference whether this claim was true or false? If the answer is no, then there is little point in giving it serious consideration.

For example, a fiercely "pro-choice" liberal might allude to the empirical finding (in the United States and elsewhere) that legalizing abortion leads to lower crime rates.³¹ A "pro-life" conservative co-worker, however, might immediately express disbelief, perhaps because of the finding's implications (e.g., that legalizing abortion could therefore be construed as "good"). But if the liberal and conservative are being honest

with themselves, it is unlikely that this finding being true or false would make any substantive difference: even if true, the conservative will likely remain just as opposed to abortion; even if false, the liberal would likely remain just as supportive of abortion rights. This is precisely because these individuals' stances on abortion probably *do not arise from beliefs about how abortion legalization relates to crime*. Therefore, changing these beliefs is unlikely to change their stances on abortion. As such, the two can save a lot of time and energy by avoiding a debate about the merits of this finding; to them, the finding's accuracy is ultimately irrelevant.

However, if we sincerely care whether a claim is true, either for its own sake, or because its validity may actually affect our beliefs, opinions, and/or behavior, we should proceed to the next step.

Step 2: What Kind of Claim Is This?

An absolutely crucial distinction when evaluating claims is that of *normative* versus *empirical* statements.³² Normative statements are those that concern the way things *should* (or should not) be. In other words, they are referencing, either explicitly or implicitly, a world that does not actually exist but, rather, one that the speaker wishes existed. Global institutions such as the United Nations, for example, may presently advance normative claims in the hope that member states and non-state actors will adopt and practice these norms *in the future* (see Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu's chapter for norm creation). When evaluating normative claims, we can draw upon our own values, lived experiences, and worldviews to determine if we, too, desire for this nonexistent world to become realized.

Very different, however, are empirical claims. These are not statements about the way the world *should be* but, rather, the way the world *is*. By definition, therefore, empirical claims can be potentially investigated and assessed in terms of their *accuracy*, whereas normative claims cannot.

In the real world, normative claims are quite often intertwined with empirical claims; thus, the ability to separate the two is an absolutely essential skill. For example, consider the following statement that one might encounter: *Citizens should not be able to purchase an unlimited number of firearms. Restricting the number of firearms that citizens can purchase will help reduce the number of gun-related fatalities in our country.*

Here, the first sentence is inherently normative (use of the word "should" can be treated as a "red flag"). Thus, we can mentally set it

aside for the moment. The second sentence, on the other hand, is empirical: it is a statement about the *actual* relationship between the number of firearms people have and gun-related fatalities. Therefore, the second sentence is conducive to empirical investigation.

Whenever we wish to think carefully about any speech, book, news or magazine article, etc., it is crucial to separate the normative statements from the empirical statements. Doing so permits us to focus only on the empirical statements, setting aside all other statements that might otherwise distract us or arouse our passions.

Step 3: Does Evidence Exist?

Once we have separated empirical claims from normative ones (being sure to repeat *Step 1* as necessary), we can then ask a simple question: does the speaker, author, etc. provide any *evidence* for this particular empirical claim? Despite this metric's simple binary nature, by keeping her mind sharply focused on whether, *as a bare minimum*, evidence is presented, the Scientist becomes capable of holding the Propagandist to account for any empirical claims that are made. Asking this question, therefore, represents a vast improvement over, for example, believing what the Propagandist says because she is an "expert", or because what she said *feels* self-evidently true. Regardless of who makes them, empirical claims necessitate evidence.

To what extent does the public care about evidence? To investigate this, I again examine results from the M-Turk survey noted above. Each respondent was randomly selected to read one of three versions of a (fictitious) newspaper Op-Ed arguing against the notion that immigration leads to more crime. The first version made no mention of evidence to support the author's claims; the second version alluded to "numerous scientific studies"; and, lastly, the third version provided a link to a recent meta-analysis³³ conducted by Ousey and Kubrin.³⁴ This article used sophisticated quantitative and qualitative techniques to examine the relationship between immigration and crime in the United States and appeared in the prestigious *Annual Review of Criminology*.

At the time of the survey, respondents were able to read the entire study by Ousey and Kubrin; but even if they read only the study's Abstract, they would see the authors' main conclusion: "Findings indicate that, overall, the immigration-crime association is negative—but very weak." As "negative" indicates that more immigration is associated with *lower* crime, and that, regardless, the relationship is "very weak," the

Table 4.1 A limited interest in examining evidence

<i>Claim:</i> “Allowing more immigrants into a country will tend to increase crime rates”	
	<i>% of respondents clicking at least once (%)</i>
No evidence provided	33
Evidence provided	46
Estimated share that clicked on link	13

Source Author’s creation based on data collected from U.S. adults

evidence presented in this article contradicts the claim that immigration leads to higher crime.

How many respondents actually examined this scientific evidence? Having programmed the survey to record the respondents’ number of clicks while observing the article, I obtained a rough estimate of the share of respondents who clicked on the link. As Table 4.1 demonstrates, I estimate that only 13% of respondents actually clicked on the link to read the Ousey and Kubrin³⁵ study, which is quite modest.³⁶

Did providing evidence actually change beliefs about the relationship between immigration and crime? To investigate this, I later asked respondents to rate, on a five-point scale ranging from “Extremely Unlikely” to “Extremely Likely,” how likely it is that the claim, “Allowing more immigrants into a country will tend to increase crime rates” is true. In Fig. 4.3, I present the mean score on this five-point scale across the three different conditions, broken down by ideological self-identification (liberals and conservatives). Disappointingly, whether looking only at liberals or only at conservatives, the means are all quite similar, suggesting that providing evidence (versus simply stating an unsupported claim) mattered little for the claim’s believability. The results therefore suggest either an inattentiveness to, or misinterpretation of, the study’s key findings. Either way, these results remind us of a limited public interest in empirical evidence, as well as a discouragingly small role for its influence on people’s belief in a related claim.

Step 4: What Kind of Evidence Is This?

If, in the previous step, we determine that some form of evidence is shown, the next task is to assess its nature. Specifically, we want to assess

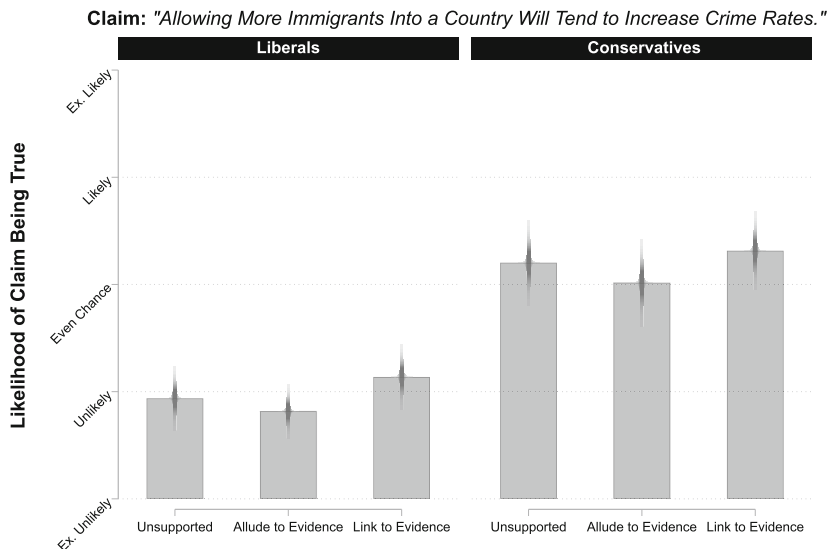


Fig. 4.3 Providing empirical evidence had no effect on perceived veracity (Source Author's creation based on data collected from U.S. adults. Note Bars indicate mean scores on a 1 ["Extremely Unlikely to Be True"] to 5 ["Extremely Likely to Be True"] scale regarding the claim ["Allowing more immigrants into a country will tend to increase crime rates."]. Bars include 95% confidence intervals)

the *strength* of the evidence presented. In this sense, evidence is best thought of as existing on a *continuum*, ranging from weak to strong.

For example, we could ask: does the evidence presented consist of one or two events (or, even worse, mere *impressions* of these events)? If so, this is relatively weak evidence: coincidences happen all the time and, thus, there may be explanations for the evidence other than the one being proffered by the speaker. Crucially, this weak evidence does not mean *no* evidence; it just means that we should be highly cautious in accepting the speaker's claim based upon this evidence alone, precisely because there exist plausible *alternative explanations* (more on this point in the remaining steps).

Better evidence would be something more rigorous, perhaps in the form of interview data or a statistical analysis involving *many* data points. If this is the case, determine whether we can view the original study (as

in the immigration example above). If not, how are we to know whether the claim is actually supported by evidence? (The Propagandist is perfectly willing to exploit the classic distinction between precision and accuracy, citing a statistic in the hopes that it sounds more “scientific,” despite the fact that the statistic may be made up, misstated, misinterpreted, or highly misleading when stated out of context.) In other words, if there is a source cited, investigate it yourself! Do not merely take the speaker’s word for what the original source says. The Propagandist, you will not be surprised to hear, may selectively discuss particular pieces of the original source, highlighting those that help her argument, but leaving out other pieces that may undermine her argument. The Scientist, alas, will not know of these cunning deeds until she inspects the original source for herself.

Further, is the source legitimate? This is not always easy to assess, but it is reasonably simple to confirm whether the source is an institution that has existed for a substantial amount of time, as well as whether the institution has any obvious political leanings. A social media post from a staunch left or right-wing activist should, on its own, be given little-to-no weight; an article from an established newspaper (that is not an Op-Ed) should be given somewhat more weight; an article published in a peer-reviewed journal should be given even more weight. (See Levitin³⁷ for terrific additional advice.)

Lastly, a tip to help you guard yourself against the MR monster: try evaluating the evidence as though the key findings/claims are *opposite from what they actually are*. By doing this, you can help ensure that your criticisms/praises for the evidence are sincere and not merely an artifact of how you feel about the end results.

Step 5: Are There Any Alternative Explanations for the Evidence?

In one of (fictional detective) Sherlock Holmes’s adventures, he explained to a detective working on the same case that, “I don’t mean to deny that the evidence is in some ways very strongly in favour of your theory. I only wish to point out that there are other theories possible.”³⁸ Here, Holmes reminds us that, just because the evidence offered is consistent with one theory, this does not preclude the possibility that the evidence is also consistent with (that is, can be *explained by*) an alternative theory. This is critical because, *to the extent that the evidence can be plausibly explained by very different argument(s) or theories, we should lower our confidence in the veracity of any one particular argument.*

For example, there are many good reasons (i.e., theories) to think that employers offering “workplace wellness programs” (WWPs) will result in more positive health outcomes for their employees. But we need more than just theory—we need evidence. On this point, a variety of studies do find a statistical relationship (i.e., a correlation) between offering a WWP (versus not) and employee health outcomes. And yet, following the Scientist’s golden rule that *correlation does not imply causation*, there exists an *alternative explanation* for these findings: the employees who elect to use WWPs tend to be more health-conscious than the employees who do not elect to use WWPs. Thus, when we compare the health of those who use, versus do not use, WWPs, *voilà!*—we find that using the WWP is “associated” with better health.³⁹ Put differently, the people who utilized the wellness program would have been healthier than their co-workers *regardless of whether the program was effective at all*.⁴⁰ The greater the extent to which we cannot rule out this alternative explanation (or others) for the evidence, we should lower our confidence in the claim that WWPs improve employee health.

There is a second critical lesson to be learned from the wellness-program research.⁴¹ Though somewhat beyond the scope of the present chapter, one helpful rule of thumb is that, when it comes to evaluating a *quantitative* study, our confidence in any study’s results should generally be higher when that study has used a randomized experiment (also known as a “randomized control trial”). Why? Because, while there are important caveats,⁴² the key strength of experiments (versus “observational studies”) is that they dramatically limit the number of *alternative explanations* for a significant finding.⁴³ And again, the fewer the number of alternative explanations that exist for a piece of evidence, the more believable the theory or claim.

Unfortunately for us, the MR monster is exceedingly dangerous throughout this step. Specifically, we will likely find it more difficult to think of alternative explanations for evidence when we do not want any to exist (because we want to interpret the evidence in a particular way), and easier to think of alternative explanations when we want some to exist (because the evidence conflicts with what we want to believe).

To avoid this trap, treat this step as a kind of game: given the evidence provided for a claim, *how many (plausible) alternative explanations can you come up with beyond the explanation provided?* The more alternative explanations you can identify, the better. And, the *more likely* each explanation is to be true, the better (implausible alternative explanations should

have little impact on our assessment of a claim's veracity). Why, to return to my astrology example above, might professional astrologers have been unable to match people's personality profiles to their corresponding birthdays?⁴⁴ For any piece of evidence, or even any peer-reviewed study, there are virtually always *multiple* explanations for the findings (including pure chance).

It should be stressed that merely identifying alternative explanations is not the same as “disproving” a claim. Rather, by identifying the alternative explanations for a piece of evidence, we can become more conscious of (1) the need for exercising caution in accepting a given claim as being the *only* explanation, and (2) the need for gathering and analyzing more evidence (especially evidence that can help rule out one or more of these alternative explanations, therein helping us get closer to “the Truth”).

For those especially committed to accuracy, there is one final exercise for this step: think through one or two *predictions* that would logically follow from the claim and then see if they have any evidence. For example, suppose you read an article arguing that the majority of citizens of a given region are rapidly losing faith in democratic institutions. Perhaps a few recent news events are marshaled in support of this claim and it seems fairly convincing. Here is how to proceed: (1) identify something, *specifically*, we should expect to observe in the near future *assuming the author's claim is true* (for example, if it is true that people are losing faith in democratic institutions, perhaps we would expect unusually low voter turnout in upcoming elections), and then (2) see if this is the case. If not, we should lower confidence in the claim; if so, we should increase confidence in the claim. Researchers refer to this kind of exercise as *hypothesis generation and testing*,⁴⁵ and the logic is extremely helpful for more rigorously evaluating claims and theories.

Step 6: Assess the Weight of Evidence & Identify Tentative Conclusions

The previous steps (and particularly *Step 5*) provide us with a straightforward process for, in effect, tallying up the strength of evidence for any particular claim (see Table 4.2 for an overview of each step). When claims have little-to-no evidence provided, and/or the evidence comes from unreliable, questionable sources, and/or the evidence can be explained by one or more plausible alternative theories, it should lead us toward assigning less weight to these claims. That is, regardless of how much we might *want* it to be true, we should be skeptical of a claim's veracity

Table 4.2 A step-by-step guide for evaluating claims

STEP 1		OUTCOME	
<i>Does its veracity even matter?</i>	Yes	No	
	Proceed to next step.	Disregard claim and move on.	
	↓	×	
STEP 2		OUTCOME	
<i>What kind of claim is this?</i>	Empirical	Normative	
	Proceed to next step.	Nothing to investigate.	
	↓	×	
STEP 3		OUTCOME	
<i>Does evidence exist?</i>	Yes	No	
	Proceed to next step.	Assign claim no weight—people can say anything.	
	↓	×	
STEP 4		OUTCOME	
<i>What kind of evidence is this?</i>	Rigorous and/or reliable source	Not rigorous and/or unreliable source	
	Assign claim considerable weight, but search for contradictory evidence, then proceed to next step.	Assign claim somewhat little weight. Proceed to next step.	
	↓	↓	
STEP 5		OUTCOME	
<i>Alternative explanations?</i>	No	Yes	
	Assign the claim greater weight, but beware the MR monster! Proceed to final step.	Assign the claim less weight, but beware the MR monster! Proceed to final step.	
	↓	↓	
STEP 6		OUTCOME	
<i>Assess Strength of Evidence</i>	Based on outcomes of steps 4 and 5, assess the overall weight of evidence for and, if applicable, against the claim. Finally, cautiously identify tentative conclusions about the claim's veracity.		

Source Author's creation

until higher-quality evidence is provided. Conversely, when claims have considerable evidence provided, from established sources, that is difficult to explain with alternative theories, we can assign greater weight to these claims. That is, regardless of how much we might *want* it to be false, we should be more trusting of a claim's veracity until evidence emerges to the contrary.

It will be far easier to accomplish this step if we strive to be accurate, rather than to arrive at a preferred conclusion. Unfortunately, though, here the MR monster is more dangerous than ever. How can we protect ourselves? Here is one simple recommendation: If, at the end of all the

steps, we have reached the same conclusion, and with just as much confidence, that we would have reached *had we not gone through any of the steps*, beware: the MR monster has likely struck again! If this occurs, repeat the steps, challenging yourself to find inconvenient evidence and alternative explanations as though your mind depends upon it.

Finally, as with any assessment, we need to cautiously arrive at some tentative conclusions regarding the claim's veracity. It is perfectly fine—and, in fact, a badge of honor for the Scientist—to *not* be 100% certain that a claim is either true or false. The Scientist strives to conclude that, given the evidence, a claim may *probably* be true, or may *probably* be untrue. (This admission of uncertainty on the part of the Scientist is infuriating to the Propagandist, who, for her purposes, would prefer that everything is either absolutely true or absolutely false—propaganda rarely contains much nuance.) And, being a good Scientist, we must also always remain open to new evidence (should it come into being).

In summary, while by no means exhaustive, nor guaranteed to always result in the “right” answer, this guide offers a simple, yet substantially more rigorous, method for evaluating evidence than what we do when we unwittingly succumb to the powers of motivated reasoning.

CONCLUSION: A PATH FORWARD

While motivated reasoning can lead us to our preferred conclusion, fortunately for humanity, scholars have long noted a *second* motivation that guides our reasoning: *the desire to be accurate*.⁴⁶ As Flynn, Nyhan, and Reifler explain,⁴⁷ “when people are motivated by accuracy goals, they search for and evaluate evidence in an even-handed manner in order to form a belief that reflects the true state of the world.” I therefore humbly submit that what is required is nothing short of *a new global ethos*. Such an ethos would place accuracy on a pedestal; frown upon strict adherence to the party line or a particular worldview; champion the “devil’s advocates”; hunger for more rigorous investigation; demur from reaching firm conclusions; relentlessly seek out alternative explanations; and, continuously remain open to new information. In short, we would accept that we do not (and perhaps *cannot*) know what “the Truth” is, and yet also consent to wait for the research process to be employed before coming to any tentative conclusions about it.

Yet a large-scale embrace of “accuratism,” if we may call it as such, is no minor undertaking. Indeed, one could easily argue that elites

and “opinion-makers” everywhere have strong incentives to shape “the Truth” as they see fit, and little incentive to entertain claims that are inconvenient for their cause. Thus, to have any chance of taking hold, parents, practitioners, community leaders, and educators must be central to such an effort’s success. Paralleling the strategy for addressing climate change, while national and international institutions might assist with fostering *accuratism*, it must have a substantial grassroots component, with citizens of the world developing their critical thinking skills on the issues they care about (see Michael Shank’s chapter for details on such efforts). Such is an endeavor that all of us, as members of the global community, should embrace in our daily lives. For, by ensuring that this logic and commitment to accuracy takes hold at the grassroots level, we help to guard ourselves against businesses, leaders, and movements who willingly exploit falsehoods for private gain.

Fortunately, compared to previous centuries, everyday people now have far greater access to information that can be used to hold such Propagandists to account. Indeed, popular organizations such as *PolitiFact* and the *International Fact-Checking Network*, as well as a vast proliferation of evidence-based blogs (e.g., *The Monkey Cage*, and policy-related blogs hosted by the *London School of Economics*), offer citizens of the world an unprecedented ability to quickly assess the merits of popular claims and examine empirical research on the topics they find most important.

It is worth stressing that this endorsement of *accuratism* is not a call to abandon our individual values or visions of a better world in favor of empirical evidence. This is a false choice. We can retain our ideals—which generally concern *the world we want to create*—while also remaining objective and scientific when it comes to evaluating empirical claims—which concern *the world as it actually exists*. We may want, with all our hearts, for example, a policy designed to increase women’s political participation to be successful. And, naturally, we may tend to dismiss any critics of the program’s effectiveness as not sharing the values that motivated the initiative (i.e., as being ideologically opposed to the cause). But in so doing, we may blindly support a program that is, in reality, ineffective, foregoing an opportunity to alter the program in such a way that might *actually* increase women’s political participation. Again, values and empirics are by no means incompatible.

In conclusion, only by treating the objective pursuit of knowledge about our world as a *shared* value—i.e., as its own ethos—can we begin to talk with, rather than past, one another about the most pressing issues

of our time. Admittedly, the challenge of evaluating claims is formidable, and fostering a new ethos even more so. And yet, one must ask, *what is the alternative?* Whoever has the most power, most money, and/or loudest voice gets to determine what is and is not true? Such a world, as well as the perilous incentives it would engender, is one that we as a species should make every effort to avoid.⁴⁸

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. To what extent do you yourself look into sources that are cited (e.g., in newspaper or magazine articles, internet posts, etc.)? How often do you think others do this? What are the risks of not doing it?
2. When it comes to global affairs issues like climate change, war, development, or gender equality, what is something you regard as being the conventional wisdom, but that, in your view, might not actually be true? How could we potentially determine if it is true?
3. Identify an experience when you learned that something you thought was true turned out not to be true. How did you react? Did you accept it quickly, or did it take time to change your mind? What sort of evidence ultimately persuaded you? Do you think others still think it is true?
4. What do you think are some specific barriers to people thinking more analytically about the information they come across? Is this challenge more formidable in some areas of global affairs than others (for example, climate change versus economic development)? Why or why not? Further, what can be done to remedy this problem, either at the individual, community, state, and/or global level?
5. What role, if any, should media organizations play in trying to counter misinformation and disinformation? Why or why not, and how could it be done (if at all)?
6. What would you need to hear to make you, and/or people you know, more interested in learning how to do research about global issues in a more scientific manner? In other words, how might people be better motivated to study a global issue—e.g., poverty, gender equality, climate change, or nuclear disarmament—with a commitment to discovering “the Truth,” rather than to confirming what they already believe?

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Toward an Enlightened Form of Capitalism: The Changing Role of Private Organizations in the Context of Global Affairs

Christian Busch

Organizational “purpose”—the reason *why* a company exists—looks very different in 2020 than it did only a few decades ago. In 1970, Milton Friedman famously argued that “the social responsibility of business is to increase its profits”, depicting business social responsibility as a pernicious “slippery slope into socialism”.¹ His view was characteristic of the commonly held belief that business purpose and longevity could best be achieved by focusing on creating shareholder value and economic activity. Yet, in 2020, one would be hard-pressed to find a Fortune 500 company without a sustainability or corporate responsibility statement. In contrast to a half-century ago, companies have increasingly—at least on paper—embraced a role in tacking environmental, social, and governance issues.

C. Busch (✉)
Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University,
New York, NY, USA
e-mail: christian.busch@nyu.edu

This shift in purpose comes in the context of global challenges such as climate change, poverty, and rising inequality as well as disruptive changes to economic systems and organizational structure and strategy. What drives this change? What are the major political, social, and economic factors which have shaped how we conceptualize the role and responsibility of companies in society? What can explain these new organizational and economic trends? How can understanding these changes help us understand how organizations will evolve in the context of global affairs?

This chapter draws on critical texts outlining the ongoing debate and trends around global challenges in business, economics, and global affairs. It builds upon a systematic literature review on the role of private sector organizations in society, as well as primary data from research projects across China, the United States, the UK, Kenya, South Africa, and other countries, including a recent Leaders on Purpose study based on interviews with 30 of the world's leading CEOs.² Our extensive data illustrates the interconnected nature of our economic systems, private organizations, and global political contexts. This chapter does not claim to be a comprehensive review of the global economy—such a project could fill a whole library. Instead, it seeks to demonstrate where we have come from by looking at some of the major ideas and schools of thought—both to inform emergent trends and to outline an idea of where we could be going.

The first section details (a) important global challenges, (b) relevant developments on the “macro-level”, integrating literature on economics and related areas, and (c) evolutions on the “micro-level”, in particular in organizational theory, including the rise of corporate social responsibility (CSR), strategic sustainability, and social entrepreneurship. The second section focuses on the emergent trends in organizational thinking, in particular, the emergence of organizations that integrate profit and purpose at scale. The third section outlines emerging trends in economic thinking, and sketches out the possible demarcations of an “enlightened form of capitalism”.

CONTEXT: GLOBAL TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

This chapter focuses on the positive and negative impacts of four trends of particular interest in shaping economic and societal activity on a macro and micro level: multilateralism, globalization, populism, and technological advancement. It then details the broader global challenges interacting with, and in some cases arising from, these trends.

First, increasing multilateralism, or the alliance of multiple countries in pursuing a common goal,³ has increased the connectivity and collaborative work of a number of public and private organizations across numerous countries since the Second World War.⁴ Intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations (UN) have worked to foster cross-national and increasingly cross-sectoral partnerships. They have seen some success in bringing together nations to address challenges, for example, in addressing the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—global objectives focused on achieving a better world by 2030.⁵ However, the functioning of these global alliances is not always smooth and they have been criticized for lack of transparency and slow pace of change.⁶

The second trend, globalization, or more specifically economic globalization,⁷ is the process by which companies and markets interact trans-nationally—essentially creating “one market” worldwide. The value of global exports relative to GDP, a common proxy for globalization, has skyrocketed—from averaging around 5 percent in the 1940s to around 25 percent today. This trend is in many ways driven and supported by multilateral efforts as countries work to open borders and increase trans-national trade. For the private sector, globalization has increased global economic growth and trade which, for some sectors, improves livelihoods and reduces poverty.⁸ Global GDP growth has more than doubled from around 1 percent to, on average, 2.5 percent since the 1950s.⁹ However, the extent to which these consequences, positive and negative, are equally distributed is debated, and there is mixed empirical evidence as to whether globalization helps or hurts in important measures, such as reduction of poverty (especially across different groups within society).¹⁰

The third trend, rising populism, can be seen both in the growing number of populist leaders around the world, as well as discontent with and decreased trust in governments and institutions. The number of populist leaders worldwide rose from four in 1990 to twenty in 2018¹¹—including a number of high-profile, watershed populist elections and policies in developed, traditionally liberal, democracies such as the election of Donald Trump in the United States, the success of Italy's Five-Star Movement, and the vote for Brexit in the United Kingdom. Populism is ultimately a political strategy that often takes advantage of uncertainty and distrust to fuel usually nationalistic, power-consolidating policies.¹² However, rather than helping “the people”, populism tends to serve to

consolidate political power of a leader, and their backers.¹³ This highlights a negative political effect of global interconnectedness, namely, the risk that politicians use the public backlash to the sense of powerlessness and incomprehensibility arising from an increasingly fast-paced, interconnected, and uncertain world to further their populist agenda.¹⁴

The growth of political polarization and populism is also driven by economic backlash to increasing global inequality and capital flows which have left, particularly, rural areas in the Western world in states of economic decline. Decreased trust in national and international institutions has also corresponded with a decrease in traditional civic engagement (e.g., voting, volunteering through large NGOs).¹⁵ However, this decrease has in many cases been redirected to more individualized and digitally focused social action (such as crowdfunding or social media activism).¹⁶ In addition, a major debate in many Western countries relates to the propagation of false information, which some argue threatens democratic processes.¹⁷ Certainly, it makes voters less confident in governmental institutions—a Pew research study found that 68 percent of Americans felt that made-up news negatively impacted their faith in the government, and over half identified it as the major issue facing society, ranking it above violent crime, climate change, and racism.¹⁸ This, in turn, potentially fuels populism, demonstrating again the interconnected nature of these social and economic changes.

Finally, technological advancement has increased the speed of change. New developments, particularly in information technology, have led to massive changes in communication and work. On one hand this has increased connectivity and business efficiency. On the other hand, technological “growing pains” create dilemmas and challenges to the society around, for example, privacy norms, and the future of work. Moreover, technological development has created higher intra-country wage inequalities in regards to skills and education,¹⁹ and despite new technologies, aggregate productivity has actually declined.²⁰

Concurrent to, and in part highlighted by, these trends are a number of critical global challenges, outlined by the SDGs,²¹ which include working toward “no poverty”, “zero hunger”, and “reduced inequalities”.²²

The related challenges are intimately linked to the trends discussed above. For example, the income and wealth inequalities that are partly associated (both positively and negatively) with technological advancement and globalization are addressed by Goals 4, 8, and 10. Since the

goals were established in 2015, some have seen positive progress, while others have made no progress or have slipped back (see Jens Rudbeck's chapter on the patchy progress of the SDGs). For example, due to improved communication about its importance and large aid commitments, clean water and sanitation has seen some of the most positive progress—with the proportion of the world's population with access to safely managed water increasing from 61 percent to 71 percent, with 90 percent having at least basic access.²³ In contrast, climate action continues to be one of the most pressing problems as temperatures and sea levels are rising faster than expected.²⁴ Similarly, global income inequality has actually increased despite the goals, with wage and wealth inequality increasing in nearly every country around the world, and labor share of GDP decreasing globally by 2 percent.²⁵

Importantly, these problems are happening on a global level and require long-term, large-scale political and economic effort to address. Private organizations are increasingly called upon—and are themselves voluntarily offering, for a myriad of reasons that we will discuss below—to take up a role. For example, numerous CEOs of companies such as Philips, MasterCard, and Danone use the SDGs to orient their business purpose and efforts to make a positive impact, often facilitated by organizations such as the UN and World Economic Forum (see Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu's, chapter for details of the UN-World Economic Forum Strategic Partnership Framework).

Therefore, economic and management thinking around capitalism and the role of the corporation in the global economy must evolve—and is already evolving—in response to these trends and challenges. A major factor framing the abovementioned dynamics is the way economies are structured (on the “macro-level”), and the way businesses (and other actors) operate within them (on the “micro-level”). Below, we discuss relevant recent developments that have shaped policy, global affairs—and the world.

THE EVOLUTION OF ECONOMIC THINKING

The role of private organizations in global affairs is still debated. Broadly speaking, this debate focuses on the capitalist free market economy—which prevails in most Western societies—and how this economic form compares to alternative options, such as socialism, or how it can best fit

into political structures, such as democracy. The diversity in how traditional approaches interpret the role of government and companies offers an insight into the divisive debates around economics in society—usually between the views that economic markets should be left alone or regulated slightly, or that capitalism is an inherently flawed system which must be heavily regulated to ensure democracy and equitable society. Although it has grown more nuanced, this debate in the present day has in many ways remained polarized, though it faces very different challenges.²⁶

To demonstrate this debate, a macroeconomic perspective drawing on the diverse views on the role of economic policies in global development can be effective. On one hand, free markets have arguably led to “miracles” of developmental transformation, such as many Chinese citizens being lifted out of poverty.²⁷ This view is supported by traditional, “neo-liberal” economic development thinkers, who argue that global trade left unfettered is the most promising source of development. However, contemporary economists, such as Nobel Prize winner Joseph Stiglitz, have argued that the promises of globalization often don’t play out in reality—for example due to information asymmetry and non-transparent institutions that reinforce traditional power structures between nations.²⁸ In addition, economic thinkers such as Amartya Sen decoupled the traditional logic that increasing “welfare” as measured by GDP necessarily leads to increased experience in happiness, education, or life expectancy.²⁹ For these thinkers, a purely market-based approach will not ensure improved lives.

In the present day, the economic role of the free market and capitalism in society remains controversial.³⁰ Some scholars continue to take a hardline and hands-off approach to market regulation,³¹ while others see democracy and capitalism as self-reinforcing despite changes to the market.³² However, importantly, capitalism is now facing a new revolution in the context of the global trends and challenges outlined above. The doctrine of continued and unlimited growth is difficult to maintain in a world of increasingly scarce and fragile environmental resources and associated difficulties around social redistribution.

In essence, capitalism has always been under debate, and has shifted forms throughout history. Confronted as it is by the challenges of the current era, it is helpful to return to the roots and reflect back upon Adam Smith’s theory of moral sentiments—at some point, our inherent sense of what is “right” tells us that an economy which results in inequality or environmental destruction is not a desirable one. As the global challenges

outlined above present a dilemma for society as a whole, novel approaches by cross-sectoral actors mean capitalism can and will arguably continue to evolve between and beyond these traditional areas of debate.

THE EMERGING ROLE OF PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS IN SOCIETY

Should corporations be considered active members not just of the economy but of a democratic society? The 2010 US Supreme Court ruling in *Citizens United v. the Federal Election Commission*³³ argued, yes, to some extent. Specifically, the court ruled that corporations have the right to make political expenditures to support a political party or candidate, just as a normal citizen would. This controversial decision reignited a longstanding debate regarding the role of corporations in society and their rights and responsibilities.

Transitioning from macro-level economic thinking about the role of the corporation to intra-organizational debates and management theory further defines the lens through which it is possible to understand the changing nature of companies' economic activity in society. This requires stepping from a (macro-) economic viewpoint—where firms are uniform black boxes with a set economic role—toward a management approach of looking within these “boxes” to understand how different firms approach problems, strategies and structures.

Traditional views of the firm focus on companies as a way to organize means of production and reduce transaction costs that would normally exist in a market.³⁴ Alternatively they were seen as “bundles of resources” wherein additional value could be created.³⁵ However, as twentieth-century firms grew in size, scope, and societal influence, the nature of their relationship to the communities in which they operated became more contested.³⁶ As Nobel Prize winner Milton Friedman famously articulated, many business leaders believed that business should continue untethered by regulation, and that social responsibility should be a personal matter—consistent with neoclassical economic schools. In their view, profit-maximization and creating value for shareholders was the most socially beneficial action a firm could pursue, as by doing so they created economic activity and value which was beneficial for society as a whole. For example, Andrew Carnegie's article on “The Gospel of Wealth” called specifically for redistribution and social equity through philanthropy—not through the structure of economic activity.³⁷

At the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century, however, private organizations began to speak about responsibility in a different way. On the multinational corporate level, the concept of corporate social responsibility began to gain traction. On the level of new organizational forms, there was a rise in the concept of social entrepreneurship—start-ups that focus on social value creation.³⁸ This chapter will explore each of these areas in turn.

The Rise (and Evolution) of Corporate Social Responsibility

What had originally evolved as a reaction to increasing societal resentment against the growing power of corporations³⁹ and a company's desire to increase its reputation, legitimacy, and local embeddedness, has progressively become more comprehensive. Companies have increasingly integrated sustainability and social responsibility into their organizations, often in the form of "Corporate Social Responsibility" (CSR) programs. This concept has received significant interest from management practitioners, as illustrated by studies on the importance of integrating purpose in business,⁴⁰ and surveys, which have demonstrated that over 80 percent of CEOs believe a societal purpose matters for strategy, customers, and/or employees.⁴¹ Over two-thirds of CEOs state that "inclusive growth" and inclusive innovation is a top strategic concern—more than three times the proportion citing shareholder value.⁴²

To understand the growth of these themes and how they evolved, we conducted a systematic literature review. This included a systematic search via the database Web of Science, filtering for "inclusive innovation" and "corporate social responsibility". The search returned 16,859 results, and after filtering for influence as determined by factors such as "most-cited", 50 of the top articles were examined. From this analysis, a number of key findings emerged which indicate the emerging direction of this literature.

First, mirroring practitioner interest, there has been an explosion in the number of academic works on the topic. While several influential papers appeared in the 1980s and 1990s, the real bulk of literature "took off" beginning around 2000. Since that point, publication contributions have climbed from the hundreds to the thousands each year.

Second, the literature mostly emphasizes three key themes: consumer reactions, financial performance or investor perception, and operational questions. The first two areas primarily explore causalities—when and why do consumers care about CSR, and does CSR lead to positive financial

results? Conclusions vary. While generally positive, they include a number of key caveats. For example, consumers' interest in CSR depends highly on factors such as "perceived genuineness",⁴³ the fit of the initiative to their own identity politics,⁴⁴ and even their cultural background.⁴⁵ Other stakeholders were also found to have more complicated relationships with CSR. For example, for risk mitigation through CSR, social actors were found to be better CSR targets than firm trading partners as they cared more about CSR performance.⁴⁶

Similarly, CSR was generally found to be positively related to financial performance—although certain mediators either strengthened or negated this relationship, and reflected the critical importance of measurement and difficulty of establishing causality with so many interconnected metrics. For example, due to the measures of firm performance used in most studies, asset age was found to be an important mediating factor as inflation distorted reported asset values. This meant that newer firms had typically higher CSR metrics—but also typically higher reported asset values (strongly correlated). As a result, controlling for the age of a firm's assets mediated the relationship between CSR and performance, although there was still slight significance.⁴⁷ However, in the long term, CSR was positively associated with better performance across the board.⁴⁸ Finally, operational questions, particularly around supply chain, and questions of employee engagement, are also sporadically addressed—though often in journals already specific to those areas. For instance, one study found that in financial services firms, CSR rating was positively related to employee organizational commitment.⁴⁹ What is most interesting about these analyzes, however, is the integration of CSR as a variable of interest into more niche fields, such as employee satisfaction or supply chain efficiency.

Third, regardless of focus, there is a call for more strategic sustainability, and a transition from simply focusing on CSR to a more nuanced approach.⁵⁰ Authors, such as Porter and Kramer (2006) argue that when CSR is seen as tangential to business or as an expenditure, it reinforces a dialogue pitting business against society and simultaneously does not allow CSR actions to be appropriately tailored to each companies' individual goals.⁵¹ Similarly, other authors argue that CSR should rather be integrated into traditional firm strategy, such as an organizational resource in the resource-based view of the firm.⁵² Reflecting this, many post-2010 papers on CSR definitionally refer to the concept in the context of subdisciplines or new terms developed to describe this nascent field, including

impact organizations, purpose-led organizations, hybrid organizations, and social innovation.

These findings illuminate widespread and growing interest in this field, but also a rethinking of CSR as a separate part of the organization. It invites businesses to reconsider their purpose and strategies in the context of global challenges and economic change, and to consider new organizational strategies and structures.

The Rise of Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship—entrepreneurship with an embedded social purpose and the underlying drive to create societal value⁵³—has grown in popularity slowly, over a number of years, as individual entrepreneurs such as Mohammad Yunus and Leila Janah sought to address business opportunities in social externalities and to solve those societal problems that governments and traditional enterprises could not.⁵⁴ Much of the literature has focused on these individual social entrepreneurs or small groups in a localized manner with pre-defined solutions.

However, given that social entrepreneurs often rely on social networks to grow their impact, research has increasingly focused on groups and the evolution of innovation networks in the context of global challenges.⁵⁵ One stream of the literature has focused on the importance of collective entrepreneurship, which taps into social reservoirs of creativity that, if properly activated, can generate significant social innovation. This collective model of social entrepreneurship, rather than focusing on the individual and a pre-defined problem, instead proposes “social innovation communities” who share and understand a critical need and from that exchange best practices to diffuse and scale innovative solutions. For example, communities such as MakeSense, Sandbox Network, or the World Economic Forum’s Global Shapers Community provide a platform for young people to share expertise around various issues, such as curriculum development for digital skills.⁵⁶ Technology often plays a critical role in developing these networks, such as the numerous social innovation communities around issues like domestic violence in Nigeria or Myanmar Youth Empowerment facilitated by Facebook’s Community Leadership Program.⁵⁷

Another stream has focused on the role of social enterprises in orchestrating social networks for change, such as those helping develop farmer

capacity by providing financing, marketplaces, and whole transformative ecosystems.⁵⁸

Often, emerging economies play a critical role in developing these community and networked efforts as well as in social entrepreneurship innovations more generally. The resource-constrained nature of these contexts has helped unearth novel organizational tactics. For example, RLabs, a South African social enterprise, scaled to 22 locations to provide low-cost education and training as well as innovation and incubation centers. Their model demonstrates a form of bricolage, or applying existing, often undervalued, resources to new problems at scale. In doing so, they provide a roadmap for new business models and best practices, such as tapping into local skills and talent for mentorship services and developing human capital learning through trial-and-error. These simple but effective mechanisms, created out of necessity but demonstrably successful, can arguably be applied to social enterprises and communities across contexts.

However, despite the localized (and usually very publicized) success of social enterprises, scaling more broadly remains a challenge, and only few social ventures actually scale up.⁵⁹

THE EMERGENCE OF THE IMPACT ORGANIZATION

Moving from the past into the future, CSR is transitioning from a tangential area of business activity toward a core focus of the organization. For example, a Global Entrepreneurship Monitor study found that, as of 2018, a third of all new businesses founded aim to address some sort of social purpose.⁶⁰ At the same time, social enterprises are seeking to achieve scale, and there is an increasing convergence as socially focused initiatives look for business legitimacy and traditional businesses seek purpose-led sustainable business. This points toward the need for a new organizational form to encompass this true integration of purpose and profit.

We identify this emergent trend as the rise of the “impact organization”, which we define as “an organization that reconciles financial, social, and environmental impact on the same strategic level”. These impact-oriented private organizations result from a synthesis of the localized and issue-based social enterprise and the for-profit corporation historically disconnected from social impact or tangentially involved in CSR. Either traditional for-profit companies or social enterprises can emerge

into impact organizations, step by step—for-profit companies by integrating societal purpose into their strategy and lines of business and social enterprises by transitioning to scaled, profitable growth. In both cases, the emergence of this sort of impact organization comes primarily in response to the global challenges facing societies and organizations. For example, companies, such as MasterCard are clear that it is no longer enough to just make money—but rather, to be part of tackling the Sustainable Development Goals. It also comes from a recognition that solving these challenges is not only mission-critical for continued operation, but also an opportunity for growth. For example, Anand Mahindra, CEO of Mahindra & Mahindra, describes climate change as a critical challenge for his business. However, he follows up by simultaneously calling it “the biggest opportunity for organizations in the next couple of decades”.⁶¹ The awareness of the need to address global challenges combined with the recognition of opportunity fuels these impact-focused organizations.

In our research over the last decade—including a recent interview series for which we interviewed 30 of the world’s leading CEOs that have attempted to integrate profit and purpose at scale—several core themes emerged that show how companies increasingly move toward becoming impact organizations.⁶² Five core pillars that allow integrating money and meaning at scale are: impact mission, impact leadership, impact operations, impact networks, and impact measurement. This impact organization framework provides an overview of how both companies and social enterprises are integrating purpose as well as scale and growth as the cornerstone of their business—and can approach the integration of profit and purpose at scale.

Impact Mission

A critical first step for many companies in transitioning to impact organizations is to determine and co-create the organizational purpose in order to inform the impact mission. The purpose is the why, whereas the mission is “time-bound” and often enacts the broader purpose. Many top companies describe this purpose as originating in part from their history, as well as relevant societal issues (for example, related to the SDGs).⁶³ Most of the companies that we looked at in our research use a process of reconciling between external stakeholders and internal strategies to define and decide the related values. This process often takes the form of crowdsourcing of sorts, such as when Philips posed the question “What does our

purpose mean to you?” to nearly 40,000 internal stakeholders.⁶⁴ This crowdsourcing can also come from speaking with—and truly listening to—external stakeholder groups. This is often the case for social enterprises, such as the Eden Project, a bio-dome tourist attraction promoting environmental education, plant preservation, and charity donations in Cornwall, England, whose mission originated from a community desire to repurpose an old clay pit.⁶⁵

The challenge for impact organizations becomes embedding this into their business as usual. More than a few companies describe this sense of purpose, once established, as being engrained in their DNA as a corporation—that is, it is not just part of a communication exercise but rather, it is included in recruitment, training, development, and operational projects across the organization. This helps engage and inspire, and adds meaning to day-to-day activities, potentially leading to increased loyalty, organizational cohesion, and engagement.⁶⁶

Impact Leadership

Our research shows that in order to ensure that the purpose, mission, and values are truly practiced, they often need to be enacted, supported, and modeled by company leadership. At Ketchum, CEO Barri Rafferty sets the “tone from the top” by “leaving loudly” in order to promote organizational values around work–life balance, such as when she turned down a “Day as CEO” media feature during her first week in the job in order to pursue a long-planned vacation with family.⁶⁷ It is also reflected in the leadership of not just large corporations, but also small- and medium-sized companies. For example, Klaus Fischer, CEO of Fischer, describes how he “thinks in decades instead of quarters” when it comes to investing in company talent.⁶⁸

Of course, CEOs might naturally hold confirmation bias—i.e., those who care about purpose, support it in their organizations, and despite it coming from another source, circularly believe that their role was important in initiating related impact. However, the critical importance of strong management leadership in driving these impact organizations is also independently corroborated by studies, such as organizational behavior literature on transformational leadership, which is overwhelmingly linked to positive organizational outcomes such as engagement, retention, and organizational performance.⁶⁹

However, impact leadership need not originate only from the top—if anything, middle-management and employee peer-leadership is just as critical, often by core “champions” across the company.⁷⁰ Just as CEOs need to model values, individual employees can as well. For example, at company DNV-GL, employees are encouraged to move between global locations to “carry the DNA” or the organizational purpose. Therefore, a culture of impact leadership can reinforce a sense of purpose within organizations.

Impact Governance

Governance—the processes and rules that govern an organization—are core to manifest the integration of profit and purpose.⁷¹ This includes creative practices that manifest crucial values, and make them come alive. At some companies learnings from unsuccessful projects are being shared across the company; for example projects that have not been commercially sustainable—but the technologies behind them have, in some cases, been discovered by other project teams to be useful elsewhere.⁷² These practices can also be facilitated by formulating challenges and business models differently. A key case of this is Philips, which has started to move away from product silos to the unmet customer needs and problems underlying its products. This enables not only product innovation, but also business model innovation. For example, for a company such as Philips, an ultrasound machine might bring some income, but developing a primary care solution and commercializing it at scale at an economically justified price commensurate with the social impact created, could potentially lead to a much bigger business.⁷³

Implementing and leveraging technology plays a critical role by enhancing transparency and visibility—internally and externally. Internally, it can help share various ideas and practices for how to ensure impact. Externally, companies can also leverage technology to share customer feedback in order to develop what Haier would call “user centricism at scale”.⁷⁴

Agile organizational processes and structures are often critical to ensuring the acceleration of purpose within organizations. This allows organizations to tackle the unexpected, to allow for changes and finding new ways. To do this, some organizations take top level-projects “out of hierarchy” to develop the product.⁷⁵ This often requires the openness to place diverse bets and ideas, including some which might fail. This is particularly challenging for organizations that are emerging from more traditional industries.⁷⁶

Impact Networks

In addition to developing internal practices and structures which bolster an organization's impact focus, many companies also actively foster networks to increase scale and impact.⁷⁷ For example, social enterprise Toast Ale focuses on fighting climate change by repurposing waste bread to brew beer. As part of their business, they connect sandwich factories to local breweries so waste bread can be used as a malt alternative. Often, the bread is provided free, as it is cheaper to ship it to a brewer than dispose of it. This networked structure allows Toast Ale to scale and expand its impact.

In addition, sometimes companies have also leveraged networks where they connect not just separate industries, but also traditional competitors within one industry to achieve a shared goal. This is often called co-opetition. For example, BMW partnered with rival Mercedes on car-sharing services, and with Daimler on autonomous car sharing. In both cases, all three companies involved were able to put aside traditional differences to pursue win-wins that focused on a broader sustainable purpose.

Impact Measurement

Finally, measurement and accountability play an unsurprisingly crucial role in the impact organization—first in ensuring that positive impacts on the organizational purpose are tracked, and second in creating a rewards scheme tied to those metrics. Being aware that often only what is measured is done, organizations that we examined reflected, in their transition toward purpose-led companies, on the importance of measurement. This includes traditional triple bottom line measures, and in some companies, such as Danone America extends to overall objectives (Danone America is now the world's largest B-Corp). Transparency of measurement can be critical, and companies, such as Turkcell use visual dashboards that can be seen across the company to track what happens and which results are being achieved.⁷⁸

Not only is it key that this is measured, but also it's critical that it has consequences. At Interface, people are as accountable for their environmental impact as they are for financial impact.⁷⁹ The seriousness with which organizations take their mandate can be reflected through the

measurement and accountability mechanisms they install to ensure that purpose is not just discussed but achieved.

Thus...

Each of these pillars has outlined how large-scale companies and social enterprises are transitioning toward becoming impact-driven organizations that aim to integrate profit and purpose at scale. By working through and combining practices from each of these pillars, they are creating companies that are future-fit and adaptive. This allows organizations to cope with the future and seize opportunities, and to make the best out of the unexpected by “cultivating serendipity”.⁸⁰

It is important to note that key challenges still exist for organizations at all scales in creating meaningful integration of purpose and profit. First, while many organizations succeed well in one pillar or another, there are as yet no case studies of organizations which perfectly fulfill all areas. The internal challenges of integrating specific cases of social impact demonstrate the pragmatic difficulty of a new way of doing business. For example, Millington (2015) chronicles how learning pathologies and overinvestment in insufficiently researched new initiatives hindered product development in India for a multinational manufacturing company.⁸¹ In a similar vein, Beuning (2019) outlines the challenges for social intrapreneurs within organizations as they pursue, sometimes single-mindedly, the issues they care about. Specifically, these social intrapreneurs are granted or cultivate organizational autonomy in their work—but sometimes this extends to a point where initiatives are launched without sufficient support or organizational feedback. For example, one of the intrapreneurs studied worked on an ultra-concentrated consumer detergent product developed to use significantly less water, but detailed how lack of organizational support for marketing and educating consumers meant that the product failed when it was initially introduced to the market.⁸² These cases demonstrate the importance of integrating all pillars to create successful impact organizations.

Moreover, external challenges often arise, particularly for larger companies transitioning to impact organizations, around accusations of greenwashing or shareholder pushback. In addition, often understanding the total impact of certain actions is difficult. For example, some companies may find that their effort toward providing decent work could actually be detrimental to climate change. Arguably, this problem can even

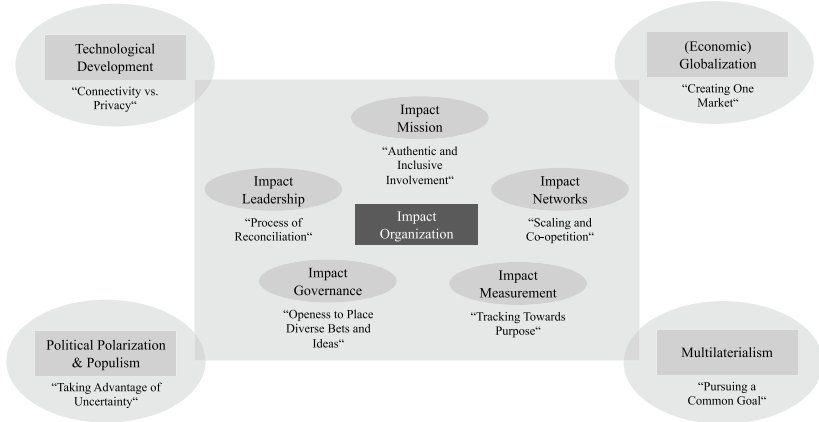


Fig. 5.1 The impact organization (*Source* Author’s own creation)

occur sector-wide—for example, the “gig economy” has provided workforce flexibility and autonomy, and yet its role in “de-skilling” workforce participants, reinforcing inequalities, and outsourcing business risk to individuals and society has been criticized.⁸³

However, despite challenges, this represents a fundamental change in the form and role of private organizations, driven by trends in business and society, which have necessitated a new kind of consciousness. By synthesizing the social consciousness of social enterprise and the large-scale profit-focus of traditional business, they can create an organization that is fit for the future (Fig. 5.1).

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIETY AND CAPITALISM AS A WHOLE

This trend of emerging impact organizations is, in some ways, a microcosm of a bigger push for change in society. Even as companies have taken on a new role and responsibility in trying to create positive impact, so are other societal actors reshaping their roles. However, given the changing views of markets and management, what are some of the potential implications for society and capitalism more broadly? How do we understand the future and where we can go from here?

We propose a reconceptualization of capitalism. For this, we turn to Hegel. Hegel’s early conception of “sublation” or “Aufhebung” is based on the idea that as concepts are confronted by new situations or

concepts, they are simultaneously destroyed and synthesized to create new ideas.⁸⁴ As we saw above, capitalism as a debate continues to confront opposing notions—on one side, capitalism and free markets as the be-all and end-all, and on the other, capitalism as a force that is destructive if unregulated. These opposing ideas, in the crucible of necessity and given the pressing nature of global challenges, may be forged into synthesis to create a more *enlightened kind of capitalism*.

Enlightened capitalism is a conceptualization of capitalism where the economic assumption of self-interest is replaced by an assumption of enlightened self-interest, or the desire to fulfill one's own needs through simultaneously fulfilling the needs of others. It includes factors such as long-term focus, sustainable thinking, and a broader sense of purpose by individual and corporate actors.

This combines Adam Smith's original ideas of free markets with moral sentiments and humanity.⁸⁵ It builds upon the idea of a networked, relational economy wherein we consider fulfilling our own needs but also consider and fulfil the needs of others. It synthesizes the concepts addressed in this chapter—the growing global challenges, the increasingly networked nature of social enterprises and integrated CSR, and finally the emergence of impact organizations—into a broader view of how markets can function.

Consequently, this suggests a number of unique roles for societal actors and how they might interact with private industry in order to promote this sort of enlightened capitalism. For this, we turn toward the idea of the social contract. Rousseau argued that people are fundamentally free and equal but need to agree to collective governance and good in order to overcome a contingent social history. The trend toward impact organizations reflects a shift toward a broader ecosystem where more organizations work together to achieve positive impact. This implies democratization of business purpose, where the idea of working together and negotiating to achieve a common good is seen in business behaviors which recognize both the individual self-interest in addressing global challenges and the global good (and harm) which can come from not addressing them. This is exemplified in companies which truly seek out people-focused solutions, such as the example of RLABs. These community- and network-based solutions imply a shift in the interactions between society and private organizations to help achieve this new social contract.

There are implications of this for other social actors. For companies more broadly, these social changes indicate that being an impact

organization means transitioning to a platform which enables people to evolve into “better” versions of themselves—and thus place ends rather than means first. For governments, this necessitates enabling bottom-up communities to thrive, but also learning from and sponsoring big society experiments. In essence, they can encourage, but not interfere in, bottom-up citizen engagement. This can be achieved through public-private partnerships with social enterprises or large-scale organizations. Critically, this requires both an understanding and two-way feedback to establish respective context. A solution that works well in one situation may not apply to another.

For universities and educational institutions, this requires developing a broader and open mindset within the next generation. In order to develop people flexible enough to seize opportunities and cross traditional silos to achieve these new social norms, it is critical that people focus not on becoming “workers”, but rather informed citizens and responsible leaders.

CONCLUSION

While looking into the past is often a matter of perspective, projecting into the future is a tricky business. This chapter has utilized history and emergent trends to paint a picture of the changing role of the private sector and reflected on some of the possible implications of this for society and capitalism—but it does not pretend to have the answers. In fact, there are ample opportunities for further research. First, researchers could explore the full range of unintended consequences; for example, under which circumstances do positive outputs (e.g., educating children) lead to negative outcomes (e.g., resentment among the community toward “the smart ones”)? Second, how does the increasing importance of data and technology influence existing “rules of the game”? In a world in which coders become “law-makers” by designing algorithms (that often go unchecked), a new reality is being created that we cannot yet fully capture. Third, what are the emerging initiatives that build on and expand on initiatives such as Global Compact? Who will be in the driving seat? Fourth, how do issues such as tax avoidance, “purpose-washing”, and “green-washing” factor into the above conversation? Fifth, how can a transition from informal to formal networks⁸⁶—or more broadly, away from a “hidden” toward the “formal” economy—be facilitated?

Arguably, the trends we discussed in this chapter and the implications for society and markets provide a positive view of responses to global challenges and historically contested natures of corporate citizenship and capitalism. However, this is not guaranteed to occur. Companies, societies, governments, and individuals must also continue to work toward a version of the future in which these challenges are addressed, and things get better—not worse. Often, we speak of self-fulfilling prophecies as negative, of bad things coming true because we believed they would. In this case, though, there is hope that by continuing to follow along a path toward impact and enlightened self-interest, private organizations can evolve toward a better future, and society with the—and disrupt the future of global affairs.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the emerging global challenges that are in need of a solution?
2. What are the ways for organizations to be part of tackling the world's global challenges?
3. What are the main barriers for individuals and organizations?
4. What can you do to be part of tackling the most pressing global challenges?
5. How do informal networks, especially in developing countries, factor into the above discussion?

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International Justice and the International Criminal Court at a Critical Juncture

Jennifer Trahan

This chapter contains a stocktaking highlighting two areas significant to the future of the field of international justice. It focuses on the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the creation of mechanisms for compiling evidence of atrocity crimes committed in Syria, Iraq, and Myanmar. As to the ICC, the chapter argues that the Court stands at a key crossroads, having already weathered extensive political pushback against its work—a campaign for mass withdrawals from the Court (particularly by African states), as well as a campaign to reassert head of state immunity. Notwithstanding, the Court continues to face serious pushback, as exemplified by scathing and destructive attacks against the Court, especially when the Court attempts to prosecute state actors. As to the mechanisms created to compile evidence of atrocities committed in Syria, Iraq, and Myanmar, the chapter raises the question whether the creation of such mechanisms—which collect, analyze, and prepare evidence for accountability but are *not* themselves accountability mechanisms—represents a

J. Trahan (✉)
Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University,
New York, NY, USA
e-mail: jt487@nyu.edu

retreat for the field of international justice, forced to adapt to a more hostile political landscape that presents more limited opportunities for prosecution. The mechanisms also differ significantly from one another in terms of whether they are consistent with international criminal justice practice and values, depending on the political imperatives that caused each to be established. A key challenge for the international community will be to ensure that in the future such evidence-collection successfully feeds into systematic prosecutions before courts and tribunals that respect due process and refrain from implementing the death penalty. The chapter concludes that the world, more than ever, needs the ICC, and, until that body has global reach, also other accountability mechanisms in the face of still far too many atrocity crimes being committed, including by state actors. States that remain supportive need to redouble that support to offset the increasingly difficult political situation, where certain state actors still appear to treat accountability for atrocities as a political tool rather than a vital part of a rules-based order.

THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT—MANAGING DISRUPTIVE ATTACKS AGAINST ITS WORK

The ICC's creation represented a phenomenally optimistic and aspirational endeavor—to have a permanent international criminal court to prosecute core atrocity crimes (genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes).¹ The idea behind the ICC was that rather than creating tribunals specific to particular situations (e.g., the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Cambodia), there would be one standing institution to prosecute such crimes when national jurisdictions are “unwilling” or “unable” to do so.² Yet, nearly twenty years into the life of the ICC, difficulties perhaps inherent in this endeavor have manifested and the increasingly challenging political landscape has exacerbated these. The section below discusses some challenges that the Court has successfully weathered and some that remain.

The Threat of Mass African Withdrawals from the Rome Statute

Crimes may be referred to the ICC in one of three ways: State Party referral, referral by the UN Security Council, or the Prosecutor's own initiation (*proprio motu*).³ While States Parties⁴ made the initial two referrals to the ICC (Uganda and the DRC), the Court faces a distinctly different situation with Security Council referral (as occurred with the

Darfur situation) or the Prosecutor's own initiation (as occurred with the Kenya situation). When a State Party where the crimes occurred makes the referral, presumably at least that state supports the ICC's investigations and prosecutions, and will be fairly cooperative.⁵ When the other methods are utilized there is no such guarantee, as the state where the crimes occurred or whose nationals are involved has in no way invited the Court's work.⁶ Moreover, when the ICC's investigation focuses on state actors, the reaction from the state involved can be distinctly hostile. Such was the case with the Darfur situation—once the Court issued a warrant against Sudanese President Omar Hassan al Bashir,⁷ and the Kenya situation—once the Court issued summonses to appear against the persons who became Kenya's President and Deputy President, Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto.⁸

The issuance of the Bashir and Kenyatta warrants ushered in a series of attempts to derail the ICC's Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) from proceeding with those investigations and prosecutions.⁹ Kenya and the African Union (AU) went to the Security Council to request that the Kenya investigation be deferred,¹⁰ and the AU made a similar request on behalf of Bashir.¹¹ Kenya also ushered in an attempt to amend the ICC's Rome Statute to add head of state immunity from prosecution—an effort that, as discussed below, ultimately failed. And, after a vitriolic public relations campaign that included accusations of the ICC being “racist” and “neo-colonialist,”¹² Kenya succeeded in having other African leaders join in a call by the AU for mass African withdrawals from the Rome Statute.¹³ At that point in time, the Court actually *did* have an optics problem in that all the Court's active “investigations” involved African states; however, this author rejects the accusation that the Court is, or was, “racist” or “neo-colonialist.” Many of the African situations were based on State Party referrals—that is, the countries at issue *invited* the ICC's work¹⁴—and African victims and African members of civil society have remained staunchly supportive of the Court.¹⁵ Of course, if there were not mass atrocity crimes in Africa, the Court also would not be focusing its attention on that continent, although there are mass atrocities on other continents as well.

Calls for African States Parties to withdraw from the Rome Statute (which is permitted),¹⁶ did result in the deposit of notices of withdrawal in the fall of 2016 of South Africa, the Gambia, and Burundi.¹⁷ Yet, ultimately, only Burundi withdrew, with both South Africa and the Gambia withdrawing their notices of withdrawal.¹⁸ Thus, mass

African withdrawals did not materialize and the Court emerged from this challenge relatively unscathed¹⁹ and perhaps also with a renewed commitment to focusing its investigations additionally beyond Africa, which it has since done.²⁰ (The only other State Party to have withdrawn from the Rome Statute since then is the Philippines.)²¹

Calls to Reassert Immunity for Heads of State

Part and parcel of the demand that African states withdraw from the Rome Statute was a campaign, led by Kenya on behalf of the AU, that Article 27 of the Rome Statute be amended to provide that “serving Heads of State, their deputies and anybody acting or entitled to act as such may be exempt from prosecution during their current term in office.”²² Such an amendment would have represented a retreat for the field of international justice, which has rejected high-level immunity before international tribunals ever since the prosecutions before the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg and the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (Tokyo).²³ The proposed Rome Statute amendment failed to attract significant support, with most ICC States Parties standing in firm opposition to it.²⁴ An additional welcome development in this area is the ICC Appeals Chamber ruling on May 6, 2019 that there is no head of state immunity as a matter of customary international law before an international tribunal, an issue that arose when the Court considered whether Jordan (a State Party) failed to cooperate with the ICC by failing to arrest then President Bashir when he traveled to Jordan.²⁵ States Parties to the Rome Statute have a statutory obligation to cooperate with the Court,²⁶ meaning they should execute warrants when persons covered by those warrants are on their territory.²⁷

While the ICC weathered these calls for mass African withdrawals and adding head of state immunity, the zeal to press for these measures no doubt lessened when the cases against President Kenyatta and Deputy President Ruto collapsed after accusations of witness tampering and the failure of Kenya to produce documentary evidence.²⁸ The backlash against the Bashir and Kenyatta warrants, however, was an early harbinger that the Court would not have an easy time attempting to prosecute state officials.

Initial Denial of Permission to Proceed with the Afghanistan Investigation

That the ICC still has significant hurdles to face was recently highlighted regarding the situation in Afghanistan. The OTP had been examining crimes against humanity and war crimes believed to have been committed by the Taliban and affiliated armed groups, Afghan Armed Forces, as well as US nationals—Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Department of Defense (DOD) personnel involved in detention operations in Afghanistan and certain “black site” secret prisons.²⁹ On April 12, 2019, ICC Pre-Trial Chamber II unanimously rejected the Prosecutor’s request to proceed with the investigation.³⁰ The Pre-Trial Chamber reasoned, *inter alia*, that the Prosecutor’s work has been “hampered by a number of severe constraints and challenges, resulting mainly from the *lack of cooperation by various authorities*” such that the “prospects for a successful investigation and prosecution [are] extremely limited,” and therefore pursuing the investigation would not “serve the interests of justice.”³¹

That decision was profoundly concerning as it appeared essentially to reward state noncooperation—that is, if states were uncooperative enough, they could ensure that investigations regarding their nationals did not proceed—which set a hugely problematic precedent for the future work of the ICC. The ruling arguably also represented a distorted concept of “the interests of justice” contained in Rome Statute Article 53(1)(c)—which provides the Prosecutor discretion to decide it is not in the “interests of justice” to proceed with an investigation.³²

While the Pre-Trial Chamber’s decision was recently reversed and the Afghanistan investigation was authorized,³³ the difficulties encountered—which followed on the heels of threats by US government officials against the Court should the investigation proceed (and now a Trump Administration Executive Order creating sanctions and asset freezes against, *inter alia*, certain ICC staff)³⁴—illustrates a more pervasive, perhaps structural, difficulty for the ICC: proceeding in situations involving state actors. As alluded to previously, the Court needs to rely on state cooperation; for example, states need to effectuate arrests, provide the OTP access to a country to conduct investigations, surrender evidence, and certainly not tamper with witnesses. Without such cooperation it may be difficult or impossible to bring cases successfully to fruition. The Court has a number of politically challenging situations potentially headed toward its docket: the situation in Palestine (involving Israeli nationals); the situations in

Georgia and Ukraine (involving Russian nationals); and, as mentioned, the situation in Afghanistan (involving US nationals). The investigation regarding Burundi and preliminary examination regarding the Philippines would likely examine, or already are examining, the responsibility of state actors, and could likely face similar difficulties.³⁵ (That the ICC could focus on crimes by state actors likely motivated the withdrawals of those countries from the Rome Statute). Only the future will reveal whether the ICC will be able to successfully proceed in these situations. In the long run, if the ICC proves unable to investigate and prosecute state actors its stature may become seriously diminished, as its risks being seen as, or becoming, a court only able to prosecute out-of-power or out-of-favor state actors, or non-state/rebel actors.

*The Need for the Assembly of States Parties to Provide Sufficient
Financial and Political Support*

To navigate this hugely challenging political landscape, the ICC requires the support of its States Parties, and, particularly, the Assembly of States Parties (ASP), the Court's management, oversight, and legislative body.³⁶ (In theory, where the Security Council has made a referral, the Council could, and should, provide such support; yet, unlike the ad hoc tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia—which were created by the Security Council—the ICC has never had the luxury of knowing it would receive such backing.)³⁷ Thus far, it is also less than clear that the ASP is fully willing to provide the political and financial support that the Court requires. As to the ICC's budget, in the years after the 2008 financial crisis a number of states have insisted on a “zero growth budget.”³⁸ This has left the Court financially strapped as it has faced an increasingly large number of preliminary examinations (nine at the time of writing) and investigations (thirteen at the time of writing).³⁹ Funding difficulties were exacerbated when the two situations referred by the Security Council came without UN funding.⁴⁰ The OTP's resources are so stretched that the Prosecutor recently announced that she cannot take all meritorious situations forward, but will have to prioritize due to insufficient funding.⁴¹ The funding shortfall is perhaps also somewhat indicative of less than whole hearted support for the institution itself. While the idea of a permanent, standing international criminal court had tremendous initial appeal and generated fairly widespread enthusiasm when it

was created, now that the Court finds itself facing a number of difficult situations, having convicted only a few individuals to date,⁴² suffered from operational and management difficulties, and had at least one high-level acquittal based on dubious reasoning of the Appeals Chamber,⁴³ enthusiasm may be waning, or inconsistent at best.

Motivated by concern about the ICC, particularly in the face of vitriolic statements by US government officials,⁴⁴ as well as the earlier dismissal of the Afghanistan investigation, four of the ASP's past Presidents wrote a blog post, dated April 24, 2019, expressing concerns for the institution and the need to strengthen it through an independent assessment process.⁴⁵ This manifested in calls for a review process, with agreement reached at the ASP in December 2019 for an Independent Expert Review.⁴⁶ In parallel, States Parties also saw the need to try to strengthen other aspects of the Rome Statute system, such as the procedure for the nomination and election of judges, which was viewed by many as politicized and not designed to ensure the strongest nominations.⁴⁷ Yet, already in the negotiations leading up to finalization of the terms of reference for the review process some states were calling the process a "reform" process, leading one to wonder whether all States Parties actually were, and are, motivated to *strengthen* the ICC. Whether the independent experts make sufficiently helpful recommendations that are then implemented remains to be seen. And, whether any additional efforts by States Parties are sufficiently helpful also remains to be seen. Yet, in light of the numerous challenging situations facing it, the ICC *does very much* need these review processes to strengthen the Court's work as well as the financial and political backing for the institution. Thus, while the ICC has made some remarkable progress, it stands at a crucial juncture: will it be able to successfully prosecute state actors? As a panel at Leiden University poignantly asked regarding the ICC: has Icarus flown too close to the sun?⁴⁸

THE CREATION OF "MECHANISMS"—A RETREAT FOR THE FIELD OF INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE?

In assessing where the field of international justice stands and where it is going in the future, another recent development that warrants analysis is that, for the first time, rather than creating additional international tribunals (such as the International Criminal Tribunal for the former

Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda) or additional hybrid tribunals⁴⁹ (such as the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia), the international community has, through pragmatism in the face of political impediments, been forced to take a new approach. That is, it has recently created three “mechanisms” to collect, analyze, and prepare evidence for prosecutions, but which themselves have no capacity to conduct prosecutions. At the macro-level, this development raises the question whether the field of international justice, due to current geopolitical realities, is now in retreat, only able to marshal the political “will” to create such investigative mechanisms and *not* tribunals, and whether this represents a concerning trend for the future. At the more specific level, each of the mechanisms—created to compile evidence of atrocity crimes committed in Syria, Iraq, and Myanmar—differs, and will face unique operational and other challenges. Their role—sifting through massive amounts of information and selecting what can be used as credible evidence—is crucially important for the eventual prosecution of crimes. The challenge will be to ensure that the mechanisms are each able to feed information into systematic and credible prosecutions before domestic courts or other tribunals that include prosecutions of state actors, adhere to internationally recognized fair trial standards, and refrain from implementing the death penalty.

The Political Realities Behind the Creation of the Mechanisms

The political realities behind the creation of the three mechanisms differ, although, as to each, it is the limitations of the political situations that did not permit more than evidence-collecting mechanisms to be created—that is, there was not sufficient political agreement to support the creation of tribunals (or ICC referral) in any of the three situations. The three mechanisms are the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law committed in the Syrian Arab Republic Since March 2011 (IIIM), created to compile evidence of crimes committed in Syria; the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da’esh/ISIL (UNITAD), created to compile evidence of ISIL/Da’esh (“ISIL”) crimes committed in Iraq; and the Independent Investigative Mechanism for

Myanmar (IIMM), created to compile evidence of crimes committed in Myanmar.

The Syria Mechanism (IIIM)

The IIIM was created to compile evidence of atrocity crimes committed in Syria, where, during the Syrian civil war, a massive number of war crimes and crimes against humanity have been committed, primarily by regime forces, but also in significant numbers by opposition forces.⁵⁰ Members of ISIL are also implicated in widespread atrocity crimes, including suspected genocide against the Yazidis.⁵¹ In light of the crimes committed (and given that Syria is not a party to the ICC), a referral by the Security Council of the situation would have appeared well-warranted. Indeed, not only did thirteen states on the Security Council vote for referral, the resolution was supported by sixty-five UN Member States.⁵² Yet, referral was blocked by the vetoes of Russia and China,⁵³ with Russia of course having provided, and still providing, extensive financial, military, and political support to the Assad regime.⁵⁴ Thus, the veto of the referral cut off the most direct path to accountability. With the Assad regime in power, Syria will certainly not consent to the creation of an international or hybrid tribunal, nor to prosecutions (particularly of regime actors) within Syria's domestic courts. After immense frustration with the veto of the referral, the General Assembly decided to create the IIIM.⁵⁵ The IIIM can, in the short term, provide evidence to European (and other) courts pursuing individual cases based on universal jurisdiction or other jurisdictional grounds.⁵⁶ In the long term, one can still hope and advocate for the creation of a fully international or hybrid tribunal to prosecute atrocity crimes committed in Syria if there eventually is another regime in power.⁵⁷ While it is significant that evidence is being collated and compiled, and cases files are being created, the IIIM has in itself no prosecutorial capacity; thus, the creation of this mechanism is a step forward, but not the full step forward that many had hoped for in terms of achieving accountability.

The Iraq Mechanism (UNITAD)

UNITAD was created by the Security Council on September 21, 2017 to collect and compile evidence and prepare files related to crimes committed by members of ISIL in Iraq and to support Iraqi domestic efforts to

hold ISIL perpetrators accountable.⁵⁸ Thus, this mechanism is distinctly different in that it has the mandate to investigate only one “side” in the situation. While there have been extensive crimes committed in Iraq since the fall of the regime of Saddam Hussein—with some of the crimes committed during that regime having been prosecuted before the Iraqi High Tribunal⁵⁹—the only agreement politically possible as to more recent crimes was to investigate ISIL. The Iraqi government could have acceded to the ICC’s Rome Statute (as Iraq is not a State Party), but has chosen not to do so, and presumably also would not consent to the creation of a fully international or hybrid tribunal, as all of these mechanisms could also examine crimes by government actors.⁶⁰ With the US heavily involved in Iraq, there clearly also would not be a Security Council referral to the ICC—that is, one could predict the US would veto such a referral.⁶¹ Thus, what attracted the required number of votes to pass the Security Council, including, significantly, agreement of all veto-wielding permanent members, is an evidence-collection mechanism only for ISIL crimes. While such crimes are significant and warranting of investigation and prosecution,⁶² the development of such a one-sided mechanism represents a step backward for the field of international justice, where investigations and prosecutions generally cover an entire “situation” within a country, with a prosecutor then selecting which persons and crime scenes to investigate and prosecute. The mandate to investigate only one side in a conflict (and turn over information about that one side potentially to another side in the conflict) harbingers back to the selectivity concerns of “victor’s justice,” that, for example, has haunted the legacy of the Nuremberg Tribunal.⁶³

The Myanmar Mechanism (IIMM)

A third mechanism is the IIMM, created by the UN Human Rights Council, to investigate “the most serious international crimes and violations of international law committed in Myanmar since 2011.”⁶⁴ “It is mandated to collect evidence of the most serious international crimes and violations of international law and prepare files for criminal prosecution, making use of the information handed over to it by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar.”⁶⁵ Myanmar again represents a situation where most of the usual routes for investigation and prosecution of atrocity crimes committed within Myanmar—believed to include genocide⁶⁶—appear blocked. Namely, there presumably will not

be referral of the situation in Myanmar (which is not a State Party) to the ICC due to China's veto power and its known close political and financial ties with the government of Myanmar.⁶⁷ Again, given the role of government actors in the crimes, particularly, Myanmar's security forces,⁶⁸ one would not predict that Myanmar (under its current leadership) would be willing to consent to the creation of an international or hybrid tribunal, and it is difficult to imagine the domestic courts within Myanmar fully or fairly investigating and prosecuting the crimes.

Yet, there have been three recent promising developments to try to accomplish some accountability for crimes committed in Myanmar. One route is before the ICC, based on Bangladesh being a State Party to the Rome Statute.⁶⁹ When the ICC's OTP sought clarification whether there would be ICC jurisdiction over crimes committed against the Rohingya⁷⁰ who have fled into Bangladesh, ICC Pre-Trial Chamber III held that as long as one element of the crime occurred in Bangladesh, there would be jurisdiction.⁷¹ This represents a welcome development, although it can only result in prosecution of crimes such as forced deportation, which involve a transborder element. A second interesting development is the criminal complaint filed on the basis of universal jurisdiction in Argentina by the Burmese Rohingya Organization UK (Brouk) "calling for Myanmar's military and civilian leaders – including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi – to be investigated and prosecuted for potential genocide and crimes against humanity."⁷² A third promising development is the Gambia's suit, brought in November 2019, on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (57 Muslim majority states), against Myanmar before the International Court of Justice ("ICJ"), alleging that Myanmar breached, and continues to breach, the Genocide Convention.⁷³ While the suit is a civil suit (*i.e.*, not one alleging individual criminal responsibility), provisional measures have been ordered, and, if enforced, could potentially facilitate the safety of Rohingya still in Myanmar and safe return of hundreds of thousands who have fled to Bangladesh.⁷⁴ A positive ruling on the merits could potentially open up additional avenues for pursuing criminal responsibility and would be significant in its own right.

Concerns About Fair Trials and the Death Penalty

The above-described investigative mechanisms can be thought of as "step 1" in the process of accountability, as, in each instance, "step 2"—where the prosecutions will occur—is not yet fully resolved, and the answer in

each situation may be somewhat ad hoc. While the future could bring full-scale tribunals for Syria, ISIL crimes in Iraq, or crimes in Myanmar, it is also possible that none of those outcomes will be politically feasible. A key goal will be to ensure that whatever prosecutions do occur (particularly where the international community is involved), encompass crimes by state actors,⁷⁵ adhere to international standards of due process,⁷⁶ and do not implement the death penalty.

While the field of international justice is committed to ensuring prosecution of atrocity crimes, it is committed to doing so through *fair trials* that implement due process protections. When trials lack such protection, aside from the unfairness to the accused, the trial process cannot be said to be truly reckoning with the past, can leave lingering concerns as to whether the crimes occurred (or occurred in the way portrayed), fails to establish an accurate historical record, and fails to demonstrate that the rule of law is functioning. As to the death penalty, while not all countries ban its use, the trend is toward its eventual universal abolition.⁷⁷ The UN system will not countenance its use, and, thus, any UN-created tribunal will not permit imposition of the death penalty as a possible punishment.⁷⁸ While unfair domestic trials and/or ones that implement the death penalty may also be significantly concerning (such as those occurring in Iraq),⁷⁹ the UN and the international community may be in less of a position to influence those (although they should attempt to do so); the UN, however, can specify the conditions under which the three investigative mechanisms turn over the information they gather to domestic courts or other tribunals.

The terms of reference of each mechanism govern the conditions under which each may furnish information to proceedings, whether before international or domestic courts. Thus, the IIM is mandated “to collect, consolidate, preserve and analyse evidence of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights violations and abuses and to prepare files in order to facilitate and expedite *fair and independent criminal proceedings, in accordance with international law standards*, in national, regional or international courts or tribunals that have or may in the future have jurisdiction over these crimes, in accordance with international law.”⁸⁰ The resolution creating UNITAD and the resolution creating the IIMM contain similar requirements.⁸¹ The IIMM’s terms of reference additionally provide that it will share its information only with jurisdictions “where the application of the death penalty would not apply for the

offences under consideration.”⁸² The IIMM also provides for this,⁸³ but UNITAD’s terms of reference lack that requirement.⁸⁴

It is significantly concerning that UNITAD’s terms of reference do not provide that it will not share information with jurisdictions where the death penalty could be imposed; it is also difficult to imagine that UN Member States would tolerate UN funding being used in a way that helps facilitate executions. Admittedly, if UN best practices are adhered to and none of the mechanisms furnishes its information to trials that do not accord with internationally accepted fair trial standards or implement the death penalty that would limit where the mechanisms are able to provide their information. This could present a challenge particularly regarding UNITAD.⁸⁵ Not only is there the issue of the death penalty, but there is also a clear tension between UNITAD’s mandate to support Iraqi domestic efforts and the requirement that its information only be used “in fair and independent criminal proceedings, consistent with applicable international law, conducted by competent national-level courts.”⁸⁶ Because, according to various accounts, Iraqi courts are conducting brief trials of accused ISIL members, without due process, and imposing the death penalty,⁸⁷ UNITAD would be violating the terms of the Security Council resolution that created it (in terms of the fair trial requirement) if it supplies information to, or otherwise furthers, such prosecutions. Given that heavily flawed ISIL prosecutions are already occurring in Iraqi domestic courts, it does leave it somewhat unresolved what UNITAD will be able to do with the evidence it compiles, other than providing it to European (or other) authorities pursuing isolated ISIL cases.⁸⁸

Because large numbers of alleged ISIL perpetrators (including their families) are being held in Iraq and Syria,⁸⁹ and European countries are reticent to take back their nationals who are alleged to have fought for ISIL,⁹⁰ there is a significant danger of these cases being summarily resolved in the region (with or without UNITAD’s involvement). If countries are going to develop another solution—e.g., a regional hybrid tribunal or a hybrid tribunal sitting in Iraqi Kurdistan⁹¹—they need to do so promptly. European (and other) countries could also take back their nationals and try them for war crimes or terrorism within their domestic court systems, with UNITAD sharing information with them. The deplorable situation of women and children being held in prisons or camps, sometimes solely based on familial ties to ISIL fighters, also

requires swift resolution. For European countries to deprive these individuals of their passports, stripping them of nationality (as some have been doing),⁹² is hardly a solution. Thus, there are huge numbers of unanswered questions regarding UNITAD, whereas the foundational documents of the other two mechanisms appear to commit them not to surrender information to prosecutions absent fair trial protections and guarantees of non-implementation of the death penalty. The problematic “one-sided” nature of UNITAD’s investigations seems not easily curable as it is built into UNITAD’s mandate.

All in all, does the creation of these three investigative mechanisms represent a “retreat” for the field of international justice? In part it will depend on whether in each of the three situations, effective and fair prosecutions are eventually able to result. The creation of the mechanisms was a somewhat creative (as to the IIIM and the IIMM), and somewhat flawed (as to UNITAD), “part 1” solution when the politics blocked a comprehensive prosecutorial approach. The international community needs to remain sufficiently invested to ensure that the “part 2” solution—fair and effective prosecutions absent implementation of the death penalty—results in *each* of the three situations. Only the future will reveal whether the creation of these mechanisms represents a greater shift in favor of creating such mechanism and not additional tribunals.

CONCLUSION

The field of international justice has made significant progress in the last two and a half decades, yet some of that progress is now slowing due to a political landscape that is less conducive to prosecuting—and sometimes intent on disrupting the prosecution of—core atrocity crimes. One sees this hostility manifest in disruptive and destructive pushback against the work of the ICC, particularly where it tries to examine the conduct of state actors. (For a discussion of the resurgence of the state, see Christopher Ankersen’s chapter in this volume.) The ICC’s ASP faces a challenge to counter this disruptive and destructive conduct, and perhaps the new ICC Independent Expert Review process will be able to contribute to that effort. With the growth of the field and the expectation that core atrocity crimes *must* be prosecuted, one sees tremendous demand for justice regarding crimes committed in Syria, Iraq (by ISIL), and Myanmar, but the politics are such that the most direct routes to ensuring prosecutions in each of those situations are blocked. Whereas in earlier decades,

accountability in the face of such political impediments might not even have been attempted, the international community is at least trying to find new and creative solutions to ensure at least some measure of accountability. (On the importance of norms in global affairs, see Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu's chapter in this volume.) Significant challenges, however, remain—namely, to guarantee each of the investigative mechanisms is able to contribute its evidence toward fair and systematic prosecutions that do not implement the death penalty, and it is concerning that only two of the mechanism appear to have fully made this commitment. An additional challenge for both the ICC and the international community regarding the mechanisms will be to ensure that the rule of law can apply equally to all, so that not even state actors remain above the law.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. If the ICC is only able to prosecute in certain situations, such as those where a State Party has referred a situation involving crimes committed on its territory, would you support those ICC prosecutions? Put another way, until the ICC has global reach (i.e., all states join the Rome Statute) is some, potentially selective, justice before the ICC better than none?
2. If the UN Security Council can only reach agreement to investigate or prosecute atrocity crimes committed by one side in a conflict, do you support such investigations and/or prosecutions? If such a practice becomes more widespread, what would the ramifications be? Is your answer different from, or consistent with, your answer above?
3. Is it a concern for the international community if the spouses of alleged ISIL perpetrators and/or their children are being held in prisons or camps without charges? Aside from concerns about humane treatment (particularly of juveniles), is this an effective way to ensure there are not new generations of ISIL perpetrators? Is depriving individuals of their passports (taking away their citizenship) an effective way to deal with those in detention?
4. Assuming there exists sufficient evidence to substantiate the charges, should the ICC investigate and/or prosecute US nationals allegedly implicated in the crime of torture—which can constitute either a war crime or a crime against humanity? Note that because Afghanistan

is a State Party to the ICC's Rome Statute there is ICC jurisdiction over crimes committed in Afghanistan since May 2003.

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NOTES

1. The ICC also has jurisdiction over the crime of aggression, although this was only more recently activated, effective July 17, 2018.
2. Under the “complementarity” regime of the Rome Statute, the country where the crimes occurred or whose nationals are involved has the first opportunity to investigate and/or prosecute the crime. See Rome Statute, July 17, 1998, Art. 17.
3. Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (as amended), Art. 13, July 17, 1998. Referral is different than jurisdiction. ICC jurisdiction over genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes exists (1) as to crimes committed on the territory of a State Party; (2) as to crimes committed by nationals of a State Party; and (3) by UN Security Council referral. Rome Statute, Arts. 12(2)(a), 12(2)(b), 13(b). See also *ibid.*, Art. 12(3) (declarations).
4. A State Party is a state that has joined the ICC's Rome Statute through ratification or accession.
5. A State Party also owes statutory obligations to cooperate. See Rome Statute, Art. 86.
6. This problem also exists when *other* states (not ones where the crimes occurred) make the referral, as happened when six States Parties (excluding Venezuela) referred Venezuela.
7. See Pre-Trial Chamber I. 2009. Warrant of Arrest for Omar Hassan Ahmad Al Bashir. ICC-02/05-01/09, March 4 (crimes against humanity and war crimes); see also Pre-Trial Chamber I. 2010. Second Warrant of Arrest for Omar Hassan Ahmad Al Bashir. ICC-02/05-01/09, July 12 (genocide).
8. See Pre-Trial Chamber II. 2011. Decision on the Prosecutor's Application for Summonses to Appear for Francis Kirimi Muthaura, Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta and Mohammed Hussein Ali. ICC-01/09-02/11, March 8. https://www.icc-cpi.int/CourtRecords/CR2011_02586.PDF; Pre-Trial Chamber II. 2011. Decision on the Prosecutor's Application for Summons to Appear for William Samoei Ruto, Henry Kiprono Kosgey and Joshua Arap Sang. ICC-01/09-01/11-1, March 9, 2011. <https://www.icc-cpi.int/Pages/record.aspx?docNo=ICC-01/09-01/11-1>.

9. The Bashir warrants cover mass atrocity crimes committed in Darfur by the Janjaweed militia and Sudanese military. The Kenyatta case concerned 2007–2008 post-election violence in Kenya in which over 1000 were killed.
10. Nichols, Michelle. 2013. African Leaders Ask U.N. to Defer Kenya International Criminal Trials. *Reuters*, October 22. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kenya-icc-un/african-leaders-ask-u-n-to-defer-kenya-international-criminal-trials-idUSBRE99L14O20131022>.
11. Akande, Dapo. 2010. Addressing the African Union’s Proposal to Allow the UN General Assembly to Defer ICC Prosecutions. *EJIL Talk!* October 30. <https://www.ejiltalk.org/addressing-the-african-unions-proposal-to-allow-the-un-general-assembly-to-defer-icc-prosecutions>. See Rome Statute, Art. 16 (providing for deferrals). The Security Council declined to make deferrals.
12. See Withnall, Adam. Gambia Pulls Out of “Racist” ICC Amid Fears of a Mass African Exodus. *The Independent*, October 26. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/gambia-international-criminal-court-south-africa-burundi-withdrawal-rome-statute-a7381336.html>.
13. 2016. African Union Backs Mass Withdrawal from ICC. *BBC News*, February 1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-38826073>.
14. Self-referrals include: Uganda, DRC, Mali, CAR (twice), and Gabon (since closed).
15. See, e.g., Coalition for the ICC. 2018. African Civil Society Launches Network on International Criminal Justice, February 6. <http://www.coalitionfortheicc.org/news/20180206/african-civil-society-launches-network-international-criminal-justice>. See also Chothia, Farouk. 2011. Africa’s Fatou Bensouda Is New ICC Chief Prosecutor. *BBC Africa*, December 12. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-16029121> (as Prosecutor Bensouda has repeatedly stated: “We say that the ICC is targeting Africans, but all of the victims in our cases in Africa are African victims”).
16. Rome Statute, Art. 127.
17. MacNeil, Gillian, and Ayodele Akenroye. 2016. International & Transnational Criminal Law, Guest Blog: The ASP Meeting—Challenges and Opportunities for the International Criminal Court, November 17. <http://rjcurrie.typepad.com/international-and-transna/2016/11/guest-blog-the-asp-meeting-challenges-and-opportunities-for-the-international-criminal-court.html>.
18. Onishi, Norimitsu. 2017. South Africa Reverses Withdrawal from International Criminal Court. *New York Times*, March 8. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/08/world/africa/south-africa-icc-withdrawal.html?_r=0 (Gambia and South Africa reversed their withdrawals). The change in the Gambia’s presidency altered the political situation back to one

- favorable to the ICC. See Mogeni, Lindah. 2016. Gambia May Not Join Other African States in ICC Withdrawal. *The Wire*, December 9. <https://thewire.in/85747/gambia-icc-africa> (Gambia's new President, Adama Barrow, has said there is no need for Gambia to leave the Court).
19. *But* see text accompanying note 28 *infra*.
 20. See note 39 *infra* (open preliminary examinations and investigations).
 21. ICC. 2019. President of the Assembly of States Parties Regrets Withdrawal from the Rome Statute by the Philippines, March 18. <https://www.icc-cpi.int/Pages/item.aspx?name=pr1443>.
 22. Secretariat of the Assembly of States Parties. 2015. Informal Compilation of Proposals to Amend the Rome Statute, January 23. https://asp.icc-cpi.int/iccdocs/asp_docs/Publications/WGA-Inf-Comp-RS-amendments-ENG.pdf.
 23. See Charter of the International Military Tribunal, annexed to the Agreement for the Prosecution and Punishment of the Major War Criminals of the European Axis. August 8, 1945, Art. 7. 82 UNTS 251 (“The official position of defendants, whether as Heads of State or responsible officials in Government Departments, shall not be considered as freeing them from responsibility”); Proclamation of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Art. 6. January 19, 1946 (establishing an International Military Tribunal for the Far East) (similar).
 24. American NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court [hereafter, “AMICC”], Assembly of States Parties Fifteenth Session. 2016. Final Report (“the statements of a substantial majority of delegations made clear that the dialogue absolutely must not include any change in the Court’s mandate to try persons without regard to their immunity as senior officials”).
 25. Appeals Chamber. 2019. Judgment in the Jordan Referral re Al-Bashir Appeal, para. 117. ICC-02/05-01/09-397-Corr., May 6. <https://www.icc-cpi.int/Pages/record.aspx?docNo=ICC-02/05-01/09-397>. Jordan is far from the only State Party to which Bashir has travelled and not been arrested.
 26. Rome Statute, Art. 86.
 27. See, e.g., Judgment in the Jordan Referral re Al-Bashir Appeal, *supra* note 25 (“There was no ground for Jordan not to execute the request for arrest and surrender [of Al-Bashir] and ... therefore it did not comply with its obligation to cooperate with the Court pursuant to articles 86 *et seq.* of the Statute.”).
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 36. The ASP consists of representatives of States Parties to the ICC’s Rome Statute.
 37. In neither of the two Security Council referred situations—Darfur and Libya—has the Security Council provided follow-up assistance to the ICC.
 38. For instance, at ASP 15 (in 2016), States Parties insisting on “zero growth” were: Canada, Ecuador, France, Italy, Japan, Poland, Spain, UK, and Venezuela. AMICC Report, *supra* note 24.
 39. The Court has preliminary examinations open as to: Colombia, Guinea, Iraq (UK), Nigeria, Palestine, Philippines, Ukraine, and Venezuela (I & II). It has investigations open as to: DRC, Uganda, Darfur,

- CAR, Kenya, Libya, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, CAR II, Georgia, Burundi, Bangladesh/Myanmar, and Afghanistan. ICC. Situations and Cases. <https://www.icc-cpi.int/pages/situation.aspx>.
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61. While the ICC has an open preliminary emanation related to crimes by UK nationals in Iraq, this stems from the UK being a State Party. Iraq is not a party; accordingly, there is no jurisdiction within Iraq more broadly. See note 3 *supra* (ICC jurisdiction).
 62. See, e.g., “They Came to Destroy”: ISIS Crimes Against the Yazidis, *supra* note 51 (suspected genocide against the Yazidis).
 63. The Nuremberg Charter only granted jurisdiction over war criminals from “European Axis” countries. Charter of the International Military Tribunal, *supra* note 23, Art. 6.
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 65. Website of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/IIMM/Pages/Index.aspx>.
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Feminist Principles in Global Affairs: Undiplomatic Practice

Anne Marie Goetz

In February 2015, not long after declaring that Sweden was practicing feminist foreign policy (FFP)—making it the first country explicitly to do so—Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom, in a speech to the Swedish parliament, detailed religiously sanctioned abuses of women’s rights in Saudi Arabia, and described the sentence of a thousand lashes for a blogger who had criticized Islam as ‘medieval’.¹ A month later she was blocked at the last minute from delivering a long-planned speech on women’s rights to the Arab League. The next day Sweden canceled an agreement on arms sales to Saudi. Saudi immediately recalled its ambassador and temporarily suspended business visas for Swedes. Arab commentators condemned Wallstrom’s use of the word ‘medieval’ as a slur reflecting deeper Islamophobia.²

The move also triggered a united howl of protest from the Swedish business establishment. Thirty CEOs signed a letter claiming that her move jeopardized Sweden’s standing as a trade partner. The Swedish

A. M. Goetz (✉)

Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University,
New York, NY, USA

e-mail: amg22@nyu.edu

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king—a symbol of traditional patriarchy—hailed Wallstrom in for a scolding and sent an mollifying letter to Riyadh. The feminist IR theorist Jacqui True described this ‘spontaneous solidarity’ as a strong example of ‘*patriarchy* at work’ or: ‘regimes of masculine hegemonies and the unequal entitlements that hold such hierarchical political economic orders together at every level.’³ No solidarity was offered by any of the countries that claim to foreground human rights, particularly those in the EU, whose diplomats avoided commenting until the spat blew over. An adjective dreaded in the world of foreign policy started to be applied to Wallstrom: ‘undiplomatic’.⁴

This episode exposes tensions in the pursuit of feminist objectives via the state. Voicing an inconvenient truth about Saudi human rights abuses, Wallstrom revealed how routinely ethics are sacrificed for superficial international harmony and substantial domestic profit—the unsavory trade-offs that are the stuff of foreign policy.⁵ The incident also exposed the enormous foreign policy power of the private sector and the limits it puts on the pursuit of social justice (notwithstanding the potential of enlightened capitalism, discussed in Christian Busch’s chapter in this volume). Wallstrom’s feminist foreign policy was by definition not just ‘undiplomatic’; it disrupted assumptions about what is in the ‘national interest’, exposing the gendered and racial harms caused overseas by domestic businesses, including Sweden’s arms trade.

Feminist approaches to International Relations (IR) theory and to the practice of global affairs have problematized the core focus of IR analysis: the construction of national interest and the way states navigate the tensions between the benefits of cooperation beyond borders and the protections afforded by the defense of national sovereignty. The continued centrality of the state in global affairs is discussed in Ankersen’s chapter in this volume, and this chapter shows how feminists are seeking to repurpose state-to-state relationships to advance gender equality in international space. The uneasy fit between feminist foreign policy (FFP) and conventional approaches to national security and economic growth, however, exposes some of the limitations of pursuing a feminist project with the tools of patriarchal national institutions, even in a context as ‘woke’ as postindustrial welfare state Sweden.

Feminists have registered impressive successes in international space. There are women in leadership positions in institutions of global governance today, and in national and regional security institutions. Most multilateral governance and security institutions have included the promotion of gender equality in their core missions. In 2010 the UN

created UN Women, an agency with a significant operational and normative mandate to advance gender equality; in 2015 the UN's Sustainable Development Goals included a stand-alone goal on gender equality, and in 2017 the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres committed to achieving gender parity across the UN by 2026.⁶ The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, produced at the UN's Fourth World Conference on women, is a wide-ranging progressive global political settlement on the imperative of achieving gender equality. UN Security Council resolution 1325 (passed in 2000) and nine subsequent resolutions establish the need to build women's participation in conflict resolution and peacekeeping. By 2020, four countries—Canada, France, Mexico, and Sweden—declared themselves to be practicing FFP. Two of them, France and Mexico, set themselves the task of hosting, in 2020, a 25 years-on reboot of Beijing, what in effect have been a Fifth World Conference on Women, had the COVID-19 pandemic not scuppered that plan.

But in the everyday practice of diplomacy, development, and trade, and in the crisis-driven practices of security, conflict resolution, and humanitarian response, gender equality issues are still often treated as an afterthought or optional extra. This has consequences. While near-parity has been achieved in education, the rate of women's engagement in the market economy has slowed since 2000 and reversed in some contexts, the gender pay gap remains significant, women hold just a quarter of positions in representative politics, women continue to do the bulk of unpaid care work, and gender-based violence continues at a high level, affecting one in three women.⁷ Gender-based discrimination and injustice continues to be treated as a matter of cultural preference, protected by notions of national sovereignty, and thus not meant for comment or action across borders; any such engagement would be 'undiplomatic'.

The fact of ongoing discrimination indicates that feminist principles and approaches have not been institutionalized securely. Lately, gains in women's rights have been reversed by conservative governments in some countries that, for instance, challenge women's reproductive autonomy (for instance the Trump administration's prohibition on funding overseas reproductive health efforts that include abortion referrals)⁸ or that relax the policing of domestic violence (for instance the 2012 legislation in Russia decriminalizing the first few instances of spousal battery).⁹ In some contexts, conservative and populist leaders have mobilized misogyny along with xenophobia to construct atavistic patriarchal notions of nation,

and are converting national women's rights bureaucracies into institutions to promote traditional families and to boost population growth.¹⁰ Although global commitments to women's rights—such as the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action—have been historically recent and unevenly implemented, a determined effort to dismantle them has been mounted by a growing collection of states that are hostile to women's sexual and reproductive freedoms, and that forbid expression of nonconforming sexual orientation or gender identity.¹¹ Does the recent emergence of FFP, and the fact that France and Mexico sponsored a Beijing+25 debate in 2020, suggest a more robust global institutionalization of feminist principles? I argue that is not the case so far, nor will it be until state and multilateral sponsors of gender equality are willing to risk diplomatic embarrassment and isolation by refusing to sideline women's rights.

THE CORE FEMINIST DILEMMA: LIMITED LEVERAGE

Feminist IR theorists differ in their perspectives on whether patriarchal states, products of political settlements that have excluded women, can be vehicles for the advancement of women's rights. Liberal theorists identify feminist outcomes in democratic welfare states.¹² Socialist feminists are more skeptical, given the privileging of private property and profit over equality in the context of hegemonic neoliberal economic policy.¹³ Post-structural and queer theorists suggest that 'state feminism' may be a fantasy in which, to quote Connell, feminists are merely: 'Appealing from Caesar unto Caesar', a self-defeating effort to repurpose hostile institutions.¹⁴ Feminists from the Global South focus on the racist dynamics embedded in western states and doubt their capacity to escape the reproduction of imperialist social relations.¹⁵ Most feminist IR theorists agree however that because states—the core institutions of international politics—are gendered masculine, the outcomes of international processes reflect and perpetuate stereotypes about gender roles and relations, and the injustices these engender.

Yet international institutions are also more than the sum of their nation-state parts. They can take on agendas of their own, particularly when animated by universal principles on human rights.¹⁶ This is why feminists have put considerable stock in the capacity of international organizations to override domestic patriarchies via exposure of national-level abuses.

Even though accountability systems in international institutions are weak, they have provided intellectual and normative support for the demands of domestic feminist movements, for instance in relation to criminalizing violence against women.¹⁷ The (belated) global recognition that violence against women, including in intimate relationships, is a crime, represents one of the most significant revolutions in human relationships of the past century. While laws against domestic violence had been passed in some countries by the 1970s, it was global campaigning by feminist movements in the 1980s and 90s that elevated the issue to a matter for international attention. The global shift from seeing domestic violence as a private disciplinary matter to a crime is held up by constructivist IR theorists as a paradigmatic example of normative change that can only be explained by international principled cooperation, since it was not driven by, nor did it benefit, any particular global power or alliance.¹⁸

To be realized, however, such normative shifts require conversion into national law. States are thus the main obstacle to, and at the same time vehicle for, progress in women's rights. In this regard the main constraint to the feminist social transformation project is a simple matter of political leverage. There are few countries in which the majority commits to redistribute power and resources between women and men. Sometimes there is not even a majority among women for this change. Women's race, class, ethnicity, sexuality affect the degree to which they mobilize on the basis of shared interests as a gender. Some women may not perceive gender-based justice to be intolerable, particularly where they have bought into the 'patriarchal bargain' where rights are traded for protection.¹⁹ Divisions in the constituency of women weaken the political pressure on public authorities to take action.

So, to be blunt: gender equality policy benefits a collectivity that may not necessarily act collectively. Further, what feminists want—criminalization of abuses of women's rights, reproductive autonomy, an end of the gender division of labor, men's engagement in care and domestic work—triggers intense resistance from individual patriarchs and the private sector. This combination of resistance and limited leverage significantly heightens the level of contestation or antagonism around women's rights and weakens incentives for powerful actors to defend women's rights in public policymaking forums.

Strong states are needed to sustain feminist policy efforts when they so significantly challenge not only the organization of work and family life

but also the authority of religious establishments and the social construction of sexuality and gender identity. Feminist social change projects can be costly too. Economic systems built on women's unpaid care work need to be restructured so that the costs of childcare and eldercare are more equally shared.

Because of limited political leverage, feminists have simultaneously sought to institutionalize or mainstream gender equality within public policy institutions, and to sustain external pressure through lobbying and critique—working ‘in and against’ public authority.²⁰

COMPARTMENTAL INSTITUTIONALIZATION

The practical project of making gender equality a core consideration, and ideally an objective of the way states interact internationally, has involved diluting the striking male dominance of public decision-making, and bringing feminist principles to bear in problem identification, analysis, resource allocation, and operations. At the national level, feminists have pursued a long-term project of ‘state feminism’,²¹ with the intention of constitutionalizing laws and establishing social practices that punish outright abuses of women's rights, that create incentives for men to engage in care work (for instance, through paid paternity leave), that erode heteronormativity (for instance, through marriage equality), and that do not force women to pay for childbearing (for instance, through paid maternity leave or pensions for mothers).

State-level gender mainstreaming efforts have encountered plenty of direct resistance, and are often characterized by the ghettoization of the gender equality effort into an underfunded stand-alone government unit like a small ministry (often connected to children's issues, sports, culture). To deflect resistance, gender mainstreaming is presented as a ‘win-win’ proposition, not a significant challenge to established politics and resource allocation

Ghettoization has also characterized the institutionalization of gender equality in international institutions. At the UN, the Commission on the Status of Women (1946) tended to address social, not security or political matters, following a long-established tradition of leaving the ‘low’ politics of social matters to women and elevating the ‘high’ politics of diplomacy and security to male-dominated arenas such as the UN Security Council.²² The eventual creation of four tiny and competing gender equality promotion offices at the UN with overlapping mandates seemed

designed to fail, pitting feminist leaders against each other, rather than against the patriarchy of the UN system.

The creation in 2010 of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN Women) brought all four gender offices under one umbrella, with responsibilities to coordinate gender equality initiatives across the UN system. It was also awarded the same rank for its chief—Under-Secretary-General—as enjoyed by other UN agencies, and in a helpful move, the US, at the time of negotiating the details, provided that the head of UN Women should also have a stand-alone seat in the Secretary-General's senior management team (in other words, UN Women would not be cluster-represented, as are some other agencies, by another, larger agency). The sting was that UN Women was to have virtually no core budget derived from mandatory member state payments—it would have to generate its own operating budget from voluntary contributions. It was not until 2019 that UN Women finally reached its initial estimated annual budget target of \$500 million.

Ironically—or providentially—UN Women was created at the very moment that the extent of the backlash against women's rights made itself more apparent. In the 2012 meeting of the CSW, for instance, conservative states from Russia to Egypt to Indonesia worked together to prevent consensus on the topic of violence against women.²³ A few years later, Belarus announced the creation of 'The Group of Friends of the Family', about 25 former Soviet states, Muslim and Catholic-dominated states, plus the Vatican, that coordinate to halt normative progress on reproductive rights and sexual orientation and gender identity. Attacks on women's rights agreements intensified after the Trump victory in the US, when US representatives at UN forums began systematically objecting to references to reproductive health, even contraceptive supply, started to request deletion of the word 'gender' from UN documents, and even references to former agreements such as the Beijing Platform for Action.²⁴

UN Women's appearance is providential only, however, if it sustains a defense of feminist policies within and beyond the UN. Observers have raised concerns that becoming mainstream has brought a shift from the antagonistic politics of monitoring the UN's performance to a conformist project of cooperation.²⁵ For instance, UN Women took no significant action between 2010 and 2017 on the long-neglected goal (set in 1994) of gender parity in UN staffing. That had to wait until the new Secretary-General began his tenure in 2017 and personally accelerated the gender parity effort. His efforts stalled in 2018 when the male-dominated field

staff unions objected to preferential hiring of women, and since then neither he nor UN Women have confronted staff unions.²⁶ UN Women's capacity to insist on feminist objectives in international relations will be shaped by the degree to which important feminist leading states at the UN move beyond the cooperative convention in gender equality debates. Whether and how this will happen might be extrapolated from how some pioneer states are experimenting with feminist foreign policy.

Emergence and Definitions of Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP)

Margot Wallstrom announced out of the gate on her appointment as foreign minister in October 2014 that she would practice feminist foreign policy, though she did not immediately define what she meant. On International Women's Day 2019, before hosting a G7 meeting in which, building on the example set by Canada the previous year of holding a parallel meeting of feminist leaders, France announced that it was also practicing 'feminist foreign policy'. Its press release was scant on details save for the promise to release more funds to support feminist movements, and to produce a policy paper eventually on what it understands by FFP.²⁷ Mexico declared itself to be practicing FFP in December 2019. Announcing the policy, Foreign Secretary Casaubón added that the whole government was feminist, and said the objective of the policy was: 'to reduce and eliminate structural differences, gender gaps and inequalities, in order to build a more just and prosperous society'.²⁸ Canada formally declared itself to be practicing FFP in a sweeping agenda-defining speech to the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations on February 21, 2020 by its new Minister of Foreign Affairs, François-Philippe Champagne.²⁹ The groundwork for the announcement had been laid by the Trudeau government which assembled the building blocks of feminist foreign policy since 2015. It had committed to ensure that bulk of its foreign aid (95 percent) would go to gender equality by 2021–2022.³⁰ It had spearheaded initiatives to increase numbers of women in multilateral peacekeeping, and was joining with other OECD donors such as the Netherlands, the Nordic countries, to provide substitute financing for the loss of US funds for organizations around the world providing contraception and abortion services.³¹

There is no common definition of FFP among these pioneer practitioners. In 2015, Wallstrom defined FFP as 'standing against the systematic and global subordination of women'³²—a pithy definition that

incorporates the contentious nature of the feminist project (‘standing against’) and indicated that Sweden seeks to challenge patriarchies beyond its borders. In her speeches on the topic, she fleshed out what this means with her ‘3 R’s’ ‘toolbox’: ‘Representation, Rights and Reallocation’: the promotion of women’s leadership in public decision-making in politics and peace processes, advocacy for women’s rights particularly in relation to ending gender-based violence, and a gender-equal allocation of global income and natural resources.³³ Canada produced a white paper on its feminist foreign policy as part of its bid for Security Council membership in 2020, and linked FFP to its efforts defend human rights in multilateral security policy.³⁴

Sweden, France, and Canada are wealthy welfare states with significant foreign aid programs, giving the impression that feminist foreign policy—and perhaps the costs associated with criticizing abuses of women’s rights elsewhere—is a risk wealthy states can take. Mexico disrupts that impression. As one observer noted at the time of Mexico’s announcement: ‘For an Indian feminist who has been watching, reading and writing about this new kind of foreign policy for a decade, wistfully and enviously from a distance, this opens the possibility that wealth and prosperity are not prerequisites’.³⁵

Mexico’s feminist foreign policy announcement appeared timed to ensure consistency in its approach to hosting, along with France and UN Women, a series of global feminist consultations in 2020 designed to update the Beijing settlement. Its FFP declaration may also be intended to highlight its liberal credentials in contrast with the US’s revivalist patriarchy. It is also presented as part of its leftist President Obrador’s focus on tackling violence and inequality domestically, backed by women in the legislature (Mexico ranks above the other FFP countries with almost half of seats in Congress won by women in the 2018 election) most of whom support scaling up the national response to violence against women.³⁶

According to Martha Delgado, undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights in the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the policy has five principles: foreign policy with a gender perspective, gender parity within the Foreign Ministry, a Foreign Ministry free of violence that is safe for all (this refers to sexual harassment and other abuses in the ministry), visible equality, feminism in all areas of the Foreign Ministry.³⁷ It is notable that four of these five principles focus on building women’s presence and feminist objectives within the ministry itself. A Mexican blogger has pointed out that the ministry has plenty to do on that score:

Delgado is the spokesperson for the foreign policy because she is the only woman among the Ministry's top 11 positions.³⁸ It is clear that its FFP starting points will be a recruitment and promotion drive, an effort to address sexual harassment, and of course its outward-facing commitment to amplifying feminist civil society voices in global priority-setting, even given the postponement of the 2020 Beijing+25 meetings.

Some observers suggest that it is ironic that Mexico, among the 25 countries with the highest rates of gender-based violence,³⁹ is asserting feminist global leadership. Excellent domestic performance on women's rights should not, however, be a requirement for the feminist foreign policy effort—if it were, few countries would even contemplate it, and practitioners of FFP would be held to impossible standards. Mexico is not expected to boast success on the issue of violence against women, but to approach it rather as the significant shared global emergency that it is.

Mexico in fact was listed second to last on a list of 25 OECD countries (Turkey came last) in a 2017 initial attempt to develop an index of FFP by Christine Alwan and S. Laurel Weldon.⁴⁰ Alwan and Weldon assess the relative degree of feminism in a country's foreign policy by analyzing indicators regarding the size of the armed forces and the importance of the arms trade, national ratification of global treaties on women's rights and race equality, the proportion of development assistance dedicated to promoting gender equality, the proportion of defense, trade, and aid leadership positions held by women, etc. While these are sensible measures, they may not apply to countries without a significant aid program (such as Mexico). They also do not include assessments of potentially meaningful signals of feminist foreign policy such as the relative power of military leaders in national decision-making, or the extent to which national foreign policy representatives defend women's rights in international spaces, such as multilateral negotiations.

An alternative approach is to assess FFP against a set of feminist standards. Lyric Thompson has extended Wallstrom's '3 R's' framework, adding 'research and reporting', and 'reach' to the promotion of equality in *rights*, increases in *resources* for gender equality, and efforts to ensure women's *representation*—in internal processes and external outcomes.⁴¹ She lists expectations such as increased funding for women's organizations domestically and overseas, use of gender-responsive budgeting methods, design of trading relationships to support industries that employ

women and have a climate-neutral impact, engagement of conflict-affected women in conflict resolution, and attention to the intersections of race, class, sexuality, etc., with gender as vectors of discrimination. ‘Reach’ means ‘Horizontal integration of gender-responsive measures by applying a gender lens to all policies and programs’, including ‘Coherence across aid, trade, defense, diplomacy’.⁴²

Critics have been quick to point out contradictions in feminist foreign policy, particularly on the matter of horizontal integration. These contradictions are inevitable to any human rights-based approaches in a field where calculations of national security and economic interests can override the ethical treatment of other people and nations. Three specific issues—security, arms trade, and migration—have posed challenges to FFP principles and are discussed next.

Security and the Use of ‘Hard’ Power

High degrees of militarization (a large standing army, military tactics in law enforcement) are linked to higher levels of violence against women and a valorization of force-based solutions by the almost exclusively male leadership of conventional armies.⁴³ Mexico and France both figure in the list of the top 30 standing armies. Mexico ranks 17th with 336,000 personnel in 2019 (0.26 percent of the population). France also has a large army with 307,000 active military personnel (0.46 percent of the population).⁴⁴ There is no requirement that feminists be pacifists though it is common to assume that feminists value non-violent and persuasion-based methods of conflict resolution.⁴⁵ Whether this is true or not, feminist foreign policy has to address the fact that violations of international law might require ‘hard’ security responses to establish ‘red lines’ on international crimes, or to address threats to national security (for instance from domestic or foreign terrorists).

Of the four FFP countries, France deploys its military capabilities most kinetically in international affairs. It is a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a nuclear-weapons state, and has been active in controversial and costly (in terms of civilian lives lost and economic and social damage) overseas military engagements including providing support for international efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, leading the UN-sanctioned NATO 2011 air strikes that triggered regime change in Libya. At about the same time that France declared its FFP, news broke France had covertly supplied weaponry, training, and special forces to Libyan strongman, Khalifa Haftar, who was undermining UN efforts to mediate

differences between the loose alliance of militias in the ‘Government of National Accord’, efforts that included a ceasefire agreement and peace talks in Palermo in November 2019. For the French, direct national security and economic calculations justified disrupting this international effort. France seeks to limit the flow of migrants from North Africa and the Middle East, and any extremist mobilization that could generate a repeat of the 2015 terrorist attacks on Paris. According to one report: ‘the dominant view in government circles in Paris is that strongman solutions are the only way to keep a lid on Islamist militancy and mass migration, and *tant pis* (tough luck) for human rights and democracy’.⁴⁶ The contradictions between outsourcing counterterrorism to ‘strongmen’, and feminist foreign policy are yet to be addressed.

So far the practitioners of feminist foreign policy have largely dodged the issue of the conceivability of a hawkish FFP. Some versions of feminist practice in relation to national and international security prioritize the feminization of armies through increased recruitment of women to combat roles. A focus on women in national and international forces is anathema to some feminist IR theorists and activists in the ‘women, peace and security’ field, as it validates militarism as an expression of sovereignty, and ‘pinkwashes’ violence as a valid response to crises.⁴⁷ Militarism—even with a feminized military, can limit the pursuit of women’s rights to a project of protection, where women are seen primarily as victims in need of rescue. The easy fit of a gendered ‘protection’ approach in security frameworks explains the significantly greater alacrity with which institutions such as the UN Security Council have responded to feminist campaigns for policy attention to sexual violence in conflict, compared to the demand for women’s participation in peace processes.⁴⁸ The ‘protection’ framing inevitably reinforces conventional gender role assumptions.

Arms Industry and Trade

France is among the world’s top three weapons exporters, behind the US and Russia; Sweden ranks 15th and Canada 19th.⁴⁹ Alliances with unsavory actors are the stuff of strategic calculations and in the case of France that extends to an alignment with Emirati, Saudi, and Egyptian regimes, who top the charts for France’s weapons sales,⁵⁰ while Canada and Sweden both resumed arms sales to Saudi after briefly suspending them over the diplomatic incidents described earlier. Weapons provision to authoritarian regimes is simply incompatible with the project of

promoting gender equality. International law can now be invoked by practitioners of FFP to support the ending of arms deals—the 2013 UN Arms Trade Treaty requires states to stop exporting weapons to parties credibly suspected of using them in acts of gender-based violence.⁵¹ But only 97 states have ratified the treaty, and Wallstrom may have been the very first to take relevant action when she ended Sweden’s agreement to sell arms to Saudi on human rights grounds, showing the monumental difficulty of challenging such a lucrative industry. The unified protest across the wide range of Swedish industry (mentioned earlier) also shows how connected arms sales are to other bilateral trade deals. It is not immaterial to France’s calculations about supporting Haftar in Libya, for instance, that the French oil company Total stands to gain from access to oil fields he controls.

Migration

Three of the countries practicing FFP have experienced destabilizing effects from recent episodes of mass migration. Sweden and France were destination countries for refugees from Syria and other conflicts in the Europe’s 2015–2016 refugee crisis. Mexico is a transit country for migrants fleeing criminal violence in Central America and heading for the US. In the 2015–2016 European refugee crisis Sweden received 163,000 asylum seekers, an influx so significant that it changed gendered demographics (70 percent of these migrants were men).⁵² Several incidents of violence against women triggered anti-Muslim sentiment, a tightening of border controls and restrictions in family reunification provisions in order to keep numbers of immigrants down. Restrictions on family reunification had a negative impact on women, since female relatives were stranded either in camps in the Mediterranean, or in dangerous situations in home countries, notably Syria.⁵³

Some countries with conservative governments have, in the context of increased migration pressure in recent years, restricted gender-based persecution asylum claims—as the Trump administration’s first Attorney General Jeff Sessions did in 2018.⁵⁴ All four of the countries practicing FFP recognize gender (and sexuality)-based persecution as a valid basis for refugee status. However, gender-specific asylum claims are dwarfed by claims triggered by poverty, conflict, and climate change. Significant increases in immigrant numbers raise domestic tensions between popular expectations about the bounded character of the state, and in particular

notions of national identity and culture, and the inclusiveness and openness—and also costs—that a feminist migration and refugee policy could entail.

FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY IS, BY DEFINITION, UNDIPLOMATIC

In mid-2018, Sweden's 2015 diplomatic spat with Saudi saw a new iteration when Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Freeland tweeted objections to the jailing of feminist activists in Saudi Arabia. Saudi retaliated by expelling Canada's ambassador and other diplomats. It announced it would sell off Canadian assets, cease flights to Canada, and recall Saudi students from Canadian universities. Hunkering down to weather this reaction over several days in August immediately after Freeland's tweets, officials of the foreign ministry anxiously surveyed social media in the hopes of support from Canada's 'like-minded' partners. On August 6, in an email titled 'Int. reactions and media roll-up' one official reported 'Very little. Only UN Human Rights has tweeted on the issue. I added other countries as fyi's but they don't discuss human rights/detained women'.⁵⁵ A former policy director under a previous Canadian Prime minister lamented in an article in *The Guardian*: 'we don't have a single friend'.⁵⁶ Freeland reached out to her US counterpart Michael Pompeo for support but the US instead urged Canada to swallow its objections, a response that observers felt emboldened Saudi in its human rights abuses.⁵⁷ It was not until the exceptionally grisly murder of government critic Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul a few months later that a number of governments risked their trade and other relationships with Saudi Arabia to condemn its blatant abuse of human rights, and even then, there was little mention of what some have called its 'gender apartheid'.⁵⁸

That the Swedish and Canadian foreign ministers found themselves so significantly isolated for their temerity in calling out Saudi attacks on feminists is no surprise given that it is an informal international norm to excuse abuses of women's rights as expressions of national culture. However, the jailing of Saudi feminists for no reason other than their ideology equates the defense of gender equality with a threat to the state and is an indicator of a serious backlash targeting feminism. This was indicated in a Freudian slip in late 2019 when the Saudi state security agency listed feminism, along with atheism and homosexuality, as an extremist ideology.⁵⁹ In this hostility specifically to the feminist notion that gendered roles

and behaviors are learned and not innate, conservative regimes across the ideological spectrum are moving toward outlawing feminist thinking itself, for instance in the 2018 banning of gender studies in Hungary.⁶⁰ Such moves will more deeply entrench masculinized notions of what is in the ‘national interest’. This makes international solidarity on gender equality more urgent, and will require willingness from the defenders of women’s rights to be more ‘undiplomatic’ and break international silence about abuses.

Domestic solidarity is also needed, and is not a given. A feature of foreign policy establishments, particularly those concerned with national security, is that they are often somewhat isolated from, and even at odds with, domestic decision-making bodies such as the legislature. This distancing provides a degree of autonomy to foreign policy establishments that can enable them to pursue policies that are not fully reflective of national preferences, but it can also mean that other parts of government will not meet feminist foreign policy objectives. This is clear from challenges in ensuring women’s participation in peace negotiations. In late 2018 Sweden hosted ceasefire and humanitarian access talks for Yemen. France participated in ceasefire and conflict mitigation talks on the Libya situation in November 2019 in Palermo. In both cases, negotiating parties did not include women, and in both cases, only a last-minute scramble generated tokenistic participation of several women who, added as an afterthought, were not in a position to influence discussions. The sustained participation of women in Track I and Track II conflict resolution efforts remains the least well-implemented feature of international commitments to the Security Council’s ‘Women Peace and Security’ agenda. That two self-declared practitioners of FFP could engineer no more than a token representation of women in Stockholm and Palermo reduces FFP to superficial virtue signaling, of no use to women’s peace and survival struggles.

WEAK STATES CANNOT GOVERN FOR EQUALITY: GOOD GOVERNANCE AND EFFECTIVE STATES AS A FEMINIST PRIORITY

In one of the most thoughtful early reflections on the emerging practice of FFP, Jacqui True notes: ‘To stop wars, we need to hold to account transnational business power, because it increasingly shapes state policies

more than it is shaped by them’, and she adds: ‘And we need to refocus our advocacy for international peace and security on state power’ because the ‘growth in arms expenditures and tax breaks for multinational business relative to austerity in state budgets for public health and education’⁶¹ are indicative of the prioritization of private profit at home over welfare and justice. She does not link this observation to the neoliberal economic frameworks that now govern markets and distort state power, though elsewhere she and other feminists have exposed the socially destructive consequences of the hegemony of neoliberalism.⁶² The point is that FFP must address economic and financial frameworks that have curbed state capacities for constructive social engineering while expanding the coercive capacities of the state—deployed increasingly in defense of capital, not people.

This is a paradox for feminists who have long been profoundly ambivalent about state power in international space, seeking to limit the issues over which states can claim sovereignty in order to expand the scope of civil society and multilateral institutions to hold states to international standards on women’s rights. States continue to protect patriarchal privileges, to reproduce gender inequality through policies promoting heteronormativity or normalizing women’s relegation to unpaid care work. But states have also provided feminists with opportunities to make social and economic policy to engineer changes in families and markets. As such, states strong enough to promote social change can be allies for the feminist project.

There is another reason why support for state social engineering capacity is increasingly seen as a feminist priority: the hollowing out of state welfare resources has contributed to the lurch toward illiberalism in a number of developed and emerging economies including some of the world’s largest democracies (USA, India, Brazil). In these contexts, heightened economic inequality has ushered in right wing or market populists with affinities for military leadership and violent responses to social protest and dissent. These illiberal regimes scapegoat feminists, immigrants, and homosexuals as causes of social ills. Feminist IR theorists are reassessing former ambivalence about the state,⁶³ considering the progressive policies that have been possible through the liberal state with social protection duties, and considering its enormous significance as a political community that is accessible and meaningful to ordinary people seeking accountability.

Support for state capacities to govern for equality must therefore be a central objective of FFP. States require high revenue generation and policy execution capacity to implement feminist policies in order to survive the political costs of pursuing sometimes unpopular social equality actions.⁶⁴ States are also vital buffers between citizens and the negative effects of global capitalism and neoliberalism as they can regulate business practices and provide a social safety net for workers, including unpaid ones. Few feminist IR theorists have been comfortable suggesting that building state power should be a feminist responsibility, although in an early feminist IR initiative to ‘rethink the state’, Mona Harrington argued that feminists should build liberal welfare states that protect the vulnerable and that prevent subordination on the basis of ‘unchosen group identity’.⁶⁵ Women have been able to access more power through states than markets, and securing political power for women (e.g., through gender quotas) and institutionalized policymaking (through national women’s bureaucracies) is another means of challenging patriarchy beyond civil society action.

CONCLUSION: FEMINISM IN GLOBAL AFFAIRS INVOLVE CONTENTIOUS POLITICS

For FFP to deliver the resources, rights, and representations that Wallstrom said it should, it will have to both build and confront state power: build state capacities to govern for equality, and confront domestic patriarchies, including military establishments, and transnational business, including arms industries. Strategic collaboration is needed between FFP establishments and the gendered bureaucracies in global and regional multilateral institutions. Since the driving energy behind gender equality projects, and the credibility of FFP, resides in the size and strength of domestic women’s movements, increased funding for women’s organizations and the protection of civil and political space for the pursuit of feminist social change objectives must be core objectives of FFP. FFP establishments must also examine the varieties of feminism they export and the degree to which these reflect the ambitions of the imagined beneficiaries of aid, trade, and security actions. Abortion is still illegal in most of Mexico⁶⁶—this presumably is not a position it plans to export. Sweden and France pursue a strategy of criminalizing sex work, arresting clients (not providers), a strategy that is opposed by sex workers’ organizations around the world and that drives sex work further into underground.⁶⁷

Analyzing Swedish feminist foreign policy in 2016, Karin Aggestam and Annika Bergman-Rosamond note that the ‘f-word’ ‘elevates politics from a broadly consensual orientation of gender mainstreaming toward more controversial politics, and specifically toward those that explicitly seek to negotiate and challenge power hierarchies and gendered institutions that hitherto defined global institutions and foreign and security policies’.⁶⁸ The pursuit of feminist objectives in international space has entered a new phase, exposing the gendered biases embedded in political settlements and business deals. Confronting these biases at home and abroad cannot be avoided for the sake of diplomatic harmony. As FFP leaders are discovering when they find themselves isolated diplomatically, solidarity is a valuable resource. The COVID-19 pandemic appears to have triggered a setback for women’s rights, particularly in terms of labor force participation, and it has at the same time empowered some misogynistic authoritarians. This creates an imperative for the formation of new political alliances to hold the line on women’s rights—an important project for states professing FFP. Anything less reduces feminist foreign policy to toothless virtue signaling to an empty house, or, as noted by Mexican cultural theorist Sarai Aguilar Arriozola, to ‘*politica exterior feminista de juguete*’: toy feminist foreign policy.⁶⁹

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How is gender equality institutionalized in your country—what official bureaucracies review legislation and policies to ensure that they advance equal rights?
2. What are the major abuses of women’s rights in your country and who in government, civil society, private sector, etc., is trying to mitigate them?
3. What would be good indicators of feminist foreign policy?
4. What are your country’s priorities on gender equality in international policy debates for example at the UN Commission on the Status of Women, or in regional institutions, and do these priorities reflect the concerns of domestic women’s rights groups?

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Taking Conflict Transformation Education Seriously

Thomas Hill

Thousands of young people began mostly peaceful protests in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities in October 2019. For the rest of the year and into 2020, they occupied Tahrir Square in central Baghdad, spoke out about unemployment, and the pervasive government corruption they saw as its cause, and called for a new Iraq free of external influence, especially from Iran and the United States. Striking university students stood at the core of the protests. They sang. They danced. They withstood tear gas, rubber bullets, and, at times, live fire, from Iraqi security forces.¹ At least 500 protesters were killed during the first few months of the protests.² Still, they did not go back to their universities, despite threats from university and higher education ministry authorities. One protester from the University of Baghdad explained the protesters' dedication: "This is our golden chance to save our country. If we are a few months behind in our education, it is not the end of the world. The end of the world is when we slacken in protesting and ignore the risks facing the country if we remain

T. Hill (✉)
Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University,
New York, NY, USA
e-mail: th334@nyu.edu

silent. I might be dismissed from school or punished, but I do not care. I only care about the success of our revolution.”³

Iraqis had organized and participated in many anti-government protests since the 2003 collapse of former President Saddam Hussein’s regime against a United States-led military intervention. But those protests—in 2011–2012,⁴ 2012–2013,⁵ 2015,⁶ 2016,⁷ and 2017⁸—almost always rushed to predictable conclusions, with government force usually bringing them to an end. The 2019–2020 protests had a different feeling to them, as protesters largely refrained from engaging violently with security forces, and did not back down when security forces resorted to violence. “This is the first time in Iraq that I have seen anything like this,” Jassim Mohammed, a 43-year-old paramedic with the Iraqi Red Crescent told *The New York Times*. “The more the government shoots, the more the reaction of the people.”⁹

Observers of the 2019–2020 Iraqi protests saw them in very practical terms as a new form of engagement between the Iraqi population—especially its youth—and the Iraqi government. One political observer called the protests “the largest grass-roots movement in Iraq’s modern history.”¹⁰ Yet there is a different way to interpret those protests—and the wave of other largely youth-led protests that stretched from Chile to New York to Lebanon to Iraq to India to Hong Kong as 2019 ended and 2020 began. They all could be seen as efforts to catalyze conflict transformation, a fundamental restructuring of the dynamics that define how modern societies approach the inevitable conflicts that occur between leaders and the people they are supposed to lead.

Conflict transformation has emerged in the past 25 years as an approach to peacebuilding that accepts and understands that conflicts need not—and, possibly, cannot—be ended, but that they can and should be transformed into forces for constructive social, political, and economic change rather than becoming excuses for violent actions that lead mainly to destruction of life and property.¹¹ Contemporary conflict transformation theorists sharply distinguish themselves from the two prominent schools of thought that preceded them: conflict resolution and conflict management.

Conflict resolution typically is thought of an approach that aims to reconcile the most obvious needs of parties in conflict and “is about how parties can move from zero-sum, destructive patterns of conflict to positive-sum constructive outcomes.”¹² However, Lederach writes that the very concept of conflict “resolution may conceptually and subtly

promote the impression that conflict is undesirable and should be eliminated or at least reduced.”¹³ Some theorists question whether ending a conflict is either possible or desirable.

Conflict management accepts both the inevitability and possible benefits of conflict in many relationships. It raises questions about “how to design a practical, achievable, cooperative system for the constructive management of difference.”¹⁴ Lederach notes, however, that conflict management rests on a weak conceptual foundation because it is a “[h]eavily Western” concept built on the assumption that “conflict follows certain predictable patterns and dynamics that could be understood and regulated.”¹⁵

Conflict transformation theorists build on these ideas and argue that conflicts must not be reduced to the reimagining of parties’ positions at the urging of external actors in order to achieve acceptable short-term outcomes. Rather, the spotlight must be turned on the stakeholders themselves, who must undergo significant attitudinal and behavioral changes in order to alter conflict dynamics and, as Galtung suggests, “to channel [conflict] energy constructively”¹⁶ so that they, their relationships and the structures through which they interact all are transformed into a more peaceful state. Lederach writes:

Unlike resolution and management, the idea of transformation does not suggest we simply eliminate or control conflict, but rather points descriptively toward its inherent dialectic nature. Social conflict is a phenomenon of human creation, lodged naturally in relationships ... [T]ransformation more closely acknowledges what social scientists have been suggesting for some time about the role and dynamics of social conflict: it moves through certain predictable phases transforming relationships and social organization.¹⁷

Conflict transformation, especially in cases of protracted conflicts, cannot be achieved easily or quickly. It is a long-term process. It requires not only the development of new and deeper awareness and understandings of conflict dynamics. It requires not only individual change on the part of stakeholders. It requires not only thoughtful dialogue and deliberation. It requires not only political action, and explicit cross-communal coalition-building. It requires all of these things—and more. Conflict Transformation Education (CTE) aims to prepare individuals, communities, and larger polities to undertake the difficult-yet-necessary task of transforming conflicts and conflict dynamics as the predominant method of building more peaceful societies globally.

WHAT KIND OF PEACE DOES CTE SEEK?

The peace that CTE seeks to build is quite different from the “liberal peace” seen through the lens of modern international relations theory. As Richmond writes, the “liberal peace” emphasizes “democratization rather than the promotion of social justice ... [accepts] certain levels of dominance and intrusive governance in order to receive related, progressive freedoms. Equality is not a key issue, rather security and stability discursively construct international life.”¹⁸

CTE instead prioritizes contextualization and respectful processes over clear definitions of what constitutes peace and accepted global procedures for how to attain measurable and comparable short-term outcomes. CTE seeks a peace that is consistent with Ricigliano’s definition: “Peace is a state of human existence characterized by sustainable levels of human development and healthy processes of social change.”¹⁹ The process of CTE, then, is what matters most because it is in that very process that increased levels of peacefulness begin to emerge. As Alger writes:

... [T]he further we move toward attainment of our present notion of peace, the more highly developed our future image of peace will be and the possibility of achieving this new image. This is dramatically different from the perspective that looks on peace as a return to conditions before war broke out, or that looks upon peace as a resolution or settlement of certain conflicts so that people can return to other pursuits, assured that the settlement will guarantee the peace. Instead, the broader definition of peace reveals a diversity of human activities through which peace can be pursued, implying that all occupations have peacemaking potential.²⁰

Central to CTE is the notion that peacebuilding can be carried out by everyone: diplomats and dog-catchers; managers and maintenance workers; clerks and clerics. The list is never-ending because the opportunity to contribute to “sustainable ... human development and healthy processes of social change” is open to all.

HOW CTE DIFFERS FROM PEACE EDUCATION

Here, an obvious question emerges: Why can’t the established field of Peace Education (PE) serve the purpose CTE is intended to fulfill? It is a logical question that has two answers:

1. Peace Education (PE) can't serve the purpose of CTE because PE, as currently constructed and practiced, has not—after more than 60 years—even approached its goal of replacing a global “war culture” with a “peace culture”²¹;
2. PE also can't serve the purpose of CTE because the core assumptions of PE are very different from the core assumptions of CTE.

One of peace education's core assumptions is that providing peace education to increasing numbers of students—youths and adults—eventually will result in broad-based political, social, and/or economic change in terms of how societies approach conflicts. As Alger, writes, a core mission of peace educators is to ensure that their messages reach as large an audience as possible:

... [G]iven the poor record of states and the interstate system, in assuring either positive or negative peace for most of the inhabitants of the world, it should not be necessary to argue that peace education should be provided for as many adults as possible. This will enable them to be more effective in pushing states toward positive and negative peace policies.²²

This argument underlies much of contemporary peace education literature: if peace educators expose more and more people to lessons about peace education's central themes—human rights, conflict resolution, gender equality, and sustainable environmental practices—the eventual result will be broad awareness of these issues, leading to progressive political action and changed policies at the national and international levels. The field has grappled with the tensions of individual vs. systemic change. As Burns and Aspeslagh note, there has been a shift toward “holism” that: “links the individual directly, rather than through stages, to the wider environment ... individual change is directly related to global or universal change ... A move from societal peace to peace culture is central”.²³

Still, it remains unclear how peace educators intend to transmit behaviors and attitudes developed in classroom settings into a broader political realm. Beyond simply assuming an additive effect upon society through the education of ever-larger numbers of students with knowledge, awareness, and skills needed to build peace, peace education is concerned with shifting norms toward a culture of peace.

“Most peace educators claim a supranational rather than national or subnational sectional order ... [with] normative appeals to justice, a common humanity and survival of the planet. Survival is the key underlying concern, and the focus is on averting war, and on alternatives to war, which is considered a major threat to human life. And the advocates of education for peace see education as central to efforts to change actions and consciousness in order to stop war and bring about a more desirable human and ecological state.”²⁴

Yet, more than 60 years since the field of peace education became a formalized entity and the first academic college-level peace studies program was founded, it seems important to ask whether the approaches of peace education actually are serving to bring about the broad international changes that it seeks to catalyze. War certainly has not disappeared and, though it has diminished in frequency in recent years, it does not appear to be disappearing. The 2019 Global Peace Index—which annually tracks levels of negative peace in 163 states and territories through the measurement of 23 indicators—reports that the world became 3.78 percent less peaceful between 2008 and 2018.²⁵ Whatever success peace education may be achieving at the individual or local level, it would be difficult to argue that it is having a major effect on the overall peacefulness of modern society. Part of this failure can be attributed to a logical flaw in the basic theory of change employed by peace education.

According to Harris, one of the foremost scholars of peace education, the field is dependent upon an “important symbiotic relationship between peace movements, peace research, and peace education.” Activists have developed strategies to warn people about the dangers of violence, whether it be wars between nations, environmental destruction, the threat of nuclear holocaust, colonial aggression, cultural, domestic, or structural violence. Academics studying these developments further the field of peace research. The activists, hoping to broaden their message, teach others through informal community-based peace education activities, such as holding forums, publishing newsletters, and sponsoring peace demonstrations. Teachers observing these activities promote peace studies courses and programs in schools and colleges to provide awareness of the challenges of ecological sustainability, war, and peace.²⁶

Harris’s account explains an educational system designed to develop awareness about violence and strategies for ending it. By his reckoning, activists and teachers share the knowledge developed by academics with

community-based groups and students enrolled in schools and universities. The only certain outcome of such awareness-raising is raised awareness, not normative change. Harris acknowledges that although a 1984 study by Eckhardt found that “after peace education training, college students have a change in their attitudes toward peace and away from violence,” a 1992 study he conducted himself indicated that “college students most often are most interested in changing their own behavior after such training, rather than trying to work on external circumstances that cause violence ... [M]ost graduates of peace education classes take the content matter of these classes and proceed to work directly on issues of violence in their own lives, as opposed to becoming peace activists and attempting to stop violence in the external world.”²⁷

Rather than questioning the basic theory of change of peace education, Harris delves into questions revolving around resistance to implementing peace education curriculum in schools. He mentions issues including supportiveness of school leadership, and whether teachers have adequate resources, participate adequately in curriculum development, and feel isolation from other instructors.²⁸ He acknowledges that peace education “has not really taken hold in school systems around the world” and that “[f]ormal school systems have largely ignored the educational insights provided by peace activist educators.”²⁹ What are the reasons for this poor treatment of peace education? Harris points to “cultural and economic pressures to ramp up ... curricula to include more math and science so that school graduates can compete in a high tech global economy” as well as fear among citizens of many countries that peace education does not provide sufficiently strong strategies to confront “imaginary or real enemies.”³⁰

Harris sidesteps peace education’s failure on its own merits and makes no serious attempt to explain how individual attitudes related to peace are supposed to translate into broader political shifts. Saloman, meanwhile, points to “four major challenges” that may begin to explain why peace education has encountered such a difficult road in terms of translating its messages into something greater. “Clearly, the idea was to educate not only individuals, but to affect whole societies.”³¹

Acknowledging the failure of the peace education enterprise globally, Saloman focuses on four conditions that are not being met:

- “the ripple effect, whereby program effects spread to wider circles of society”;

- “the endurance of desired program effects”;
- “the need for a differential approach,” and;
- “the application of general dispositions and values to specific situations.”³²

Saloman details evidence of peace education’s shortcomings in each of these four domains and concludes that “[i]n the absence of any one of the four, peace education may likely be a local, well-intended activity, but with little enduring social impact.”³³

Given peace education’s problem with process—how is it possible to translate small, short-term, localized programs into something greater than the sum of its parts?—it is worthwhile here to consider Kelman’s focus on shifting political attitudes, and how he moves “from an individual to a collective unit of analysis” through interactive problem-solving workshops that sought to “[change] people not as isolated individuals but as members of an ethnic coalition and representatives of broader political constituencies.”³⁴ Baron connects Kelman’s workshops to the educational theory of Vygotsky, who argued that a child’s actual potential development is best measured by a zone of proximal development, determined by which problems she is able to solve “under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.”³⁵ Baron argues:

It is also possible to use Vygotsky’s (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD) as a way of seeing how relational Kelman’s approach is. That is, much as a person can achieve a higher level of cognitive achievement in the context of social support, so can a political attitude become more positive when people are part of a cross-ethnic coalition than would occur without such a context ... This example is, in effect, a new way to spin Lewin’s (1948) proposition that it is easier to change a person as part of a group than as an isolated individual.³⁶

If collective attitude shifts leading to political action are much more likely to occur when participants (learners) are treated as members of “broader political constituencies,”³⁷ as Kelman’s work suggests, then the field of peace education may be operating at a distinct political disadvantage by seeking to catalyze social change through the education of ever-greater numbers of individuals who share nothing more than membership in an academic class. In order for peace education to work, true constituencies—not convenience samples—are needed.

Ben-Porath³⁸ brings the issue into sharper focus, and helps to explain why peace education has not—and possibly cannot—succeed in gaining

support for principles and practices of conflict transformation. She argues that peace education typically is “all too often based on definitions that are either too broad or too narrow.”³⁹ Peace educators, Ben-Porath notes, tend toward either a “pedagogic approach” or a “holistic approach.” Those favoring the “pedagogic approach” focus on development of “identifiable capacities” for violence reduction and consequently share a rather modest vision of peace that often is limited to ending or avoiding direct violence.⁴⁰ Educators who utilize the “holistic approach” seek “to devise a comprehensive program to eliminate all aspects of violence.”⁴¹ Ben-Porath believes both groups are guilty of oversimplification—“pedagogic” educators by reducing the problems of violence to issues that can be discussed and addressed in a classroom, and “holistic” educators by suggesting strong linkages between all forms of violence that may be effectively addressed with a unified strategy.⁴² (Harris’ concerns about a lack of support by school leaders for program and curriculum development would qualify him for the “pedagogic” school while Galtung’s efforts to theorize systematic approaches to many forms of violence, would fit nicely in the “holistic” school.)

Ben-Porath ultimately is equally critical of both schools, claiming that they are too apolitical. She argues that a failure to directly address political issues—because they seemingly are too big or too small, depending on which school’s viewpoint is considered—threatens to render meaningless the entire peace education enterprise. She writes that the “failure to envision a different future is the weakest side of peace education approaches of both trends”⁴³ and that the presentation of vaguely peaceful images or the promise of marginally improved relations are not sufficiently compelling alternatives to people experiencing actual violence.

[H]ow do citizens contribute to the continuation of violence or to its alteration? How can the enchanting images of peace be realized? ... Absent responses to these questions peace education fails to tackle the rigidity of and stagnation that are the hallmarks of belligerent citizenship.⁴⁴

WHAT DOES CTE LOOK LIKE?

CTE, thus, must do more than offer small adjustments to peace education. It must offer a radically different approach to educating young people so that they can become active and effective agents of change at the societal level. CTE must not only change attitudes. It must

change behaviors, as well. Participants in CTE need to achieve a full transformation in how they encounter the world.

CTE seeks to answer the questions posed by Ben-Porath through its principled yet political design, deeply engaging its participants so that they can become more reflective and creative in their approach to conflicts and other social, political, and economic challenges. Participants in CTE develop their strategies, policies, and programs not as individuals but as members of polities, which can then work at ever-higher societal levels to formulate meaningful strategies for contributing to higher levels of global peacefulness. Such strategies cannot rest on idealist rhetoric, but must adapt and change based on evidence of effectiveness. They must respond to Saloman's four challenges: creating a ripple effect; creating enduring value; differentiating between diverse stakeholders, and; translating universal principles into actions tailored to very specific political realities.

Critics of CTE might see it as overly ambitious, pushing the boundaries of higher education too far and usurping social space usually filled by political parties, community-based organizations, humanitarian agencies, media outlets, security forces, and, even, religious institutions. Such a critique would be well-founded inasmuch as CTE seeks to unleash the enormous strength of higher education institutions to contribute to the public good through severe reductions in violence of all forms and the human suffering they almost always cause, and corresponding elevations in levels of peacefulness at both local and global levels.

Such thinking is not at all new. Many universities have played broad social roles, at least since the late eleventh century, when the University of Bologna (perhaps the world's first university), helped to establish Bologna as a famous center of learning, attracting students from across Europe who enjoyed special legal privileges and contributed greatly to the city's economic growth.⁴⁵ This idea of the university as a constructive force for social, political, and economic change has persisted. In the early twenty-first century, my own employer labeled itself "a private university in the public service."⁴⁶ CTE certainly would be consistent with the vision of Ernest L. Boyer, who wrote about "the scholarship of application" not as a process of learning followed by informed practice, but rather as an approach to higher education that is "far more dynamic."

New intellectual understandings can arise out of the very act of application—whether in medical diagnosis, serving clients in psychotherapy,

shaping public policy, creating an architectural design, or working with the public schools. In activities such as these, theory and practice vitally interact, and one renews the other.⁴⁷

In this vein, CTE can operate within the contemporary university system. It can and should consist of a blend of theoretical and skills-based learning along with significant field research and practical experiences. As mentioned earlier, conflict transformation is not a time-bound process; in order for conflict dynamics to shift, sufficient time is needed for stakeholders' attitudes and behaviors to change. Similarly, CTE requires sufficient time for participants to become fully self-reflective practitioners and also to develop the hard and soft skills that will enable them to design and implement conflict transformation processes that will facilitate needed social, political, and/or economic changes. Thus, CTE must be conceived of in terms of months and years, not days and weeks.

CTE must be an explicitly political project. However, this does not mean it has to be politically insensitive. Instead, CTE must help its participants understand local and national political processes and how to navigate them individually and institutionally. It must not select or promote a single mode of operation based on dogma. CTE can and should prepare its participants to maneuver through political systems in the most effective manner in order to achieve contextually appropriate objectives related to conflict transformation and peacebuilding.

Using the example of Iraq's 2019–2020 protests, CTE should prepare societies broadly for managing such moments of historical discontinuity, ensuring that both university students and leaders (most of whom, presumably, are university graduates) have the necessary skills and mindsets to work through political, social, or economic crises without resorting to violence and with a continued focus on developing and implementing policies that will lead to higher levels of peacefulness.

At the heart of such preparation must be a commitment to ensuring that students of CTE are well-trained in communication skills needed to engage in true dialogue, which Buber might define as “the art of unmediated listening.”⁴⁸

By listening to the Other attentively, by allowing the voice of the Other to penetrate, so to speak, one's very being, to allow the words of the Other—articulated acoustically and viscerally—to question one's preestablished positions fortified by professional, emotional, intellectual, and ideological

commitments, one must perforce be open to the possibility of being challenged by that voice ... Genuine dialogue thus entails a risk, the “danger” that by truly listening to the other—be the other an individual, a text, a work of art—that one might, indeed, be changed, transformed cognitively and existentially.⁴⁹

CTE must promote true dialogue and honest debate, and deeply prepare its participants in developing understanding and appreciation of alternative points of view. It must build strong listening skills, patience, and empathy. Yet it must not ever be patronizing in its approach or its tone. Honest disagreements must be acknowledged openly and respectfully, leaving all stakeholders with space to question, consider, and reorient their own thinking over time.

CTE must seek to support participants in the act of building true constituencies, involving stakeholders with differing viewpoints, experiences, and worldviews. It must organize such constituencies around the normative strength of nonviolence, but must be fully accepting of individuals’ and institutions’ very different motivations and pathways that have led them to seek CTE.

CTE must be interdisciplinary, in the truest sense of the word, resisting the false god of hyper-specialization that addresses micro-problems without acknowledging the interconnectedness of all aspects of modern society. Similarly, CTE must discourage linear thinking and, instead, draw from systems thinking. It must incorporate lessons about the dynamic interplay between the behavioral, structural, and cultural dimensions of peace that inspired Ricigliano to develop his model of peacebuilding.⁵⁰

The structural, attitudinal, and transactional (SAT) model holds that effecting lasting, systemic change in a social system [peace writ large] requires change in all three of these domains of the society. Just as in the theory of systems change in the organizational context, the three levels are conceptually distinct but practically interrelated.⁵¹

In order to achieve such a level of holism, CTE must not be restricted to the academic domains ordinarily associated with peace: political science, psychology, sociology, anthropology, law, and education. Instead, CTE must be liberated from disciplinary boundaries and cross into unfamiliar territories such as computer science, data science, mathematics, engineering, medicine, and the natural sciences. CTE must bring its unique

form of education to students of all these specialties and must also be willing and eager to learn from them.

Lastly, CTE must be a creative endeavor that seeks to unleash the artist in every participant. True conflict transformation demands creative solutions. Seemingly intractable conflicts often demand unfamiliar approaches or out-of-the-box thinking. Participants in CTE, thus, should not be encouraged to rely upon a standard set of tools or procedures, but should be supported in becoming their most creative selves. With such an abundance of creativity often comes a lack of adherence to bureaucratic procedures. CTE educators must be willing to surrender control of systems in order to allow for maximum innovation.

EXAMPLES OF CTE

The Peace Research and Education Program (PREP) at the New York University School of Professional Studies Center for Global Affairs has been carrying out several projects that use CTE principles over the past few years. They did not begin as efforts to utilize CTE, but over time, project leaders and participants began to recognize opportunities to leverage CTE thinking in order to increase the effectiveness and reach of the interventions.

Iraq

PREP has been engaged with several universities in Iraq for more than a decade (even preceding PREP's formal establishment). Its longest engagement has been with the University of Duhok (UoD), which as of early 2020, boasted the only Department of Peace Studies and Human Rights in Iraq as well as the only true research and practice center devoted to the subject, the Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies (CPCRS). Following are two examples of how PREP and UoD have incorporated principles of CTE into their joint work:

1. PREP supported CPCRS in developing curriculum, training instructors, and establishing an operational framework for what came to be known as the Community-based Peace Education (CPE) program, which trained more than 4000 young men and women in core peacebuilding concepts and skills from 2014 until 2017. CPE launched in 2014, shortly after the extremist group *Da'esh*

had occupied the nearby city of Mosul and other parts of Iraq, causing approximately 500,000 people to flee Mosul and relocate in Duhok city and other nearby districts that were not under control of *Da'esh*. Such an intensely disruptive moment ordinarily would not have been viewed as an opportune moment for implementation of a traditional peace education program. But PREP and CPCRS decided together that moving toward the fire rather than away from it was the proper course of action. By engaging in teaching and dialogue about peace, diversity, different forms of violence, and the importance of becoming community-level ambassadors for peace, the 19 CPCRS trainers who implemented the program ensured that it was not too apolitical, as Ben-Porath warns.

Long-term engagements of the sort that would be most likely to foster true transformation were not possible to organize—mainly because nearly half of the program participants were living in displacement camps—but the three-day workshops were structured so that students could begin to build community-level constituencies, see themselves as community activists and utilize their creativity. Each group of approximately 20 students participated in two days of training and then was given time to develop small community-level peacebuilding initiatives. When the trainers returned to visit with them—an average of two months after the initial training sessions—students reported out about their small projects and then were challenged to locate themselves in a modified version of Ury's Third Side peacebuilding roles, which include: teacher, mediator, provider, and bridge-builder.⁵²

One participant from a Duhok high school said she and other participants from her school had served as mediators in disputes between students as well as between family members. “We are the conflict resolution committee for the students,” she said.⁵³

The CPE program also has shown some evidence of having achieved Saloman's “endurance of desired program effects.” In a late 2018 SMS survey conducted with participants in the program's final event, a youth summit at the University of Duhok, 51 of 56 respondents reported that they had undergone changes in knowledge, attitudes, or behavior almost two years after the end of CPE workshops. The reported changes included both personal and social changes. As one participant reported, “I learned how to co-exist

with other people and respect their opinion even when their opinion contradicts mine.”⁵⁴

2. PREP also supported CPCRS in efforts to help the University of Mosul (UoM) establish peace and conflict studies in the aftermath of the *Da'esh* occupation. CPCRS trainers conducted six workshops for UoM students and two workshops for UoM faculty in early 2017, when many UoM students and faculty still were displaced to Duhok. This was an explicitly political project. CPCRS aimed to provide UoM faculty and staff with knowledge and skills they might use to confront the deep divisions that were anticipated in Mosul between those who had fled Mosul and those who had remained in Mosul under *Da'esh*. CPCRS also understood the likelihood that many of the displaced UoM faculty and students might not return to Mosul at all, meaning that it was essential to begin building stronger ties between the academic host community in Duhok and the long-term visitors from Mosul. The project began to achieve Saloman's “ripple effect” when, in April 2017, two UoM faculty participants in the CPCRS-led workshops conducted a symposium in Duhok entitled “Reconciliation and Social Cohesion in Ninewa after *Da'esh*.” The event featured: two UoD faculty and three UoM faculty presenting together; a dialogue between UoD and UoM students about tensions between the host community and the displaced in Duhok, and; UoM faculty presenting “research on social cohesion in Mosul.”⁵⁵

Colombia

PREP's work in Colombia has been conducted in cooperation with the *Escuela Superior de Administracion Publica* (ESAP), Colombia's school of public administration. Together, PREP and ESAP twice have conducted the Joint Research Seminar in Peacebuilding, which is an intensive two-part course that facilitates student research partnerships and the development and production of collaborative peace research.

The course, which consists of a three-week seminar in New York followed by three weeks of field research in Colombia, meets the standard of being explicitly political because of the sensitive subject matter it investigates. Its first iteration, in 2018–2019, explored the importance of reparations as part of Colombia's peace process following adoption of the 2016 comprehensive peace agreement that brought an end to the

five-decade armed conflict between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) and the government of Colombia. The second seminar investigated different stakeholder groups' understandings of what peace means in Colombia beyond the state-centric idea that the peace agreement has put Colombia at peace.

The course utilizes participatory action research (PAR) as its primary approach. PAR values the knowledge and expertise of community members and includes these community members in investigations of local issues. Instead of conducting research *on* communities, PAR projects collaborate *with* communities to build capacity, share knowledge, and work toward social change.⁵⁶

Relying upon PAR means that dialogue and true listening are absolute prerequisites to any investigation. Research is conducted only in areas where it is needed and welcomed by the local community. And because research aims primarily to support communities in their search for better ways to address issues of local concern, it seeks to build constituencies of individuals and groups that are committed to finding constructive solutions to real problems. Those constituencies, in the case of the Joint Research Seminar in Peacebuilding, have included both the researchers from New York and Colombia, as well as community members where the research took place. How is it possible to know that a constituency developed? Four months after the first course's field research took place, the NYU researchers learned that their Colombian counterparts were in need of funding to continue their own research aimed at having the town of Algeciras declared a victim of collective damage and eligible to receive collective reparations under terms of the 2016 peace agreement. The NYU students developed an online campaign that raised nearly \$1000 to help their colleagues continue their research.⁵⁷

Framing the entire endeavor as a form of peace research furthermore means that the solutions being sought should be constructive contributions to helping those communities experience higher levels of peacefulness. As Wallensteen writes, "[p]eace researchers are not simply interested in empirically understanding the extent of violence in the world. They also hope to contribute to the *improvement* of the human condition."⁵⁸

Such contributions cannot be predetermined and must depend on the needs and priorities of the communities where research takes place. It would be impossible to undertake such research with a narrow disciplinary lens. Identifying problems and emergent solutions to them could just as

easily require the thinking of an engineer as they would an economist; in reality they might require both and more. Finding the proper balance of thinking from a variety of disciplinary perspectives demands not only familiarity with a range of disciplines, but also a high level of creative thinking about how to properly blend them. Thus, the Joint Research Seminar in Peacebuilding stands as an excellent example at the level of an academic course or research project that embodies all the foundational principles of CTE.

Kuwait

There is only one institutional example of CTE among PREP's projects, and it is an institution that, as of early 2020, did not even technically exist: Kuwait's *Al Salaam* University (ASU), a private university proposed as the world's first higher education institution that would teach traditional subject matter through a peacebuilding lens. ASU hopes to develop a School of Business, a School of Law, a School of Engineering, a School of Education, and a School of Graduate Studies by the time of its planned opening in 2023. PREP works to help ASU's founders develop the university's programs and curriculum, and eventually plans to provide training to ASU faculty and staff. ASU grew out of:

... a discussion between [ASU's founders Adel Allaqawi and Amer Sultan Qader] regarding the need for universities to go beyond the provision of qualifications and development of human capital, [and] the concept of *Al Salaam* (Peace) University was born. What drove [the] discussion was a common belief that universities should take some form of responsibility for the future actions of [their] graduates. It was felt that such could be achieved by integrating a peace-based curriculum into undergraduate degree-based programs, so that graduates becoming engineers, architects, businessmen, educators and other global citizens are attuned to their environment and become peacebuilders through practicing their craft from a peace perspective.⁵⁹

With the support of PREP, ASU aims to embody the core principles of CTE. ASU hopes to be:

1. *Explicitly political*: ASU will be a private institution, but its Center for Peace Studies should serve as a forum for participatory action

research into both public and private contributions to peacefulness in Kuwait and the surrounding region. Structures that support all forms of violence must draw the attention of ASU research, which will aim to offer constructive and creative thinking leading to the reduction and ultimate elimination of violence in all its forms. Such research need not be—and, in fact, should never be—politically polarizing, but should acknowledge the roles of all political actors in contributing to violence and exist as a space for thoughtful considerations about how those very same actors might reorient their actions and resources to help build a fully inclusive peace, instead;

2. *A place for true dialogue:* Both in its classrooms and in all its public spaces, ASU will welcome and encourage deep listening. All faculty and staff will be well-trained to facilitate difficult conversations, to acknowledge very different viewpoints and to encourage all members of the university community to listen to and hear one another;
3. *A laboratory for cross-communal constituency-building:* All ASU students—whether they aim to be future lawyers, businessmen, engineers, or educators—will learn core theories and skills that will help them become peacebuilders in their future lives and careers. These lessons will prepare them to intentionally cross boundaries marked by academic discipline, but also by race, gender, age, religion, and nationality. Both on-campus and off it, ASU students, staff, and faculty will be encouraged to develop inclusive approaches to daily life that challenge superficial notions of identity;
4. *A shining example of interdisciplinarity:* ASU faculty, staff, and students all will be encouraged to develop approaches to problems that draw upon the full range of thinking available to them. Disciplinary hierarchies will not exist at ASU, and teaching in all schools will both seek to validate the learning in other schools and will aim to illustrate the real-world need for mutual intellectual interdependence;
5. *A crucible for creativity:* Students, faculty, and staff all will be rewarded for evidence of their creative approaches to problems, both large and small. Peacebuilding typically requires nonlinear thinking, and ASU will be a campus devoted to developing in its students their “moral imagination,” which Lederach defines as, “the capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world yet capable of giving birth to that which does not yet exist.”⁶⁰

ASU as an institution in fact stands as an example of its founders' "moral imaginations." If their dream is fully realized, it may become the greatest example of what CTE can look like in practice.

CONCLUSIONS

Conflict Transformation Education (CTE) represents a new way forward for preparing future generations to build peace at local, regional, and global levels. Peace education has failed miserably in its efforts to shift norms away from standard realist thinking that emphasizes the achievement of peace through the use of force (violence). CTE offers a fresh approach that takes into account the primary reasons for peace education's failure and offers higher education institutions (and others) a set of principles on which academic programs could be built that would prepare students to work strategically and realistically to increase levels of peacefulness. Such programs must: be explicitly political in their approach; encourage and facilitate true dialogue; build diverse constituencies for peacebuilding; emphasize interdisciplinary thought and action, and; prepare students to become their most creative selves. Programs based upon these principles of CTE could produce a strategically placed network of actors well-prepared to work meaningfully across lines of difference and to develop, promote, and implement popular policies aimed at building peace.

Adopting and implementing CTE will require a major shift in global affairs—away from an overly intellectualized approach that believes the next generation of leaders can be educated in mostly the same way as the previous generation. Of course, consistency and rigidity in education leads only to consistency and rigidity of thought. Only a significant normative transformation in how the field of global affairs prepares its next leaders—with a new emphasis on understanding local politics, engaging in true dialogue, and appreciating diversity of thought—can produce meaningful change in how those future leaders approach and govern the world. CTE can help them all do it more peacefully.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. The author argues that peace education has failed to improve global levels of peacefulness in part because of its focus on changing the attitudes of individuals without a blueprint for how societal norms

- might change. What other reasons can you see for the failure of peace education?;
2. Conflict Transformation Education (CTE) relies on the principle of always engaging politically. Might this approach also pose a risk to leaders of CTE or to the programs themselves? Can you provide any examples that support your point of view?
 3. The author offers three examples of CTE: one at the community project level (Iraq); one at the level of an academic course or research project (Colombia), and; one at the level of an institution (Kuwait). Which of these examples do you feel would be the most promising direction for university leaders who wanted to implement a program in CTE? Why did you choose this example?
 4. How might your existing institution benefit from a CTE program? What would such a program look like? Who should be involved and why?

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A Changing Agenda for International Development

Jens Rudbeck

In 2015, the World Bank announced that it would eliminate the term “developing countries” from its vocabulary. For more than four decades it had served as an umbrella concept to differentiate a group of low- and middle-income countries with access to World Bank loans from high-income countries that were excluded from such financial services.¹ While the term “developing countries” had entered into everyday language and was widely used by development agencies, it was becoming increasingly clear to World Bank experts that the classification was no longer a meaningful way to characterize two-thirds of the world’s countries. It was too broad and failed to capture how an uneven integration into the global economy created vast differences between the countries originally lumped into the group. Mexico, for example, has a poverty rate of close to two percent while more than two out of three people in Malawi live under the international poverty line of \$1.90 per day.² To suggest that these two countries belong to the same category gave a false impression of similarity with respect to the development challenges the countries face.

J. Rudbeck (✉)
Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University,
New York, NY, USA
e-mail: jr2723@nyu.edu

The growing antiquatedness of the term was further underscored by the fact that poverty and malnutrition, issues that traditionally have set the development agenda, are increasingly concentrated in regions characterized by violent conflict and fragile state institutions. In the period from 1990 to 2010, the percentage of the world's poor and hungry who lived in stable low-income countries fell from nearly 80 percent to just 13 percent.³ A spike in episodes of violent conflict since 2010 has seen a further deepening of this trend such that by 2030 absolute poverty will—to a significant degree—be located in just 31 countries out of the about 140 nations that today are designated as low- and middle-income countries.⁴

The same year that the World Bank decided to drop the term “developing countries,” the United Nations (UN) adopted the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This ambitious agenda was to continue and expand upon the work that had been done under the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but whereas, the MDGs aimed to reduce poverty and build human capital in low-income countries, the SDGs' focus was significantly wider and aspired to promote inclusive, peaceful, resilient, and prosperous societies. Recognizing that climate change constitutes a serious threat to the future development of such societies, sustainability must be at the core of the agenda (see Michael Shank's chapter for further discussion of climate change). As no country can claim to have found a path to sustainable development a new and innovative component of the SDG agenda was the idea that the development goals are universal for all states; they are not intended to be met by only the developing nations.

The World Bank's decision to drop the term “developing countries” and the SDGs' global reach are two among a growing number of signs that a disruption is taking place within the international community's approach to development. To be sure, traditional issues such poverty, malnutrition, lack of access to quality healthcare and education, corruption, and gender discrimination still persist and remains a core focal point but they are less and less a problem for the vast majority of developing countries. Thus, while the traditional development agenda is narrowing and becoming a concern predominantly for Sub-Saharan Africa, a new perspective is gradually emerging. This chapter explores this emerging paradigm and its implications for future development practices. It focuses particularly on two aspects; first, it discusses the increasing concentration of traditional development issues to countries plagued by violent conflict and fragile state institutions. As this trend intensifies, it has become

increasingly unclear whether or not foreign aid is effective under such circumstances. This has led to a number of new initiatives that seek to strengthen fragile states, among them the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. Second, the chapter explores the growing emphasis on sustainability as a core element in any development strategy. The centrality of sustainability has expanded the international development agenda both in scope and with respect to the number of countries involved in achieving the development goals. As a result of the widening agenda, the UN estimates that the total cost of the SDGs could come to \$2.5 trillion per year for the developing countries alone,⁵ a price tag that raises serious questions about the prospect for success, even when government spending and private funds are combined (see Christian Busch's chapter for a discussion on the role of private companies in meeting the SDGs).

FROM THE "LOST DECADE" TO THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The dynamics of international development have undergone significant changes over the past two to three decades. Up until the late 1990s, the number of successful development stories were so few and far apart that they could be counted on one hand. Only Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea had managed to step out from the "developing country" category and into the high-income group. The impression that more or less all developing countries were stuck in poverty traps that prevented them from catching up to the industrialized nations was reinforced by the "Lost Decade"⁶ of the 1980s. For Africa in particular, but also for oil exporting nations and for countries in Latin America, the ten years between the early 1980s and early 1990s saw economic growth rates stagnate or turn negative leading to an increase in the number of people living in poverty. While there were many complex reasons for the economic decline—including falling commodity prices, corruption, violent conflict, and growing debt—the development implications were straightforward. As economic growth came to a halt it had a devastating effect on access to adequate nutrition, education, and healthcare. Statistical data shows that, during the 1990s, no less than 53 developing countries saw a decline in their Human Development Index,⁷ a measure that combines average income, life expectancy at birth, and education levels. Despite cultural differences, unique historical backgrounds, and geographical diversity, there was a common belief that a majority of

poor nations were in the same sinking boat where similarities outweighed differences. The solution to the crisis was accordingly to follow a fairly standardized set of interventions, often referred to as structural adjustment programs. Key elements in these programs were to cut government spending, privatize nationally owned industry, reduce trade barriers, and devalue the local currency in order to boost the export sector. Privatization, trade, and integration into the global economy were believed to be the best tools to break the severe poverty traps that many developing countries were caught in.

As the dire situation that characterized many low- and middle-income countries dragged on critical voices began to challenge the conventional practices that had determined development intervention since the 1960s. If a region like Africa was measurably worse off after having received more than \$1 trillion in foreign aid over a period of 30 years, could it be that the aid was not only ineffective but a contributing factor to the economic failure? Some answered in the affirmative suggesting that overseas development assistance had trapped developing nations in a vicious circle of corruption, market distortion, and poverty leading to a dependency on the continuation of aid to alleviate the negative economic consequences that aid was causing in the first place.⁸ Some went even further in their criticism and compared the policies guiding development interventions to some of the most repressive and authoritarian ideologies in human history. William Easterly, for example, argued that, “A dark ideological specter is haunting the world. It is almost as deadly as the tired ideologies of the last century – communism, fascism, and socialism – that failed so miserably. It feeds some of the most dangerous trends of our time, including religious fundamentalism. It is the half-century-old ideology of Developmentalism.”⁹ While it might seem hyperbolic to compare the ideologies that led to World War II and Stalin’s Great Terror with the development policies of the UN and World Bank the sad truth is that poverty is the leading cause of death in developing countries. An estimated five to six million children die every year before they reach the age of five. They die from malnutrition, lack of access to clean water, and inadequate health services.¹⁰ The mortality among children under five that arise from poverty dwarfs the number of deaths that were caused by wars and tyranny in the twentieth century.

It was against this background of economic crisis and growing concerns over the effectiveness of development assistance, if not a direct refutation of existing practices, that the international community adopted

the UN Millennium Declaration in 2000. The declaration, which outlined eight development goals and 54 targets that had to be achieved by 2015, focused on reducing poverty and hunger while providing education, healthcare, and protecting the environment.¹¹ In retrospect the MDGs seem to have been a turning point that put many developing countries on a positive trajectory. Global poverty declined from 47 percent to just 14 percent, a drop of 70 percent.¹² The world also saw a reduction of 44 percent in the global numbers of children not attending primary school. In addition, stunting was reduced by 41 percent, and there was a drop of 53 percent in the global mortality rate for children younger than five.¹³ In a status report on the MDGs, the UN optimistically concluded that “with targeted interventions, sound strategies, adequate resources and political will, even the poorest countries can make dramatic and unprecedented progress.” However, the report also acknowledged “uneven achievements and shortfalls in many areas. The work is not complete, and it must continue in the new development era.”¹⁴

This cautious yet positive interpretation of the success of the MDGs wasn’t embraced by everyone. Critics have argued that the goals were formulated in such a way that they created a bias against Sub-Saharan Africa. Even though the goals were adopted in the year 2000 the baseline year was 1990. This was a huge advantage to countries such as China and India that had pulled millions out of poverty and hunger between 1990 and 2000, but a significant disadvantage to many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa that had seen a decline in the Human Development Index in this period. Africa’s troubled start during the first ten years of the MDGs made it much harder for this region to meet the goals by 2015.¹⁵

While some have criticized the goals as having been negatively biased against Africa, others have argued that the MDGs were too unambitious. By formulating the goals as a reduction in the proportion of people living in poverty and hunger rather than in absolute numbers, Africa’s fast population growth diluted what had to be accomplished. Had the goal of reducing those living in poverty and hunger by 50 percent been formulated in absolute numbers instead of in proportional terms, as they originally were in the 1996 Rome Declaration, then the success of MDG 1 would have meant that an additional 496 million people would have had to have been pulled out of poverty for the goal to be met.¹⁶ Sub-Saharan Africa actually saw a decline in the overall poverty rate between 1990 and 2015, but rapid population growth led to an increase in the number of poor people from 278 million to more than 416 million.

Finally, some have argued that the MDG agenda had little direct impact on development practices. A 2010 analysis found that only five out of 54 indicators accelerated after the MDGs were adopted, and the acceleration only took place in half to two-thirds of the countries where the goals were applied. China, for example, which pulled 28 million people out of poverty every year between 1990 and 2008, barely participated in the MDGs. In other words, the MDGs were not met because countries allocated more resources to achieve the specific goals, they were met because of dynamics that were set in motion before the goals were formulated.

Regardless of whether or not the MDGs should be considered a success, an important outcome of the period from 2000–2015 was the realization that poverty, hunger, and the lack of access to quality health-care and education were no longer a common feature across all developing countries. A major reason for this change was the success that many populous countries—in particular China and India—had had in alleviating poverty. When the Millennium Development Declaration was adopted, three out of four of the world's poor lived in one of the following ten more populous countries: China, India, Nigeria, Indonesia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan, Tanzania, and Ethiopia. Over the course of the MDG agenda, seven of the ten countries cut the number of their poor by 70 percent or more, thereby driving down the global poverty rate by more than 15 percent. Only the three African nations Nigeria, the DRC, and Tanzania fell short of that mark.¹⁷ As countries with large populations shrank poverty rates to a point where there was little potential for further reduction, poverty increasingly clustered in the countries that failed to meet the MDGs. Most of them are located in Sub-Saharan Africa. Forecasts predict that Africa's share of the world's poor will increase from 60 percent in 2016, to 80 percent in 2023, and by 2030 Africa is expected to host close to 90 percent of the world's poor unless decisive action is taken.¹⁸ A common feature across the countries that will struggle to reduce poverty rates are violent conflicts and fragile state institutions. Any attempt to reach a deeper understanding of the dynamics that will impact future development practices must address this context.

DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES IN FRAGILE AND WAR-TORN STATES

When the SDGs went into effect on 1 January 2016, it was against a background of 25 years of unprecedented success in fighting poverty at the global level. Perhaps it was this historic accomplishment, which led to the belief that, by 2030, it would be possible to “end poverty in all its forms everywhere,” as stated in SDG 1. What this optimistic outlook failed to take note of was the dramatic shift that had occurred in the composition of where poor people live. In 1990, the baseline year for the MDGs, nearly 80 percent of the world’s poor lived in stable low-income countries, when the SDGs were launched, poverty was largely concentrated in a number of nations facing serious institutional and systemic obstacles to progress. Because most of the low hanging fruit had been picked during the MDGs agenda, future reductions in poverty rates are likely to slow down, and, in some places, could come close to a full stop. If current trends in poverty alleviation continue into the foreseeable future, a significant number of these countries will fall far short of a poverty rate below 3 percent as envisioned by the SDGs. Africa, as a whole, is on track to lift 45 million people out of poverty, but that will only lead to a decline in the poverty rate from 33.5 percent in 2018 to 24 percent in 2030. In absolute numbers approximately 377 million Africans will still live below the poverty line.¹⁹

Accordingly, there is good reason to be skeptical about the prospects for ending poverty in all its forms everywhere by 2030. In fact, forecasts predict that, by 2030, 31 countries will have poverty rates above 20 percent of the population.²⁰ Of these countries, 26 are located in sub-Saharan Africa. Outside this region poverty in excess of 20 percent will only be found in Haiti, Papua New Guinea, Venezuela, Afghanistan, and North Korea. Though no country in Latin America is expected to have a poverty rate above 20 percent by 2030 except for Haiti, five countries—Venezuela, Suriname, Bolivia, Guatemala, and Belize—are unlikely to bring poverty rates below the 3 percent target of the SDGs. Put together these 37 countries will be home to about half a billion poor people. The number of poor people in these countries is closely associated with the lack of economic growth. A country like Madagascar, with a poverty rate of 70 percent, has seen no increase in its GDP over the past 20 years. During this period, the number of people living in poverty

has grown on a one-to-one ratio with population growth suggesting that virtually every new-born child has been born into poverty.²¹

If we seek to understand why people are poor, a good starting point is therefore, to ask the question: why are countries poor? Two characteristics, which stand out across many of the countries that will struggle to raise GDP in the decade to come, provide a compelling answer. Of the 31 countries, 24²² have been characterized as fragile states by the World Bank and by the Fund for Peace's Fragile States Index, and 13²³ of the 31 countries are either currently embroiled in high levels of conflict and violence, or they have recently seen grave forms of violence.²⁴ State fragility and violent conflict often overlap, and in recognition of the devastating effect that they have on development, the World Bank has since 2011 published the "harmonized list of fragile situations," which tracks countries that are "fragile and conflict-affected." Statistical data has shown that the share of the global poor living in fragile and conflict-affected countries has increased from 14 percent in 2008 to 23 percent in 2015,²⁵ and by 2030, these countries are expected to be the home to 46 percent of the world's extreme poor.²⁶

There is nothing particularly novel about the correlation between a decline in GDP and violent conflict. It has long been known that civil war and other forms of large-scale violence constitute a grave impediment to GDP growth. A major study by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) of the relationship from 1987 to 2017 demonstrated that a war-torn country in Sub-Saharan Africa, on average, experienced "a drop in real GDP per capita of 15 to 20 percent over five years compared with a no-conflict scenario."²⁷ As GDP declines, poverty rates go up. Countries that were exposed to large-scale violence between 1981 and 2005 had poverty rates that exceeded those countries not experiencing significant violence by 21 percent.²⁸ While peace and security are central to all states' development efforts, what makes it especially important to the low-income countries, as preconditions to break free of poverty, is the fact that causality runs both ways. Conflict leads to poverty, and poverty leads to conflict. Collier has shown that in any five-year period, a typical low-income country faces a 14 percent chance of a civil war if economic growth is slow or declining. By contrast, if economic growth increases by one percent the risk of civil war decreases by 1 percent.²⁹ There are several reasons for the existence of this correlation between poverty and violent conflict, prominently among them is that poverty makes recruitment of young people into rebel groups easier. The lack of access to education and

high unemployment rates, which characterize most countries in economic crisis, provide incentives, particularly for young men, to seek a better life by taking up arms and joining an insurgency against a corrupt and fragile regime.³⁰

South Sudan, a country that by 2030 is expected to be the most fragile state in the world³¹ is in many ways an illustrative example of the obstacles to progress facing the 31 countries that will continue to struggle to eliminate poverty in the years to come. South Sudan gained its independence in 2011 after a protracted conflict that had left more than half the population below the poverty line. Although the country has received overseas development assistance in excess of \$11 billion and has substantial oil resources, building a state from the ground up is a difficult and complex process that relies heavily on talented and visionary political leadership. Not long after independence, a crisis between President Salva Kiir and Vice President Riek Machar over the distribution of revenue from South Sudan's natural resources derailed the emerging new state institutions, and as the conflict turned violent, it led to the displacement of almost 4.5 million people while an estimated 190,000 people have been killed.³² The escalation of the conflict led the economy to collapse, resulting in a decline in GDP by more than 80 percent, from \$17.8 billion in 2011 to \$3.07 billion 2018. As the GDP plunged, the poverty rate soared from 51 percent on the eve of independence to 82 percent just five years later. In absolute numbers, poverty rose from about 6 million to 9 million people.

The crisis was further compounded by the decision to float the South Sudanese pound in 2015. The move triggered a rapid depreciation of the currency that, due to South Sudan's heavy reliance on food import, led to a spike in food prices. From 2015 to 2017, the official consumer price index rose by as much as 1100 percent.³³ As a direct result acute food insecurity spread through the country, and in February 2017, the crisis had become so severe that the UN declared famine in parts of South Sudan, warning "that war and a collapsing economy have left some 100,000 people facing starvation there and a further one million people are classified as being on the brink of famine."³⁴ The declaration of famine, only the second time that the UN had been forced to resort to this drastic step since 1985, led to a concerted effort from the international community to alleviate the situation. While a full-scale catastrophe was averted, seven million people were still in need of humanitarian assistance in 2019,³⁵ and while a peace agreement was signed in 2018 to end the war, the situation is far from settled. According to a report of the

UN Human Rights Council “oil revenues, and income from other natural resources such as illegal teak logging, have continued to fund the war, enabling its continuation and the resulting human rights violations.”³⁶ As the hostilities continue South Sudan’s poverty rate is predicted to climb from 82 percent in 2017 to above 90 percent in 2030 making South Sudan the poorest country in the world.³⁷

The negative effects that violent conflict has on economic performance have led to growing concerns over foreign aid’s effectiveness in fragile and conflict-affected states. If a country like South Sudan could receive more than \$11 billion in foreign aid and yet see the number of poor people go up at an alarming rate, is it possible that development aid is wasted when provided within the context of war? Collectively, fragile and conflict-affected states receive about 30 percent, over \$70 billion per year,³⁸ of all official development assistance; yet most of them are off-track to meet many of the SDGs. To address these concerns the g7+ group—20 of the most fragile and conflict-affected states³⁹—adopted the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States in 2011. This New Deal sought to strengthen the capacity of g7+ countries to meet the needs of their citizens by fostering inclusive political settlements and conflict resolution; establishing and strengthening people’s security; addressing injustices and increasing people’s access to justice; generating employment and improve livelihoods; and managing revenue and building capacity for accountable and fair service delivery.⁴⁰ By seeking to build capacity in these five areas the 20 countries aimed to reestablish trust among donors that aid can be a useful and effective tool in the fight against poverty despite the difficult context. According to the g7+ group it was exactly the lack of trust in the political leadership of fragile and conflict-affected states that had led international donors to increasingly “bypass national interests and actors, providing aid in overly technocratic ways that underestimate the importance of harmonizing with the national and local context.”⁴¹ This was particularly problematic for the g7+ countries as they are considerably more dependent on foreign aid than non-fragile developing nations. The median fragile state relies on aid for 50 percent of its foreign capital, in comparison foreign aid only accounts for 10 percent of foreign capital in other developing countries.⁴²

Since its inception, many countries and organizations have endorsed the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States and supported closer collaboration between aid donors and the g7+ countries. Despite this support reluctance against stronger engagement remains in certain circles,

and is not just based on a belief that aid is ineffective. Angus Deaton, the 2015 recipient of the Nobel Prize in Economics, has argued that when governments rely on foreign aid for its revenue, “such governments need no contract with their citizens, no parliament, and no tax-collection system. If they are accountable to anyone, it is to the donors; but even this fails in practice, because the donors, under pressure from their own citizens (who rightly want to help the poor), need to disburse money just as much as poor-country governments need to receive it, if not more so.”⁴³ In the absence of a social contract and due to the lack of accountability the state will fragment, which increases fragility and undermine efforts to eradicate poverty. Simply put, the use of foreign aid to strengthen fragile states is counterproductive.

To overcome the choice between providing aid to inefficient and fragile state systems or bypassing government institutions altogether, Gertz and Kharas have suggested that donors should experiment with new forms of shared ownership. As an example, they point to Liberia’s Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP) that, following the country’s prolonged conflict, became a framework for common responsibility and oversight for improving core government functions.⁴⁴ Regardless of the potential of the Liberian model for building stronger and more effective state institutions, basic governance transformations may take 20–40 years. It is therefore safe to say that, in the foreseeable future, traditional development issues—poverty, malnutrition, and access to education and healthcare—will increasingly be concentrated in fragile and conflict-affected states.

THE 2030 SDGS: A DEVELOPMENT AGENDA FOR ALL COUNTRIES

While the number of countries struggling to meet the traditional development agenda is shrinking, the 2030 SDG agenda has greatly expanded what development, at the global level, is supposed to achieve. The title of the UN Secretary-General’s report published prior to the launch of the SDGs succinctly captured what is at stake, *The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming all Lives and Protecting the Planet*. On a more concrete level, the United Nations aspires to end poverty in all its forms everywhere; achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all; end hunger and malnutrition; attain universal health coverage, wipe out AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and neglected tropical

diseases; provide universal secondary education and universal access to tertiary education; end gender discrimination and eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls; ensure adequate and affordable housing, water, sanitation, reliable modern energy, and communications technology access for all; protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation halt biodiversity loss, and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds preventing species loss. The list goes on. Taken together, the SDGs comprise 17 goals and 169 targets that, if met, will radically change the world.

Contrary to previous approaches to international development, where about 30 countries received aid from about 30 donors leaving about 130 countries that neither get much nor give much aid on the sideline, a new element of the 2030 SDG agenda was the inclusion of all UN member countries. Globalization has led to a recognition that issues, such as climate change, the loss of biodiversity, the spread of infectious diseases, terrorism, and cybercrime have negative cross border spillover effects and, accordingly, must be solved through concerted and coordinated efforts. Similarly, positive cross border spillover effects from free trade, ending poverty and hunger, promotion of human rights and democracy, and knowledge and technology exchange create incentives for a development approach that incorporates all countries. In addition to the growing awareness of the integration and interdependence that tie the fate of countries together, the scope as well as the level of ambition of the SDGs also reflected the process that led up to the formulation of the goals. As discussed by Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu in his chapter, the SDGs took shape over a five-year period of extensive consultation. An online survey had more than 7 million responses. Large multinational corporations with trillions of dollars in assets were consulted as were international groups like the World Economic Forum, the G-20, the G-8, the G7+, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Every development agency under the UN banner contributed with their views, and there were thematic, regional, and country consultations all over the world. Finally, “academics and scientists analyzed every goal and target, and debated the cost-effectiveness of achieving them.”⁴⁵ It was the attempt to accommodate the requests from the many interest groups and stakeholders that saw the agenda balloon and embrace a wide variety of issues.

The scope and ambition of the SDG agenda unavoidably raises questions. Will the goals be met? And if not, why not? Since its launch, the UN has kept close track of the 232 indicators incorporated into the agenda, which has led to the publications of a number of reports that provide tentative answers to these questions. The report *Global Responsibilities: Implementing the Goals*—the first major stocking-taking of progress on the SDGs—bluntly and pessimistically concluded that, “the analysis shows that no country is on track to achieve all goals by 2030.” The report found that only three G-20 countries—Brazil, Mexico, and Italy—had taken real action to achieve the goals by having SDG strategies or coordination units within their governments. Of the G-20 countries, only India and Germany had undertaken an assessment of investment needs, but none of the countries had fully aligned the SDGs with their national budgets. Finally, according to the data, two of the largest contributors to carbon emission—the United States and Russia—had taken the least action on the implementation of the goals.⁴⁶ In 2019, a UN published report found that worsening inequalities and potentially irreversible damage to the natural environment make it unlikely that the SDGs will be achieved. While it is unlikely the SDGs will be met, it is not impossible “but only if there is a fundamental—and urgent—change in the relationship between people and nature.”⁴⁷

The lack of urgency with which the agenda has been treated is far from the only obstacle to its implementation. Closing the financing gap is of vital importance for success. With a price tag of \$2.5 trillion per year for the developing countries alone,⁴⁸ the agenda puts significant pressure on government spending, especially for the low- and middle-income countries. A study published by the IMF found that for 49 developing countries achieving the SDGs in areas of health, education, water and sanitation, roads, and electricity would cost \$520 billion a year, which constitutes an additional annual outlay of 14 percentage of GDP on average.⁴⁹ The lower middle-income countries, a group of 47 countries with an average per capita income between \$1026 and 3995, find themselves in a particularly difficult situation as they have a relatively small tax base to generate revenue for investment in climate change adaption, urban infrastructure, clean energy sources, universal health care, and secondary and tertiary education, etc. Whereas upper middle-income countries have much larger tax bases to draw upon, and low-income countries have access to high levels of foreign aid, the lower middle-income countries are caught somewhere in between. With restricted access to aid and limited

domestically generated revenue these countries have to turn to private capital markets to finance the SDGs. Here they find they have to pay high risk premiums due to their existing debt burden. For Africa as a whole, government debt increased from 36 percent of GDP in 2013 to 55 percent in 2018. As a consequence, about 46 percent of African countries were either in debt distress or considered high risk in 2018 compared with 22 percent just five years earlier. This risk assessment had a direct impact on the cost of borrowing for many lower middle-income countries. Kenya, for example, “issued 10-year bonds in 2014 at an interest rate of slightly less than 7 percent compared to the less than 1 percent that the World Bank charge low-income countries.”⁵⁰

Aware of the significant financial demands that implementing the SDGs will entail, the UN called a conference in Ethiopia’s capital, Addis Ababa, in 2015 to find ways to “overhaul global finance practices and generate investments for tackling a range of economic, social and environmental challenges”⁵¹ that arose from the 2030 SDG agenda. The conference was generally viewed as a huge success and saw, among other measures, a recommitment by the rich countries to achieve the target of 0.7 percent of gross national income for official development assistance. Fulfilling this promise, which had been made back in the 1970s, would more than double overseas development assistance. Despite the optimism surrounding the Addis Ababa Action Agenda there is cause for concern. In the discussion of how to finance the SDGs, it is often overlooked that, every year, there is a massive net transfer of capital from the developing countries to the high-income countries. Contrary to general belief, net capital is flowing out of the poor countries, not in. A 2016 study by Global Financial Integrity (GFI) in collaboration with the Centre for Applied Research at the Norwegian School of Economics⁵² added up all the financial resources that get transferred between rich countries and poor countries including aid, foreign investment and trade flows, debt cancellation, workers’ remittances, and unrecorded capital flight. The analysis found that in a single year, 2012, the developing countries received a total of \$1.3 trillion, but that same year some \$3.3 trillion flowed out of them leaving the developing countries with a net deficit of \$2 trillion, a sum that could finance the investment needs in sustainable infrastructure in all developing countries.⁵³ These numbers suggest that for every \$1 that developing countries receive in foreign aid they transfer \$24 back to the rich countries.

Two of the more nefarious ways in which poor nations unwittingly are supporting the economic wealth of rich countries are through offshore tax havens and trade mis-invoicing by multinational companies. With respect to offshore tax havens, the study found that “in 2011 tax haven holdings of total developing country wealth were valued at US\$4.4 trillion,”⁵⁴ diverting billions of dollars into private pockets that would otherwise have become government revenue. Between 2005 to 2011, at a time when global oil prices were high, transfers from Sub-Saharan Africa into tax shelters were increasing faster than for any other region, developed or developing, which, “exacerbated inequality and undermined good governance and economic growth.”⁵⁵ The other spurious, if not directly illegal, way that wealth is transferred out of developing countries and into rich countries is through trade mis-invoicing. Multinational companies can move profits from one subsidiary in a country with higher taxation to another in a country with a lower tax rate by selling goods and services between various branches. Such trade mis-invoicing is hard to prove, but qualified estimated puts the amounts at \$700 billion per year, and according to the report “these figures only cover theft through trade in goods. If we add theft through trade in services to the mix, it brings total net resource outflows to about \$3 trillion per year.”⁵⁶

In 2019, the UN Secretary-General’s report, *Roadmap for Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 2019–2020*, circled back to the issue of how to finance the SDGs. The report struck a more somber tone than the optimism that had oozed from the Addis Ababa Action Agenda acknowledging that the global financial system has the capacity to finance the SDGs, but it also recognized that, “available finance is not channeled towards sustainable development at the scale and speed required to achieve the SDGs... The financing gap to achieve the SDGs in developing countries is estimated to be US\$ 2.5–3 trillion per year.” The report also pointed out that “global flows of foreign direct investment (FDI) have fallen by 23 per cent in 2017, and private investments in SDG-related infrastructure in developing countries were lower in 2018 than in 2012”⁵⁷ raising serious questions about the ability to meet many of the SDGs. Private finance is needed particularly in the area of infrastructure because low public investment, especially in many municipalities with growing populations, has become a bottleneck to further per capita income growth and constrains the transformation of economies toward lower carbon emission. The World Bank estimates that global infrastructure investment needs could amount to trillions of dollars a year and,

in light of the drop in private investment a number of new international mechanisms have been created: the G-20's Global Infrastructure Hub, the World Bank's Global Infrastructure Facility, Africa50 Infrastructure Fund, the BRICS Development Bank, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to name a few of the most prominent. However, according to Kharas, "long-term institutional investors are putting less than 3 percent of assets in infrastructure... if they are to reach the scale that is necessary, public agencies must be more proactive, including by ensuring that infrastructure, once built, is properly used and maintained."⁵⁸ Whether such investment is likely to materialize remains uncertain. This should be a cause for deep concern over the prospect for a sustainable future.

CONCLUSION

When looking at what the tea leaves have to say about the future of international development there is good and bad news to report. On the positive side, it is undeniable that major strides have been taken in the fight against poverty and malnutrition. Over the past two to three decades hundreds of millions of people have been lifted out poverty and into the middle class. Progress is likely to continue, but there is good reason to believe that it will be at slower pace, and, due to high fertility rates, the number of people below the poverty line is likely to increase in certain countries, especially in Nigeria, the DRC, and Madagascar. Projection of current trends suggests that by 2030 poverty will be concentrated in 31 countries characterized by fragile states and violent conflict, countries that are home to more than 500 million people. High levels of poverty, fragile states, and violent conflict are also good predictors of how countries well will do on the SDGs. On the UN's 2019 ranking of how countries score on the SDG indicators, 19 of the 20 lowest ranked countries are also on the list of the 31 countries that are predicted to have poverty rates above 20 percent by the year 2030.⁵⁹ Only Djibouti is not on both lists.

While the 31 countries are seriously off-track to meet many of the SDGs, not a single country is on track to meet all of them. As UN Secretary-General António Guterres put it, "It is abundantly clear that a much deeper, faster and more ambitious response is needed to unleash the social and economic transformation needed to achieve our 2030 goals."⁶⁰ A major obstacle to meeting the SDGs is the lack of sufficient funding. Most countries allocate around ten percent of GDP in public spending on health, education, and social safety nets. In many low- and middle-income

countries, this might translate into \$100–\$200, per person per year, or 50 cents per person per day, well below the requirements needed to deliver even a basic minimum package of services. Lack of public funding is only half the problem. Private sector investment in SDG-related areas is also falling well short of what is needed, especially against a backdrop of a \$2.5–3 trillion global annual financing gap. The World Bank has estimated that between 2009 and 2014, private investment in infrastructure in 77 low-income countries totaled less than \$15 billion per year, equal to merely one percent of the financing gap. The lack of commitment of private capital will significantly hamper the potential for progress, but what is perhaps the greatest obstacle to meeting the SDGs in developing countries is the massive transfer of wealth from these countries to the rich world. This problem is often overlooked and therefore rarely addressed in SDG forums. GFI has provided convincing data that puts the loss of capital that developing countries have suffered since 1980 at \$16.3 trillion dollars. The loss of resources on such a massive scale represent tremendous social costs that have been borne by poor people around the globe. Unless steps are taken to curb the greed of the rich and powerful by reversing capital flows it is unlikely that the future of international development will bring about the kind of transformative change that the SDGs envision.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In light of the growing diversity among low- and middle-income countries, do you agree with the World Bank's decision to eliminate the word "developing countries" from its vocabulary, or do you believe it is still a useful concept?
2. It has long been known that fragile states and violent conflict are serious impediments to economic growth and poverty reduction. If political stability and peace are preconditions for successful development efforts should foreign aid be withheld from "fragile and conflict-affected" countries?
3. Fragile state institutions and violent conflict has put South Sudan on the track to become the world's poorest country by 2030. The collapse of the economy is fueled by a struggle over the country's natural resource. If foreign aid is ineffective in "fragile and conflict-affected" states what steps can be taken to avert South Sudan from meeting a tragic fate?

4. The SDGs are seriously underfunded, which makes it difficult to reach all of the 17 goals. What steps could be taken to increase both public and private funding of the goals?
5. If it is impossible to leverage funding for all the SDGs, which of the goals would you prioritize? Why are some goals more important than others?

NOTES

1. In 2020, any country with an average income per capita below \$12,376 would have access to World Bank loans and hence considered a “developing country.” <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups>. Accessed 19 January 2020.
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Cyber Competition and Global Stability

Pano Yannakogeorgos

People around the world are utilizing cyber technology at an unprecedented pace. All aspects of modern polities, and their national and economic security depend upon a fragile digital substrate broadly termed as cyberspace. As a result, we find a world that is in perpetual conflict with itself. Perpetrators of harm in cyberspace include nation-states, sub-national actors, disgruntled employees, and vulnerability hunters. Their victims ingested vulnerabilities into their homes, businesses, critical infrastructure, and smart things. Humanity is rushing to gain from the promise this technology poses to prosperity and the improvement of the human condition across developed, developing, and less developed societies. At stake is a modern quality of life we have become accustomed to.

This chapter offers an update and compression of some key themes found in Jarmon, Jack and Pano Yannakogeorgos. 2018. *The Cyber Threat and Globalization*. New York: Rowman Littlefield.

P. Yannakogeorgos (✉)
Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University,
New York, NY, USA
e-mail: py16@nyu.edu

This chapter focuses on some of the structural and systemic reasons for why we have come to where we find ourselves now. It is a primer on cyber of sorts. The first section describes why the cyber domain is so important for achieving sustainable development goals and transforming the world. I discuss the technological foundation of cyberspace across four technological planes: Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Operational Technology (OT), Platform Information Technology (PIT), and the Internet of Things (IOT). After establishing what these terms mean, and how they contribute to prosperity, I turn to the two systemic factors that make cyberspace an increasing variable for instability worldwide: socio-technical vulnerabilities and the threat actors who exploit them in pursuit of thievery, disruption, damage and destruction. I conclude with suggestions for how the global community may manage risks to assure cyber is an economic enabler enhancing human prosperity rather than a source of discontinuity, disruption, and destruction.

CYBERSPACE AND THE PROMISE OF ACCELERATED HUMAN PROGRESS

Cyber technology is seen as a core driver of achieving the United Nation's *Millennium Development Goals* and the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. The aim is to enhance productive capacity in developing and less developed countries. Achieving sustainability development goals, and remaining competitive, means that commercial entities have to respond to exact quality and price demands of a market driven by connectivity, free flowing information, and automation. The result of these efforts is making populations and machines more accessible, whether they are markets, political constituencies, energy distribution systems, or smart lights in a house. Cyberspace certainly opens the field of play to new actors and opportunities for creating wealth. However, it also gives criminals, spies, and militaries new openings for plunder and exploitation. Populations become victims as the result of efforts to improve the global human condition with development plans and strategies focused on harnessing technology. The UN 2030's sustainable development goals (SDGs) emphasize the criticality of harnessing technology to improve the human condition. For example, "By 2030, expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries."¹ These modern services rely on cyber as the means by which all countries today build strong economic foundations, empower

women and girls, achieve sustainable agricultural production, and attain a reliable, sustainable, and modern energy services. Indeed, goal 9 calls on all countries to “develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure.” However, policy makers, and those seeking to implement these policies are not cyber aware. The right questions are not being asked to those providing the infrastructure. Noble projects consequently become agents of socio-technical vulnerability proliferation. Thus, as SDGs programs alleviate human suffering and create opportunities for collaboration, the technology they implement can also be exploited to cause harm.

How did we get here? In a word: Globalization. The term “globalization” throughout the chapter refers to the highly connected state and manner by which societies, governments, and economies link across geographic boundaries. Although technology is a key driver of the globalization process, we must remember that, as Yale Ferguson puts it: “those who focus on the uniqueness of contemporary globalization see the microelectronic revolution as the principal technology feature of globalization. To some extent, they are surely correct, although we would stress that such technologies are themselves the fruit of long-term historical processes.”² As cyber technology is harnessed to transform the world, the possibilities of market relations and political responses are heightened and intensified.

“Cyber” is a lax term, and a mongrel concept. Every country has its own definitions, and there may not even be agreement within a country as to what cyber means. For example, the United States has offered up at least twenty-eight definitions across government and military departments and agencies of what the definition of cyberspace is.³ Ultimately, an operational definition must confer a meaning of “cyber” and attendant concepts in the same terms that we use to understand, pen, and verbalize our notions about the other domains of human endeavor where serious challenges co-exist along grand opportunities for cooperation. For the purposes of this discussion I amend “electronics” and the “electromagnetic spectrum” to the National Institute for Standards and Technology definition of cyberspace: A global domain within the information environment consisting of the interdependent network of information systems infrastructures including the Internet, telecommunications networks, computer systems, and embedded processors and controllers.⁴

Cyber is thus a complex socio-technical system that includes both the physical infrastructure and the logical (virtual) layers. The interconnection and dependencies on physical and logical characteristics of the cyber

domain are determined by humans. It is the “logic” elements of cyber that permits information to flow across electronic networks and appear within applications to achieve a specific goal in the non-virtual world. The domain is thus bound only by the limits of the laws of physics and human innovation.

Any visualization of the various layers of cyberspace represents a high-level abstraction of the domain’s components. However, there are technical and organizational differences in how the technology is harnessed into a system for the purpose to achieve individual or organizational goals and objectives. Ultimately, all attempts to access, manipulate, or change information have a human source. Bots on a botnet or a shared email account are cyber personas. In the end, all activities in cyberspace will trace to some individual, group, or machine. These human sources include official actors (such as spies and saboteurs), profit-oriented organized criminals, terrorists, commercial competitors, ideologically motivated hacktivists, diplomats, and humanitarians.

Cyberspace can be broken further down into subparts of specific technological components.⁵ What is common to all is the electromagnetic spectrum, microprocessors, and connectivity. From there, each category diverges substantially. First, there is *Information and Communications Technology (ICT)*. It is a broad term used to refer to systems that store, send, receive, and process data for the purpose of communicating information for personal or business needs. This includes desktop computers, mobile computers, routers, switches, intrusion detection systems, the public Internet, and private intranets. Interoperability and connectivity at global scale occurs via TCP/IP and MAC addresses. When the TCP/IP protocol was invented, security concerns were minimal. It was an open system because it was closed to others outside its small circle of users with authorized access to specific government-owned and sponsored large mainframe computers. Due to the government’s original intension of keeping the function and system limited and proprietary, much of the security issues faced today are inherited traits of a previous generation of development.⁶ The project however ran beyond the wildest dreams of its inventors. TCP/IP today is the backbone of the Internet. The ITU estimates that by the end of 2018, 51.2 percent of the global population, or 3.9 billion people, were using the Internet, accessing it via desktop or mobile broadband access points.⁷ Affordability of service is one key driver. The cheaper cost of access is directly correlated to the increased access from these countries as the percentage of the gross national income

in least developed countries (LDCs) reaches parity with the developed world, more people will begin to interact across borders and utilize the domain for both good and bad.

The surges in efficiency, reduction of cost, and ease of access have boosted commerce. Access to ICT has become a significant engine for domestic economic growth, and increasingly creates cross border export opportunities combined global ecommerce sales, led by the United States, reached \$29 trillion in 2017. Despite the hope by the original developers of the Internet and others that the digital age would bring along with it new accesses to empowerment and a spirit of democracy, the trend is that these hopes often give way to misuse and exploitation. One concerning trend is that newcomers to the domain from LDC's may not have an awareness of the risks associated with using the Internet.⁸

A divergence in threat awareness among populations becomes apparent. On the one hand, populations surveyed in Latin America chose to limit their Internet time due to concerns about getting an infection or being spied on. By contrast, in the African sample, survey results indicated that cost and personal time were the chief reasons for not accessing the Internet. Awareness of threats to computer security and privacy was not a significant factor. This lack of cybersecurity awareness is concerning given the rapidity with which new people and machines join the Internet. The pandemic demand for better global communication and more access points has been transformative in its impact on communication and commerce. As ICT technology is integrated across societies to enable the sustainability and developmental goals, education and training programs elevating a population's awareness of security threats should also be fielded to prevent the victimization of vulnerable populations online.

Second on the technology plane is *Operational Technology (OT)*. These are the hardware and software systems that manage and monitor physical processes that connect, distribute, manage, and supply a nation's critical infrastructure and key resources. This broadly includes energy management systems, programmable logic controllers (PLCs), remote sensors and field devices and Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) protocols and telecommunications systems. Altogether they are commonly referred to as Industrial Control Systems (ICS) or Building Control Systems (BCS). These acronyms when put together in a system refer to the function of acquiring data from remote devices such as pumps,

valves, and sensors and transmitting the information to computers with SCADA software for analysis and graphical display.

The technology is ubiquitous across utilities and industry across the world, and their adoption produces the modern and reliable infrastructure critical to achieving the SDGs. The functions supported by this technology include automating manufacturing processes, ensuring the smooth operation of elevators in skyscrapers, distributing water, and treating wastewater. OT systems connect, distribute, manage, and supply services critical to modernity. The characteristic feature of the equipment controlled by OT is that they tend to be critical systems which perform limited functions over a widely distributed environment. The value is placed on reliability across long time periods without the need for human involvement.

Beyond differences in the mission and business OT systems have key differences in their logical and physical infrastructure from those in the ICT plane. Overlaps with the ICT plane exist. For example, TCP/IP connects all the parts of an ICS/SCADA system together, however, there are also higher-level protocols, that exchange data between sensors and SCADA. Siemens S7 Communications (S7) is one such protocol. The missions and business processes are different as well. In ICT systems availability, safety, and reliability are the key drivers of missions. This has significant impacts on how cybersecurity processes are managed within the OT environment. The NIST Guide to ICS Security highlights one of several important key difference between IT and OT constraints to achieve cybersecurity:

Unpatched software represents one of the greatest vulnerabilities to a system. Software updates on IT systems, including security patches, are typically applied in a timely fashion based on appropriate security policy and procedures. In addition, these procedures are often automated using server-based tools. Software updates on ICS cannot always be implemented on a timely basis. These updates need to be thoroughly tested by both the vendor of the industrial control application and the end user of the application before being implemented. Additionally, the ICS owner must plan and schedule ICS outages days/weeks in advance.⁹

An unplanned OT outage or failure is a crisis that can result in physical damage to property and even death.¹⁰ It can result in a high-impact event with severe economic repercussions and possibly, personal injury or loss of

life. Even planned outages for upgrade are challenges to utility companies because of the apprehension linked with unwanted downtime. Upgrades can take months of advance planning, require suspension of operations, and sometimes result in declining revenues and harm to corporate reputation. Although preferable to a disaster event, these stoppages more immediately effect the OT operators bottom-line than they do that of an ICT focused entity, which regards such procedures as a cost of doing business. In contrast to OT, downtime to upgrade software, install firewalls, or run system audits in IT environments is acceptable and routine. Lost data can be restored or recreated. Product and supply cannot. A lost transformer or downed production line is not the same as a failed email server.

However, ICT and OT have converged. Pressures and calls for a more integrated and holistic approach are mounting. Their integration across developed, developing, and LDCs bedrock of future prosperity. As we move on to smart power grids, smart manufacturing plants, smart water distribution/sanitation systems, the encroaching connectivity of intelligent devices will force a more robust dependence on ICT functions within OT environments. These trending architectures rely on networks of self-monitoring transformers, remote meters, and sophisticated sensor systems.¹¹ The emergent term that characterizes this convergence is the Industrial Internet of Things (IIOT). This is fundamentally the convergence of the OT/IOT planes discussed next.

The *Internet of Things (IOT)* has been defined in by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) as ubiquitous global infrastructure enabling advanced services by connecting the physical world with the information based on existing and evolving interoperable ICT.¹² Also known as ubiquitous computing, the IOT has been used to describe the full universe of devices, that combined are drastically modifying the way modern societies function. Smart building systems and soil moisture sensing systems are examples of IOT. IOT is still in its infancy, which makes it a good place to integrate some of the design solutions aiming to remove vulnerability and assure reliability in cyberspace discussed in the recommendations section of the paper. It is the network of objects such as smart TVs, home security cameras, thermostats, alarm systems, and medical devices and equipment. They contain embedded technology that communicate, sense, or interact with their internal states or the external environment. IOT is largely invisible to the general public. It consists of, billions of data streams from a multitude of devices. It represents a

paradigm shift from networked laptop and desktop in ICT, and large-scale process control system managing industrial scale functions in OT. Instead, it represents a paradigm of networked objects sensing their environments and communicating what they see among themselves.

Aside from the growing ubiquity of such machines and expansive usage, they are significant to achieving SDGs given that when combined with machine learning and other automated analytics humans can identify inefficiencies and manage scarce resources with greater care. The World Economic Forum reports that “most current IoT projects can contribute to achieving both the SDGs and the UN’s 2030 mission. An analysis of more than 640 IoT deployments, conducted in collaboration with IoT research firm IoT Analytics, showed that 84 percent of existing IoT deployments can address the SDGs...75 percent of these projects concentrate on five SDGs: #9 Industry, innovation, and infrastructure (25 percent) #11 Smart cities and communities (19 percent) #7 Affordable and clean energy (19 percent) #3 Good health and well-being (7 percent) #12 Responsible production and consumption (5 percent)”¹³ Through research collaborations, investment in low-cost sensor technology, and even the creation of “living labs,” IOT can address a set of challenges, which range from improving the delivery of municipal services to managing the effects of climate change. One example of the benefits of IOT being utilized to achieve SDGs is in the management and control of water resources in agricultural production. For example, a “dumb” agricultural irrigation system is one that is being used, but is not recording and distributing data about water resources. A “smart” irrigation system has a real time data links sensing the environment and tracking temperature, rainfall and humidity, soil moisture level, and reporting water leaks. Machines can talk to other machines in order to trigger actions such as turning water supply on and off to meet irrigation needs. Farmers utilizing such a system can achieve greater agricultural yields, while also capturing data that could enable them to make forecasts for future crop production. However, failure of IOT due to poor system design and implementation or malicious actions could also result in famine. Thus, there is a big impact of these tiny devices to human and global security.

The same factors driving changes across traditional ICT and OT environments are also imposing historical transformation on civilian and military platforms as well. This is the realm of PIT. PIT refers to ICT or OT that is “physically part of, dedicated to, or essential in real time to the mission performance of special purpose systems.”¹⁴ Special purpose

systems on the civilian side this includes controller area network bus (CANBUS) on planes, ships, boats, trains, and automobiles. For militaries it means the ICT, OT, and IOT adapted to the precision weaponry and platforms of modern warfare. This includes targeting systems, ICS, micro-electronics on military platforms.¹⁵ They include the global deployment of unmanned operations, undersea warfare and supply, and extended air operations.¹⁶ At the core of military modernization strategies are lethal and nonlethal distributed systems.¹⁷ These systems will rely upon artificial intelligence technologies that support a global network of sensors, refueling capabilities, and strike operations on aerial and marine platforms reducing personnel costs and benefit of enhanced performance of military forces. Thus, for the defense and national security community the impact of the digital information revolution has been seismic.

Cyberspace is the core of modern military systems where electronic medium is a target for adversaries. Military instability and the resultant breaches of peace and threat to global security may result from miscalculations resulting from nations seeking to gain military advantage by exploiting vulnerabilities within large-scale weapons environments. The expansion of military cyber and spectrum warfare units across the global indicates the intent to utilize this space to achieve affects. The risks to strategic stability are many, and have been covered in depth elsewhere.¹⁸

The interconnection, automation, and connectivity of all these technical planes resulted in the emergence of the digital information age. The purpose of cyberspace is to allow humans to achieve specific goals. Each system has functionality that is designed to achieve the purpose of its organizers. Although these four environments share some commonality, they historically remain separate domains and are managed as independent silos within organizations.¹⁹ Not only are they distinct in their functionally, the communities that design and develop in their respective physical and logical layers have cultural and strategic differences as well. Traditionally, commercial enterprises view ICT as a cost center and a support unit, while OT more directly aligns with the core business and return on assets and investment. PIT and IOT are essentially the convergence of ICT, OT, and IOT by integrating them on military and civilian platforms. To further illustrate this point, consider a business system designed by a major credit card corporation and fielded to merchants across the world to accept payments via credit cards. Such an ICT system has its components arranged according to different requirements than those of a system that is designed to process grades in an institution of higher education.

Both were designed with very different functions that aligned with the mission of an organization. Not all functions are created equal. A mom and pop shop being hacked might be devastating at an individual level. Likewise, a company may go bankrupt as a result of intellectual property theft. However, there are cyber components whose functionality is critical to national survival. The US Department of Homeland Security has termed these as national critical functions (NCF) which are: “the functions of government and the private sector so vital to the United States that their disruption, corruption, or dysfunction would have a debilitating effect on security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination thereof.”²⁰ When these systems fail, people die and property is damaged or destroyed.

Thus, the integration of all components of cyberspace for the purpose of achieving SDGs presents risks to societies around the world. All the technology mentioned above is a double-edged sword. These resources can be used for either empowerment or in exploitation of one group over another. However, in its current state of systemic vulnerability, there is great potential for the domain to allow for remote operations to cause damage as we adopt technology to conduct business, facilitate communications, and deliver NCF. The complexities of the interdependent technical systems leave them susceptible to malfunction and sabotage. As the world’s dependency on cyberspace grows, evolves and is more tightly integrated across humans and machines—so too grows the exposure to risk as exploitation or introduction of vulnerabilities contained throughout the technical substrate spreads. Understanding vulnerabilities, and designing new technologies with more attention paid to secure design, manufacturing, coding practices is the only way to decrease the risks associated with societal cyber integration. All too often the focus is on threats, rather than the root cause of cyber exploitation: vulnerabilities.

THE NORM OF SYSTEMIC VULNERABILITIES

In order to understand cyber threats, we first need to understand the properties and functionalities within technology that create an “exposure.” We also need to understand how these elements interoperate and where they disconnect. Such insight reveals how systemic flaws are created through the errors in the computational and mathematical logic, as well as the people and processes that implement conventional

approaches to system/network management and security, along with the socio-economic pressures that drive investment.

What then is a cyber vulnerability? A vulnerability, according to the standard-bearing Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures (CVE) data source is “a weakness in the computational logic (e.g., code) found in software and hardware components that, when exploited, results in a negative impact to confidentiality, integrity, or availability. Mitigation of the vulnerabilities in this context typically involves coding changes, but could also include specification changes or even specification deprecations (e.g., removal of affected protocols or functionality in their entirety).”²¹ Vulnerabilities come in threes. The ones listed in the CVE database are “known” vulnerabilities. Exploits for these vulnerabilities may be available on hacker markets. With some coding skills and understanding of computer networking a relatively unsophisticated actor can manipulate code and logic to commandeer computers across the world. The second category of vulnerabilities is “zero-day” vulnerabilities. That is a vulnerability that is unknown to the actors in the domain and therefore no anti-virus signatures exist to identify or protect against it. A zero-day may also be known, but due to technical reason there is no patch to offer the public to prevent its exploitation. These so called “forever day” vulnerabilities are typically found in ICS systems.²² Zero-days are often misunderstood by the non-technical audience who tend to believe that discovering zero-days represents the acme of a hacker’s skill. The traditional view is that the discovery of zero-days is extremely difficult, requires a lot of resources, and are only in the purview of nation-states and highly capable actors. However, the regularity and rate that zero-days are discovered are indicative of the fact that with enough parsing of code, attention to detail and computing power, a zero-day may be discovered by an individual cyber researcher. Upon discovery, a zero-day may be disclosed to the vendor of the product via a bug bounty program, stored in an arsenal for later exploitation, or sold for profit. Well-resourced organizations, such as organized criminal enterprises and state-based offensive cyber entities, may purchase these in the same dark markets criminals frequent, or they may buy them directly, discover them through their own resources but in all cases, they will stockpile them for potential future use.

Oftentimes non-experts hear the word “zero-day” and are amazed at the level of sophistication that an actor demonstrated, it is often the case that zero-days are more useful in attacking organizations that are keeping

up with their patches.²³ However, a recent revelation by Google's Project Zero of an iOS exploit chain relying on zero-days is a recent case in point related to the changing economics of zero-day utilization.²⁴ Contrary to the stereotypical depiction of zero-days being reserved for specialized access attempts, the iOS exploits were indiscriminate in their targeting of visitors to infected websites.

Policies, People, and Processes

An additional form of vulnerability comes to the interaction between the social and technical aspects of cyberspace. That is, the people and the policies created to manage technical processes to reduce risk to themselves and their organizations. Cybersecurity policies today rely on false senses of security brought about through purchases of intrusion detection systems (IDS) and other technologies that monitor networks, detect intrusions, and manage device inventory and software patches. While necessary at this point in time to remain aware of oneself, the continuous stream of successful exploitations suggests that traditional security paradigms have failed. Enterprises may not detect a successful intrusion or their vulnerability until months or years after infiltration. They often only become aware once the damage has been done, which could be several years later and usually through a third party. Once the loss of a market or competitive advantage occurs, it may also be too late to react. A prime example of this is from the \$300 million crippling of Maersk by Eternal Blue and NotPetya in 2017. The intrusion detection systems certainly detected the malicious code and threat actors; however, it was only after this catastrophic event occurred. The consequences for victimized organizations can be dismaying. The fear of negative publicity is always a concern for private sector enterprises as well as public offices and organizations. In the case of a security breach of a business firm, the incident can open an organization to lawsuit and adverse market impact.

Lack of trusted relationships and disincentives to share information across government and industry is another example of a process vulnerability. Public disclosure of a breach can signal to other attackers that vulnerabilities exist and an organization may be ripe for exploitation. Additionally, an organization's reputation might be harmed, driving down sales and causing loss of jobs and potentially even organizational demise. In weighing the costs and impact of reporting such incidents, it is easy to understand why many organizations opt to remain silent about their

situation rather than draw public attention. Additionally, the allocation of time and resources, as well as the poor record of prosecution, creates further disincentive to report such offenses. Furthermore, the information disclosed during the process of cross-examination can run the risk of being as damaging to the plaintiff's self-interest as the original crime. Information sharing efforts do exist, such as corporate threat intelligence consortia. Results are mixed, and more needs to be done in order for the defenders to get ahead of the offenders.

One good practice in global information sharing is the expansive network of Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERT), also known as Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRT). These are groups of computer experts who handle computer security incidents. They are a good place to build a global community of trust to share threat intelligence, vulnerability information, but also to respond to global crisis. There are more than 250 organizations using the name CERT or CSIRT focusing on cyber security threat issues and response. In the United States, US-CERT acts independently of these organizations, yet maintains relationships for information sharing and coordination purposes. US-CERT works with its partners to control the abuse and misuse of technology across cyber space. Those partners include private sector cyber security vendors, academia, federal agencies, Information Sharing and Analysis Centers (ISACs), state and local governments, and domestic and international organizations. This network of participating individuals and organizations represents how deep and expansive the threat is. However, a considerable amount of time and resources are required to set up the security controls at an organizational level that can sense the cyber environment and detect anomalies before this information can be shared with partners. The cost of these is born by the participants. Perhaps a more economical shift for the global community would be to transfer the cost of protection, prevention, and recovery from cyber incidents induced by malicious threat actors should be borne by the manufactures of the domain. I will now turn to why this is a multidisciplinary challenge that entangles technology and economics.

THE SOURCES OF VULNERABILITY

All risk equations begin with vulnerability. If cyber is a man-made domain, then how did we get to a point where vulnerability is a feature rather than an exception in the domain? One expert has noted that "Early on in the

evolution of software, hardware, and networks people became accustomed to ‘computer bugs’ and other design flaws that they simply accepted as the norm. Rarely has a single industry benefitted from such a desensitized consumer population which has allowed the producers and manufacturers to skirt responsibility and liability for the flawed products and systems they produce.”²⁵ Developed over forty-five years ago, the designers of these software applications sought a model that was scalable, easy to operate, and able to link together de-centralized facilities. In this environment security concerns ran second to interests of Internet expansion and accessibility. Therefore, standardized technologies and open solutions seemed more corresponding to the original vision. Today’s standardization of software products, hardware products, and connectivity with other networks are both, problematic and seminal. The escalating threat from cyberattack has put at risk these control systems and the critical national infrastructure facilities that rely on them.

What can we do? How might the global community motivate contractor vigilance in firmware, software, and hardware design and network security? I have argued elsewhere that the US federal government “could use a continuum of incentives, from large financial rewards for success to stiff legal sanctions including possible criminal penalties in extreme cases for failure. By using incentives and penalties judiciously, the DoD could motivate contractors to devote more effort to secure programming and network security.”²⁶ Institutions of global governance including the United Nations, World Bank, IMF, and development agencies could take similar through the power of contracts to begin designing vulnerabilities out of the technical planes. By holding ICT, OT, IOT, and PIT vendors responsible for designing and developing secure ICT, OT, IOT, incentives can be created to undertake more rigorous cyber security efforts. As an example, sponsors funding SDG technology integration programs could require contractors to report cyber intrusions on their systems or impose financial penalties written into contracts to shape the habits of trusted information exchanges. Prosecution of accountable parties is necessary to ensure future provisions in the contract are followed. The PIT space is perhaps leading the charge of designing cyber secure systems. Autonomous vehicle manufacturers such as Volvo are leading the way when it comes to product liability due to cyber. As mentioned above, given the early stage of development the IOT trade-space finds itself, it must follow suit given the potential national security consequences of these small systems. Designing these systems following

security best practices at the early phase of design and development is more cost effective than bolting on security and reliability measures after deployment. Boeing is currently learning the costly lessons of poor system design and sensor integration on avionics critical to the flight operation of its 737 Max airplane.

Secure system design and expanded system testing for security should be another practical step. However, it is not an easy one and will require cultural changes within communities of technologists. 50 percent of time should be spent on these measures during the design phase and the development phase of complex programming projects.²⁷ Too often, this is not the case. Computer programs are released to consumers with far too many vulnerabilities in the computer code. As soon as software is loaded onto a computer, consumers expect the software to be broken, requiring patching to eliminate the latest round of vulnerabilities disclosed almost as soon as the program is installed. Cyber developers thus must produce software that meets a higher security standard. Software development processes that incorporate a security development lifecycle do exist, but they are not taught widely in computer science curriculum. All this has encouraged designers to rush products to market, leaving consumers unaware of costly flaws that make hacking easier and puts sensitive data, business processes, and NCF at risk. Vulnerabilities have caused enough financial, reputation harm and contribute to the global system risk to stability and prosperity. Continuing to accept a patch/configuration management culture that promotes a laissez-faire approach to cybersecurity ensures global instability.

INSIDE THE ARENA OF CYBER CONFLICT

In today's cyber conflict arena, the threats and sources of attacks are myriad. Disgruntled employees, hacktivists, criminals, and nation-state actors all have their own resources and motivations. Hacktivists hack for fun, laughs, and political disruption. Criminals hack to make money. Intelligence agencies hack to gain military and political secrets. They may also steal corporate secrets and share them with their own domestic industry in pursuit of national industrial policies. Corporations break laws to conduct economic espionage. Militaries conduct reconnaissance as they prepare for war. They also are in a race against time to digitally assure their weapons systems will work when their nations require them.

In its definition of cyber threat, NIST defines a threat source or threat agent as “the intent and method targeted at the intentional exploitation of a vulnerability or a situation and method that may accidentally trigger a vulnerability.”²⁸ Sources can be separated between external and internal threats—those without or within the target organization. Some of the actor categories below overlap and some are defined more by their vectors than motivations. Terrorists and criminals take advantage of the same tools and mechanisms of the global economy as do legitimate actors. Therefore, the opportunity to create wealth and engage in plunder exists side by side.

Insider threats are a significant source of computer crime. They are personnel who are employed, authorized, or granted privileges by the organization but who intentionally or inadvertently harm the organization. Theft Insiders may not need a great deal of knowledge about computer intrusions because their knowledge of a target system often allows them to gain unrestricted access to cause damage to the system or to steal system data. Current and former employees, consultants, suppliers, contractors, and even business partners all fall within the scope of the insider threat. The insider threat also includes outsourcing vendors as well as employees who accidentally introduce malware into systems. The National Insider Threat Task Force states that: “The insider threat is a dynamic problem set, requiring resilient and adaptable programs to address an evolving threat landscape, advances in technology, and organizational change. The effort requires continual evaluation and updated perspectives and approaches.”²⁹ Insiders could be naturally motivated or enlisted by external actors. They might also be willing accomplices or unwitting abettors. The inadvertent leaker may be a victim of malware and spyware exploits rather than tempted by the lure of bribes.

Computer infection, harvesting of personal and financial data, data sale, and “cashing out” of financial information are all part of the economy that drives the expansion of criminal activity in cyberspace. This underworld has its own ecosystem of threat sources. Malware developers are individuals or groups that produce the software designed to exploit vulnerabilities. Such software is illegal in many countries. Depending on the malware package, the developers may offer capabilities to non-technical criminal types who are looking to expand their illicit ventures into a domain where the likelihood of discover remains low. The malicious software delivers code malware payload and controls an infected system remotely. They often include user-friendly web interfaces for creating

Internet platforms for future exploitation. While remote code cracking once required a fair amount of skill or computer knowledge, hackers can now download attack scripts and protocols from the Internet and launch them against ICT, OT, PIT, or IOT. As attack tools have become more sophisticated, they have also become more accessible and easier to use. The Kali Linux and Metasploit frameworks is one such toolset that hackers use to automate attacks. The past modules were developed primarily to target ICT systems. Today, one can browse and discover Metasploit modules designed to ease the exploitation of vulnerabilities in SCADA, PLC, and Siemens S7 as well as IOT and automotive PIT. Vulnerable OT and IOT systems are likewise discoverable via the Shodan search engine that continuously monitors the Internet for connected “things.”

That we have not suffered critical outages as a result of successful exploitation of the OT and ICT space may be for several reasons. First, the OT environments do not have intrusion detection throughout the ecosystem, and thus, when failures of equipment occur the forensics are not available to determine whether or not malicious cyber or natural failure was the cause of an outage. Secondly, the criminal space may have not figured out how to monetize disrupting critical infrastructure. Nation-states have used it for strategic intimidation, such as the Russian adventurism on Ukraine’s energy distribution grids. However, nation-states control their operations to the best of their ability. Thus, the worldwide population of criminally motivated hackers poses a relatively high threat of an isolated or brief disruption causing serious damage.

Hackers use these remote access tools and exploitation kits to accomplish their objectives. Motivating factors differ across the different subcultures, and most are focused on financial gain not societal disruption. Botnet masters are hackers; however, instead of breaking into systems for the challenge or bragging rights, they take over multiple systems in order to coordinate attacks and to distribute phishing schemes, spam, and malware attacks. They are a common instrument in cybercrime. Botnets are large numbers of computers infected through phishing campaigns to perform automated tasks ranging from bank fraud to attacking other networks with spam, denial-of-service commands, viruses, and other forms of malware. Botnet rentals are popular among criminals. The services of these networks are sometimes made available on underground markets (e.g., purchasing a denial-of-service attack, servers to relay spam, or phishing attacks, etc.). Offered at relatively low cost, a turnkey botnet infrastructure of malware, servers, and targeted email lists can be rented

anywhere from \$0.66 per day to \$19.99 a month.³⁰ Requiring a very rudimentary technical knowledge of how to set up domain names, execute command line commands, the skillset is low, and the return on this investment can be within the range of tens of thousands to tens of millions of dollars. Thus, there is a thriving underground market for services and products. Many of them are accessible on the dark web where anonymous marketplaces offer customers untraceable communications and full order and payment management systems.

Building out a botnet is, however, time consuming. Botmasters, those who set up command and control infrastructure on servers around the world, rely upon phishers to recruit computers into their networks. These are individuals, or small groups, that execute phishing schemes in an attempt to steal identities or information for monetary gain or to aid in building out a botnet infrastructure. The size of these groups may range from small criminal units to loose ad hoc networks or organized crime, which operate on a larger scale. International cooperation is critical to gathering evidence to prosecute cybercriminals. United Nations Comprehensive Study on Cybercrime report puts it this way: “Reliance on traditional means of formal international cooperation in cybercrime matters is not currently able to offer the timely response needed for obtaining volatile electronic evidence. As an increasing number of crimes involve geo-distributed electronic evidence, this will become an issue not only for cybercrime, but all crimes in general.”³¹ Successful cooperation among private sector companies and law enforcement has led to the disruption of botnets through technical means and legal processes.

Several high-profile botnet takedowns are indicative of the digital cops and robbers being played out on victim computers that may be located in home Wi-Fi routers, hospital equipment, and security cameras. It’s no easy task, and secondary and third order consequences have to be considered in order to avoid unintended disruptions due to the complex technical dependencies among systems.

Cybercrime puts a heavy economic burden on individuals and organizations victimized by these criminals. The true cost of cybercrime is hard to measure. Ponemon Institute’s 2017 Cost of Data Breach Study highlights that the cost of data breaches is not insignificant: “The average per capita cost of data breach was \$225 in the United States and \$190 in Canada. The lowest cost was Brazil (\$79) and India (\$64). The average total organizational cost in the United States was \$7.35 million and \$4.94 million in the Middle East. The lowest average total organizational cost

was in Brazil (\$1.52 million) and India (\$1.68 million).”³² Cybercrime is an expanding global phenomenon. In the UK, cybercrime accounts for more than 50 percent of all crime in the country.³³ The economic implications in the developed world, where technology is tightly integrated, threat awareness is high and investment in cybersecurity resources increases year by year. 100,000 groups in at least 150 countries and more than 400,000 machines were infected by the WannaCry virus in 2017, at a total cost of around \$4 billion.³⁴

Going up the ladder from non-state actors are National Intelligence Services that use cyber tools as part of their espionage activities. In addition, several nations are aggressively working to develop cyber and information warfare doctrine, programs, and capabilities. Information warfare extends beyond the technical issues of networks to include psychological warfare through propaganda, the manipulation of news, and the shaping of attitudes via social media and kompromat that entails the use of slander. Such capabilities enable a single entity to have a significant and serious impact. Sabotage operations disrupting or destroying the supply, communications, and economic infrastructures that support military power—impacts that could affect the daily lives of citizens across the United States and other countries across the globe. However, due to globalization, the lines between the state and non-state have become blurred. The ambiguity clouds the attempt to establish attribution and formulate appropriate response. For example, a McAfee/CSIS report maintains that “20 to 30 cybercrime groups in the former Soviet Union that have ‘nation-state level’ capacity.” This means that such groups not only have the requisite resources and skilled staff to conduct a high-impact event, they also have repeatedly shown that they can overcome almost any cyber defense. Making matters even more byzantine, their affiliation with official Russia, Russian Federation, is conveniently veiled. The report further asserts that “financial crime in cyberspace now occurs at industrial scale.”³⁵

Ultimately, most cyberattack sources are not affiliated with any state and act privately. Like the Russian example in Ukraine briefly mentioned above, these operations are usually under the command and control of intelligence or military agencies and aim to achieve a nation’s interest within their existing national strategies. The primary competitors of the Cold War are still major players. Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea are all the most active participants and innovators in gaining asymmetric advantage against the United States as well as regional rivals. They

compete politically and economically with the United States and continue to prosecute the remains of a conflict born from the previous era, but with variation in mission and rationale adapted to the realities of the post-Cold War period.

Trends are now developing and events unfolding at a historic pace. The targeting of OT by nation-state actors has been one of the most troublesome. Patterns of nation-state rivalry in the domain shift signal the emergence of a new perilous world. The reorientation in national security portends an era of global instability. Disorienting features of the new arena of cyber conflict are the unfamiliar objectives that dominate a new strategy of warfare and competition by state and non-state actors. In these new wars, mass disruption rather than destruction can be acceptable goals. The preference of endless conflict over final victory is another strategic objective that forces a reshaping of the accepted wisdom on the transforming nature of war itself.

CONCLUSION

The arena of cybercrime and competition provides a glimpse of a future of discontinuity, disruption, and destruction if the cyber status quo continues at its current pace. Already economically underdeveloped countries see promise in the utilization of new technology to improve the human condition and empower vulnerable populations within their countries. However, as a result of the proliferation of vulnerabilities, these countries open themselves up to guaranteed harm. Aggressors in the cyber domain will only look to exploit countries that may not have the same expensive and expansive robust cyber security controls in place that the entire world has. LDCs may not have neither the strategic, technical, or legal capacity to manage cyber systems securely, and develop plans to mitigate vulnerabilities and counter cyber threats. Nor do they have the financial resources required to develop these capabilities. This capacity and utilizing best practices and lessons learned in the developed world will be critical to increasing costs to attackers and reduce reducing harm to those crossing over the digital divide.

The forces of prosperity emergent from globalization and international trade might be better served when designing reliable and trustworthy cyber systems become a part of the core business process of technology companies providing the components and systems that compose cyberspace. However, in spite of the awareness of the over-hanging cyber-threat, incentives are still lacking and investments of time and treasure to design vulnerability out of the domain are not seen as directly converting into earnings. Therefore, vulnerabilities will continue to proliferate and only those who can afford security solutions will remain ahead of exploiters.

Threat sources are thus outpacing the attempts at a solution. The world thus finds itself in the midst of a disruptive paradigm shift. All find themselves in a simultaneous conflict with non-state players who will increasingly gain the means to become destructive forces within the global system if technology design and development continues down the current business models of the private sector. As sustainable development goals drive the adoption of vulnerable technology, and developing and LDC's become dependent on the interlocking aspects of cyberspace for commerce, financial services, communications, utility grids, government, and military logistical needs the risk to all countries will increase. Without some form of global governance and accountability structures that reinforce the idea of private sector responsibility to develop safe and reliable cyber components the great hope that cyberspace will enable the acceleration of human progress will diminish.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are some of the key differences between ICT, OT, and PIT? How are they different? How do they interrelate?
2. To what extent could there be a big impact of small IOT systems on national security?
3. What is the role of multilateral institutions of diplomacy such as the UN in governing state and non-state behavior in cyberspace? What are some of the challenges?

4. How does cyber transform a state or non-state actors “power” in global affairs? How does cyber enable less powerful global actors amplify and project their power?

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The Upending of the Geopolitics of Energy: Disruption Is the New Normal

Carolyn Kissane

To understand the impending disruption, consider the following: in 2004, the United States (US) was the largest importer of crude oil and preparing to import liquefied natural gas. Plans were underway to build natural gas liquefaction import terminals, and supply would come from Qatar and other gas-rich countries. At the same time, China's demand picture was moving into overdrive. Rapid industrialization and a growing middle class meant China required more oil and gas to meet its energy demand. In response to this growing demand challenge, China launched its "Going Out Strategy," which involved China buying high equity stakes in overseas oil and gas projects.¹ The search for new oil and gas finds took on an urgency when the world thought it was running out. The scarcity fear of insecurity of supply drove oil prices to record levels. Oil price volatility during this period illustrates the extent of change in how traders viewed supply and demand:

C. Kissane (✉)
Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University,
New York, NY, USA
e-mail: carolyn.kissane@nyu.edu

After spending most of two decades below \$30, in 2004 crude oil prices started rising and by late 2007 they had reached \$99. By the summer of 2008, they soared above \$100 and peaked at \$145.31 in July 2008 in the biggest zoom ever recorded – and then abruptly crashed back to \$33 in less than six months. Prices rebounded to around \$100 in 2011 and averaged about \$95 over the following three and a half years. But from June 2014 to February 2016, prices crashed once more, from \$107 to \$26 – a bust of over 75 percent.²

Simultaneously there was a shift in oil and gas production, which proved to be both a disruption to supply dynamics and a radical discontinuity in the geopolitics of energy. The hydrocarbon narrative today no longer mentions peak oil supply, but rather peak oil demand and the slew of considerations and effects it will bring with it. Not only is oil supply no longer a concern, in fact, the new uncertainty is over peak demand. Technological advances allow energy to be economically generated, and the shale revolution illustrates this in action. As a result of US shale production and advances in renewable energy, the world finds itself in a paradigm shift.

The geopolitics of energy is experiencing a period of discontinuity. Demands for deep decarbonization and climate change mitigation and adaptation are driving new policies and practices. The outsized influence, once wielded by a handful of countries, mostly comprised of Oil Producing and Exporting Countries (OPEC) member states, is waning. In the short term, that influence is blunted by the tremendous output of American unconventional oil. Looking forward, we can anticipate that the proverbial energy deck of cards is sure to be reshuffled and new hands will allow different states to wield outsized influence in geopolitics.

To understand the geopolitical implications, an examination of the rise of the United States as an energy superpower is necessary. First, US energy dominance means historic relationships in the Middle East driven by the necessity of securing oil has changed; the United States is stepping back from its long-standing position of securing Middle Eastern energy supplies. Second, the United States new energy position has altered the power and influence of OPEC; the organization's ability to move markets has diminished, and Saudi Arabia no longer holds the hand of swing producer of last resort. The United States—though unable to increase production by one or two million barrels a day on short notice—is now in a position within the global energy world to provide a supply cushion,

which has altered OPEC's market hand. Third, Russia is a petro-state and oil and gas are not only vital strategic resources, but also serve as political and economic weapons in its foreign policy. Fourth, China remains the challenge and the opportunity for global energy. Over the last twenty years China has emerged as the largest consumer of imported oil and is second to only Japan in global gas consumption. China's energy policy is an all of the above strategy: it needs all kinds of energy, and securing resources, hydrocarbons and renewables, are an integral part of domestic and foreign policy.

Understanding these changes requires an examination of how we got here. This chapter will address the drivers of the energy transition, and who will be the winners and losers as the world moves from hydrocarbons to new sources of cleaner and more sustainable energy systems. The questions are many; today's energy transition represents what some view as the most urgent action we have to take. This chapter explores the last two decades of energy shifts, examining oil and gas, the role of energy in the strategic outlook of the US, Saudi Arabia, and Russia, and future disruptions caused by changes in energy use and demand, with particular attention on the energy future of China. Finally, the chapter will look at the impact of stricter climate policies and new calls for action around environmental justice in the energy transition to cleaner energy.

BACKGROUND: OIL AND FOREIGN POLICY

The way we have historically conceptualized energy, energy security and policy, and energy geopolitics is being upended by the proliferation of affordable renewable energy and natural gas generation. Daniel Yergin defines energy security as "the capability to assure adequate, reliable energy supplies at reasonable prices in ways that do not jeopardize major national values and objectives."³ This definition integrates economic, security, and ideological elements in addition to the core necessity of ensuring access to adequate supplies. However, energy security today is about more than access, supply, and affordability. Meghan O'Sullivan goes further with her definition of energy security. She integrates how countries can account for things beyond energy access into their foreign policy. She defines energy security as "having access to affordable energy without having to contort one's political, security, diplomatic, or military arrangements unduly."⁴ While the mid-twentieth century version of energy security centered on access and supply, the twenty-first century

is moving toward O'Sullivan's more nuanced and multi-layered understanding of energy security. A bit of background helps to illustrate the difference.

Petroleum and foreign policy have been intimately linked in the United States since the Second World War. Starting in 1945, three major events have dramatically altered the trajectory of American energy and foreign policy. In the closing days of the war, American security interests led President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) to travel from the Yalta Conference in Crimea to meet with the first king of Saudi Arabia, Abdulaziz ibn Abdul Rahman ibn Faisal ibn Turki ibn Abdullah ibn Muhammad Al Saud, also known as ibn Saud. The meeting was intended to forge a relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia that would secure American energy needs for the coming decades. The close rapport established between FDR and ibn Saud has indeed shaped American Middle Eastern policy for the last eighty years. American diplomatic and military involvement in the region and the remarkably close ties between two philosophically incompatible governments—one a pluralistic secular democracy, the other an essentially theocratic monarchy—can be tied directly to oil demand. Though this relationship has endured as presidents and kings have come and gone, it has not been without strain. In 1973, following United States support for Israel during the Arab-Israeli War, the Arab members of OPEC suspended oil shipments to the United States and a number of Israeli allies including the Netherlands, Canada, and Portugal. It was one of the earliest examples in which energy was deployed as a weapon. While the success of the embargo in achieving its primary objective is debatable, it, however, ushered in an era of new Western energy policy; driving government investment and research in oil exploration, contingency plans, and alternative energy technologies. As oil prices per barrel climbed by over 400 percent,⁵ the 1973 crisis led the United States to establish the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), though it had been discussed in both the Eisenhower and Truman Administrations.⁶ Today the US SPR is the world's largest reserve of crude oil, with a capacity of over 713 million barrels.⁷ It has been used to ease pressure in the oil market on three occasions, most recently in 2011, when unrest in Libya caused significant and abrupt supply disruptions.⁸

The immediate impacts of these two events still shape energy policy today though on the surface the geopolitical landscape looks dramatically different. Why does oil remain so important? Without electricity and the ability to move goods and people, modern economies cease to function.

Today, even with extraordinary advances in renewable energy and electrification of transportation, oil fuels most transportation of both goods and people globally. In 2018 in the United States, for example, oil powered 69 percent of transportation.⁹ Despite decades of effort and hundreds of billions of dollars in research, there remains no real alternative to oil at the scale and cost needed around the world. But that may be changing.

THE UNITED STATES: A NEW ENERGY SUPERPOWER

At the end of the last decade, much to the world's surprise, the United States became the largest producer of both oil and natural gas. By the end of January 2020, it is expected to produce more than thirteen million barrels per day (mbd).¹⁰ The rate of growth for American production far exceeds the rates for the second and third largest producers; Russia and Saudi Arabia (see Fig. 11.1). American petroleum preeminence began with the shock of the 1973 oil embargo. After recovering from the initial crisis, the government began investing millions of dollars in shale petroleum extraction research. Between 1978 and 1992, the Department of Energy (DOE) directed \$137 million to the Eastern Gas Shale Program,¹¹ which was eventually able to demonstrate a commercially viable set of technologies that are critical in hydraulic fracturing

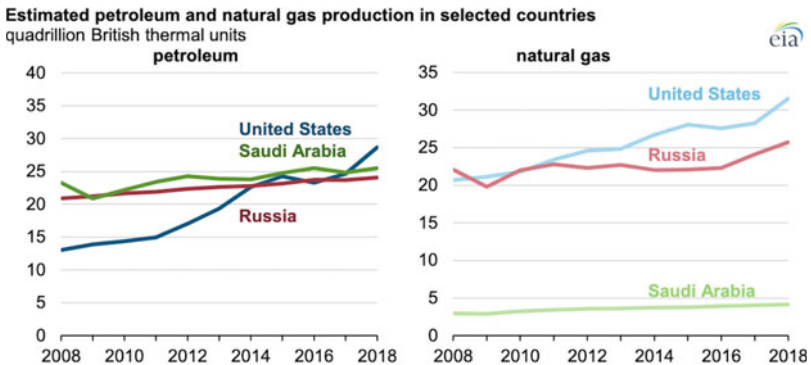


Fig. 11.1 Estimated petroleum and natural gas production in selected countries (Source U.S. Energy Information Administration, based on International Energy Statistics. Note Petroleum includes crude oil, condensate, and natural gas plant liquids)

or fracking. The Federal government, along with a number of American private industry-partners, perfected directional drilling, micro-seismic monitoring of fracturing treatments, and advanced modeling.¹² These new techniques allowed drillers to extract hydrocarbons trapped in shale formations in an economically viable way.

Oil still dominates geopolitics and will continue to do so for many years to come. In fact, arguable the shale revolution has prolonged its lifespan. Shale came as a complete shock to the world. It heralded a total reversal of 40–50 years of American energy policy. The Middle East and Russia, it was assumed, would continue to dominate global energy trade, while the United States remained chained to the whims of producer nations. To quote the International Energy Agency (IEA) Executive Director Fatih Birol “The second wave of the U.S. shale revolution is coming. This will shake up international oil and gas trade flows, with profound implications for the geopolitics of energy.”¹³ With the US awash in oil and gas, and its dependency on imports waning, there is a different focus when it comes to foreign policy. The prior relationships with countries, whether enemy or friend, but with oil as a mutual interest, has given way to a new dynamic. The United States is not yet a swing producer but it has tempered the strength and influence of OPEC. Given the country’s high production volumes, the United States has moved away from importing oil and gas from places like Nigeria and Venezuela, and has been more ardent in using economic statecraft, specifically sanctions, to slow down Iran, Russia, and Venezuela. The US government would be less apt to use sanctions on oil and gas producing countries if there were concern about supply tightening, thereby affirming O’Sullivan’s idea that a country need not contort its policies to satisfy domestic and international energy security.¹⁴

Technological innovations and disruptions in exploration and extraction techniques have made the United States the largest crude oil and natural gas producer in the world, surpassing Saudi Arabia and Russia in energy production. The United States has moved from touting future energy independence to energy dominance, and its foreign policy is reflective of this new energy reality. Before the Shale Revolution, Saudi Arabia was the world’s most influential producer and exporter. The OPEC, the historical heavyweight of the oil world, now needs non-OPEC producers, specifically Russia, to cooperate in its policies to sustain market share.

OPEC AND SAUDI ARABIA

Is OPEC an organization or cartel, or both? The answer is both. Historically many analysts referred to it as a cartel, as it had the power to move oil markets. Decisions to increase overall oil production or decrease would almost immediately result in a change in price. OPEC was created in 1960 with Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela. Today it is an organization with fourteen member countries. During the 1980s and 1990s OPEC wielded power, collectively producing more than a one third of global oil supply. If there's a country in the driver's seat of OPEC, it is Saudi Arabia. As the largest producer in the group it can wield its power to move the direction of OPEC decisions. Some producers account for only 1–2 mbd of production; Saudi Arabia produces over 10 mbd and touts the capability to raise production levels to 13 or more mbd. This capacity gave Saudi Arabia the title of swing producer. It remains the only country in the world capable of ratcheting up production. This contributes to security of global oil supply. Or at least it did. Security of Saudi Arabia's production remains increasingly vulnerable to attacks, especially from its neighbor and enemy, Iran—a fellow OPEC member.

Starting in 2014, Saudi Arabia, under the direction of then Deputy Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman and then Oil Minister Ali Al-Naimi, began to flood the market with oil in an attempt to crush the growing American production.¹⁵ Russia would soon follow their lead. They understandably feared the skyrocketing production in the United States and the relative loss of power that would naturally accompany such unrestrained growth. It is widely understood within the petroleum industry that American shale producers required higher oil prices than most traditional producers in order to operate and the Saudis bet that if they suppressed prices in the oil market, American drillers and their investors would lose money and shut down operations.

But the Saudis and the Russians made a serious miscalculation. They failed to anticipate the agility of small producers operating freely across the United States unconstrained by the larger National Oil Companies (NOCs) or super major International Oil Companies (IOCs) with which OPEC and Russia were more familiar. More importantly, they were unable to foresee the continued improvements in extraction efficiency and the resilience and risk appetites of investors who were facilitating fracking's expansion. Two years later, unable to sustain its increased output nor bear the losses in state revenues, Saudi Arabia threw in the towel.

During this time many American frackers did indeed close up shop, but Saudi Arabia ended up doing more damage to itself.¹⁶ The problem that traditional producers face is that they're not competing against a large NOC or a handful of IOCs but thousands of nimble small entrepreneurs operating in one of the most liquid and dynamic capital markets in the world (the United States) which allows them to respond rapidly and easily to changes in global market demand. More to the point, shale wells can be more easily turned on and off, compared to conventional wells.

Today as the 3rd largest producer Saudi Arabia is less able to unilaterally direct global oil markets. The rise of American shale has changed the face of OPEC, necessitating the formation of an alliance that has practically superseded OPEC. Though known as OPEC+, a loose grouping of OPEC and non-OPEC producers, Saudi Arabia and Russia are the two most important *de facto* leaders of this alliance. The formation of OPEC+ was an implicit admission that their previous go-it-alone strategy had failed. This move was a recognition that the fundamentals of oil geopolitics had changed and going forward, the Saudis, Russians, and other large producers would need to work together to confront the challenges presented by American oil dominance. Many have raised questions as to future of OPEC and whether we have heard its final death knell. Looking toward the future, the IEA projects that American production will account for 85 percent¹⁷ of all new oil growth and reach a staggering 20.5 mbd by 2025.¹⁸

In many ways energy trade is so critical that it transcends traditional politics. That is not to say the rules are different but that many states are willing to overlook traditional obstacles or interstate conflicts in order to ensure access to energy resources. Russia has long had contentious relationships with much of Europe but continues to be the primary supplier of natural gas. And herein lies the heart of energy geopolitics. States like Germany and Poland, which rely on Russian gas for heat in the winter and electricity all year round, may think twice before responding to Russian policy or actions for fear that Moscow may cut off critical supplies. Russia like many other energy producers has a long history of leveraging its energy resources to ensure more favorable political outcomes.¹⁹

RUSSIA—PETRO-POLITICS AT WORK

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia entered a nine-year period of dislocation and disruption. The last years of the Soviet Union exposed pillage from within, or as Steven Solnick described it,

“stealing the state.”²⁰ The dirt cheap sell-off of state-run enterprises led to the rise of the Russian oligarch that illustrated one slice of Russia’s very dysfunctional economy of the 1990s. Its economy was battered and there was little in the way of hope in the aftermath of 1991. Yeltsin was not the leader to revive an ailing Russia. Russians viewed him as a drunk and an idiot. Russia’s superpower status evaporated, and the country was on its knees. To better understand the dramatic shift that transpired consider this: there were regions of Russia threatening to break away from the federation, and oil production collapsed from 12 mbd in the 1980s to just over six mbd in 1998. The price of a barrel averaged \$16 during Yeltsin’s term and, to make the bad even worse, the default of domestic debt and the collapse of the ruble in August 1998 wiped out whatever savings people had in banks and under mattresses.

It was Putin who ushered in the turnaround, with an almost overnight rebranding of Russia from one of failure to one of strength.²¹ By 2000, Putin was firmly and comfortably entrenched in the Moscow White House and a new era for Russia was in the making. Putin’s timing was superb. Shortly after he took office, oil prices started to climb, and with that, Russian oil production. A few years into Putin’s first term and the country was producing almost 10 mbd, and the narrative of decline turned into one of miraculous transformation.²²

However, it’s been downhill since. In 2008, Russia went into Georgia, and in 2014 annexed Crimea and invaded Ukraine. They didn’t pay much of a price and believed then as they do now, that might makes them right. The West decided against military action and instead used what is now a common form of economic statecraft, sanctions. Sanctions were meant to slow Russia’s future energy growth, specifically around developing new oil and gas fields, which required Western expertise and technology but sanctions have now been in place for more than five years and Russia manages to get by, and—Putin would argue—thrive. Oil production reached over 11 mbd in 2016 and the first half of 2017, almost surpassing the all-time high of 11.7 set in 1987.

As Russia looks to the future, its energy strategy is very much a continuation of previous policies. Its economy will remain heavily dependent on resource extraction. As of 2018 more than 80 percent of Russian exported goods relied on mineral extraction, including petroleum products, coal, lumber, and metals.²³ Russia very much envisions and demands a slower transition to a decarbonized future than that foreseen by their North American and European counterparts. Their current investments suggest

an assumed ten or twenty years wherein petroleum continues to provide significant revenues to the national economy.²⁴ Russia is doubling down on hydrocarbons with the launch of the *Power of Siberia*, *Turkstream*, and *Nordstream II* natural gas pipelines.

The *Turkstream* pipeline is an interesting and topical example of the tangled web of geopolitical interests that often characterizes energy relationships between states. Turkey and Russia often work closely together on energy policy. The *Turkstream* pipeline helps secure Turkish energy supplies and allows it to extract some revenues and leverage by acting as an additional transit hub for Russian gas. Examples of energy geopolitics are evident all around, as the recent discovery of large deposits of gas in Israeli, Egyptian, and Cypriot waters has led Turkey to defy international law and violate a U.N. arms embargo on Libya.

Similarly, Russia is facing obstacles on the gas front in Europe. In light of its previous attempts to effect desired policy outcomes in Europe by leveraging its critical gas supplies, Russia has found that the almost completed *NordStream II* pipeline is facing sanctions, and dividing the EU. The pipeline has been subject to criticism by the European Commission, the United States, and Eastern European countries for concentrating too much crucial European energy supply along a single route. Furthermore, they point to the risks of allowing a single supplier (Russia) to control too much of the market. Germany, meanwhile, the main EU proponent of the pipeline has been actively pushing for the pipeline's completion, which has been stalled by Danish authorities who refused to grant construction permits for the pipeline section in its territorial waters until October 2019. *NordStream II* was initially expected to be completed in late 2019 but delays have pushed that date to sometime in 2021, assuming no additional hiccoughs delay construction further.

Oil has directed Russian policy in interesting ways. For example, it's not merely to stick a finger in the eye of the United States that Russia has remained involved in Venezuela; managing the global oil is very much part of Moscow's calculation. Similarly, Russia's return to the Middle East and North Africa after a long absence, establishing a foothold in Syria and expanding influence in Libya is not because it desires to secure oil for itself—there is certainly no shortage of hydrocarbons domestically—but to help influence production and supply in the global market.

Russian strategic planners naturally expect China to play an increasingly greater role in the region over the next couple of decades, as long as Russia retains close military linkages with Central Asian states and Russian

oil and gas have a market in China via Siberian pipelines. Conversely, Putin's Russia's will continue to develop its far east through the continued development of its hydrocarbon reserves. And the development of the region's energy resources thrusts Moscow and Russian power back onto the map from Irkutsk to Vladivostok. China recognizes the abundant hydrocarbon potential that Russia's east has to offer to its energy thirsty northeastern rust belt.

THE GLOBAL ENERGY GIANT: CHINA AT A CROSSROADS

China has deployed a multi-pronged global energy strategy that ensures continued economic growth and energy security. These twin drivers, coupled with an increasingly distant global energy supply chain, require China's leadership to include energy as a priority in decision-making abroad. China has been working to diversify both its domestic power mix and the sources of its imports, preventing any one supplier or technology from gaining too much influence within its economy. The current energy mix is still dominated by coal, of which it is the world's largest producer.²⁵ In light of public health concerns and overwhelming pollution, which cover Chinese cities in dense smog, Beijing embarked on a large fuel-switching campaign and deployment of renewables, as seen in the proportional peak of coal in the power mix in 2007, and the subsequent slow but steady rise in natural gas-powered electricity generation which began to take off in 2011.²⁶ Yet, China must make strategic decisions about the material of its energy investments. Put simply, China's relative abundance of coal provides the country with a degree of energy security derived from central government policy control that imported gas simply does not.

Low international gas prices ostensibly make the replacement of coal-fired power plants with natural gas plants a sensible option, but coal's abundance within China makes this shift along the supply curve challenging. Still, China has crafted a national and international natural gas strategy as part of recent five-year plans to increase domestic production and secure access to gas resources in neighboring countries. Natural gas offers China's growing economy a cleaner source than burning coal, and new technologies entering the market suggest natural gas will become more significant as a transportation sector fuel. Thus, while coal remains the top of China's energy supply pyramid, natural gas' base is poised to expand over the next decade and beyond.²⁷

Simultaneously, Beijing has been systematically developing a global market for its coal exports. Under the umbrella of its Belt-Road Initiative (BRI) China has accelerated its development and funding for coal-fired power plants abroad, despite its concerted domestic efforts to reduce coal-fired contribution to its power mix through coal-to-gas fuel switching. From Kenya to Pakistan, China has been financing and building coal-fired power plants in a bid to ensure continued demand for its coal and thereby maintain the livelihoods of the large coal mining community; another example of domestic demands impacting geopolitics.

China, the third largest consumer of natural gas in the world,²⁸ is poised to double its natural gas consumption, over the next decade. It has used its large market size to pressure suppliers, ensuring favorable long-term agreements. A stunning example of this can be seen in the *Power of Siberia* gas pipeline, recently completed by Gazprom without any Chinese funding.²⁹ It was initially envisioned by Russia as an arbitrage mechanism that would allow it to funnel natural gas to either Europe or China. After a series of negotiations, China forced Russia to build the pipeline significantly further east ensuring that the only potential off-taker could be China.³⁰ In a curious way this creates common ground between Europe and China, both of which are potentially aligned on ensuring a low price for Russian gas. Russia through miscalculation and over-reliance on hydrocarbon exports is stuck in the middle.

At the same time, China has been successful in establishing itself as a quasi-Arctic power, which is a remarkable feat considering it has no Arctic territory. Aside from gaining a seat as an observer on the Arctic Council it has the second largest number of ice breaker ships after Russia, and is in the process of developing a nuclear-powered class of ships. It has worked closely with Russia on its Arctic endeavors, and in doing so has effectively quashed any potential leverage Moscow may have wielded over it. The Arctic represents more than just vast quantities of minerals; it would provide the shortest sea route from Asia to Europe. More importantly, in light of faster than expected ice melt, talk is no longer confined to the North-West Passage or the Northern Sea route but now includes the Trans-Arctic route, which would cut across the North Pole through international waters. China is the only nation that seems to be readying for this eventuality.

While the United States steps back from global leadership in green energy and nuclear technology, China is positioning itself not only as a global manufacturer of green technology but as an innovator and

technical partner. China holds 30 percent of global renewable energy patents; 150,000 compared to the United States' 100,000. It is the world's leading producer of solar panels, wind turbines, batteries, and electric vehicles (EVs). China has been the top investor in clean energy projects for nine of the last ten years, according to the Frankfurt School of Finance and Management. Over the last two decades China has invested more than \$244 billion in energy projects across the globe. It has helped develop over 12.6 gigawatts of solar in South and South East Asia over the last fifteen years. China and domestic entities have produced, engineered, financed, and developed renewable energy projects from Argentina and Brazil to Mexico, Scotland, Ethiopia, and Turkey. These and other programs have been rolled out as part of a deliberate effort to rebrand China as the world's environmental champion. The continued growth of renewable energy and China's role in being the largest manufacturer of the majority of renewable energy technologies help boost Chinese power and reorient existing trade relationships. Beijing is also pushing to assume the mantle of global nuclear energy power. As of 2018, China was leading the development of reactors in the Middle East, Europe, and South America, and was second in number of projects only to Russia.³¹ China is hedging its bets positioning itself as the energy manufacturer, financier, and expert for the emission-free, low emission energy future. China's BRI, which Beijing hopes will reorient the global economy from US–Europe to China, features energy as a key pillar. China's energy dominance is strengthened not only through its manufacturing capacity but also via its role as a leading energy project financier and developer.

There is growing geopolitical competition in the hydrocarbon space as the world grapples with a meeting a more decarbonized future, and the growth in renewables. New policies promoting greater amounts of non-fossil fuel sources in the energy mix may prove disrupting to the current geopolitical landscape, which continues to be dominated by oil, gas, and coal. Climate action is changing this dynamic and unleashing a paradigm shift which threatens future hydrocarbon demand with implications for international relations and security.

DISRUPTING HYDROCARBONS: RENEWABLES AND THE ENERGY TRANSITION

Renewable energy is not new to the global landscape. What is new is the dramatic fall in the price of almost all forms of renewables, especially solar, and wind, culminating in creating more competition for which sources of energy get integrated into a country's energy system. The twentieth century was dominated by oil, natural gas, nuclear, and coal. The twenty-first century, with increasing pressure and demand for a more decarbonized world, means today's system is bringing in increasing amounts of renewable energy—though the world is still heavily dependent on fossil fuels, oil, gas, and coal; but new climate legislation and stricter emission rules is resulting in a reduction in coal demand. In the United States alone coal production declined 18 percent in 2019.³²

Over the course of the last two decades we have seen a dramatic shift in the application of wind and hydro technologies. Similarly, solar photo-voltaic (PV) generation has been widely proliferating as production advances have allowed it to become accessible to consumers across the globe. Though the solar panel was invented in the United States³³ it is not the world leader in solar PV generator production. Using cheap labor, ready access to critical minerals, like Rare Earth Elements (REES), and economies of scale, China overtook the West in renewable energy production in 2015.³⁴ The sheer production capacity of the Chinese industrial sector allowed the country to drive costs down dramatically. Importantly, natural gas and renewables are not overtaking coal and petroleum as primary sources of generation simply because they have lower emissions, but because they produce cheaper electricity on a per kilowatt basis. In China, renewables are already cheaper than natural gas and are expected to undercut coal by 2026.³⁵

As with hydrocarbons, manufacturing capacity and distribution of the resources needed for renewable energy generation varies greatly. An entirely new class of resources, sometimes called *Critical Minerals* may replace fossil fuels as the main source of geopolitical leverage. REES, the vast majority of which—80 percent in 2014—were produced in China.³⁶ All renewable energy technologies depend on critical minerals like lithium, cobalt, nickel, and manganese. Not only are rare earth minerals critical components for renewable energy technology but also in computer and defense technology. Similarly, lithium, a component in the most widely available type of battery storage is produced by Chile, Argentina,

Australia, and China.³⁷ Cobalt and coltan, another set of crucial elements are produced primarily in the Democratic Republic of Congo,³⁸ which has recently declared Cobalt a *Strategic Element*³⁹ in an effort to increase domestic revenues. As states recognize the increasing value that these minerals have to the global economy, what actions will they take? Similar questions from the geopolitics of oil and gas re-emerge with critical minerals; will producer countries cooperate to act in a cartel-like fashion *a la* OPEC? Or will they demand concessions from other states or the private sector? There are no clear answers as it is still early in the rare earth and critical resource energy transition, but it is fair to say, geopolitics will continue to be with us.

While we are unquestionably at the beginnings of an energy transition, it is important to note that there are multiple possible pathways to achieving low emission or emission-free generation, none of which have been firmly decided upon by most stakeholders. In the short term, natural gas producers like the U.S., Russia, and Qatar will continue to leverage their gas resources in the global energy trade. Most forecasts project an eventual decline in natural gas consumption as well. It is widely assumed that most electricity demand (which will likely include terrestrial transportation) will be met by emission-free electricity. This includes nuclear as well as renewable energy. While much of Europe stresses a renewable powered and energy efficient future, other states see a large role for nuclear. As the West, steps back from nuclear energy proliferation, Russia and China continue to export their nuclear energy expertise filling the rapidly expanding gap left by previous leaders like the United States and France.⁴⁰

Today, electricity is already sold between states. Examples include the frequent electricity trade between the United States and Canada or Norway and Germany. But that requires the development of sufficient transmission capacity, and amicable geopolitical relations. Imagine a future where electricity trade is no longer constrained by physical infrastructure. While renewable resources exist everywhere on the planet, it is clear that their abundance differs widely. In recent years there has been talk of building super grids across Asia and Europe, but, more intriguingly, there has been talk of imagined trade relationships between say Algeria and the United Kingdom (UK) for example, wherein solar PV energy from the Sahara is stored in chemical batteries and shipped to the UK where it can power street lamps and electric vehicles. Much of what we see today was unimaginable a decade ago, and the pace of disruption

is happening faster and faster. With it, there is more uncertainty on the impact of these developments on the global energy systems. Deepening electrification may bring broader globalization of energy.

WHAT NEXT? THE AGE OF CLIMATE CRISES

In late 2015, most of the world's states—led by the United States and China—agreed to what would become informally known as the Paris Agreement, which set emission reduction goals in recognition of the existential threat posed by climate change. Following this, in 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a report which predicted that the global community had 12 years to reduce emissions by 45 percent to prevent a 1.5 °C increase in global temperatures,⁴¹ which would have profound and lasting effects on the climate and weather patterns. This dire warning brings the short comings of the Paris Agreement into sharp relief, whose 2 °C target ceiling will not be sufficient to prevent catastrophic climate change. Extreme weather events that characterized the 2017 Atlantic hurricane season (Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Maria), the 2014 Polar Vortex, or the 2019–2020 Australian wildfires have helped further the call for emissions reduction. Simultaneously, in places like China and India, extreme pollution has harmed human health. These events have pushed polities to pressure governments to act. The declining costs of renewables and abundance of less-polluting natural gas make these changes possible.

The next decade is considered pivotal. What we do or don't do will determine whether the world meets its climate goals or if we cross the 2 °C threshold, which most experts believe is inevitable, given the current climate crises (see Michael Shank's chapter on this eventuality and how new sub-state actors are trying to mitigate this outcome). Energy-related carbon emissions increased in 2018 and 2019, with most of the increases coming out of rising energy demand in Asia. US emissions were 2 percent lower in 2019, with the majority of that decrease due to reducing coal use by 18 percent.

The key question in the energy transition is: what are the energy sources to push forward to achieve both energy security and decarbonization? Natural gas is abundant, less carbon intensive than coal, and has been considered an important bridge fuel in the energy transition. Unsurprisingly, the rise in natural gas is global and more countries are using gas

due to its abundance and lower cost. For China it's a coal to gas to renewables story but some countries are pushing back against natural gas since it is still a carbon emitting source of energy.

For many, the pace of the global energy transition is not fast enough. The 2015 Paris Agreement was viewed as a success by many; but years later, emissions continue to rise and countries are moving away from the commitments and action plans they submitted at Conference of Parties (COP) 21. China and the United States agreed to ambitious carbon reduction targets, and every country submitted nationally determined contributions (NDC) outlining their actions to reduce carbon emissions by 2030. As a non-binding agreement the results, as of 2020, remain lackluster and most analysts argue countries are not on track to meet the NDCs they agreed to at COP 21 in Paris in 2015. What this inaction has resulted in is a rise in social movements targeting the impacts of climate change. Across Europe there have been Extinction Rebellion protests, and in 2017 a young school girl decided it was time to take individual action. Greta Thunberg, became the face of the climate change movement, and in a few short years is now a globally recognized advocate and voice for climate change action. In March 2019, 1.5 million children across 112 countries protested against climate change. Today, the leader of School Strike, Greta Thunberg, is now not only a household name, but has appeared at Davos, the UN, and around the world calling on governments and corporations to do more and to stop carbon emissions from rising. Her message in 2019 to Davos participants: "I don't want you to be hopeful, I want you to panic. I want you to feel the fear I feel every day and then I want you to act."⁴² For all of these movements, climate change is a global emergency threatening human existence and survival as we know it. A 2019 paper by Jem Bendell, "Deep Adaptation: A Map for Navigating Climate Tragedy," argues that "starvation, destruction, migration, disease and war," await the world if action is now taken.⁴³

The emergence of EVs, more advanced battery storage technologies, cheaper production and use of renewable energy, enhanced energy efficiencies, and a growing awareness around the need to reduce fossil fuel energy consumption are all part of what's happening and will continue to drive peak demand. With the world looking to decarbonize and new technologies emerging to challenge the supremacy of oil and gas, the question is not if but when demand peaks. There is disagreement over when it will happen; some forecast as early as 2025, while Exxon Mobil and the IEA

move it to 2040. The growing pressures around climate change action and capital may move the demand peak up, and the repercussions will be great, especially for countries heavily reliant on fossil fuel revenues to support their budgets.

In 2015, Mark Carney, the Governor of the Bank of England, warned of the multitude of impending risks associated with climate change, from costs to pension funds and the onset of stranded assets. “Be warned,” he said, “stranded assets will mean lost investments, so prepare now.”⁴⁴ In September of 2019, over 100 international banks presented the *Principles for Responsible Banking*, which, if implemented, would see a decrease in upstream and downstream hydrocarbon investment with a concurrent increase in renewables investment to the tune of \$47 trillion. This move comes after a group of large institutional investors with a combined value of over \$11 trillion have begun to divest oil and gas assets.

As Amy Myers Jaffee argues, “The party hasn’t ended yet, but for the world’s newest petrostates it may be the last call.”⁴⁵ Stranded assets will become a bigger part of the energy transition narrative. A loss in the value of oil, gas, and coal reserves, particularly in countries and regions that rely heavily on natural resources for state funding, will severely impact political stability. What this will look like over time remains a significant uncertainty. A world without heavy reliance on fossil fuels may sound more peaceful, without the pressure of security of supply and transit to hydrocarbons, but another reality demands consideration. Petrostates, and hydrocarbon producing countries rely on hydrocarbon resource revenues to support and sustain government budgets. Unless there is a determined and strategic diversification drive, resource rich countries may find themselves stranded—without buyers for their most prized resources, and the fiscal disruption would reverberate through society creating new challenges to maintain peace and basic standards of living.

CONCLUSION

Though renewables can be produced in every locality around the world the decline of fossil fuel generation does not spell the end of energy geopolitics. What is clear is the world is shifting, and the influence of traditional energy powers—like Russia and Saudi Arabia—will wane, though not immediately. The United States has emerged as a new energy super power as a result of its oil and gas windfall, and the resulting supply

provides a demand cushion against energy insecurity. But for how long will the world be able to consume hydrocarbons at its current pace? The world continues to be hungry for fossil fuels, consuming more than a 100 mbd and uncertainty surrounds the demand picture for Asia. China's policies, and those of India, will determine the direction of energy geopolitics from the demand side. What is almost certain is demand will need to be curtailed; substitution is on the horizon, and the energy world of the last half century is sure to look different in the decades ahead.

The emerging picture is one of discontinuity from the past to a new energy reality in light of climate change. We are in the beginning stages of what will be a shift of power as historic oil, gas, and coal producers see their previous export markets begin to dry up and a concurrent decline in their ability to leverage their natural resources to effect policy. Kingsmill Bond from Carbon Tracker sums up the enormity of the tasks at hand as the world moves from a hydrocarbon centric system to a decarbonized one. "The whole of human prosperity and wealth has been based on our exploitation of oil and other fossil fuels, so it is an almighty undertaking. To just remove them from our energy system within a decade or two is completely fanciful."⁴⁶ Energy security considerations are not new, and though sources of energy may change, achieving and maintaining energy security will be a central focus on the ongoing global energy transition, disruptions, and discontinuity will continue to be the new normal.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Is it possible to envision a future where hydrocarbons no longer figures into the geopolitical calculus?
2. Will critical minerals necessary in the production of renewable energy technologies lend themselves geopolitical conflict in the future? Will they encourage the development of alternatives in scarce markets such as battery and computer recycling?
3. What will the growing middle classes in Asia and Africa require in terms of power and how will it be met, what will that mean for power distribution in the twenty-first century?
4. How should the global community respond to changing economics in hydrocarbon rich regions?
5. Will the oil, gas, and coal sectors actively respond to climate change? How will investors and new investment initiatives impact future hydrocarbon production?

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The Future of Climate Action: From Systems Change to Behavior Change

Michael Shank

Climate science is zeroing in with increasing certainty on current and future climate impacts, global heating trends, and their implications for human and environmental health, economies and security. Forecasts remain conservative, however. A study¹ by the University of Adelaide shows that estimates used by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) are overly conservative and the threats are much greater than the IPCC predicted.

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels continue to spike, reaching their highest ever² in 2020, at 417 parts per million. This is well above the 350 parts per million that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Goddard Institute for Space Studies recommends³ for sustainable life on earth. Oceans are absorbing this CO₂—roughly 25 percent⁴ of it, or 22 million tons of CO₂ daily⁵—undermining the shell-building and skeleton-building capacities of marine life, and impacting the food chain upon which much of the world depends.

M. Shank (✉)
Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University,
New York, NY, USA
e-mail: michael.shank@nyu.edu

These CO₂ levels correspond with rising temperatures,⁶ and so it is unsurprising, yet deeply troubling, that the five hottest years on record⁷ occurred in the last five years and the 20 hottest years on record occurred over the past 22 years. This global heating—as *The Guardian*⁸ newspaper started calling it—is impacting the environment at alarming rates by melting glaciers, warming oceans and raising sea levels, causing devastating heat waves, droughts and wildfires, increasing the ferocity and frequency of storms, and flooding, and ushering in a litany of destabilizing trends, as noted below.

Global Heating Is Forcing Glaciers to Melt Faster Than Ever Before. Himalayan glaciers are melting at double⁹ the rate they melted between 1975 and 2000. Greenland lost 4 trillion pounds¹⁰ of ice in one day and is losing ice four times faster than previously thought. If Greenland loses all ice, global sea levels will rise 7 meters,¹¹ making life in many coastal communities uninhabitable.

Global Heating Is Making Oceans Warmer, Forcing Water to Expand. Last year witnessed the highest¹² ocean temperatures on record. This, coupled with the glacier melt above, raised sea levels 5 to 8 inches over the past 100 years. Based on current warming trends, sea levels could rise over 6 feet by 2100,¹³ displacing millions of people. As waters get warmer and sea levels rise, storms become more damaging to coastal infrastructure and flooding becomes more frequent.

Global Heating Is Making Weather Patterns More Extreme. As global heating raises air temperatures, warmer air causes more evaporation, which makes more water available for precipitation. Warmer air also holds more water vapor, which results in heavier and more torrential downpours. Additionally, heat waves, droughts, and wildfires, caused by rising global temperatures, are becoming more common, and imperil communities and crops globally.

Global Heating Is Exacerbating Water Crises in Cities Worldwide. With increasing heat waves and droughts, cities such as Chennai and Cape Town and Sao Paulo and Sanaa are running out of available water, forcing water-insecure communities to migrate, survive on shipped or desalinated rations, or fight over supplies.

All this has a deleterious impact on global economies, human health, and security. The toll from rising CO₂ and warming temperatures is costly in human and financial terms: 7 million people die prematurely from air pollution each year, according to the World Health Organization,¹⁴ and just the top ten global climate disasters, in 2018 alone, cost governments

\$85 billion.¹⁵ The IPCC warns¹⁶ that if urgent action is not taken to limit greenhouse gas emissions and keep global warming within 1.5 degrees Celsius (above pre-industrial temperatures), life on this planet becomes untenable.

SOCIAL SCIENCE: CLIMATE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

Despite the alarming trends, these facts are not generating the action that is necessary to substantially reduce emissions. A study in the *Journal of Environmental Psychology* found that those who expressed the greatest concern about climate change were also the least likely to report individual-level actions.¹⁷ This is a problematic disconnect, but it is ripe with opportunities.

When it comes to attitudes, climate change is perceived as a top global security threat. That is a solid foundation on which to build a behavior change agenda. In a 26-nation survey¹⁸ conducted by Pew Research Center, global climate change was considered the top threat by the greatest number of countries—and understandably so. In the World Economic Forum’s Global Risks Report 2020, climate impacts comprised the top-five long-term risks in terms of likelihood.¹⁹ This sets the stage for proactive action against that security threat, despite the fact that international security institutions—e.g., the United Nations Security Council—do not yet have the mandate to act on climate security threats.

Without an international force to respond to climate threats, the public may feel overwhelmed by the threat and unable to act. Compare this with the threat of terrorism in the United States, for example, and there are two distinct differences: (1) the public’s ability to take action in response to their fear of terrorism is bolstered by a singular, government-promoted proposition that if they *see something*, they should *say something*, thus helping citizens to feel empowered; and (2) the government’s trillion-dollar investments in military measures to respond to the terrorism threat bring with it the assurance or appearance of protection.

When it comes to dealing with the climate security threat, however, neither of these dynamics are present. The call to personal action is not as simple and national governments have not financially doubled down on climate threats on par with counterterrorism investments.

While the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement—which was supported by 196 state parties to the UN Framework on the Convention of Climate Change—got us closer to this kind of international response (also, see

Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu's Chapter 13 on the UN), it remains insufficient because the timelines and targets are not aggressive enough and new administrations from previously signed parties (e.g., the United States) are pulling out of the agreement, undermining the urgency of the climate security threat.

Without a forceful international response to what is rightly perceived as the top global security threat, and without clear, simple actions the public can take to fight this threat, people can feel helpless²⁰ at the prospects of overcoming this threat. In lieu of action on climate threats on par with how nations respond to terrorism threats, sub-national actions and individual actions become even more critical to carbon cutting and essential in offering the public a behavioral outlet consistent with their climate attitudes.

NATIONAL RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE

National governments are failing in their response to climate change. According to the UN Environment Programme's latest Emissions Gap Report,²¹ countries are not fulfilling their mitigation promises from the Paris Climate Agreement. Scientists²² say that greenhouse gas emissions need to peak and decline by 2020. National commitments need to ratchet up, not relax. The group of twenty economies (G20) that should be taking the lead on carbon reductions, given many of these nations' access to green technology, are still subsidizing heavily polluting coal and, in recent years, tripled²³ their subsidies. Coal, consequently, was the single biggest contributor to 2018's rise in emissions.²⁴ Global emissions, meanwhile, need to be cut in half in the next decade if the international community wants to slow the escalating flooding, droughts, heatwaves and attendant adverse security, economic and health impacts facing front-line communities in these climate security zones. National governments are not even close to that level of cutting and, instead, many governments are increasing carbon emissions. Given the absence of aggressive and ambitious leadership, sub-nationals are filling the void.

SUB-NATIONAL RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE

In light of national governments' lackluster responses, regions, provinces, states, cities, companies, universities, religious communities, nonprofits, and individuals are setting ambitious climate targets to reduce emissions, waste, and ramp up renewable energy. The Under2 Coalition, for example, commits sub-national governments to emissions reductions "80-95 percent below 1990 levels, or to below 2 annual metric tons per capita, by 2050 – the level of emission reduction necessary to limit global warming to under 2 degrees Celsius by the end of this century."²⁵ Over 200 governments representing 43 percent of the global economy joined the coalition. Similarly, over 200 companies have committed to powering their businesses with 100 percent renewable energy, as part of the RE100 campaign,²⁶ led by the Climate Group and the Carbon Disclosure Project (for other public-private partnerships, see Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu's UN chapter).

Cities are equally active and ambitious. The C40 Cities²⁷ organization works with nearly 100 of the largest global cities to commit to the Paris Agreement and develop local climate plans, while members of the Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance commit to 80–100 percent greenhouse gas emissions reductions by 2050 or sooner—as well as 100 percent renewable energy and zero waste, representing some of the most aggressive leadership in this space.

Nonprofits are proffering solutions, too. One of the most comprehensive contributions is Project Drawdown, which calculates the most effective ways to reduce carbon emissions. In their top ten most effective ways to slow global warming, half of the solutions are food-related (e.g., transitioning to plant-rich diets, reducing food waste, restoring tropical forests) and population growth-related (e.g., educating girls, family planning). Yet, these carbon-cutting measures are not discussed enough in climate circles.

Even individuals—such as Greta Thunberg and the school strike for climate movement—are inspiring a sea-change in sub-national climate action and activism. While this chapter focuses primarily on sub-national actors at the municipal level, the student strike movement has contributed substantially to climate awareness and activism around the world, raising an unprecedented level of attention to the climate crisis and positively disrupting the status quo.

In total, these efforts by sub-national actors have increased dramatically over the past decade, getting the attention of national governments and the UN, where they are being quantified by the UN Environment Programme. This shows the level of seriousness by sub-nationals and the level of reliance on sub-nationals that the UN and others now expect.

Sub-national Case Study: City-Level Responses to Climate Change

There are clear reasons why cities are invested. Unique to the other sub-national actors, cities represent the majority of the world's population, energy use, and carbon emissions. They are the most likely to be impacted now, and in the future, by air pollution and extreme weather caused by global heating. Rising sea levels and worsening storm surges are a few of the impacts facing coastal cities, which is why cities are taking aggressive action. What is beneficial about cities taking the lead on climate action, from a public attitude and behavior perspective, is that the public has more trust in their mayor or city representative,²⁸ versus state or national governments. This helps with public attitudes and behaviors if citizens are seeing locally what is being done to reduce emissions and recruited to take simple, clear actions.

Cities are radically rethinking how they should be developed and designed, implementing systems change across the cityscape. Seven game changers from Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance's *Game Changers: Bold Actions by Cities to Accelerate Progress Toward Carbon Neutrality*²⁹ report, for example, show how serious cities are when it comes to systemic change. The game changers include: (1) adopting zero-emissions standards for new buildings, (2) building a ubiquitous electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, (3) mandating the recovery of organic material, (4) electrifying buildings' heating and cooling systems, (5) designating car-free and low-emission vehicle zones, (6) empowering local producers and buyers of renewable electricity, and (7) setting climate budgets to drive decarbonization.

There are more systems-level game changers to consider, including embodied carbon, which refers to "carbon dioxide emitted during the manufacture, transport and construction of building materials, together with end of life emissions."³⁰ Cities are also looking at carbon capture, sequestration, and equity-centered approaches—both game changers in how cities approach climate policy. But the seven game changers above

are a starting point for transforming cities and their carbon footprint. Now, a quick dive into each.

Adopting a Zero-Emissions Standard for New Buildings. In many major cities, buildings—and the energy required for heating, cooling, lighting, and appliances—represent the largest carbon footprint. By adopting a zero-emissions standard for all new buildings—which requires that new buildings be highly efficient and use only renewable energy—cities have an opportunity to send a strong message regarding how they want their future to look. Fortunately for cities, super-efficient buildings are becoming less expensive to build. While this game changer does not address existing building stock, which requires heavy retrofitting, zero-emissions building standards critically shape the direction of future building stock and set a new precedent for more sustainable design, function, and operation.

Building a Ubiquitous Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure. In order to get people to stop driving petrol and diesel vehicles, it needs to be easier for them to drive, and charge, the electric alternative. In many cities, it is still quite difficult to reliably depend on charging infrastructure, but that's changing. There are at least 1.5 million chargers installed globally, with China leading the way on EV infrastructure with the total number of charge points and strong buildouts in Shanghai, Beijing, Shenzhen, and Qingdao.

The market is shifting quickly and electric vehicles are here to stay, according to the International Council on Clean Transportation.³¹ Cities are doubling down on their EV commitments. Amsterdam and Oslo, for example, are committing to zero-emissions transport over the next decade, while cities like Shenzhen, which boasts the world's first fully electric bus fleet, and Tianjin are rolling out tens of thousands of new energy vehicles (i.e., plug-ins and hybrids). These efforts are outpacing national government initiatives on zero-carbon transportation and illustrate what is possible when cities act fast.

Mandating the Recovery of Organic Material. Most recoverable organic material is going to the landfill and, as it decomposes there, emits harmful methane, which is approximately 28 times³² more powerful than CO₂ in its global warming capacity over a 100-year timeframe (and over 80 times more powerful over a 20-year timeframe). By recovering it and turning it into compost, cities avoid these landfill-based methane emissions, while absorbing carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions. This is exciting new territory for cities. Soil's ability to sequester carbon is the

new frontier in the climate space, providing an enormous opportunity for cities.

Electrifying Buildings' Heating and Cooling Systems. Many of the world's buildings run on oil, gas, and even coal, emitting massive amounts of greenhouse gas emissions. By electrifying buildings heating and cooling systems, a city can power them, instead, with renewable energy. Retrofitting existing buildings will not be easy, but it will be necessary if cities want to drastically cut emissions. City-wide district heating systems offer an easier switch for cities because they can transition the heating and cooling of whole building blocks. That's why the UN Environment Programme launched the *Global District Energy in Cities Initiative*, to assist local governments—from Cartagena and Marrakesh, to Belgrade and Pune—in scaling-up modern district heating. Cities unable to invest in district heating will need to electrify their stock one building at a time, which is time and resource intensive but represents the next essential phase of building decarbonization.

Designating Car-Free and Low-Emission Vehicle Zones. In addition to getting people out of petrol and diesel cars and into electric vehicles, this game changer shapes how the quality of life in the city center can be improved with fewer vehicles. When city leaders introduce low-emission vehicle zones, it is important to incentivize what the city wants more of (i.e., low-emission vehicles, mass transit) and put a price on what they want less of (i.e., high-emission vehicles, single-occupancy vehicles). Cities around the world—from locales in Kenya and Argentina to Croatia and Morocco—are committing to car-free city centers. This will soon be the norm. Cities are rolling out congestion pricing and putting a price on, and zoning out, transport-related pollutants. In doing so, considering the 7 million premature deaths annually from air pollution, the health benefits from these car-free and low-emission zones should be clearly communicated.

Empowering Local Producers and Buyers of Renewable Electricity. Cities will be more energy secure if their power is locally and renewably sourced—and even more so if it is decentralized. By creating the capacity to store that energy throughout the city, leaders can add resilience to infrastructure. A city no longer needs to be reliant on a centralized power plant, the way many cities were reliant on large coal or gas-fired power plants. Such older, larger systems make cities less energy secure. Rolling out this game changer across developing cities represents not only the democratization of energy—where all communities can

harness clean renewable energy for heating, cooking, cooling and more—but a health opportunity (the reduction of polluting cook stoves) and a socio-economic development opportunity (independence from autocratic, government-run energy utilities).

Setting a Climate Budget to Drive Decarbonization. Using a climate budget to achieve decarbonization goals represents a whole-systems approach because every city department calculates climate impacts—from labor and health departments, to energy, waste, and transportation. Every department has a role in making systems more efficient and sustainable, less carbon-intensive and more renewable. By developing carbon budgets for every department, the city can better measure its environmental impact and spend its carbon wisely and within budget. A climate budget “establishes a maximum greenhouse gas emissions level for the budget year, based on the city’s emissions goal,” and “details the city’s proposed short-term emissions-reduction actions to stay within the maximum amount, their projected impact, and cost”.³³ As Oslo’s vice mayor noted when the city rolled out the world’s first climate budget, a climate budget allows them to “count carbon dioxide the same way as we count money”,³⁴ a helpful way to understand climate budgeting locally and its role within the emissions reduction agenda.

All seven game changers do two things. First, they make a substantial contribution to the decarbonization of a city, irrespective of a national government’s real or perceived inaction on climate change. Second, they send a message to the public that the city is serious about climate action. This, in turn, helps motivate and mobilize constituencies to take action and change behavior.

There are more game changers that cities can pursue, including the less technical and narratively focused climate emergency declarations. Over 1700 local governments in 30 countries, representing over 800 million citizens, have declared a climate emergency.³⁵ While this is not a structural game changer, this discourse elevates the way in which the climate crisis is discussed by sub-national actors. These emergency narratives by cities send an important message to the public. It notifies them of an escalating threat and encourages a behavioral response that is commensurate with that threat. That cities are resorting to emergency declarations indicates a lesson-learned from similar threat situations (e.g., health pandemics, natural disasters, or terrorism attacks). This is a new focus within the climate movement, and it moves away from simpler behavior change asks, such as changing lightbulbs, recycling, or walking, and doubles down

on bigger systems-level changes that are necessary to combat the emergency declarations—e.g., what is eaten, shipped, flown, driven, heated, commuted, worn, or powered. Now, almost every individual climate action is up for discussion. This new and often uncomfortable territory for cities is one they are being encouraged to embrace quickly.

Sub-national Case Study: Individual Responses to Climate Change

While there is a reluctance among some cities to move toward a focus on individual actions, industries will continue lobbying against systems-wide change unless consumers also demand a shift, which is why a simultaneous focus on individual actions is so critical.

As part of this effort to localize action, the climate movement has made the climate crisis more personal by focusing on what individuals can do to save the planet (e.g., buying hybrid or electric vehicles, purchasing renewable energy, reducing waste, etc.). Yet, many of the most substantive choices to reduce one's contribution to climate change—having fewer kids, living car-free, avoiding transatlantic flights, and eating a plant-based diet—are rarely discussed.³⁶ Plant-based diets are finally becoming more mainstream, and fast fashion's impact is just entering the discussion. But smaller families rarely make it onto environmental to-do lists despite their superior carbon reducing capacity.³⁷

There was and still is an expectation that national governments are primarily responsible for making these choices and systems more sustainable. But with national governments failing to decarbonize whole systems and failing to push back on carbon-heavy industries (e.g., fossil fuel, meat, dairy, and apparel industries) there is an increasing appetite for what people can do to create demand for more sustainable options.

That is why cities are promoting individual action, and going beyond the traditional low-hanging fruit when it comes to environmental messaging on single-use plastics, lightbulbs, recycling, or public transit. They are adopting food pledges and promoting circular economy platforms. While uncharted territory for many, it is necessary for the emergence of transformative climate policy. Cities are signing the Cool Food Pledge, for example, which helps food service facilities cut food-related greenhouse gas emissions 25 percent by 2030. As the pledge states, “food production accounts for nearly a quarter of all greenhouse gas emissions, and helping people increase the share of plant-based foods in their diet is a critical step in reducing agriculture's pressure on the climate.”³⁸ This

would be a game changer, then, in terms of emissions reductions, if cities encouraged individuals to pursue plant-based diets and stimulate the industries that will serve these diets and demand.

Cities are also promoting circularly economies, which includes waste minimization, closed-loop systems, regenerative use of resources, and sustainable fashion. Cities like Amsterdam are focused on individual actions and carbon-heavy consumption. In Amsterdam’s circular economy messaging from their latest report titled “*Building Blocks for the New Strategy: Amsterdam Circular 2020–2025, Directions for a thriving city within the planetary boundaries*,” the promotion of a fundamental mind shift is explicit:

Fast-moving consumer goods are cheap, highly abundant products, such as clothing. As a result of their relatively low price, these products are easily sold and quickly thrown away. The increasing availability of these low-cost products contributes to a fast-paced consumerist and throw-away society. To prevent resource overconsumption, a fundamental (mind)shift is needed, not only in the way products are produced and consumed, but also in how consumer goods are valued. Innovative circular business models, materials and designs can help to reshape unsustainable production and consumption and maximize lifespans of consumer goods.³⁹

Motivating individual action is not easy, as cities realize. People do not often deviate from their status quo, but they will need to in order to shift industry practices and encourage new sustainable markets. Consumer demand has the capacity to shift industries even when entrenched carbon-heavy corporate interests—in the fossil fuel sector, for example, or apparel, meat and dairy industries—seem immovable and bent on preventing a price on pollution. If consumer demand moves in a more sustainable direction, industries will respond. Similarly, the more technical game changers in climate-leading communities will not be possible unless public and political will is mustered, mobilized, and maintained.

Ultimately, political will is shaped by individual and collective behavior changes, which cities can influence and inspire given their proximity to the public. Thus, the next section explores: (1) the social science behind behavior change, (2) examples of how people might change their climate-impacting behaviors, and (3) ways in which cities can motivate citizens to do more to decarbonize behaviors.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND BEHAVIOR CHANGE

As sub-national actors complement their systems-changing focus with a more socially minded behavior change focus, there are many ways to build public will. This section explores the potential for leaders to employ social science research in an effort to make cities more sustainable.

The following twelve behavioral science-based principles are relevant to sustainability initiatives in cities of any size. These principles, compiled by the social scientists at [Ideas42.org](https://ideas42.org), are helpful in thinking through how cities can apply them to their work in building consensus around, and communicating out, game-changing policy.

Choice Overload. Whether it is building retrofits, green energy installs, public transit improvements, waste management, bike lanes, or household weatherization, there are myriad climate policies that need to be pursued. But is there a way to deliver this to individuals that does not cause choice overload in terms of what policy to support? Is there a way to deliver it, as [Ideas42.org](https://ideas42.org) put it, that decreases the number of choices presented and increases the meaningful differences between them? For example, a city's climate webpage could feature one action each month and individuals could be encouraged to take that one action for 30 days. All communications would center on that one action, and then, the next month, a new action would be rolled out. This may sound basic but given the myriad climate actions needed across the sub-national space, recruitment needs to be carefully curated, especially given the propensity of individuals to feel choice overload.

Cognitive Depletion and Decision Fatigue. There is plenty of social research on how fatigue makes for bad decision-making. Considering this, when cities reach out to the community to build public will, are they cognizant of when individuals might be fatigued and less equipped to support climate initiatives? Mindful of food desert prevalence, how are cities managing food insecurity and working with other departments to ensure communities have what they need? This is a great example of how social and environmental sustainability are interconnected and how city departments can work together to ensure communities have the resources they need to make the healthiest decisions possible.

Hassle Factors. How can cities make green choices easier for individuals? If cities want residents to ride the bus more, bike more, eat more plant-based foods, waste less, weatherize, and buy heat pumps and solar power, how do they make it hassle-free or close to hassle-free? Can

they make it more enjoyable, affordable, or accessible? People might be willing to undertake the effort and expense if they are doing it in friendly company, with free food, while having fun.

Identity. Since not everyone considers themselves an environmentalist, how do cities resonate with other identities that might be attracted to climate policies? There are myriad ways in which communities self-identify; what are the principles that matter to them? Parents would have, as part of their guardian identity, a desire to keep their children safe from harm and to provide for their household. That identity covers health, security, and economics. Are cities mindful of this when messaging and mobilizing on climate initiatives? In words of Ideas42.org, how can cities “prime positive identities to encourage socially beneficial actions”⁴⁰?

Limited Attention. When communities do not immediately respond to city-level climate requests, it is not because they are disinterested. Perhaps they heard it once or perhaps other priorities took their attention. Mindful of limited attention spans, and cognizant of all that takes priority in residents’ lives, how can cities make it easy for individuals by repeating and reiterating the work through every possible channel? Are cities using radio, television, billboards, community newspapers and newsletters, local associations and advocacy organizations, religious halls, phone and email, text and other ways to communicate with the public? If not, they should.

Loss Aversion. People have an intrinsic disdain for loss. They get attached. How can cities communicate their climate work mindful of the public’s proclivity for loss avoidance? Think about what people care about: quality of life, money, health, and physical security. Are cities articulating their work mindful of what individuals do not want to lose? Habitat or species loss translates here, as does the quality of life lost, the money lost, the health lost, and the security lost from fossil fuels, global heating, and extreme weather. But it is important to build new attachment to the kind of reality cities are trying to build. For example, after a city turns road-trafficked blocks into a pedestrian-only zone, full of beautiful park amenities, and encourages active engagement in that space, it is much more likely that the public will become attached to this new reality and want to replicate the experience. How do cities show that life is better in this greener world? There is intrinsic fear in letting go of the fossil-fueled experience. One way to offset this fear is to provide opportunities for people to build new attachment to the world that cities are creating. People that have a personal bond with something that is impacted by global heating are more likely to protect it. In sub-national climate

messaging and mobilizing, it is critical to give individuals something to avoid losing.

Primacy Bias. There is a bias toward information that is presented first, versus information less visible. How does that impact how cities message on climate? Is it presented in highly visible ways on city websites and do cities have social media channels specifically devoted to climate and sustainability work? Are city staff leading with the climate message or are they placing it last on a list? This may seem like subtle nuance, but the ordering of a simple list sends a strong message.

Procrastination. Everyone procrastinates at some point, which is why any far off “2050” framing for climate initiatives is potentially problematic. Even 2040 and 2030 seem far off. People will often wait until the last minute to do whatever is asked. When cities talk about future impacts, it can reinforce the proclivity to procrastinate. Talking about impacts happening here and now, and offering easy, bite-sized steps that anyone can take, counters procrastination. The same goes with implementing short-term climate goals instead of long-term ones. People are more likely to take action if it is easy *now*, they can see the difference *now*, and the goals are relevant *now*. There is a need to refocus public engagement on the 2020 and 2025 realities so that people’s penchant for procrastination is countered by near-term possibilities.

Social Norms. Social norming is powerful. If one’s neighbor has solar panels, one is more likely⁴¹ to get them. If one’s neighbor is saving money on a utility bill, due to energy efficiency measures, one is more likely⁴² to pursue similar savings. Given this, how are cities reflecting back community actions so that residents and building owners see peers taking action and get motivated to do what others are doing? Reflecting back the green actions happening within the community not only works from a social norming perspective, but in the field of climate action, where people can feel like actions make little difference, this mirroring back can lift people up emotionally, provide inspiration and hope, and counteract defeatism.

Status Quo Bias. Default settings are powerful. People like routine. How does this impact climate-focused behavior change work, reaching people within their routine? One option: By setting up default settings to be more sustainable, with greener opt-out versus opt-in options (since opt-out produces significantly higher participation rates than opt-in), a new status quo can be made more sustainable.

The Availability Heuristic. People may think they never experienced a climate impact. This occurs when press and policymakers fail to contextualize extreme weather events within global warming realities. As [Ideas42.org](https://ideas42.org) put it, “we judge probabilities based on how easily examples come to mind.”⁴³ How are cities chronicling, then, climate impacts so that recent examples are more readily available? Can cities better use media channels to document climate impacts so that people have a better understanding of climate trends? And how are cities showcasing solutions so that people have examples of the behavior change needed? So that when individuals think of going green, there are plenty of examples that come to mind. The more cities message this—featuring city staff going green, too, in what they eat, drive, fly, wear, heat and power—the more the public has available examples.

The Planning Fallacy. Individuals are often optimistic about how much time it will take to accomplish tasks. This has implications for sustainability targets and timelines for 2030, 2040, and 2050. It is important to be very clear about how much time these tasks will take (or reorient deadlines with easier estimable planning periods). Since systems-level game-changing takes time, cities will want to be clear about the necessary planning, and be positive about their ability to accomplish tasks. By giving examples of similar time requirements associated with other behaviors in residents’ lives, a climate action request has a salient comparison. By helping communities know how much planning is required to make necessary shifts, cities can set expectations. By doing it in shorter increments (versus 2050 timeframes), it helps ensure expectations are realistic, short-term planning is reported and made public, and everyone is witnessing what is involved. Additionally, allowing for time to assess progress, and adapt, helps maintain the public’s faith throughout the process.

These 12 principles offer useful guidance in the rolling out previously mentioned systems-wide, game-changing strategies for cities engaged in climate change mitigation. The final section explores additional ingredients that are helpful to sub-nationals in their efforts to motivate individual behavior change.

INGREDIENTS FOR BEHAVIOR CHANGE

Messages and Messengers. Cities that want to experiment further with behavioral change might consider what marketing professionals understand: Appeal to basic human needs—i.e., how will life be better? The climate community often leads with some kind of normative, ethical message regarding doing the right thing for future generations, rather than selling the health, economic, security, quality of life benefits that come with taking action on climate. Identifying those benefits, however, won't be enough. When marketing these benefits, the use of economists, medical doctors, security officials, and cultural influencers will be helpful.

It can appear disingenuous when climate leaders claim green economy job numbers without maintaining sector-specific credibility or industry background to back up the assertion. It is a stronger message when the messenger is an authority on the matter and maintains trust with the audience, which is why finding the right messenger for the appropriate message is critical.

Cities are not recruiting the right surrogates frequently enough to message on the city's behalf. As a result, city policies get dismissed or watered down because the city failed to tee up industry-specific surrogates (on health, economy, security, cultural influence, etc.) to prepare the hearts and minds for the expected behavior change.

Mainstream Media and Memes. After finding the right messages and messengers, making a policy palatable to the mainstream majority also requires: (1) accessible messages, i.e., language that the mainstream majority is using (not terms like decarbonization, carbon neutrality, net zero, or retrofit accelerators); (2) repeated messages, since residents will need to hear it a half-dozen times for it to stick (known in marketing as effective frequency); and (3) readily available messages, in the media spaces that the majority uses (which means social media and community newspapers and news stations).

This is a stretch for cities because they tend to rely on their own city websites, which they hope the public will access, and tend to produce heavy reports, which may be useful in providing accountability on city mandates but which few citizens read. Another good exercise for city staff is to create memes for their climate and sustainability work (a meme is a shareable concept, image, video, or text for social media). Failure to do so misses a large swath of social-media-consuming society. Everything can be made into a meme; it just requires creativity.

This is often outside the comfort zone of city staff since many received professional training in the hard sciences necessary for running city climate, sustainability, and resilience offices. This social science work was not likely part of the sustainability training, but the ways in which cities now need to win the hearts and minds of their carbon-consuming publics are increasingly on their agenda.

Movements and Mobilization. This is a new priority among cities and an important development since people often feel alone or impotent in the fight against global warming. Eco-anxiety is emerging, where climate change is held responsible for generating post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression. Cities, consequently, are exploring new and socio-economically sensitive ways to mirror back the movement happening in their communities so that residents realize two things: first, that they are not alone and there is a movement in their community, and second, that the city is positively reaffirming and featuring the sustainable behavior needed.

As cities lead this movement building, officials are realizing the importance of leading by example and serving as change agents within their contexts. Walking the sustainability talk is now more critical than ever as citizens look to their leaders on more than just basic environmental behaviors—recycling, changing lightbulbs, riding mass transit, etc.—and expect leaders to walk the talk in all aspects of life including flying less and going carless, scaling-up solar and heat pumps, pursuing sustainable diets and slow fashion and even talking about having smaller families.

This walking of the talk is essential in leading local movements as people are drawn to leaders, their stories and their journeys. A failure to walk the talk in the climate space runs the risk of derailing a city's climate initiative as critics often look for holes to poke and inconsistencies to call out when attempting to undermine climate action.

Moment-Making. Other work that is helpful when building a movement is to stay nimble and respond to news moments when they occur. A bushfire in Australia, a flood in New York City, a heat wave in Europe, or the Amazon burning in South America. All of these events are moments in the news cycle that city leaders should take advantage of when messaging on climate change. Miss these moments and the city loses an opportunity to contextualize the news within a climate frame. Every time extreme weather emerges, provided it has a global warming connection, cities have an opportunity to frame for the public this connection. The more the public sees the climate connection reiterated, the more familiar the science will become.

One way of seizing the extreme weather news cycle is for cities to show, not tell, what is happening. For example, a mayor could host a press conference from within the flood zone, with fishing waders on, requiring the press to follow the mayor throughout the impacted area. The optics here are important. It places the climate message in the middle of the extreme weather impact zone. This goes for heat waves, wild-fire, droughts, floods, and more. Reporters are tired of traditional press releases and sterile press conferences. They are looking for a story to tell, for something surprising to hook readers. It is up to local leaders to help the press tell that story and provide that visual.

Mirroring and Mimicry. When capturing the public's attention, keep in mind they are consuming content that is primarily visual, fast paced, light on text, and entertaining. The most shared social media content generates feelings of happiness, surprise, and admiration, so cities will want to rethink how they engage the public on climate impacts and solutions. Too often a city's website is text-heavy and plan-heavy for good reason: to establish targets and timelines for a city, to be accountable to a city council, and to be transparent that a plan exists and is on track.

This is not what the public is eager to consume. By mirroring the kind of content that the public is sharing on social networks, it will move cities toward visual and video storytelling and require cities to integrate content that conjures feelings of happiness, surprise, and/or admiration. It takes creativity, but it is possible. When the Maldives government's cabinet ministers held an underwater press conference to raise awareness on how sea level rise will consume their country, it got the world's attention. It was an excellent example of creative climate messaging that evoked surprise and admiration.

Moreover, if cities want to mimic how the public talks with each other and takes action within their communities, it will require that cities meet the community where they are at, listen, and be mindful of preferred modes of communication and action. Appreciative inquiry is helpful here. When mirroring back and mimicking the kinds of climate behaviors cities want to scale up, this work should be done carefully, mindful of power structures and cultural representation, and equitably co-created with the community.

This focus on individual behavior change is a much more involved role that is now being asked of city leaders. But if climate policy is going to transform quickly enough to save humanity from climate chaos, then cities need to expand their portfolio to include behavior change. Given

increasing national government recalcitrance on climate action, this may be the most tractable way forward.

CONCLUSION

This chapter assumes a transformation in how climate action evolves over the next few decades, discontinuing a reliance on national actions—given the inadequate action to avert climate destruction—toward a more diversified and disruptive portfolio of sub-national actions, with an increasing reliance on cities as change agents in local communities.

Climate action will benefit from an application of the behavioral science principles identified above, as individual action offers substantial opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. If every car-driving individual in the United States, for example, switched immediately to an electric car, the country's emissions would drop by over 8 percent.⁴⁴ That is a sizable reduction for one of the biggest emitters globally. And while national government support for charging infrastructure will be critical in furthering this kind of behavior change, social science is equally useful in understanding the attitudes that will expedite this shift and disrupt the status quo.

Cities in the global north and south offer a meaningful opportunity to message more local behavior change, since the majority of the world's population, energy use, carbon emissions, and climate impacts are in metropolitan areas. Cities are where the climate story should be told, by local leaders and within local communities. Since cities around the world are already leading on systems-wide game changers in the climate space, it is now up to these same cities to lead on the behavioral game change front.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are sub-national leaders in your community/city doing to avert climate destruction and disrupt the fossil-fueled status quo and how are you supporting their efforts?
2. When is the last time you significantly changed your behavior and what inspired or motivated you to do so? What would it take for you to change your behavior—what you're powering, transporting, heating, eating, and wearing—so that it's even more sustainable and climate-friendly?

3. How would you design your community/city to be more sustainable and climate-friendly and how would you build the political and public will to make it happen?
4. What's the most inspiring sub-national climate action happening in your community and how might it be scaled up further so that its impact might be felt in neighboring communities, states, and provinces?

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The United Nations: Managing Unrealistic Expectations

Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu

Speaking in 1954, Dag Hammarskjöld, the second and, perhaps, the most iconic secretary general of the United Nations (UN), reminded the world that “the United Nations was not created in order to bring us to heaven, but in order to save us from hell.”¹ Today, as the UN marks its 75th anniversary it is failing to prevent humanity’s march to hell, and is literally going bankrupt. At a time when states are prioritizing “nation first” doctrines that unabashedly challenge the existing global order, and are leading to renewed global geopolitical contestation—coupled with the rise of emerging powers that are pushing for accommodation within the present system—the narrative of the crises in multilateralism in general, and the possibility of the demise of the UN in particular is not unfounded.² With a revanchist Russia, a resurgent China, and a rudderless United States, locked in confrontation over trade, a renewed nuclear arms race, contestation over cyber security and emerging technologies, and in proxy wars in Syria, Ukraine, and Venezuela, the UN has

W. P. S. Sidhu (✉)
Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University,
New York, NY, USA
e-mail: wpsidhu@nyu.edu

been rendered increasingly ineffectual in addressing many pressing global threats and challenges. Moreover, the Trump administration's pronouncements to withdraw from the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the Paris climate agreement, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear program, and the Human Rights Council, in addition to jettisoning its international commitment on refugees, and disengagement on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), have only been matched by China's disregard for the rules of the international trading system, and international law as evident by its robust actions in the South China Sea, among others. Clearly, these actions have not only weakened many of the multilateral norms painstakingly established, especially since the turn of the century, but have also stymied the efforts of the UN—as an arena, agent, and actor—to effectively deal with more urgent peace and security, development, and human rights crises.

In its role as an *arena*, the UN functions as a convener and provides the venue for state (and increasingly civil society) actors to cooperate or, indeed, confront each other in its various deliberative bodies; in its role as an *agent*, the UN acts on behalf of its member states, and seeks to implement decisions made by them, notably in political and peacekeeping missions, and the development field; and in its role as an *actor*, the UN—particularly the secretary-general and the senior management group, along with the heads of the various agencies—often exercise independent decisions-making and implementation, which is sometimes contrary to the interest of member states. Of course, not all of these roles are siloed and there is considerable overlap, and, indeed, tension between the agent and actor role.³

The UN's role as an arena in multilateral processes is still in evidence, and it continues to influence the global discourse and norms on peace and security, development, and human rights. However, its role as agent and actor in the implementation of these norms, agreements, and treaties remain uneven at best and non-existent at worst, primarily on account of the renewed contestation, particularly among the permanent five members (P5) of the UN Security Council,⁴ as well as from the African Union—at least in mediation efforts. Nonetheless, partly on account of the absence of any other universal organization, the UN is likely to remain a relevant actor, agent, and arena for most of the twenty-first century, even as it grapples with new challenges that its founders never envisaged at the time of its creation in 1945. Among these are the expanding peacekeeping mandates, terrorism, and pandemics (such as Covid-19); the political, technical, and financial hurdles in implementing the SDGs;

the climate crisis; and dealing with the opportunities and threats of cyberspace, emerging technologies, and revolution in information and telecommunication.

Against this backdrop, the chapter begins with a review of some of the salient norms, principles, practices, and institutions established in the UN related to peace and security, development, and human rights in the twenty-first century. As a corollary, it will assess the role of new non-state and sub-state actors in the creation of these norms.⁵ The chapter then examines the implementation and operationalization of these norms to assess their effectiveness, or lack of it. The following section argues that despite the apathy or indeed the hostility toward the UN, especially by the dominant and emerging powers, the UN is likely to remain a primary (but not necessarily the only) arena for the development of norms, especially if it can engage new actors and devise processes that can circumvent great power indifference or intimidation. The conclusion considers three possible scenarios of the UN's role in shaping global norms over the next decade.

A LONG AWAITED POST COLD WAR RESURGENCE

After the Cold War inflicted hiatus the UN experienced an unexpected but long awaited renaissance in the final decade of the twentieth century, which culminated in the 2005 World Summit to mark the UN's 60th anniversary. The epochal Outcome Document issued on the occasion highlighted four priority areas: development; peace and collective security; human rights and rule of law; and strengthening of the UN.⁶ The document strongly endorsed the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 and, remarkably, anticipated the contours of the yet to be negotiated SDGs when it reaffirmed that "sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental aspects constitutes a key element of the overarching framework of United Nations activities."⁷ Indeed, development is prioritized in the document and more than half of it is dedicated to the issue, and many of the recommendations related to sustainable development were subsequently reflected in the SDGs. In the peace and security arena the document created the Peacebuilding Commission, Peacebuilding Fund, and the Peacebuilding Support Office. Additionally, the UN's mediation capacity was strengthened, along with its counter-terrorism strategy, which led to the establishment of a stand-alone counter-terrorism office. It also institutionalized the role of women

in peace and security, first articulated in UN Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in October 2000. Under human rights the concept of responsibility to protect (R2P), wherein each “individual states has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity,” was formally adopted.⁸ Additionally, the cachexia-ridden Human Rights Commission was to be replaced by a more responsible and robust Human Rights Council. The document also welcomed “the positive contributions of the private sector and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in the promotion and implementation of development and human rights programmes.”⁹ Finally the document reaffirmed “democracy is a universal value” and established the Democracy Fund.¹⁰

In short, the 2005 Outcome Document (despite several drawbacks; for instance, the existential threat posed by weapons of mass destruction finds no mention) revealed a desire among UN members to make the world body fit for purpose in the twenty-first century. The document was just one of many manifestations of institutional activism during the period; several other innovations were launched by the Security Council and other processes. Today, despite the fact that many of the norms and institutions set up in the Outcome Document have suffered severe setbacks, the trend of creating new norms and institutions has not entirely dissipated. This section will review some of the key normative, and institutional innovations in the UN universe since the dawn of the twenty-first century in general and the 2005 Outcome Document in particular.

Peace and Security

In the peace and security arena, the UN witnessed several constructive developments, some of which are noted in the 2005 Outcome Document. Other initiatives related to UN peacekeeping in particular, including the so-called Brahimi report¹¹ sought to gradually increase the scope and ambition of peacekeeping, while facing the growing challenges of going into places without peace to keep. This resulted in some multidimensional operations with expanded mandates to protect civilians, ensure rule of law, and conduct elections. While the operationalization of these mandates has been particularly problematic for a number of reasons—including tensions with the traditional peacekeeping principles of consent, impartiality, and use of force only for self-defense—the UN’s peace enforcement role was considered to be inevitable.¹² Consequently, even the 2015 high-level

independent panel on peace operations (HIPPO) sought to make them more effective.¹³ While the recommendations of the HIPPO report to address serious shortcomings are yet to be implemented, and notwithstanding the presence of other peacekeeping actors, the UN remains “the world’s primary peacekeeper by a considerable margin [and] there is evidence that the Security Council’s authority as the source of peacekeeping mandates has strengthened with time.”¹⁴ This is despite the fact that the UN is missing in action in Libya and Yemen for no fault of its own.

Other initiatives included UNSCR 1325 on women, peace, and security, which partly contributed to the establishment of UN Women (in 2010)¹⁵; UNSCR 1373 on terrorism (adopted in 2001 in the wake of the 9/11 attacks), which led to the establishment of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and, in 2004, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) mandated to provide the CTC with expert advice¹⁶; and UNSCR 1540 (which was passed in 2004, and requires governments to legislate and enforce laws to prevent non-state actors, especially terrorist groups, from acquiring weapons of mass destruction—WMD), which led to the creation of the so-called 1540 Committee.¹⁷ Apart from the Council led initiatives, the UN General Assembly also successfully negotiated two significant treaties: the 2013 ATT to establish common standards and reduce illicit arms trade, and the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which proscribes signatories not to use, threaten to use, develop, produce, manufacture, acquire, possess, stockpile, transfer, station, or install nuclear weapons.¹⁸ Among these UNSCR 1540, and the TPNW are of particular salience on account of their far reaching normative implications and will be discussed in more detail.

UNSCR 1540

Passed in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, and the dominant narrative of the link between Iraq and WMDs, this resolution is a rare instance where the Council has donned the role of a legislative body; 1540 mandates all UN members to pass appropriate domestic laws to ensure that non-state actors, including terrorist groups, are unable to attain weapons of mass destruction or the necessary material and expertise to build them. Passed under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, 1540 also empowers the Council to enforce the mandate. As a sop, the 1540 Committee has followed a more cooperative and collegiate approach to encouraging UN

members to pass necessary domestic legislation, and also establish institutions to enforce them domestically.¹⁹ However, following the discovery of undeclared chemical weapons in Syria, and the fact that Damascus had lied in its initial 1540 declaration, the Council passed resolution 2118 in 2013, which includes a section that mandates all UN members to “inform immediately the Security Council of any violation of resolution 1540,” thus empowering the 1540 Committee to verify all reports.²⁰ UNSCR 1540 was passed unanimously for at least three reasons. First all P5 members were in agreement of the necessity of such a sweeping resolution. While many of the P5 sponsors of this resolution have used non-state actors as proxies to violate the sovereignty of their adversaries, there was an overall consensus that allowing any groups to have access to WMD capabilities would be extremely dangerous and detrimental in the long run. Second, prompted by post-9/11 concerns of a terrorist WMD attack, states (such as Pakistan), which were particularly worried about the implications of the resolution and sought to push-back, were browbeaten into submission by the P5. Third, although the resolution was addressed to UN member states, the tip of the spear was aimed at non-state actors, especially terrorist groups, from acquiring WMDs, and did not directly impinge on proliferation by states, which made it more palatable.

Resolution 1540 might be considered a partial success in the UN’s efforts to address WMD proliferation to non-state actors by requiring states to legislate, regulate, and enforce rules to prevent non-state actors from obtaining these weapons and the means to deliver them. In doing so it established the norm of states not facilitating non-state actors from acquiring WMD. Yet, its implementation remains uneven and far from complete. Apart from the lack of capacity of some states to actually report on the implementation of 1540 nationally, other states have deliberately misreported their WMD holdings and steps taken to prevent WMD from falling into the hands of non-state actors. However, with the exception of Syria, the Council has been reluctant to enforce the mandate of 1540, partly on account of lack of P5 consensus and partly because of the perils of enforcement.

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)

If 1540 proved that the P5 could compel the Council to legislate for all UN members, then the TPNW proves the inability of the P5 to block a crucial normative treaty that takes aim at the core of their military

prowess—their nuclear arsenals. Born out of the civil society movement (spearheaded by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons—ICAN²¹) concerned with the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, and supported by several leading non-nuclear European nations (notably Austria, Ireland, Sweden, and, initially, Switzerland), the TPNW process emerged from the UN open-ended working group (OEWG) created by the General Assembly in 2015 “to substantively address concrete effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms that will need to be concluded to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons.”²² All the nuclear-armed states, except North Korea, boycotted the OEWG.

The OEWG voted to recommend the start of negotiations and, in 2017, 124 non-nuclear weapon states—including the Netherlands, a NATO member and a prominent nuclear umbrella state (which reportedly stores US nuclear weapons at Volkel Air Base)—gathered in New York to negotiate a “legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.” This congregation caused great consternation among the nuclear-armed states and their shielded allies as amply demonstrated when the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, along with several countries that live under a nuclear umbrella, publicly protested against the conference, and sought to justify their decision to boycott it.

The trepidation of the nuclear-armed states is justified for a number of reasons. First, the TPNW strengthens the non-use norm of nuclear weapons, and, in doing so, challenges the very premise of nuclear deterrence. Second, it also questions the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) canon that nuclear weapons are an entitlement bestowed upon a handful of countries that had tested a weapon before the treaty entered into force in 1970. Third the TPNW challenges the belief that the security of most of the world’s nations—indeed, world order itself—is based on the possession of or protection by nuclear weapons. Fourth, it also contests the idea that nuclear weapons cannot be banned, and nuclear disarmament is possible only as part of a process of “general and complete disarmament,” as outlined in Article VI of the NPT, implying that nuclear weapons might be the last to be eliminated. Finally, the TPNW plugs a serious legal gap in that nuclear weapons (unlike chemical and biological weapons) were the only WMD that were not prohibited by international law. This was an unfathomable lapse given the potential of nuclear-weapon use to lead to global extinction.²³ In doing so, the TPNW also strengthens the human

security norm by highlighting the existential humanitarian consequences posed by the use of nuclear weapons.

If nuclear-armed states, especially the P5 are unhappy with the momentum of the ban negotiations and treaty, then they have only themselves to blame; these negotiations were a direct result of the diminishing faith in the NPT process, the Conference on Disarmament, and the nuclear-centered world order that persevered after the Cold War ended. The merits, or lack thereof, of the TPNW notwithstanding, the treaty underlines that new actors—civil society movements—along with a gathering of small and middle powers can contribute to norm creation within the UN framework, despite stiff and vocal opposition from P5 members and their influential allies. ICAN’s contribution to the TPNW proceedings and process was recognized by the award of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize. Justifying the award the Norwegian Nobel Committee praised ICAN “for its work to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and for its ground-breaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons.”²⁴

Development

The end of the Cold War saw the scope for multilateral development open significantly. This was evidenced by the creation of the Human Development Report (HDR), the related Human Development Index (HDI) in 1990, and, more significantly, their acceptance by UN members.²⁵ The HDR/HDI was a more holistic way of measuring development as compared to the unidimensional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measure. The 1992 Rio “Earth Summit,” where Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and civil society actors played a prominent role, soon thereafter set the stage for serious deliberations on sustainability, climate change, and development. This momentum culminated in the top-down and relatively modest eight MDGs in 2000. The MDGs served to put a “spotlight on the issue” even if they ignored “important elements of the development enterprise, such as freedom and technological innovation, while framing a mostly basic needs agenda.”²⁶ This is unsurprising given that the MDGs were prescribed exclusively for countries of the global South by, as one UN insider put it, “a bunch of mostly men from the global North who dreamed up the goals while sitting in a basement with little consultation with the target countries.”²⁷ Perhaps the singular contribution of the MDGs was to pave the way for the

uber-ambitious SDGs in 2015. The SDGs, along with the Paris climate change agreement, are probably the two most significant achievements in the development arena in particular and the UN universe in general. Consequently, their impact will be examined in some detail.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

By most accounts the SDGs were the result of “the most inclusive and comprehensive negotiations in UN history.”²⁸ The SDG agenda, negotiated by the UN membership, as well as civil society groups, foundations, and NGOs over three years is, perhaps, the most ambitious roadmap ever drawn up by the world body.²⁹ It lists 17 goals ranging from “Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere” through “Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries” to “Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development”, and a staggering 169 targets that need to be monitored and implemented by 2030.

The development aspect apart, the SDGs are salient for the UN’s political role as a global norm setter for several reasons. First, the inclusive manner in which the SDGs were negotiated (and indeed might have contributed to the runaway ambition evident in the scope of the goals) underlined that UN members were able to achieve remarkable consensus in the development field, despite the deep political differences that have stymied cooperation in other areas. This in turn has led UN members to take ownership of the goals. For instance, even before the goals were formally adopted India’s government asserted that as many as 11 of the 17 SDGs—including “Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower women and girls” and “Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” were already part of its agenda.³⁰ This ownership is also evident in the enthusiasm of most countries in presenting their voluntary national reports (VNR). While most countries have presented a VNR at least once (with notable exceptions like the United States, Iran, Somalia, and Myanmar which have not presented a single report), many countries (such as Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Mexico, and Turkey) have presented three VNRs. Although their rationale for doing so varies, clearly, they see benefits in the VNR process.

Second, although the SDGs are notionally about development, the goals have significant implications for peace and security as well as human rights, especially of women and minorities. One, perhaps inadvertent, consequence of this has been that the SDGs have empowered citizens

to hold their governments responsible for delivering on the goals. This has spawned the recognition of rights among civil society in all countries, including those, where such rights are not guaranteed. Third, the “all of government” approach inherent in implementing the goals has empowered the role of not only all branches of the national government, but also state governments, local municipalities, and even village-level governance structures. Additionally, civil society organizations, NGOs, foundations, and even the corporate sector have been engaged in the onerous challenge of implementing these goals.

Finally, the adoption of the SDGs coincided with the economic rise of the global South and more substantial South–South cooperation. The 2013 HDR, aptly titled *The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World* noted: “For the first time in 150 years, the combined output of the developing world’s three leading economies—Brazil, China and India [BIC] – is about equal to the combined GDP of the longstanding industrial powers of the North – Canada, France Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States [six of the original G-7].”³¹

Simultaneously, South–South cooperation, which for most of the twentieth century was a mere slogan, is emerging as a vital factor not only in the economic growth of poorer countries but also the human development of their populations. This cooperation is evident at several levels. At the ideational level the less developed countries can learn and benefit from the success of the emerging economies of the South; their experience is more relevant to the developing countries than the experience of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. At the practical level, South–South cooperation in investment, finance, technology transfer, and trade were key new factors in facilitating the economic growth of the global South—and complementary to the traditional North–South finance flows.

One indication of this is the rise in South–South trade from 8.1 percent in 1980 to 26.7 percent of total world trade today. In addition, nearly half of all remittances sent home by emigrants from the South come from workers living in other developing countries. Similarly, growth in low-income countries would have been lower by as much as 1.1 percentage point between 2007 and 2010 had China and India registered a fall in growth rate similar to that of developed economies. Moreover, global South countries have increased their share of global Foreign Direct Investment to 50 percent and, as an example, nearly half the financing for infrastructure projects in Sub-Saharan Africa over the past decade came

from countries and regional funds of the South. Similarly, the BICs have emerged as the largest donors outside the OECD.³² Consequently, increased South–South cooperation—even as North–South cooperation stagnates or recedes—is likely to be a key factor in achieving the SDG targets.

In practice, however, two SDG reports show that by 2019

...despite progress in a number of areas over the past four years, on some of the Goals, progress has been slow or even reversed. The most vulnerable people and countries continue to suffer the most and the global response has not been ambitious enough.

For instance, extreme poverty has reached the lowest point since its tracking began. And yet, at the current pace, we are still not on track to end poverty by 2030. Similarly, many countries are taking actions to protect our environment, but the health of our earth is still deteriorating at an alarming rate.³³

Clearly, while achieving the SDGs by 2030, according to the UN Foundation “will require heroic and imaginative effort, ...and agility to adopt to new information and changing trends,” the goals and the high-level political forum (HLPF) to facilitate their implementation has led to innovative ways to do business, and offers a radical departure from the past moribund approaches to development. One such innovation—albeit controversial—is the Strategic Partnership Framework between the UN and the World Economic Forum which identifies six areas of focus—financing the 2030 Agenda, climate change, health, digital cooperation, gender equality and empowerment of women, education and skills.³⁴ While it remains to be seen how this partnership will work in practice in a Covid-19 ravaged world, it certainly reflects new thinking.

Climate Change

The 21st meeting of the Conference of Parties (or simply COP21) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Paris witnessed initiatives to tackle one of the biggest challenges confronting humanity; and on 12 December 2015 the gathering reached a landmark agreement to combat climate change, and to accelerate and intensify the actions and investments needed for a sustainable low-carbon future.

COP21 can be seen as an interesting departure from the usual UN process. The 1991 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC),

which led to the UNFCCC was meant to side-step the traditional UN processes. However, it reached its nadir when COP15 ended with a tepid agreement in Copenhagen in 2009. It was, according to Lumumba Di-Aping, chief negotiator for the G77 group of 130 developing countries, “the lowest level of ambition you can imagine” and “...nothing short of climate change scepticism in action.”³⁵ Against this backdrop, COP21 was a deliberate fudge to overcome the severe roadblocks highlighted in the COP15 debacle. Consequently, the issue of accountability for climate change was sidestepped; much of the “institutionalization” called for in COP15 negotiations was abandoned; and, unsurprisingly, COP21 was voluntary and the setting, meeting, reporting were to be determined by states, and not multilateral arrangements. It was the inevitable price to pay for a successful outcome.

Nonetheless, the so-called Paris climate agreement set the ambitious goals to keep global temperature rise this century well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels, and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 °C; increase the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change; and at making finance flows consistent with a low Green House Gas emissions and climate-resilient pathway. Additionally, the parties also agreed to put forward their best efforts through nationally determined contributions (NDCs), and to strengthen these efforts in the years ahead.

While the implementation (or lack thereof) of the agreement has drawn international opprobrium, especially following the decision of the Trump administration to cease participation in it, there are several other hurdles, including whether to work toward a fossil free future or a low-carbon economy, and how to create a legal framework to sustain climate finance, especially for developing nations. However, several other initiatives facilitated on the sidelines of the official deliberations reflect noteworthy new approaches to addressing a crucial global problem.

The first is the Breakthrough Energy Coalition (BEC), spearheaded by Bill Gates, which includes leading Indian and Chinese entrepreneurs, and reflects that any UN efforts to successfully implement the agreement would require engagement with the private sector.³⁶ This coalition—announced during the course of COP21—aims to provide venture capital to bring riskier and untested new technologies related to electricity generation and storage, transportation, industrial use, agriculture, and energy system efficiency to the market. More than the \$20 billion capital that BEC aims to offer over the next decade, it is the idea of making profit

while addressing climate change challenges which is truly noteworthy.³⁷ The second is the launch of Mission Innovation (<http://mission-innovation.net/>), a dramatic initiative to accelerate public and private partnership to “address global climate change, provide affordable clean energy to consumers, including in the developing world, and create additional commercial opportunities in clean energy.”³⁸ This includes the investors from the BEC and 20 countries, including Brazil, China, India, and the United States who “represent 75 percent of the world’s CO2 emissions from electricity, and more than 80 percent of the world’s clean energy R&D investment.” Again the most interesting aspect of this initiative is to leverage the public–private partnership—both in the global North and South—to promote joint ventures that can make clean energy economically viable. Both the Mission Innovation and BEC were recognized by the UNFCCC as “a landmark commitment to dramatically accelerate public and private global clean energy innovation.”³⁹

Third, the Indo-French led International Solar Alliance (ISA) of 121 countries, which hopes to raise \$1 trillion to scale-up solar energy development by 2030, particularly in the tropical sun-drenched countries, was also announced at COP21. Apart from bridging the technology and finance gap the Alliance is also an effort to bridge the North–South divide, which has stymied cooperative approaches to addressing climate change. The ISA has already partnered with the World Bank, “adopted interim regulations that follow UN standards,” and “desires eventually to be part of the UN system as a related agency.”⁴⁰

Additionally, the pledge of the Least Developed Countries Fund along with the launch of the Transformative Carbon Asset Facility by the World Bank and four European nations at COP21 is also likely to have contributed to the successful outcome.⁴¹ More importantly, while countries like India and China continue to echo their rights under the “common but differentiated responsibility” concept, these initiatives, coupled with the voluntary nature of the Paris agreement, underline that these emerging powers are willing to play a guarded role in shaping the norms, mechanisms, and institutions to deal with global climate change both nationally and internationally.

Human Rights

In the sphere of human rights most advocates might assert that the UN’s efforts have either stalled or, worse, retreated, especially in the

face of opposition from P5 members, particularly China, Russia, and the United States. They might point to the quiet disappearance of the Human Rights Up Front initiative (launched by Secretary General Ban ki-Moon in 2013) under Antonio Guterres. Although the initiative sought to strengthen the preventive work of the UN and to stress the value of early warning signals of crises to come—which would have supported Guterres’ own priority on prevention—it is missing from the secretary-general’s reforms.⁴² While efforts to promote and protect human rights might have regressed under the present incumbent of the 38th floor at UNHQ in New York,⁴³ there is ample evidence that other actors within the UN system—notably the Geneva-based UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR)—have taken on the mantle of being the global voice of conscience. For instance, during her tenure Navi Pillay earned the wrath of Myanmar by highlighting the killing of minority Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine state. Her successor, Zeid Ra’ad al-Hussein, was even more outspoken about human rights abuses in Syria, Myanmar, Yemen, Iraq, Congo, Venezuela, and Nicaragua, and also called out Hungary, Poland, and Austria, among others, on their intolerance and oppression, especially of migrants and minorities. He justified his role as one of putting up a mirror before all governments. Predictably, speaking unpalatable truth to states came at the price of being a one-term incumbent, and al-Hussein did not seek a second term because “to do so, in the current geopolitical context, might involve bending a knee in supplication.”⁴⁴ Similarly, his successor, Michelle Bachelet, a former victim of torture, and former president of Chile, used her socialist credentials to engage Venezuela, and still, much to the perturbation of the regime, presented a scathing report on human rights abuses there. Yet, she also managed to ensure continued country access to her officers.⁴⁵

The efforts of the UNHCHR notwithstanding, the promotion of human right norms have lagged behind those in the peace and security and development arenas. There are, however, two areas where human right norms continue to evolve and have made progress. The first is the revamped Human Rights Council, which despite all its justified flaws, has developed the process of Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The second is the process of special procedures and independent investigations.

Human Rights Council

Established in 2006, to replace the Commission on Human Rights, the Human Rights Council (HRC) was an effort to overhaul the body,

“which had been hampered for years by the politics of intransigence, geopolitical rivalries and inadequate concern for the victims of human rights violations around the world.”⁴⁶ Although the Council’s membership has often been dismissed as a group of some of the worst human rights violators, in reality between 2007 and 2015 “over 74 per cent of the Council’s members met the Freedom House standards of free and partly free” states.⁴⁷ Additionally, in 2005 the General Assembly passed a resolution establishing the UPR to assess the human rights records of all 193 UN members.⁴⁸ Remarkably, all UN members have participated in the first cycle of the UPR, which began in 2008 and ended in 2011.⁴⁹ This process allowed an unprecedented international scrutiny of each member’s human rights record, including states with egregious human rights records. The process has also allowed for new actors at the national level to participate either directly or through shadow reports. According to Ted Piccone: “The UPR process is adding another layer of transparency and accountability for upholding international human rights norms; nearly half of the recommendations made to states were fully or partially implemented just two-and-a-half years after the first round of reviews.”⁵⁰ While the exit of the United States from the HRC in 2018 has, clearly, dented the reputation of the Council, it also reflects poorly on the ability of Washington to play a leadership role. In departing from the HRC the US—a traditional champion of human rights norms—has weakened not only its own reputation but also the ability to operationalize norms it had promoted.

Special Procedures & Independent Investigations

In addition to the UPR, one of the great innovations of the HRC was to mandate special procedures, which set up special rapporteurs, independent experts, or working groups who serve in their individual capacity. The special procedure mandates could be either thematic (e.g., Special Rapporteur on poverty and human rights) or country specific (e.g., Special Rapporteur on human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea).

Moreover, the UN has also witnessed an increase in the special investigation missions, and since the end of the Cold War the UNHCHR has supported or deployed nearly 50 such commissions or missions. A recent Group of International and Regional Eminent Experts on Yemen established by the HRC presented a scathing report and accused all the warring factions as well as their extra-regional allies (including France, the

United Kingdom, and the United States, which provided weapons to one side in the conflict) of “possible war crimes.”⁵¹ Similarly after a detailed six-month investigation, Agnes Callamard, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions presented a damning report that held Saudi Arabia responsible for the “premeditated execution” of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. The report asserted that Saudi Arabia’s actions violated at least six tenets of international law and “constitutes an international crime over which other States should claim universal jurisdiction.”⁵² While this report clearly establishes the norm against this practice, it leaves it to the will of states to act against offenders.

Separately, the creation—by the General Assembly—of the International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law committed in the Syrian Arab Republic Since March 2011 (IIIM-Syria) and the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM), to gather evidence of crimes are noteworthy initiatives (for details of the IIIM-Syria and IIMM see Jennifer Trahan’s chapter in this volume).

Similarly, even UN Security Council resolution 2286 of May 2016, while reiterating the boilerplate “need to promote and ensure respect for the principles and rules of international humanitarian law” significantly urged states “to ensure that violations of international humanitarian law related to the protection of the wounded and sick, medical personnel and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, their means of transport and equipment, as well as hospitals and other medical facilities in armed conflicts do not remain unpunished.”⁵³

CONCLUSION: UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS & THREE FUTURE SCENARIOS

This survey of some key initiatives since the end of the Cold War reveals that the UN witnessed a burst of normative and operational creativity primarily on account of unprecedented P5 unity in the early days of the twenty-first century. However, even as this P5 unity eroded over the past few years and tensions rose, not only among the established powers but also among them and other emerging powers, the UN was still able to push through some significant norms. These were strongest in the development field and weakest in human rights, with peace and security initiatives falling in the middle. Predictably, the UN was most visible in

its role as an arena (although in some cases, such as cyber space, other venues were preferred by some of the key actors), less effective in its role as an agent, and, perhaps, the least influential as an implementing actor. This was partly on account of limited consensus among the key powers on specific issues (especially those related to cyber security) and partly on account of the greater role played by new actors, such as civil society, NGOs, and even the corporate world in creating these norms. This in turn has led to unrealistic expectations that either having established these norms, or having the norms thrust upon it, the UN is now in a position to implement them.

On the contrary, these norms, coupled with the deterioration in great power relations and rising geopolitical contestations, have on the one hand raised expectations of the UN's abilities to deliver (especially among its relatively new non-state constituencies) while on the other the same geopolitical competition and great power rivalry is likely to stymie the UN from doing so. This, clearly, poses a dilemma for the UN: will it be able to manage these unrealistic expectations or will it be able to carve out a role to deliver, despite the far from conducive global scenario?

Against this backdrop, there are three possible scenarios for the future role of the UN. The first scenario is the continued centrality and relevance of the UN-centered global governance system. However, this scenario would require several conditions to manifest. First, there would have to be P5 convergence, if not rapprochement, especially on key peace & security issues. In particular, this would depend on the United States rededicating itself to the UN through enlightened leadership. Additionally, the UN system would have to undergo drastic systemic and procedural reforms to accommodate emerging state powers on one hand and non-state actors—especially civil society and corporate sector—on the other. While the latter process is in evidence, the former is still not discernible. Under this scenario the UN might embrace a multi-stakeholder approach rather than a traditional multilateral approach, especially in areas, such as international development, climate change, and digital cooperation, where it might be more useful.

If the UN is unable to undertake this critical transformation, then the second likely scenario might be the growing irrelevance or even demise of an unreformed UN-centered global governance system. Such a scenario might unfold in different ways. While seemingly far-fetched, the most dramatic would be a great power global nuclear conflict that could destroy earth, along with the UN. Equally, the inability to prevent planetary

destruction on account of climate catastrophes would inevitably also lead to the end of the UN. Less dramatically, but equally existential, it might involve P5 members either withdrawing from different UN arenas (as the US has done from the HRC) or simply refusing to adhere to their commitments (as China appears to be doing in the case of the South China Sea arbitration). This would be akin to the collapse of the League of Nations on the eve of the Second World War. Or the UN system might be rendered peripheral if existing or emerging powers seek other venues instead of the UN to serve their interests. For instance, the emergence of the so-called Group of Twenty (G20) as an alternative to the unreformed UNSC, and its increasing role in issues normally dealt with at the Council, is evidence of this trend.

Finally, there is the possibility of what Stewart Patrick has described as “Messy Multilateralism.”⁵⁴ In such a scenario there would be a multiplicity of forums, and forum shopping not only by the states but also the corporate sector as well as civil society actors. In this scenario charter or treaty-based permanent institutions would co-exist with ad-hoc, flexible, purpose-built groupings (such as the G20); instead of formal legally binding obligations, there would be voluntary codes of conduct (as is the case with the climate agreements); instead of a comprehensive approach to issues and challenges, there would be piecemeal approaches; and interactions among the various actors would be simultaneously trans-governmental, multi-level, and multi-stakeholder. In such a scenario the UN is unlikely to retain its primacy in global governance and might be reduced to being just one of the many arenas, agents, or actors addressing the existing and emerging global challenges in the twenty-first century.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What factors contributed to the renaissance of the UN at the end of the Cold War? What major initiatives were launched in the area of peace and security, development, and human rights?
2. How has the retreat of leading powers from the multilateral arena, and emergence of great power contestation impacted the UN-centered global governance system?
3. How are rising powers, developing countries, and South–South cooperation shaping global governance norms and institutions?
4. How are non-state actors, including civil society groups and cities, and the corporate sector shaping global norms and institutions?

5. What are the necessary ingredients in the making and establishing of norms? What factors explain the success or failure of norms, agreements, and treaties?
6. What are some of the new existential global challenges confronting the UN? Is the UN capable of managing them?
7. What are prospects for reform of the UN-centered global governance system? What pre-conditions are necessary for these reforms to succeed?

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