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### **In This Issue**

This issue of *All Azimuth* features six articles on a diverse range of subjects, but two themes stand out. Our first set of articles concerns international politics by studying the interrelations between civil society and the state. Can non-state actors and processes shape the political agenda, and if so, in what ways? How should we think about civil society in relation to states?

We open with “U.S. Democracy Aid and the Conditional Effects of Donor Interests, Media Attention and Democratic Change, 1975-2010,” by James Scott, Charles Rowling, and Timothy Jones. American decisionmakers have legislated on donating democracy promotion aid to numerous countries in recent decades. These decisions, however, are never straightforward, and past studies have focused on variables such as the strategic interests of donors as well as democratic openings in recipient states, among other factors, to explain democracy aid allocations. This article examines the role of the media in shaping these preferences as the authors argue that the saliency of a country is consequential. Donors who tend to have lower levels of interest in a particular country are more likely to be swayed by the saliency effect of the media. Donors with high levels of interest, meanwhile, are less susceptible to the agenda-setting effects of the media. This argument is explored through an empirical examination of U.S. democracy aid between 1975-2010.

Our second article, “Beyond the ‘Tissue of Clichés’?: The Purposes of the Fulbright Programme and New Pathways of Analysis,” by Giles Scott-Smith, concerns the Fulbright Programme. The article explores differing perspectives of the Fulbright Programme’s impact on international relations, arguing that there are in fact more innovative ways to think about the role of international and transnational exchanges. Traditionally, the Fulbright Programme’s lofty goals and rhetoric, combining both the essence of Enlightenment values and liberal internationalism with the desire to enhance American values and influence globally, could be labelled as a tissue of clichés. In fact, the Fulbright Programme evidences how American hegemony is co-produced (geographies of exchange) thanks to the consultative nature of the program. Fulbright also serves to facilitate the creation of a transnational knowledge network by creating and sustaining sites of knowledge production and ensuring “brain circulation.” Within the US, the programme also ensured shifting centers of calculation, or sites where knowledge production takes place through the gathering of resources from other locations. Finally, programmes like Fulbright facilitate ‘parapublic’ exchanges between states that reinforce notions of international order and ultimately serve to reinforce an ‘enlightened nationalism’ predicated on “peace-promoting norms and a sense of community.”

In our third article, “Japanese Non-State Actors’ Under-Recognized Contributions to the International Anti-Nuclear Weapons Movement,” Lili Chin, Geetha Govindasamy, and Nasrudin Akhir examine how non-state actors have profoundly shaped the anti-nuclear weapons movement. Using the framework of collective social action, the efforts of various Japanese non-state actors are examined over the course of the 20th century, showing how various organizations and, crucially, eyewitness survivors of the atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, known as hibakusha, were instrumental in raising awareness and framing a humanitarian agenda aimed at banning nuclear weapons. The authors support their study with a wealth of interviews from hibakusha to ultimately demonstrate that “the Japanese anti-nuclear weapons movement is an under-recognised pillar of strength and a source of inspiration for the international anti-nuclear weapons movement.”

Our second set of articles turns to a pressing issue: that of defining security threats and the subjectivity of threats, especially in our present day with the uncontrolled tide of fake news and disinformation. Both articles, therefore, investigate the subjectivities of security through different research traditions.

Our fourth article, “Securitization of Disinformation in NATO’s Lexicon: A Computational Text Analysis” by Akin Ünver and Ahmet Kurnaz, for example, uses computational methods to explore 238,452 tweets from official NATO and affiliated accounts, and more than 2,000 NATO texts, news, statements, and publications to answer how security institutions define disinformation in foreign and security policy, and how these can affect their securitization strategies over time. The findings indicate that the US political lexicon informs NATO’s word choices, which reflect a design to mobilize alliance resources and cohesion. In fact, further findings show that NATO’s recent securitization of disinformation reflects its long-standing agenda of securitizing Russia.

Our penultimate article explores the subjectivities of security in the context of Iran’s missile program. Ali Bagheri Dolatabadi’s article, “Ontological Security and Iran’s Missile Program,” offers a refinement of ontological security by arguing for the immanence of physical security threats. When faced with real consequences over its missile program, Iran often chooses to back down. Its desire, however, to sustain its ontological security, nevertheless, engenders a persistence of Iranian resistance towards the West. This attitude is reinforced by the attitudes of the US, which also fails to negotiate with Iran through a basis of mutual respect and concern that would preserve Iranian honor and prevent its leaders from pursuing alternative narratives and justifications to resuscitate their ontological security.

Our final article offers a sneak preview of what our readers can expect from our upcoming Winter 22/23 special issue, which will contain the fruits of the 6th Annual All Azimuth Workshop on Global IR and the IR discipline in Turkey. To wit, Ali Bakeer and Eyüp Ersoy’s “The Rise and Fall of Homegrown Concepts in Global IR: the Anatomy of ‘Strategic Depth’ in Turkish IR” offers a thorough dissection of a previously much-vaunted concept of strategic depth. They begin by exploring how homegrown concepts in the global periphery often experience their life cycles. They then engage in a thorough examination of Strategic Depth and the intellectual and policy-practical milieu in which the concept first emerged and, gradually, declined. They examine the contemplative (intellectual), implementive, and evaluative factors behind both, essentially showing how the concept emerged with an attractive narrative and argument under the tenure of Davutoğlu, but gradually lost its appeal as its core ideas failed to sustain an efficacious foreign policy for Turkey.

## U.S. Democracy Aid and the Conditional Effects of Donor Interests, Media Attention and Democratic Change, 1975-2010

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### Abstract

*Democracy promotion emerged as a US foreign policy priority during the late 20th century, especially after the Cold War. Scarce resources, however, require policymakers to make difficult choices about which countries should receive democracy aid and which ones should not. Previous studies indicate that a variety of factors shape democracy aid allocations, including donor strategic interests and democratic openings within potential recipient states. Research has also shown that media coverage plays a significant role in these decisions. We model the conditional effects of media attention and regime shifts on US democracy aid decisions, controlling for other recipient and donor variables. We argue that these factors are contingent on the salience, in terms of broad interest profiles, of a particular country for policymakers. The donor's overall level of interest in a potential recipient systematically shapes the effects of media attention on democracy assistance. Broadly speaking, low-interest conditions elevate the agenda-setting impact of media attention and regime conditions/shifts while high-interest conditions reduce that effect. To assess these contingent relationships, we examine US democracy aid from 1975-2010. Our results support our argument and present a more nuanced explanation of the relationship between the media's agenda-setting role, recipient characteristics and donor interests.*

**Keywords:** Democracy aid, media, foreign policy

### 1. Introduction

For years, the United States has been allocating targeted packages of democracy assistance to foreign governments, political parties, and non-governmental organizations. However, such resources are scarce, forcing policymakers to make difficult choices about recipients.

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Previous studies by numerous scholars indicate that determinants such as strategic interests, ideational considerations, and the likelihood of success of democratization shape these decisions. Research has also shown that media coverage affects these decisions by increasing the visibility of the dynamics within potential recipient countries.

In this study, while controlling for other recipient and donor variables, we advance the novel argument that policymakers' broad interest profiles of a particular country shape the conditional effects of media attention and regime shifts in US democracy aid decisions. As we explain, the donor's overall interest in a potential recipient – defined as level of engagement and cooperation – systematically shapes the effects of media attention on democracy assistance. Broadly speaking, low-interest conditions *elevate* the impact of media attention and regime conditions/shifts while high-interest conditions *reduce* that effect. Examining US democracy aid from 1975–2010, we find support for our nuanced explanation of the relationship between donor interests, the media's agenda-setting role, and recipient characteristics.

## 2. Foreign Aid, Democracy Aid and Allocation Decisions

A component of foreign aid, democracy assistance targets civil society organizations and political institutions to promote democratization. From 1975–2010, US democracy assistance grew from negligible amounts to \$3–4 billion annually (about 14% of foreign aid), on par with aid priorities such as health, emergency response, and agriculture. The US provides roughly a third of this aid directly to NGOs.

Most empirical research on democracy aid focuses on its outcomes or the determinants of its allocation. On its effects, numerous studies conclude that democracy aid has positive consequences for democratization.<sup>1</sup> On the allocation side, studies concerned with democracy aid (and foreign aid more generally) find varying influence from recipient regime characteristics; human rights behavior; recipient development and humanitarian needs; economic, political and security interests of donors; considerations of feasibility; colonial legacies; situational factors such as economic crises, conflict and political changes; and bargaining between donors and recipients.<sup>2</sup> Significantly, in both democracy and foreign aid, donor interests are central: because scholarship has found positive relationships between aid

<sup>1</sup> E.g., Zohid Askarov and Hristos Doucouliagos, "Does Aid Improve Democracy and Governance? A Meta-regression Analysis," *Public Choice* 157 (2013): 601–28; Simone Dietrich, "Bypass or Engage? Explaining Donor Delivery Tactics in Foreign Aid Allocations," *International Studies Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (2013): 698–712; Simone Dietrich and Joseph Wright, "Foreign Aid Allocation Tactics and Democratic Change in Africa," *Journal of Politics* 77 (2015): 216–34; Steven E. Finkel, Aníbal Pérez-Liñán and Mitchell A. Seligson, "The Effects of U.S. Foreign Assistance on Democracy-Building, 1990–2003," *World Politics* 59 (2007): 404–39; Sarantis Kalyvitis and Irene Vlachaki, "Democratic Aid and the Democratization of Recipients," *Contemporary Economic Policy* 28 (2010): 188–218; James M. Scott and Carrie Steele, "Sponsoring Democracy: The United States and Democracy Aid to the Developing World, 1988–2001," *International Studies Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (2011): 47–69; Sebastian Ziaja, "More Donors, More Democracy," *Journal of Politics* 82, no. 2 (2020): 433–47.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., Alberto Alesina and David Dollar, "Who Gives Foreign Aid to Whom and Why," *Journal of Economic Growth* 5 (2000): 33–63; Clair Apodaca and Michael Stohl, "United States Human Rights Policy and Foreign Assistance," *International Studies Quarterly* 43 (1999): 185–98; Eliana Balla and Gina Yannitell Reinhardt, "Giving and Receiving Foreign Aid: Does Conflict Count?" *World Development* 36 (2008): 2566–585; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and Alastair Smith, "Foreign Policy and Policy Concessions," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51 (2007): 251–84; David L. Cingranelli and Thomas E. Pasquarello, "Human Rights Practices and the Distribution of U.S. Foreign Aid to Latin American Countries," *American Journal of Political Science* 3 (1985): 539–63; A. Cooper Drury, Richard Olson, and Douglas Van Belle, "The CNN Effect, Geo-Strategic Motives and the Politics of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance," *Journal of Politics* 67 (2005): 454–73; Tobias Heinrich, "When is Foreign Aid Selfish, When is it Selfless?" *Journal of Politics* 75, no. 2 (2013): 422–35; James Lebovic, "National Interests and US Foreign Aid: The Carter and Reagan Years," *Journal of Peace Research* 25 (1988): 115–35; Robert D. McKinlay and Richard Little, "A Foreign Policy Model of US Bilateral Aid Allocation," *World Politics* 30 (1977): 58–86; Steven Poe, "Human Rights and Economic Aid Allocation Under Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter," *American Journal of Political Science* 36 (1992): 147–67; James M. Scott and Ralph Carter, "Distributing Dollars for Democracy: Changing Foreign Policy Contexts and the Shifting Determinants of US Democracy Aid, 1975–2010," *Journal of International Relations and Democracy* 22, no. 3 (2019): 640–75; Haley Swedlund, *The Development Dance: How Donors and Recipients Negotiate the Delivery of Foreign Aid* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017).



and alliances/military relationships, foreign policy affinity/ideological alignment, and other interests, it is clear that “donors expect political benefits from their aid.”<sup>3</sup>

Thus, studies of democracy aid, build on the foreign aid literature to emphasize three central findings, which serve as the foundation of our argument. First, studies have shown that political, economic, and strategic interests are significant factors in determining democracy aid allocations, though their effects are often different on foreign aid.<sup>4</sup> Second, along with other recipient characteristics, recipient democratic conditions and trajectories also shape democracy aid decisions as policymakers look for situations in which democratization is underway, most promising, or likely.<sup>5</sup> Third, a country’s visibility in the news affects the extent to which it is prioritized. In general, the more visible a country is in news coverage, the more foreign aid – including democracy assistance – it tends to receive.<sup>6</sup> However, we argue that these pieces do not operate independently of one another. We, therefore, construct a novel argument that better captures the nuances, interactions, and contingencies of these pieces and offers an improved and more comprehensive explanation of US democracy aid allocations.

### 3. Targeting Democracy Aid: Democratic Change, Media Attention, and Donor Interests

To begin, we build on research showing that democratic conditions and trajectories in potential recipient states significantly shape US democracy assistance decisions. Specifically, *regime conditions* and *regime shifts* serve as the basis for assessing democratic demand and feasibility. Because donors are concerned about the efficacy of democracy aid, they look for evidence of demand and feasibility in *regime conditions* exhibiting democratic features. More promising recipients garner more assistance. In this context, *regime shifts* – democratic openings demonstrated by shifts toward democracy – signal opportunities and increase donor confidence in the potential efficacy of democracy assistance. Thus, regimes that possess democratic features and are experiencing a shift toward democracy tend to receive more democracy assistance than those that do not.<sup>7</sup>

*Media attention* also influences which countries receive foreign aid, and democracy aid is no exception. As Linsky has argued: “The press has a huge and identifiable impact... Officials

<sup>3</sup> Glenn Palmer, Scott B. Wohlander, and T. Clifton Morgan, “Give Or Take: Foreign Aid and Foreign Policy Substitutability,” *Journal of Peace Research* 39 (2002): 5–26.

<sup>4</sup> Scott and Carter, “Distributing Dollars for Democracy”; Tobias Heinrich, Yoshiharu Kobayashi, and Leah Long, “Voters Get What They Want (When They Pay Attention): Human Rights, Policy Benefits, and Foreign Aid,” *International Studies Quarterly* 62 (2018): 195–207 argue that donor interests are central to decisions to withdraw foreign aid to repressive regimes.

<sup>5</sup> E.g., Daniel Yuichi Kono and Gabriella R. Montinola, “Does Foreign Aid Support Autocrats, Democrats, or Both?” *Journal of Politics* 71 (2009): 704–18; Richard Nielsen and Daniel Nielson, “Triage for Democracy: Selection Effects in Governance Aid” (paper presented at the Department of Government, College of William & Mary, February 5, 2010); Scott and Carter, “Distributing Dollars for Democracy”.

<sup>6</sup> John T. McNelly and Fausto Izcaray, “International News Exposure and Images of Nations,” *Journalism Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (1986): 546–53; James M. Scott, Charles M. Rowling, and Timothy M. Jones, “Democratic Openings and Country Visibility: Media Attention and the Allocation of US Democracy Aid, 1975–2010,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 16, no. 3 (2020): 373–96; Douglas Van Belle, “Bureaucratic Responsiveness to the News Media: Comparing the Influence of New York Times and Network Television News Coverage on U.S. Foreign Aid Allocations,” *Political Communication* 20 (2003): 263–85; Douglas Van Belle, Jean Sebastian Rioux, and David M. Potter, *Media, Bureaucracies and Foreign Aid* (Palgrave: New York, 2004); Xiuli Wang, Pamela J. Shoemaker, Gang Han, and E. Jordan Storm, “Images of Nations in the Eyes of American Educational Elites,” *American Journal of Media Psychology*, 1, no. 1/2 (2008): 36–60.

<sup>7</sup> E.g., Dietrich and Wright, “Foreign Aid”; Erasmus Kersting and Christopher Kilby, “Aid and Democracy Redux,” *European Economic Review* 67 (2014): 125–43; Nielson and Nielsen, “Triage for Democracy”; Timothy Peterson and James M. Scott, “The Democracy Aid Calculus: Regimes, Political Opponents, and the Allocation of US Democracy Assistance, 1975–2009,” *International Interactions* 44, no. 2 (2018): 268–93.

believe that the media do a lot to set the policy agenda and to influence how an issue is understood by policymakers.<sup>8</sup> The news media are central to the creation, reinforcement and promotion of ways the public and policymakers see the world, and studies have shown that country salience in the media affects the prioritization of that country among policymakers.<sup>9</sup> High levels of media attention signal to donors that a potential recipient is important and, therefore, tend to correlate with an increase in foreign aid.<sup>10</sup> For example, media attention is a key factor in donors' decisions to impose foreign aid sanctions on repressive regimes and can increase public attentiveness to some situations, contribute to accountability, and generate electoral concerns for policymakers in democratic governments.<sup>11</sup> Thus, those countries that are highly visible in news coverage tend to receive more attention from policymakers and, in combination with other factors, are more likely to receive democracy aid.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, the impact of media attention on democracy aid allocations becomes even more consequential when it interacts with *regime shifts*, especially those toward democracy.<sup>13</sup> Specifically, the media shine a spotlight on those countries undergoing shifts toward democracy, cueing policymakers to allocate democracy assistance. Visibility in news coverage validates democratic openings and increases confidence in the feasibility of democracy assistance. Conversely, without media attention, such shifts are potentially less salient and more uncertain, resulting in less democratic assistance. In part, a lack of visibility reinforces the wariness of US policymakers about the uncertainty surrounding such regime changes.

*Donor interests*, broadly conceived, are also important factors in democracy aid decisions. We argue, however, that they systematically condition the effects of other determinants and their interaction. Consistent with other scholarship, we regard donor interests as the broad material benefits – specifically, those related to engaged and cooperative security relationships, political alignment and support, and economic interactions such as trade – associated with aid allocations.<sup>14</sup> As noted, research indicates that greater donor interests in a potential recipient tends to result in more foreign aid. Such aid tends to enhance and sustain the relationship between the donor and the recipient.

On democracy aid, however, we argue that these dynamics function differently. Democratization entails regime change, or at least the altering of institutions and political processes. Thus, while donor interests remain important to democracy aid decisions, their impact on these decisions is likely to be the opposite of how they tend to affect foreign aid decisions. Indeed, US policymakers are likely to be more inclined to promote democracy in places perceived to be *less important* for donor interests simply because there is less risk that such action could potentially undermine US relationships and interests there. Put another way, in democracy aid decisions, US policymakers are likely to be wary of destabilizing

<sup>8</sup> Martin Linsky, *Impact: How the President Affects Federal Policymaking* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1986).

<sup>9</sup> Eytan Gilboa, Maria Gabrielsen Jumbert, Jason Miklian and Piers Robinson, "Moving Media and Conflict Studies Beyond the Cnn Effect," *Review of International Studies* 42, no. 4 (2016): 654–72; Steven Livingston and Todd Eachus, "Humanitarian Crises and U.S. Foreign Policy: Somalia and the CNN Effect Reconsidered," *Political Communication* 12, no. 4 (1995): 413–29; Cui Zhang and Charles William Meadows III, "International Coverage, Foreign Policy, and National Image: Exploring the Complexities of Media Coverage, Public Opinion, and Presidential Agenda," *International Journal of Communication*, 6 (2012): 76–95.

<sup>10</sup> Van Belle, "Bureaucratic Responsiveness".

<sup>11</sup> E.g., Heinrich et al., "Voters Get What They Want". See also the literature on political survival (e.g., Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, Ma: MIT Press, 2003).

<sup>12</sup> Scott et al., "Democratic Openings".

<sup>13</sup> Scott et al., "Democratic Openings".

<sup>14</sup> E.g., McKinlay and Little, "Foreign Policy Model"; Lebovic, "National Interests".

regimes with whom the United States already has an established, beneficial, and cooperative relationship.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, when media attention is absent, regime shifts tend to *reduce* US democracy aid.<sup>16</sup> We extrapolate from and extend these findings to offer our first hypothesis:

***H<sub>1</sub>: Low-interest potential recipients are more likely to receive democracy assistance than high-interest potential recipients.***

Although studies have found that donor interests play a role *alongside* media attention, regime conditions/shifts, their interaction, and other factors, our novel argument is that such interests first *condition* the effects of these dynamics. Specifically, we contend that media attention, regime conditions/shifts, the interaction of these variables, and other factors operate *differently* depending on donors' specific interests. While previous studies offer valuable insight into US democracy aid allocations, the picture remains incomplete because the factors shaping these decisions, especially the role and influence of democratic openings, media visibility and their interactions, are *contingent on* donor interest profiles. Thus, the way in which US democracy aid allocators respond to increased media attention and regime shifts in a potential recipient country depends on broad levels of US interest in that country.

Specifically, we argue that when the broad profile of US interests is high – when engagement and cooperative/beneficial relationships are more extensive – policymakers pay more attention to and have more knowledge about potential aid recipients. In such high-interest profiles, policymakers will depend *much less* on media attention when making democracy aid decisions. There is also likely to be preference for preserving a stable relationship with high-interest potential recipients. Increased media attention and regime shifts within high-interest potential recipients are, therefore, *unlikely* to shape donor calculations or cause a substantial shift in the prioritization of these potential recipients. In effect, the agenda-setting power of the press *diminishes* in the context of established relationships and high interest profiles.

By contrast, when the broad interest profile of potential recipients is low – when engagement and cooperative/beneficial relationships are less extensive – the potential recipients in question are less salient to US policymakers. Increased media attention and regime shifts in low-interest potential recipients should, therefore, play more consequential roles in bringing policymakers' attention to bear on those situations. The low-interest nature of these situations involves less saliency, lower awareness, and fewer sunk costs and existing commitments. The opportunity afforded by regime shifts is thus more likely to attract attention when the media helps to bring visibility to the situation. Where the media does not bring attention to bear, the low-interest profile of the situation is likely to reduce aid commitments, given the uncertainty and perceived risk. While specific kinds of US interests (e.g., strategic, political, economic) are likely to remain important – albeit in different ways – for aid decisions in either profile, the broad differences in interest profile set the context for critical variance in the impact of media attention and regime shifts. This leads to our central hypothesis, which reflects this three-way relationship:

***H<sub>2</sub>: Potential recipients of low (high) interest experiencing regime shifts toward democracy and greater media attention will receive more (less) democracy aid than other potential recipients.***

<sup>15</sup> E.g., James Meernik, *U.S. Foreign Policy and Regime Instability* (U.S. Army War College: Strategic Studies Institute, 20087); Jonathan Paquin, *A Stability-Seeking Power: U.S. Foreign Policy and Secessionist Conflicts* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2010).

<sup>16</sup> Scott et al., "Democratic Openings".

#### 4. Data and Methods

To test our argument, we examine US democracy aid to the developing world from 1975-2010, using AidData 3.1 project-level aid.<sup>17</sup> We thus examine country-year data for the 36-year period of our analysis. From AidData 3.1, we extract US democracy aid and aggregate it to annual commitments to each country. Using AidData project codes, we disaggregate aid into democracy assistance (purpose codes 15000-15199) and other development aid (all other purpose codes). Using annual Penn World Tables population data, we then compute annual per capita democracy aid for each country. The average annual per capita democracy aid for the period of our analysis is \$574.5 (s.d. 4187.3), ranging from 0 to a high of \$164,198.8.

Four independent variables form the foundation of our argument: regime conditions, regime shifts, media attention, and donor interest profiles. In all our models, these independent variables are lagged one year behind our democracy aid measures to ensure that they precede the aid allocations.<sup>18</sup>

**Media Attention.** Our measure of country visibility derives from coverage of foreign nations by major US news outlets. We select the *New York Times* and *CBS Evening News* to represent print and television news. The *New York Times* is recognized as the “newspaper of record” within the United States and *CBS Evening News* has the largest viewing audience among television news networks during our study’s time frame.<sup>19</sup> We collect *New York Times* content from abstracts in the historical *New York Times* Index and *CBS Evening News* content from the Vanderbilt Television News Index. Scholars routinely use print and television news abstracts as proxies to analyze news content: attention devoted to a topic in an abstract is roughly equivalent to attention given to that same topic in a full story.<sup>20</sup> We use computer-aided content analysis to count country mentions, focusing on the number of news stories about a foreign nation, rather than the number of mentions for a foreign nation within each news story. Thus, each country is given a 0 or 1 based on whether it is mentioned within each news story. We relied on the names of each country as our search terms, taking into account usage and context (thus avoiding conflating “turkey” and “Turkey,” or “Jordan” and “Michael Jordan” for example) and multiple versions of some country names. Average annual mentions are 56.1 for the NYT (s.d. 120.2), ranging from 0 to 2723.5, and 10.5 for CBS (s.d. 35.2), ranging from 0 to 655. In all our models, our measures for media mentions are lagged one year behind our democracy aid measures to ensure that they precede the aid allocations.

**Regime Conditions and Regime Shifts.** We measure regime conditions and regime shifts with the Polity2 variable, a composite score (-10, least democratic, to 10, most democratic) in Polity IV data (Marshall and Jaggers 2012; Munck and Verkuilen 2002).<sup>21</sup> Following

<sup>17</sup> Michael J. Tierney, Ryan Powers, Dan Nielson, Darren Hawkins, Timmons Roberts, Mike Findley, Brad Parks, Sven Wilson, and Rob Hicks, “More Dollars than Sense: Refining Our Knowledge of Development Finance Using AidData,” *World Development* (November 2011).

<sup>18</sup> We also tested 0 and 2-year lags, with no substantive changes to our inferences.

<sup>19</sup> Guy Golan, “Inter-Media Agenda-Setting and Global News Coverage: Assessing the Influence of the New York Times on Three Network Television Evening News Programs,” *Journalism Studies*, 7 no. 2 (2006): 323–34.

<sup>20</sup> Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, *Agendas and Instability In American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Jill A. Edy, Scott L. Althaus, and Patricia F. Phalen, “Using News Abstracts To Represent News Agendas,” *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 82, no. 2 (2005): 434–46; Pippa Norris, “The Restless Searchlight: Network News Framing of the Post-Cold War World,” *Political Communication*, 12 (1995): 357–70.

<sup>21</sup> Monty G. Marshall and Keith Jaggers, “Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800–2011,” <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm>, 2012; Gerardo L. Munck and Jay Verkuilen, “Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices,” *Comparative Political Studies* 35 (2002): 5–35.

Plumper and Neumayer, we substitute Freedom House scores (2-14, transposed to set lower values as less free, adjusted to the Polity2 scale, and rounded to the lower value) for the missing variable for interruptions (-66) in Polity2, while keeping the interpolated scores in Polity2 for transitions (-88) to improve face validity.<sup>22</sup> This approach avoids artificial changes to the Polity2 score derived from substituting 0 for the interregnum. Because we recognize that different measures of democracy have varying strengths and limits, we also conducted our tests substituting Freedom House scores for the Polity scores. Our results were fully consistent, and we do not report those tests here.<sup>23</sup>

Our adjusted Polity2 score is the basis for our measure of regime conditions. We reset the adjusted scores to 0-20 (0=the most autocratic conditions). Consolidated democracies receive little to no democracy assistance (see Figure 2), chiefly because of a “graduation” effect: donors reduce or eliminate democracy aid to consolidated democracies, potentially replacing the aid with other forms of support and assistance. To avoid biasing our results by including situations in which democracy aid reductions are driven by this graduation effect, we drop consolidated democracies (scores of 19-20) from the data.<sup>24</sup> Regime conditions average 7.8 (s.d. 6.2). In all our models, we lag our measure for regime conditions one year behind our democracy aid measures to ensure that they precede the aid allocations.

We measure regime shifts by subtracting the adjusted score at time t-2 from time t to calculate shift over the two-year period. Our results range from a 15-point shift toward autocracy to a 16-point shift toward democracy; our data thus measure both shifts toward and away from democracy. Regime shifts average 0.4 (s.d. 2.7), ranging from -15 to 16 points of change on our adjusted polity measure (0-18). In all our models, the measure of regime shift is lagged one year behind the dependent variable. Thus, in effect, for aid allocations in year t, the regime shift variable measures the change in adjusted score from t-3 to t-1. For the key variable in our study, we interact our measures of regime shifts and media attention (MEDIA ATTENTION\*REGIME SHIFTS) to gauge the conditional effects of media attention at different levels of regime shifts. In all our models, we lag this interaction term one year behind the dependent variable.

**Donor (US) interest profiles.** We argue that the conditional effects of media attention and regime shifts are contingent on donor interest profiles. We begin with individual measures for economic, political, and security interests. For *US economic interests*, we include US trade as the sum of imports and exports (in current dollars) between the United States and a potential recipient.<sup>25</sup> For *US political interests*, we use affinity scores (s-score) from Strezhnev and Voeten, a measure commonly used for similar interests/political affinity.<sup>26</sup> These affinity scores are based on UN General Assembly voting data in which higher scores indicate similar voting (affinity) between a potential recipient and the United States. We also operationalized

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Plümpert and Eric Neumayer, “The Level of Democracy during Interregnum Periods: Recoding the polity2 Score,” *Political Analysis* 18 (2010): 206–26.

<sup>23</sup> These results are available in Table A1 in a supplemental results appendix at <https://www.jmscott.org/democracy-assistance.html> or via email from the corresponding author.

<sup>24</sup> However, we tested our main models with the full dataset, including consolidated democracies, prior to taking this step. Across all models, these results are consistent with our reported findings and are available in Table A2 in our supplemental results appendix at <https://www.jmscott.org/democracy-assistance.html> or via email from the corresponding author.

<sup>25</sup> Katherine Barbieri and Omar M. G. Keshk, Correlates of War Project Trade Data Set Codebook, version 3.0. <http://correlatesofwar.org>, 2012.

<sup>26</sup> Anton Strezhnev and Erik Voeten, “United Nations General Assembly Voting Data,” Harvard Dataverse, V7, 2013, <http://hdl.handle.net/1902.1/12379>.

political interests with idealpoint measures.<sup>27</sup> Our results were consistent, and we do not report those tests here.<sup>28</sup> For *US security interests*, we code a dichotomous measure for the presence of an alliance between a potential recipient and the United States for each year using Correlates of War Alliance data.<sup>29</sup> Because this is a simple, though widely used, measure, we also used Bell et al's security salience measure, substituting it for the dichotomous alliance measure. Our results were fully consistent, and we do not report those tests here.<sup>30</sup>

From these data, we compute an overall measure for the broad interest profile of the United States and a potential recipient, differentiating between low and high interests in each interest variable. For economic (trade) and political (s-score) interests/affinity, we identify the mean value of each measure in our dataset and designate potential recipients above the mean as "high-interest" and those below as "low-interest." For security (alliance) interests/affinity, we designate potential recipients with an alliance with the United States as "high-interest" and those without as "low-interest." We argue that high interest profiles require positive connections across multiple dimensions, so we compute an ordinal variable in which 0 = low interest in all three areas; 1 = high interest in 1 of 3 areas; 2 = high interest in 2 of 3 areas; 3 = high interest in 3 of 3 areas. From this ordinal measure, we recode for the overall US interests profile with a dichotomous variable where *High Interests* (1) = values 2 and 3 and *Low Interests* (0) = values 0 and 1 on the ordinal scale. In the main tests of our argument, we use this measure to distinguish between broad interest profiles, but we also include the individual economic, political, and security interest variables to capture and control for variation in and effects of these more specific interests on democracy assistance. In all our models, we lag our measures for high and low interest profiles behind democracy aid allocations by one year.

**Control Variables.** We include several control variables. In the models using subsamples, we include trade, political interests, and alliances, as identified in the preceding discussion. Also, in all models, we include a measure of "other aid" to control for general US aid commitments to a recipient. We subtract democracy aid from total aid and calculate its logarithm in constant 2009 dollars. Finally, we control for size of a potential recipient with a variable for population from the Penn World Tables.<sup>31</sup> Diagnostics indicate that we do not need to be concerned with collinearity. In all our models, we lag our control variables one year behind our democracy aid measures to ensure that they precede the aid allocations.

<sup>27</sup> Michael A. Bailey, Anton Strezhev, and Erik Voeten, "Estimating Dynamic State Preferences from United Nations Voting Data," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61, no. 2 (2-17): 430–56.

<sup>28</sup> These results available in our supplemental results appendix in Table A3 at <https://www.jmscott.org/democracy-assistance.html> or via email from the corresponding author.

<sup>29</sup> Douglas M. Gibling, *International Military Alliances, 1648-2008* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2009).

<sup>30</sup> Sam R. Bell, K. Chad Clay, and Carla Martinez Machain, "The Effect of US Troop Deployments on Human Rights," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61, no. 2 (2017): 2020–2042. As Bell et al. (p. 11) explain: "we determine the absolute minimum distance between each state in the system and the nearest: (1) US rival, (2) Marxist state, (3) leftist rebellion, or (4) US-involved conflict.... [In S]tates that are close to any of these strategic security concerns, security salience will be higher" (p. 2030). Since these results are consistent with our findings using the alliance variable, and the less expansive time frame for which this variable is available would eliminate over one-third of our time series, we rely on the alliance variable for this analysis. Results using strategic distance are available in Table A4 in our supplemental appendix at <https://www.jmscott.org/democracy-assistance.html> or via email from the corresponding author.

<sup>31</sup> Tijen Demirel-Pegg and James Moskowit, "US Aid Allocation: The Nexus of Human Rights, Democracy, and Development," *Journal of Peace Research* 46 (2009): 181–98. We also conducted all our tests with per capita GDP to control for recipient development. Our results were fully consistent, and per capita GDP was not statistically significant in our tests (but see the discussion of the Heckman selection models below), so we do not report those tests here. These results are available in Table A5 in our supplemental results appendix at <https://www.jmscott.org/democracy-assistance.html> or via email from the corresponding author.

To test our argument, we first present some descriptive data on the patterns of democracy aid during the period of our study. Then, consistent with the country-year structure of our data, we use Generalized Least Squares regression with random effects and corrections for a first-order autoregressive (AR1) process. Fixed effects are often the appropriate choice, but random effects are more appropriate for our study because they account for variations unique to a country but constant over time, and variance over time but constant across countries.<sup>32</sup> However, we also tested our GLS models with fixed effects. The results were fully consistent with our random effects findings, and we do not report them here.<sup>33</sup> We present a general test in which our dichotomous interest profile (low-high) variable is included with the other explanatory variables. Then, in what is the most important part of our analysis, we test the three-way conditional relationship in our argument by using this interest profile measure to split our sample into high and low interest subsamples to examine the effects of media attention, regime conditions and regime shifts, along with other factors. Splitting the samples is the appropriate step because our explanatory variables may vary by whether the potential recipient is of high or low interest, and using subsamples allows coefficients for all the explanatory variables to vary in each interest-level condition. In these tests, we include the measures for political, economic, and security interests. However, for robustness, and to ensure that our results are not a function of splitting the sample, we also conduct tests with the full sample and a three-way interaction among media attention, regime shift, and high-low interest profile.

For robustness and to account for selection effects, we also conducted Tobit analyses of our models to further improve our confidence in the results. As a technique for addressing selection effects and censored data, Tobit is a useful option, especially for dealing with right- and left-censored data (ours is left-censored, with aid values bounded at 0). To further increase our confidence in our results, we also conducted this same suite of tests with Heckman selection models. These results were also consistent with our central findings, and we do not report them here.<sup>34</sup>

For both the GLS and Tobit models, we tested our original measures of media attention (*New York Times* and *CBS Evening News*), as well as a different measure of media attention: Gorman and Sequin's (2015) measure of *New York Times* mentions of country leaders from

<sup>32</sup> E. g., Nathaniel Beck, "Time-Series-Cross-Section Methods," in *Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, edited by Janet Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier (London: Oxford University Press, 2009), <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199286546.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199286546-e-20>.

<sup>33</sup> These results are available in Table A6 in our supplemental results appendix at <https://www.jmsscott.org/democracy-assistance.html> or via email from the corresponding author.

<sup>34</sup> Foreign aid and democracy aid allocations are often modelled as two-stage decision processes: a selection stage sorting states into recipients and non-recipients, and a level stage allocating amounts to those selected for aid in the first stage (e.g., S.L. Blanton, "Foreign Policy in Transition: Human Rights, Democracy, and U.S. Arms Exports," *International Studies Quarterly* 49 (2005): 647–67; Cingranelli and Pasquarello, "Human Rights Practices"; Drury et al., "CNN effect"; James Meernik, Eric L. Krueger and Steven C. Poe, "Testing Models of U.S. Foreign Policy: Foreign Aid During and After the Cold War," *Journal of Politics* 60 (1998): 63–85). In our data, 50–70% of cases do not receive democracy aid and failure to address such selection effects may produce biased estimates. We include separate Heckman models using human rights (e.g., Apodaca and Stohl, United States Human Rights Policy; Blanton, Foreign policy in transition; Cingranelli and Pasquarello, Human rights; Meernik et al, Testing models; Poe, Human rights) and per capita GDP (e.g., Apodaca and Stohl, United States human rights policy; Balla and Reinhardt, Giving and receiving) as the exclusion variable. Our measure for human rights is the Political Terror Scale's US Department of State component. Of course, multiple measures for human rights scores exist, each with strengths and limits. We also tested models using Fariss' dynamic measure of human rights (Christopher J. Fariss, "Respect for Human Rights has Improved over Time: Modeling the Changing Standard of Accountability," *American Political Science Review* 108, no. 2 (2014): 297–318). Our results are consistent (our key variable remains statistically significant and in the theorized direction at the selection stage) and, since Fariss (p. 312) determines that the difference in precision between his dynamic measure and the PTS score (State Department component) we use is negligible, we do not report those results here. The results of the alternative Heckman tests are available in Tables A7–A11 in our supplemental results appendix at <https://www.jmsscott.org/democracy-assistance.html> or via email from the corresponding author.

1950-2008. While this measure is narrower than ours, it provides another useful robustness check. All results are from STATA, version 14.

### 5. Results: Media Attention and US Democracy Aid

Our results support our novel argument. First, donor interest profile is consequential for democracy aid allocations (H1). Low-interest potential recipients received more democracy assistance than high-interest potential recipients. Second, media attention, regime conditions/shifts, and their interaction, along with other recipient characteristics and donor concerns, operate *differently* under specific conditions of donor interest, as we theorized (H2). Donor interests play a role *alongside* media attention, regime conditions/shifts, and their interaction, in shaping democracy aid allocations, but, most importantly, they first *condition* the effects of these dynamics. This three-way relationship is the central innovation of our study.

We begin with some general descriptive information for context.<sup>35</sup> Figure 1 provides context for US democracy aid, showing its marked increase after 1989. Figure 2 shows allocations of US democracy aid to different regime conditions (Polity IV measure of democracy-autocracy). The most autocratic regimes received only \$312 per capita, while low and high anocratic regimes received \$506 and \$780 per capita, respectively. The most assistance went to unconsolidated democracies (\$1036 per capita), while consolidated democracies received minimal democracy aid (\$170 per capita). These simple results provide initial support for a key strand of our argument. They also further support our decision to exclude consolidated democracies from our analysis.

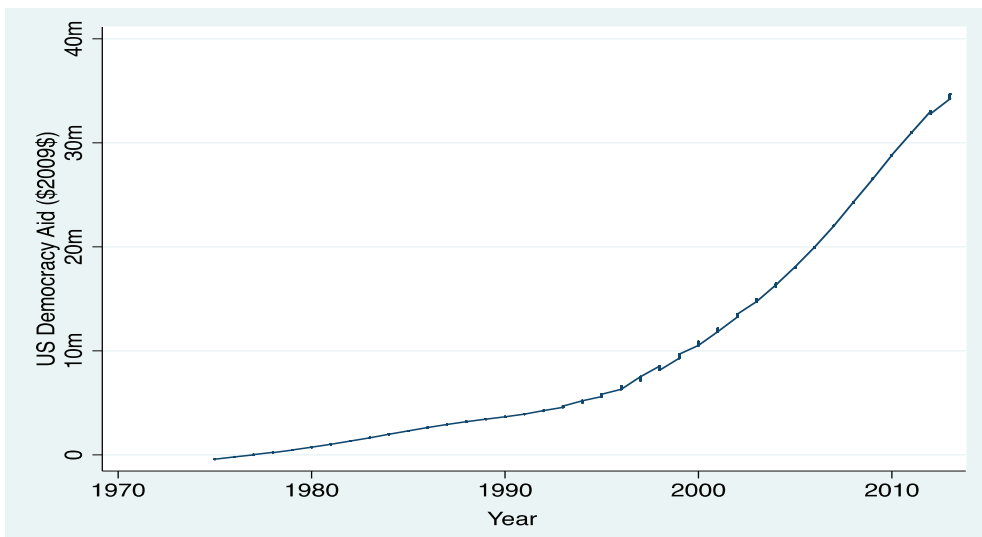


Figure 1: US Democracy Aid, 1975-2010, (Constant 2009\$) Source: AidData 3.1

<sup>35</sup> Summary descriptive results for our key variables are available in Table A0 in a supplemental results appendix at <https://www.jmscott.org/democracy-assistance.html> or via email from the corresponding author.



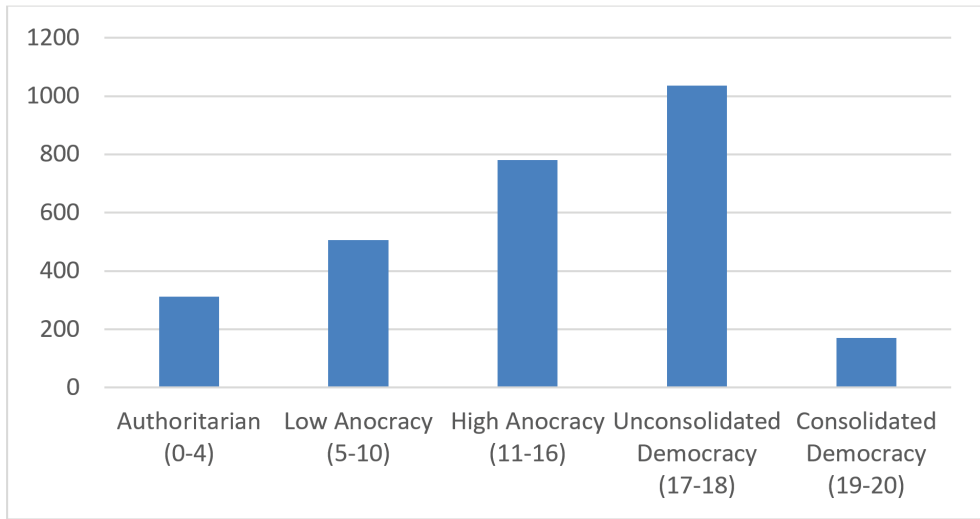


Figure 2: Per Capita US Democracy Aid by Polity Score, 1975-2010

Table 1 presents a simple difference of means test of the relationship between interest profiles and per capita US democracy aid. Overall, countries of low interest receive more than three times the per capita democracy assistance than countries of high interest. This result provides initial support for our argument (H1).

Table 1- US Per Capita Democracy Aid by US Interest Level, 1975-2010

Interest Profile	Observations (country-years)	Examples	Mean Per Capita Democracy Aid
Low Interest Countries	3171	Indonesia Kenya Paraguay Syria	\$617.3*
High Interest Countries	364	Brazil Mexico Philippines Turkey	\$202.6*

\*difference of means significant at .05

Table 2 presents the results of the first test of our model, with interest profile (low-high) included as an explanatory variable with our measures of media attention, regime conditions, regime shifts, and the interaction of media attention and regime shifts (controlling for other US aid and recipient population). These results provide support for H1. Overall, Table 2 shows good model fit and explanatory power. For our control variables, receipt of other aid generally results in greater democracy assistance (other aid is not statistically significant in Model 3 only), while larger countries (population) receive less. Even after controlling for these factors, the effects of our key variables are statistically significant and support our argument. Overall, there are four findings we wish to highlight.

First, the results show that the broad interest profile is a good predictor of per capita democracy aid allocations. In all three models, as we expected, countries of high interest

receive less democracy aid than countries of low interest. Those effects range from \$550 per capita to \$965 per capita, depending on the model/measure of media attention.

Table 2-The Effects of Interests and Media Attention on US Democracy Aid, 1975-2010  
GLS Regression with AR(1), Random Effects

DV: Per Capita US Democracy Aid (2009 \$)	Model 1 CBS	Model 2 NYT	Model 3 Gorman and Seguin 2015 NYT Leader References (1975-2008)
Constant	-300.37 (197.6)	-538.25 (224.7)**	-129.2 (218.3)
Interest (low-high)	-546.66 (515.8)*	-965.1 (349.9)***	-650.9 (318.9)**
Media Attention (CBS)	13.2 (2.4)***	-	-
Media Attention (NYT)	-	8.7 (.82)***	-
Media Attention (Gorman/Seguin 2015)	-	-	3.1 (.87)***
Regime Conditions (Polity)	51.0 (14.8)***	61.6 (16.6)***	66.0 (15.7)***
Regime Shifts (Polity Change)	-79.0 (29.0)***	-137.1 (35.1)***	-35.0 (30.1)
<b>Media Attention*Regime Shifts</b>	<b>24.7 (1.0)***</b>	<b>4.5 (.31)***</b>	<b>3.6 (.3)***</b>
Other Aid (logged)	23.6 (11.2)**	26.8 (12.3)**	10.5 (12.0)
Population	-.001 (.0007)**	-.005 (.001)***	-.001 (.0008)*
	Obs=2813 Wald X <sup>2</sup> =927.5 R <sup>2</sup> (between)=.58 R <sup>2</sup> (overall)=.27 Rho-AR = .07	Obs=2931 Wald X <sup>2</sup> =480.3 R <sup>2</sup> (between)=.29 R <sup>2</sup> (overall)=.17 Rho-AR = -.13	Obs=2941 Wald X <sup>2</sup> =319.6 R <sup>2</sup> (between)=.31 R <sup>2</sup> (overall)=.11 Rho-AR = .09

\*\*\*=.01, \*\*=.05, \*=.10

Second, our results indicate that regime conditions, regime shifts, and media attention affect democracy aid. For regime conditions, the coefficients in all models are significant at the .05 level or better, indicating that, when media attention to a country is at zero, more democratic regime conditions tend to attract about \$51-66 more in democracy aid per capita. Regime shifts are also significant at the .01 level in two of our three models, indicating that, in the absence of media attention, democratic changes *reduce* US democracy aid. Each point of shift toward democracy results in about \$80-137 *less* per capita in democracy aid. This lends support to a stability argument: in the absence of visibility, political change appears to be regarded as a potential threat to other US interests and is, therefore, approached with caution.

Third, the results reveal that media attention has a statistically significant effect on democracy aid allocations when a potential recipient is not experiencing any regime shift. Models using our original measures of media attention as well as Gorman and Seguin’s measure show that increased media attention tends to result in greater allocation of democracy aid in the absence of regime shifts. The coefficients for media attention in Models 1-3 indicate that each mention results in between \$3 and \$13 more per capita in democracy aid.

Fourth, and most importantly, the results show that the interaction effects of media attention with regime shifts significantly affect democracy aid allocations, even when interest level (low-high) is included in the model. Whether our two original measures of media attention or that of Gorman and Seguin were used, the variable MEDIA ATTENTION\*REGIME SHIFTS is significant at the .01 level in each model: additional media mentions at each point of regime shift toward democracy results in an additional \$3-25 in per capita democracy aid, depending on the measure of media attention in the model.

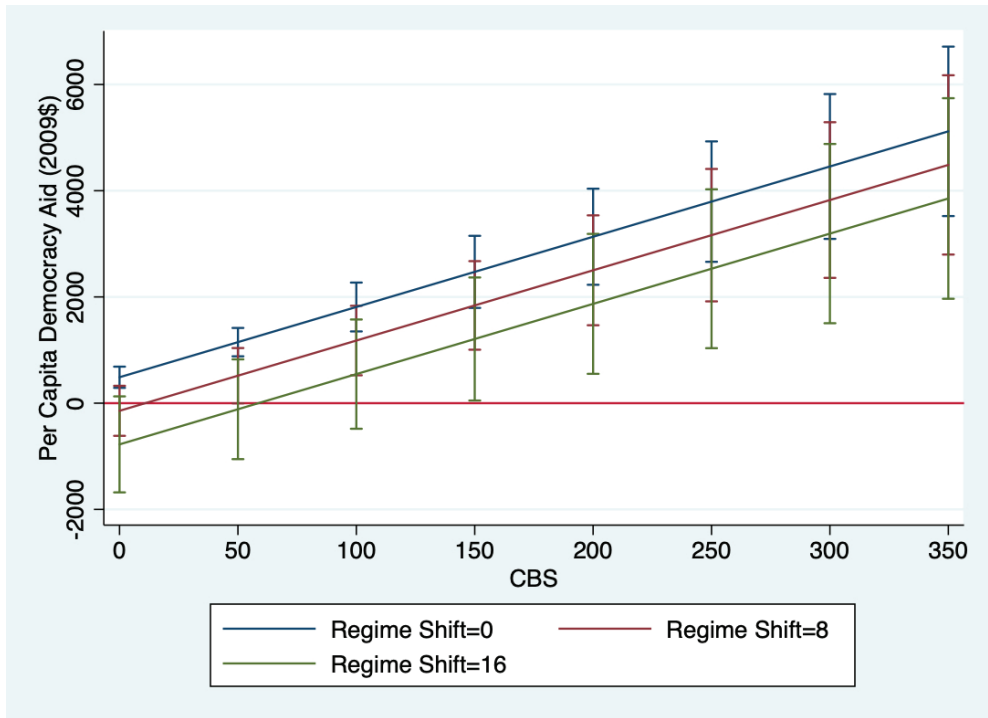


Figure 3: The Conditional Effects of Media Attention on Per Capita US Democracy Aid at Different Levels of Regime Shifts, 1975-2010 (marginal effects with 95% confidence levels)

In Figure 3, we clarify and illustrate these results. The figure shows the marginal effects of media attention at specified values of regime shifts for both our original measures. As Figure 3 indicates, for countries experiencing regime shifts toward democracy, greater media attention results in more per capita democracy aid. Countries experiencing such shifts without media attention, however, do not. Increased media attention also appears to change democracy aid allocation strategies during regime shifts, moving allocations from negative to positive at certain thresholds of media attention (about 50 mentions by CBS, or 100 by the NYT).

In Table 3, we present the results of our Tobit tests for this same basic model for our original measures of media attention. Even when modeling for selection effects, the same basic relationships hold. Interest level (low-high) is a statistically significant predictor of democracy assistance allocations, as is our critical media attention-regime shift variable. These results indicate the robustness of our results and increase our confidence in the findings. As previously noted, the fact that our supplemental tests using Heckman selection models produces the same results and inferences further reinforces our confidence in our results.

Table 3-The Effects of Interest, Regime Shift, and Media Attention on US Democracy Aid, 1975-2010, Tobit Results

	Overall (original model)	Overall (with human rights)
Interests (low/high)	-2415.89*** (558.499)	-2602.486*** (549.602)
Adjusted Polity Score	255.045*** (26.057)	266.656*** (25.765)
Change in Polity	-142.476** (56.483)	-167.122*** (55.495)
CBS Mentions	22.448*** (4.22)	28.131*** (4.473)
CBS*Change in Polity	27.568*** (1.8)	28.6*** (1.807)
Other aid (logged)	417.472*** (31.464)	403.184*** (31.312)
Population	-84.093 (103.829)	-444.123*** (111.428)
Human Rights	--	1127.502*** (158.457)
Constant	-11306.749*** (972.017)	-11058.633*** (969.41)
sigma:_cons	6127.737*** (133.199)	5945.256*** (129.274)
Observations	2833	2749

However, our central argument specifies a three-way relationship: the fundamental relationship between democracy aid allocations and the regime conditions, regime shifts, and media attention variables *works differently in situations of diverging interest levels*. Tables 2-3 and Figure 3 show that broad interest profile, media attention, regime conditions, and regime shifts affect the allocation of US democracy aid, and that the combination of regime shifts and media attention is a particularly potent cue, as we expected. But, as we argue in H2, interest profile (low-high) is not so much a factor shaping democracy aid allocations alongside these other variables as it is *the factor that conditions the effect of these variables on democracy aid decisions*. Indeed, we expected media attention to be a more powerful cue for democracy aid allocations in low-interest situations than high-interest situations. To gauge the conditioning effect of US interests, Tables 4-6 present the tests of our models in low-interest and high-interest subsamples, along with a three-way interaction model using the full sample. Across all the models in these tables, our results support our main argument (H2).

Table 4 shows the results of our model for low-interest potential recipients. Again, we test our model using both our original measures of media attention and Gorman and Seguin's measure for robustness. These results strongly support our argument: media attention, regime conditions, regime shifts, and the interaction of media attention and regime shifts all provide

powerful cues for the allocation of democracy aid in low-interest recipients.

After controlling for factors related to US economic, political, and strategic interests in these low interest countries, the results in Table 4 show that democracy aid goes to countries with more democratic regime conditions. In addition, MEDIA ATTENTION (without regime shifts) generates *greater* democracy aid while REGIME SHIFTS (without media attention) generate less democracy aid. Most importantly, our key variable – MEDIA ATTENTION\*REGIME SHIFTS – has a statistically significant and positive impact on democracy aid allocations. Notably, in all three model specifications in this low-interest subsample, additional media mentions at each point of regime shift toward democracy results in an additional \$4.5-26 in per capita democracy aid. Thus, where US interests are low, media attention highlights, clarifies and amplifies the nature of regime shifts, interacting with them to provide aid allocators with cues that lead them to allocate more democracy aid.

Table 4- The Effects of Interests and Media Attention on US Democracy Aid in Low Interest Recipients, 1975-2010, GLS Regression with AR(1), Random Effects

DV: Per Capita US Democracy Aid (2009 \$)	Model 6 CBS	Model 7 NYT	Model 8 Gorman and Seguin 2015 NYT Leader References (1975-2008)
Constant	-581.4 (255.9)**	-980.6 (282.8)***	-300.6 ((276.5)
Media Attention (CBS)	8.97 (2.8)***	-	-
Media Attention (NYT)	-	10.2 (1.1)***	-
Media Attention (Nielsen 2013)	-	-	-
Media Attention (Gorman/Seguin 2015)	-	-	-2.3 (1.24)*
Regime Conditions (Polity)	40.2 (17.3)**	57.3 (19.2)***	46.2 (18.6)**
Regime Shifts (Polity Change)	-73.5 (31.6)**	-148.2 (38.0)***	-31.6 (32.6)
<b>Media Attention*Regime Shifts</b>	<b>25.9 (1.1)***</b>	<b>5.2 (.35)***</b>	<b>4.5 (0.3)***</b>
Trade with US	-.003 (.007)	-.002 (.006)	-.0008 (.005)
Political Interests (Affinity)	-1091.8 (416.5)***	-1212.3 (442.4)***	-11401.5 (416.2)***
Other Aid (logged)	10.9 (12.5)	15.9 (13.7)	-6.04 (13.7)
Ally	791.4 (307.3)***	632.2 (350.8)*	1095.2 (366.8)***
Population	-.001 (.0009)	-.005 (.001)***	-.001 (.001)
	Obs=2507 Wald X <sup>2</sup> =867.7 R <sup>2</sup> (between)=.49 R <sup>2</sup> (overall)=.28 Rho-AR = .07	Obs=2592 Wald X <sup>2</sup> =500.5 R <sup>2</sup> (between)=.32 R <sup>2</sup> (overall)=.19 Rho-AR = .14	Obs=2560 Wald X <sup>2</sup> =325.2 R <sup>2</sup> (between)=.17 R <sup>2</sup> (overall)=.13 Rho-AR = .08

\*\*\*=.01, \*\*=.05, \*=.10

For these low-interest countries, the two panels of Figure 4 show the marginal effects of media attention on democracy aid at different levels of regime shift. Even big changes – normally a cause for hesitation for US policymakers because of stability concerns – are eventually met with increased democracy aid when media attention is greater, with 65-70 (CBS) or 200 (NYT) media mentions being the thresholds at which aid increases start for those countries experiencing the largest, most dramatic regime shifts.

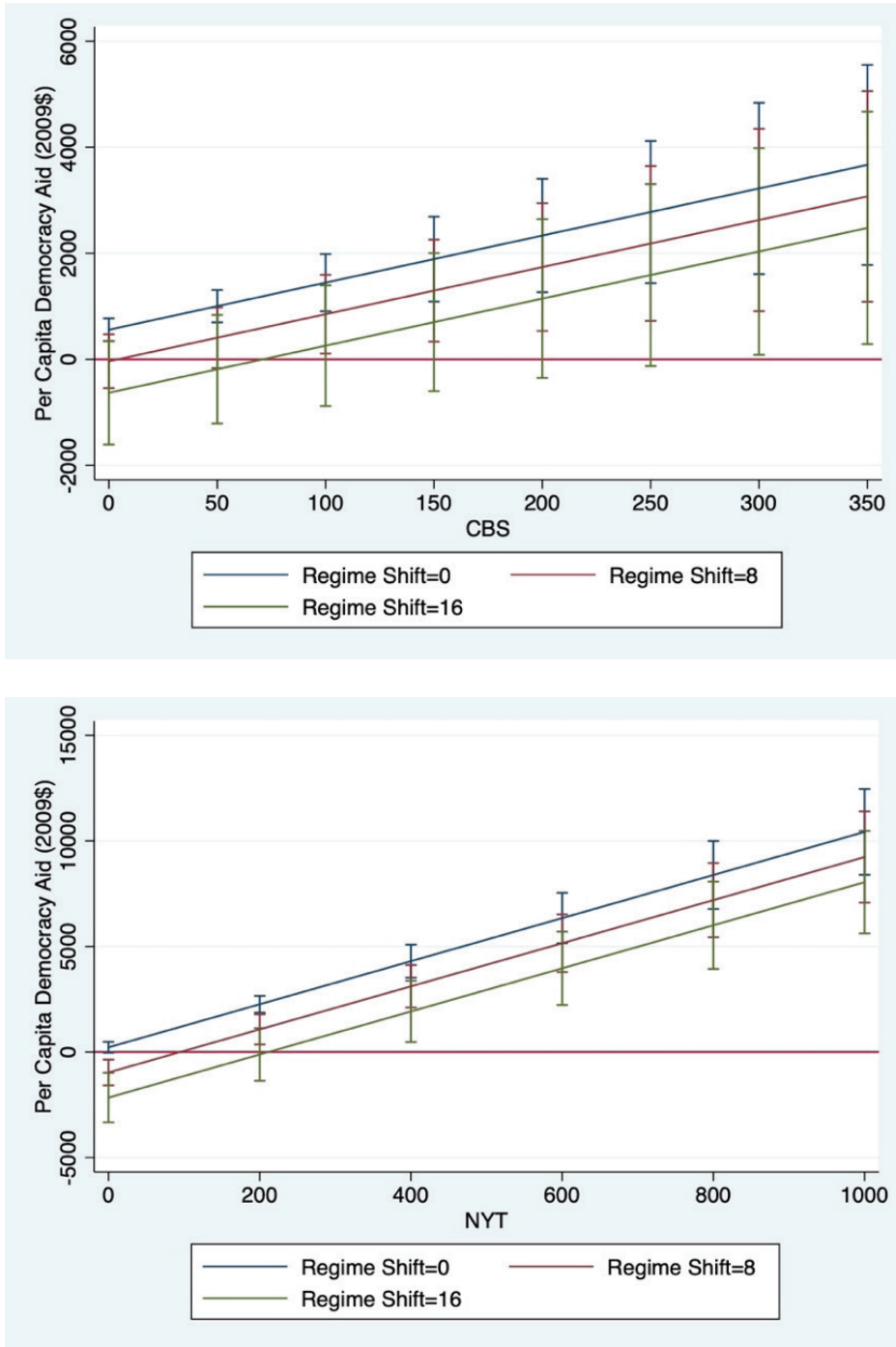


Figure 4: The Conditional Effects of Media Attention on Per Capita US Democracy Aid in Low Interest Recipients at Different Levels of Regime Shifts, 1975-2010 (marginal effects with 95% confidence levels)

We do not expect this same dynamic to occur in high-interest countries, where policymakers are already engaged and attentive and do not rely on media attention for cues about whether or not to provide democracy aid. Thus, we do not expect to see our key measures impact democracy aid allocations in this positive fashion. Table 5 presents the results of our tests in our high-interest subsample. As these results show, our key variables no longer have any statistically significant effect on democracy assistance, as expected. Regime conditions, regime shifts, media attention, and the interaction of media attention with regime shifts *all fail* to reach standard levels of statistical significance in this subsample. As the two panels of Figure 5 show, the positive conditional effects of media attention on democracy aid at different levels of regime shift for low-interest recipients simply disappear for high-interest countries.

Table 5- The Effects of Interests and Media Attention on US Democracy Aid in High Interest Recipients, 1975-2010, GLS Regression with AR(1), Random Effects

DV: Per Capita US Democracy Aid (2009 \$)	Model 9 CBS	Model 10 NYT	Model 11 Gorman and Seguin 2015 NYT Leader References (1975-2008)
Constant	98.0 (235.4)	120.9 (222.7)	-171.8 (219.4)
Media Attention (CBS)	.32 (3.8)	-	-
Media Attention (NYT)	-	.03 (0.7)	-
Media Attention (Gorman/Seguin 2015)	-	-	-1.3 (1.1)
Regime Conditions (Polity)	15.4 (13.9)	13.4 (13.8)	4.6 (13.2)
Regime Shifts (Polity Change)	12.1 (48.5)	37.4 (62.4)	1.8 (47.3)
Media Attention*Regime Shifts	-0.6 (2.0)	-.14 (.27)	.15 (.34)
Trade with US	-.0002 (.0009)	.0002 (.0009)	.002 (.001)*
Political Interests (Affinity)	-238.9 (221.4)	-350.4 (205.5)*	-558.8 (208.1)***
Other Aid (logged)	-1.9 (12.4)	-1.47 (12.6)	2.5 (9.6)
Ally	-	-	-
Population	-.002 (.001)*	-.003 (.001)**	-.003 (.001)**
	Obs=166 Wald X <sup>2</sup> =7.98 R <sup>2</sup> (between)=.17 R <sup>2</sup> (overall)=.07 Rho-AR = -.12	Obs=178 Wald X <sup>2</sup> =11.24 R <sup>2</sup> (between)=.32 R <sup>2</sup> (overall)=.09 Rho-AR = .08	Obs=206 Wald X <sup>2</sup> =19.0 R <sup>2</sup> (between)=.33 R <sup>2</sup> (overall)=.12 Rho-AR = .03

\*\*\*=.01, \*\*=.05, \*=.10

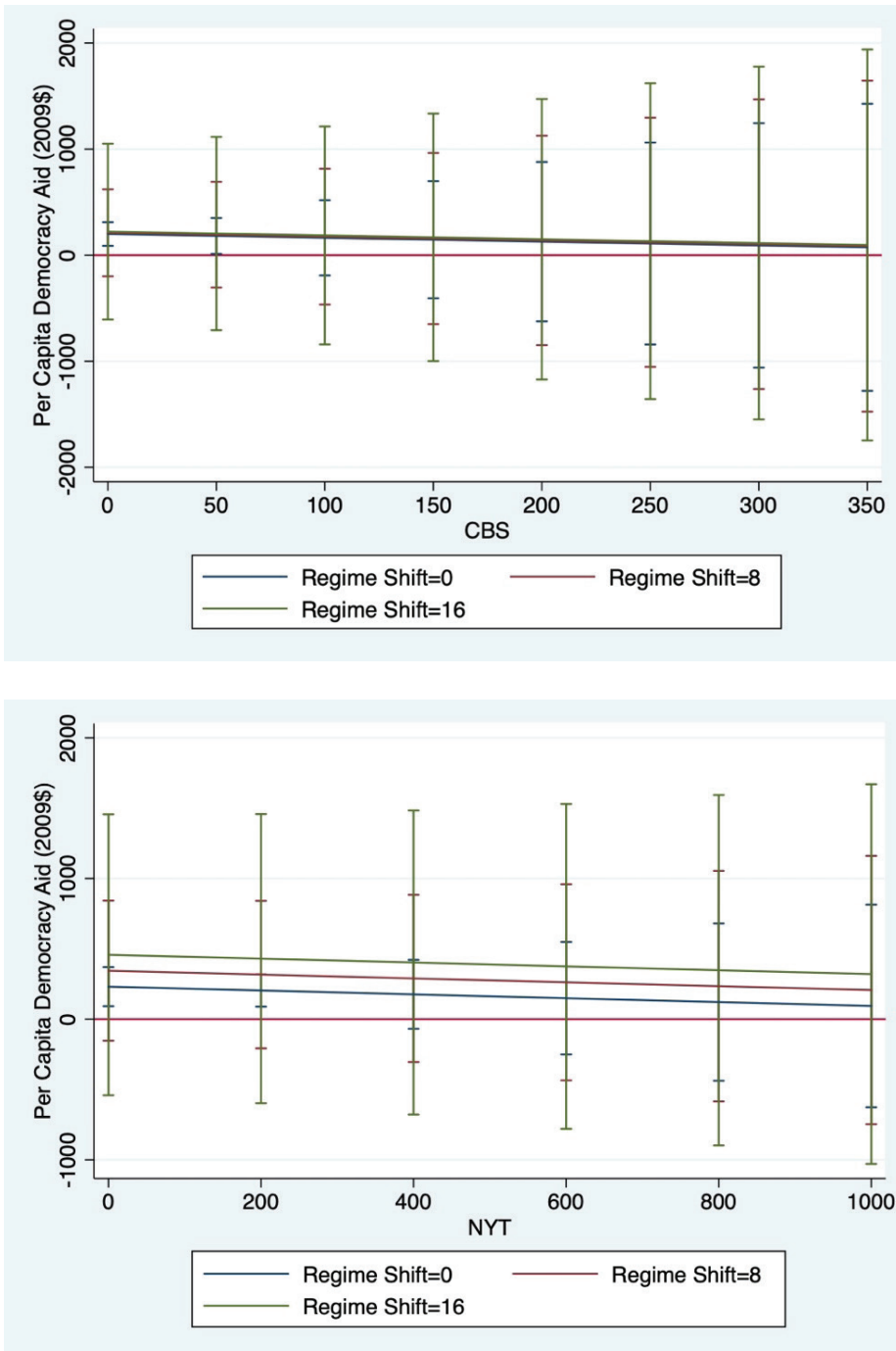


Figure 5: The Conditional Effects of Media Attention on Per Capita US Democracy Aid in High Interest Recipients at Different Levels of Regime Shifts, 1975-2010 (marginal effects with 95% confidence levels)



As previously discussed, we believe a split-sample approach is the correct approach given our argument. However, to ensure that this decision has not unduly influenced our results, we also conducted tests with the three-way interaction, which we present in Table 6. As Table 6 shows, these results also support our findings and inferences. The key variables (bolded in the table) all remain statistically significant and in the theorized direction: in particular, the interactions show that MEDIA ATTENTION\*REGIME SHIFTS *increases* democracy assistance in low interest countries but *decreases* it in high interest countries.

Table 6- The Three-way Interaction Effects of Interests, Media Attention and Regime Shifts on US Democracy Aid, 1975-2010, GLS Regression with AR(1), Random Effects

DV: Per Capita US Democracy Aid (2009 \$)	Model 12 CBS	Model 13 NYT	Model 14 Gorman and Seguin 2015 NYT Leader References (1975-2008)
Constant	-495.646** (194.043)	-688.294*** (219.146)	-785.105** (386.669)
Regime Conditions (Polity)	41.848*** (14.344)	43.547*** (16.302)	46.53** (23.159)
Interests (low, high)	-418.379 (341.072)	-309.645 (428.592)	-333.292 (1116.976)
Regime Shifts (Polity Change)	-15.676 (29.595)	-29.086	-28.91 (61.038)
Interests*Regime Shifts	26.175 (151.358)	36.918 (194.746)	344.28 (1195.719)
Media Attention (CBS)	9.552*** (2.413)		
Media Attention*Regime Shifts	16.593*** (1.05)		
Interests*Media Attention	-5.501 (12.262)		
Interests*Media Attention*Regime Shifts	-18.264** (8.999)		
Media Attention (NYT)	-	5.941*** (.859)	
Media Attention*Regime Shifts	-	2.766*** (.337)	
Interests*Media Attention	-	-5.145** (2.585)	
Interests*Media Attention*Regime Shifts	-	-2.755** (1.122)	
Media Attention (Gorman and Seguin 2015)	-		194.093 (120.468)
Media Attention*Regime Shifts	-		140.836*** (29.176)
Interests*Media Attention	-		-72.335 (523.686)
Interests*Media Attention*Regime Shifts	-		-284.809 (543.173)
Other Aid ((logged))	43.353*** (11.096)	53.486*** (12.296)	53.953*** (19.46)
Population	-.001* (.001)	-.003*** (.001)	-.002 (.001)
Observations	2853	2951	1769
Wald X <sup>2</sup>	453.65	210.69	75.15
R2 (between)	.51	.33	.15
R2 (overall)	.15	.10	.05
Rho-AR	-.01	.12	-.02

\*\*\*=.01, \*\*=.05, \*=.10

The two panels in Figure 6 present point estimates of the key variables in side-by-side comparison of low-interest recipients (blue points) and high-interest recipients (red points), with smoothed error bands for each. As this figure shows, our variables of interest – regime conditions (polity score), regime shifts (polity change), media attention (CBS and NYT mentions), and the interaction of media attention and regime shifts (CBS/NYT mentions\*Polity change) – are significant indicators in low-interest situations, but not in high-interest situations. This further confirms the central hypothesis (H2) of our theory.

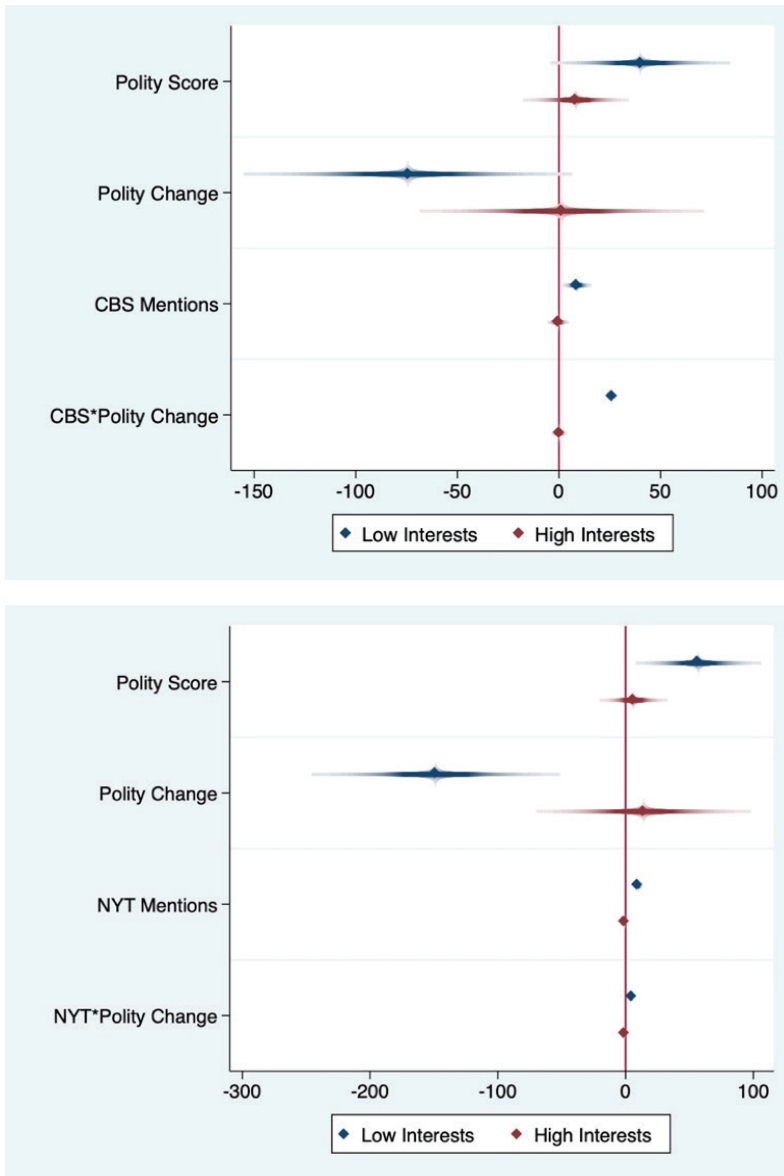


Figure 6: Point Estimates of Regime Conditions, Regime Shifts, and Media Attention in Low and High Interest Recipients, with 95% Confidence Intervals

Finally, Table 7 presents the results of our tests with Tobit models for the CBS and NYT measures of media attention in the two subsamples. These results further support our argument. In the low-interest subsample, our Tobit models perform as expected, consistent with the results for the low-interest subsample in Table 4. In the high interest subsample, once again the media-attention-regime shift interaction is not a statistically significant predictor at either stage. Again, the consistency of our results in this technique increases our confidence in the robustness of our argument.

Table 7- The Effects of Interest, Regime Shift, and Media Attention on US Democracy Aid, 1975-2010, Tobit Results

	Low Interest (original model)	High Interest (original model)	Low Interest (with human rights)	High Interest (with human rights)
Adjusted Polity Score	208.166***	135.105***	228.809***	116.828***
	(30.286)	(38.552)	(30.159)	(36.167)
Change in Polity	-120.307**	-42.629	-145.822**	39.633
	(60.958)	(103.131)	(60.088)	(91.759)
CBS Mentions	13.775***	8.995	22.765***	7.901
	(5.271)	(8.113)	(5.774)	(7.63)
CBS*Change in Polity	28.815***	-.21	29.594***	-2.02
	(1.968)	(3.887)	(1.987)	(3.575)
Other aid (logged)	401.007***	-19.756	392.794***	-26.939
	(35.115)	(34.416)	(34.883)	(32.707)
Population	14.838	-250.977***	-295.033**	-363.522***
	(120.257)	(91.207)	(131.779)	(91.796)
Ally	2315.715***	--	1745.045***	--
	(453.754)		(450.399)	
Trade	.002	0	.005	.001
	(.009)	(.001)	(.009)	(.001)
Political Affinity	-5617.322***	-1209.164***	-4527.431***	-960.523**
	(881.201)	(416.029)	(875.793)	(391.803)
Human Rights	--	--	854.652***	436.368***
			(181.158)	(107.239)
Constant	-14474.766***	181.938	-13537.336***	392.905
	(1170.777)	(1129.543)	(1156.931)	(993.332)
sigma:_cons	6372.349***	847.629***	6221.436***	792.956***
	(147.444)	(65.656)	(144.327)	(60.855)
Observations	2507	166	2438	163

## 6. Conclusions: Donor Interests, Media Attention and Democracy Aid

Our examination of US democracy assistance from 1975-2010 demonstrates the conditioning effects of donor interest profile on the relationship between media attention and democratic demand/feasibility concerns. Overall, the results extend previous studies concluding that democracy aid allocations are strategic bets affected by regime conditions/shifts and media

attention, which serve as important cues on the likelihood of progress toward/consolidation of democracy and the potential for democracy aid to impact democratization positively. As others have concluded, the visibility generated by media attention works in tandem with indicators of movements toward democracy to trigger increased democracy aid allocations.

However, our results clearly and robustly show that this central dynamic functions very differently in low-interest versus high-interest profiles. This is the central focus and the primary contribution of our study. Put another way, it is not simply that donor interests shape democracy aid allocations, it is that differentials in donor interests condition the way that media attention and regime shifts shape democracy aid allocations. When potential democracy aid recipients have high interest profiles for donors such as the United States, the cueing effect of media attention and regime shifts is far less important to aid allocations than in low interest profiles. In effect, when US policymakers are most engaged (high interest profiles), democracy aid allocations are driven by cues other than movements toward democracy and media attention.

Our results reinforce findings that US policymakers strategically consider the likelihood of successful democratization along with regime conditions and regime shifts as critically important indicators when allocating democracy aid. Moreover, the evidence shows that how US democracy aid allocators respond to increased media attention and regime shifts within a potential recipient country primarily depends upon the level of US interest. This underscores an important dynamic: the agenda-setting power of the media is most pronounced when potential recipient states are less salient for US policymakers, but less pronounced when potential recipient states are more salient. Thus, the power and influence of the news media in democracy aid decisions depends upon the extent to which a potential recipient is already on the radar for US policymakers.

Future studies might include other sources of media attention (especially given the dramatic changes in the nature of the media over the past two decades or so), other forms of agenda-setting (i.e., non-media), and other donors beyond the United States. Research should also examine the context (and valence) of country mentions in news coverage to better assess the relationship between media attention and democracy aid decisions. Not all country mentions are equal and unpacking such context is potentially important.

Additionally, future research might consider disaggregating the data to account for the following dynamics. First, different foreign policy and global contexts may well be significant, so examining the Cold War, post-Cold War, and post-9/11 periods might reveal variation in the linkages between democracy aid and the interests-media-regime factors on which we focus. Further study of our key conditional variable – interests – might prove fruitful as well. Our analysis and modeling focus on broad interest profiles constructed by indexing across economic, political and security interest areas. However, examination of each of these interest areas individually might reveal more subtle nuances and variations in the central relationships of our study. Does media attention work the same way in areas of high(low) economic, political and security interests? Furthermore, regional variations in these allocation decisions might also be investigated as well. Finally, select case-studies might scrutinize the process and causal mechanisms at work in these dynamics.

Nevertheless, our results indicate that donor interest profiles are a crucial conditioning factor shaping the impact of media attention. Thus, while the link between media attention and regime shifts could be interpreted as a modified version of the “CNN Effect” in which

the media plays an important role in shaping policymaker decisions on democracy aid, this cueing function is substantially muted when donor interests are high. In those circumstances, US officials do not appear to look to or rely upon media attention to shape how they allocate democracy aid to potential recipients around the world.

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## Beyond the ‘Tissue of Clichés’?: The Purposes of the Fulbright Programme and New Pathways of Analysis

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### Abstract

*This article critically explores some of the evaluative perspectives and models developed by social science scholars in order to further critical thinking on the function of exchange programmes, and particularly Fulbright, within international relations. It takes the concept of ‘educational exchange’ to mean the movement of individuals or groups between nations for the purpose of training of some kind, ranging from high school visits to professional skills. The Fulbright programme covers both student and scholar exchange and has the added element that academics are moving also to teach, taking their expertise with them. While there are many studies of bilateral exchange programmes, there is more to explore in terms of the function of educational exchange as a vector of transfer (be it of knowledge, material, people, or all three) in transnational or international history. The article first surveys the literature on the Fulbright programme to assess how its purposes in international relations have been presented. It then explores potentially innovative ways to conceptualise exchanges in international and transnational interactions: ‘geographies of exchange,’ ‘brain circulation,’ ‘centres of calculation,’ ‘enlightened nationalism,’ and ‘parapublics’.*

**Keywords:** Educational exchange, knowledge transfer, brain circulation, evaluation, Fulbright program

### 1. Introduction

It is a widespread assumption that cross-border exchanges contribute to a more peaceful international environment by undermining stereotypes and establishing social ties. As Julie Mathews-Aydinli summed up in a recent book exploring this theme, “Intuitively, it seems logical that educational exchanges will increase participants’ knowledge and understanding of others’ practices and beliefs, and this will in turn contribute to better, friendlier relations between the participants and those others.”<sup>1</sup> The Fulbright program is presented as typical of this outlook, as its website announces:

Through our unique international educational and cultural exchange programs, Fulbright’s diverse and dynamic network of scholars, alumni and global partners fosters mutual understanding between the United States and partner nations, shares knowledge across communities, and improves lives around the world.<sup>2</sup>

Behind this general statement of intent lies the assumption that Fulbright, through its facilitation of international, inter-cultural, and educational exchange, creates the basis for the progression of inter-state relations in a more peaceful direction. Of course, these kinds of claims have not avoided criticism. Some researchers have found the presumptions of

exchanges overtly idealistic in their goals, often at variance with the available data on their results.<sup>3</sup> Attempts to quantify the positive impact of exchanges can also appear lacking in depth, although survey development has led to increasing refinement of results.<sup>4</sup> There is also a sense that a counter-trend is evolving, whereby we are returning to a situation of public diplomacy increasingly being used as a tool in an environment of competing states, rather than an investment in a more enlightened, post-national landscape.<sup>5</sup>

This article critically explores some of the evaluative perspectives and models developed by social science scholars in order to further critical thinking on exchange programmes, and particularly Fulbright, within international relations.<sup>6</sup> It takes the concept of ‘educational exchange’ to mean the movement of individuals or groups between nations for the purpose of training of some kind, ranging from high school visits to professional skills. The Fulbright programme covers both student and scholar exchange and has the added element that academics are moving also to teach, taking their expertise with them. While there are many studies of bilateral exchange programmes,<sup>7</sup> there is more to explore in terms of the function of educational exchange as a vector of transfer (be it of knowledge, material, people, or all three) in transnational or international history.<sup>8</sup> Global history and studies of hegemonic or imperial networks have occasionally focused on the contribution of exchanges for the establishment and/or maintenance of trans-continental connections, in particular in the context of Pan-Americanism.<sup>9</sup> As Paul Kramer presciently put it in 2009:

the history of foreign student migration ought to be explored as U.S. international history, that is, as related to the question of U.S. power in its transnational and global extensions. In this sense, my argument here is topical: that historians of U.S. foreign relations might profitably study international students and, in the process, bring to the fore intersections between “student exchange” and geopolitics.<sup>10</sup>

To date, this (re)positioning has not yet been done for the Fulbright programme, yet the intersections of the programme’s global scope and purpose with US global power after

<sup>3</sup> Iain Wilson, *International Exchange Programs and Political Influence: Manufacturing Sympathy?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> See for instance Yael Fischer, “Measuring Success: Evaluating Educational Programs,” *US-China Educational Review* 7, no. 6 (2010): 1–15.

<sup>5</sup> See for instance Vivian S. Walker and Sonya Finley ed., “Teaching Public Diplomacy and the Information Instruments of Power in a Complex Media Environment: Maintaining a Competitive Edge” (US Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, Washington D.C., August 2020).

<sup>6</sup> For an earlier attempt (focusing more on the International Visitor Leadership Program) see Giles Scott-Smith, “Mapping the Undefined: Some Thoughts on the Relevance of Exchange Programs within International Relations Theory,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616 (2008): 173–95.

<sup>7</sup> For instance on US-China see Weili Ye, *Seeking Modernity in China’s Name: Chinese Students in the United States, 1900–1927* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); Hongshan Li, *U.S.-China Educational Exchange: State, Society, and Intercultural Relations, 1905–1950* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008).

<sup>8</sup> For an attempt to frame a twentieth century perspective on the impact of exchanges, see Ludovic Tourmes and Giles Scott-Smith, eds., *Global Exchanges: Scholarships and Transnational Exchanges in the Modern World* (New York: Berghahn, 2017).

<sup>9</sup> In terms of exchanges and US empire see Giles Scott-Smith, *Networks of Empire: The US State Department’s Foreign Leader Program in the Netherlands, Britain and France 1950-1970* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2008); Paul Kramer, “Is the World Our Campus? International Students and U.S. Global Power in the Long Twentieth Century,” *Diplomatic History* 33 (2009): 775–806. In terms of Latin America see Matt Loayza, “A Curative and Creative Force: The Exchange of Persons Program and Eisenhower’s Inter-American Policies, 1953-1961,” *Diplomatic History* 37 (2013): 946–70; Richard Candida Smith, *Improvised Continent: Pan-Americanism and Cultural Exchange* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017). For the British empire see Amar Kumar Singh, *Indian Students in Britain* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1963); Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain, 1900–1960: Nationalism, Pan-Africanism, and Communism* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1998); Lloyd Braithwaite, *Colonial West Indian Students in Britain* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2001); Tamson Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars: Universities, Networks and the British Academic World 1850-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).

<sup>10</sup> Kramer, “Campus,” 776. See also Liping Bu, *Making the World like Us: Education, Cultural Expansion, and the American Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003).

WWII are more than evident. With this as context, this article first surveys the literature on the Fulbright programme to assess how its purposes in international relations have been presented. This is followed by a section on recent analytical pathways from the social sciences that provide potentially innovative ways to conceptualise exchanges in international and transnational interactions: ‘geographies of exchange’, ‘brain circulation’, ‘centres of calculation’, ‘enlightened nationalism’, and ‘parapublics’. This is followed by a discussion of the ways in which these perspectives might be brought to bear in investigating the contribution of exchanges as channels of influence in international relations over time.

## 2. The Purposes of the Fulbright Programme

The Fulbright program, of course, stems from humble beginnings that did not provide much indication of the initiative’s expansive goals. The amendment to the Surplus Property Act of 1944 that provided the means for what would become the global network of Fulbright agreements is a very plain, almost anodyne piece of legislation. Regarding the purpose of the Act, the following is laid out in concrete terms:

A) financing studies, research, instruction, and other educational activities of or for American citizens in schools and institutions of higher learning located in such foreign country, or of the citizens of such foreign country in American schools and institutions of higher learning located outside the continental United States, Hawaii, Alaska, (including the Aleutian Islands), Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, including payment for transportation, tuition, maintenance, and other expenses incident to scholastic activities; or

B) furnishing transportation for citizens of such foreign country who desire to attend American schools and institutions of higher learning in the continental United States, Hawaii, Alaska (including the Aleutian Islands), Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, and whose attendance will not deprive citizens of the United States of an opportunity to attend such schools and institutions: ....<sup>11</sup>

This “ingenious marriage of necessity and idealism” reflects a piece of legislation that was inserted in a way to deliberately avoid attention and opposition, flying under the radar during the quiet summer period of the congressional calendar.<sup>12</sup> Fifteen years later, the preamble to the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Program (Fulbright Hays) is much more explicit as to the grand aims involved:

The purpose of this chapter is to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations, and the contributions being made toward a peaceful and more fruitful life for people throughout the world; to promote international cooperation for educational and cultural advancement; and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic, and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world.<sup>13</sup>

This is the language we most associate with the overall goals of the Fulbright exchanges:

<sup>11</sup> Public Law 584 – 79th Congress, Chapter 723-2<sup>nd</sup> Session, S.1636 [Approved August 1, 1946], <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015030796620&view=1up&seq=43>.

<sup>12</sup> Donald Cook, “A Quarter-Century of Academic Exchange,” n.d. [1971], Box 5 Folder 16, Walter Johnson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago.

<sup>13</sup> Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, 87<sup>th</sup> Congress, 75 Stat. 527, <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/iegps/fulbrighthaysact.pdf>.

pursuing educational advancement, achieving mutual understanding, seeking cultural unity, and as a result promoting the cause of peace. It is the kind of language that Robin Winks (1952 Fulbright grant to New Zealand) dismissed in the opening sentence of an essay on the subject – “One’s thoughts about the value of the Fulbright experience invariably consist of a tissue of clichés” – before concluding: “A tissue of clichés it is. But no less true for that”.<sup>14</sup>

The belief that cross-border contacts could gradually break down social and political barriers and lead to a more peaceful international system, if not a transformation of international society, is a staple of Enlightenment Liberal thinking. Free trade was, from this perspective, meant not only to generate wealth but also to facilitate economic interdependence, social interaction, and the generation of a shared sense of common human destiny. Kant’s notion of ‘perpetual peace’ from 1784 comes closest to embodying this as a cosmopolitan political project.<sup>15</sup> Yet the inauguration of organized exchanges in the Atlantic and imperial worlds in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries occurred during a peak period of nation-building and competitive interests, and “organizing the mobility of elites for scientific and economic gain became an instrument of foreign policy.”<sup>16</sup> So whereas Liberalism provided the broad theoretical assumptions underlying cross-border contacts as a fundamental good, the actual implementation or organized exchanges in the form of scholarships for training and educational purposes always possessed a kernel (or more) of national interest. But the positive sentiments of Liberalism based on human nature and the wish to bring a new world into existence always fed more easily into the public posture of exchanges. International organisations, looking to evolve the state system beyond competition towards cooperation on shared issues and recognition of shared values, took this all a stage further. Karl Deutsch’s ideal of a ‘security community’, the democratic peace theory, paths to functionalist integration, and the role of communications in transforming inter-state relations all built on these assumptions to construct Liberal-fuelled imaginaries of peaceful future worlds through normative, value-rich processes of integration.<sup>17</sup>

Many studies of the Fulbright programme have embarked from these fundamental Liberal assumptions and the belief that it was contributing to the evolution of international relations in a positive direction. These approaches thus praise the Fulbright concept not as a normative but as a transformative power. Reviewing the legacy of Fulbright exchanges for the contribution they could make at the dawn of the post-Cold War era, Leonard Sussman exclaimed the following in resounding rhetoric:

The small world of Fulbrighters can make limitless connections with the large universe. One man launched that idea. It has improved hundreds of thousands of lives directly, millions indirectly. That idea has helped introduce entire scholarly disciplines in countries abroad, and has led to better teaching and research methods here and abroad. It has improved the way

<sup>14</sup> Robin Winks, “A Tissue of Clichés,” in *The Fulbright Experience 1946-1986: Encounters and Transformations*, eds. Arthur Power Dudden and Russell Dynes (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1987), 33, 44. See also the companion follow-up (and equally celebratory) volume, Richard Arndt and David Lee Rubin, eds., *The Fulbright Difference: 1948-1992* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1993).

<sup>15</sup> Immanuel Kant, “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose,” in *Kant: Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>16</sup> Ludovic Tournès and Giles Scott-Smith, “Introduction: Conceptualizing the History of International Scholarship Programs (19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> Centuries),” in Tournès and Scott-Smith, *Global Exchanges*, 1–30.

<sup>17</sup> Karl Deutsch, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957); Emmanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, *Security Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Leon Lindberg, “The European Community as a Political System: Notes Toward the Construction of a Model,” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 5 (1967): 344–87; Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1993).

architects build, scientists research, teachers teach. The idea has influenced the way countries act: Their behavior improves as elites learn greater sensitivity and act with greater respect for other cultures. That idea has brought people together from many nations not just for a semester, but a lifetime.<sup>18</sup>

It would be too easy to compartmentalize this as more of Winks’ ‘tissue of clichés’. At the heart of this worldview lie two fundamental assumptions: that the programme has generated an exclusive elite devoted to the betterment of the world through public service and inter-cultural communication; and that Fulbright is all about the transfer of expertise through as much the camaraderie of inter-personal relations as the formality of professional appointments. This situates the ethos of the programme in the same context as, say, the Rotary club movement, that during the first half of the twentieth century spread the ideals of business-related brotherhood just as Fulbright spread the ideals of academia-based brotherhood in the second.<sup>19</sup>

Yet Fulbright the politician and Fulbright the programme did possess their own in-built limitations to realizing this one-worldist vision. Firstly, there has always been a Liberal-Realist dichotomy at the heart of the Fulbright exchange ideal. Sam Lebovic has outlined how Senator Fulbright himself took for granted the underlying assumptions of the benefits of exchange, talking only in general terms along the lines of the Fulbright-Hays preamble above. For Fulbright, the values inherent in these exchanges were simply a given – they were a normative force to gradually steer international society towards a better future. That future represented the effective merging of American values as universal values, of the American interpretation of civilization as world civilization, so much so that Lebovic concludes that “For all the talk of mutual understanding, in other words, Fulbright imagined that educational exchange would produce a global elite that was attuned to American values and American interests and would work to remake their countries in the image of American freedom.”<sup>20</sup> Fulbright’s elitism is clear – and for a Rhodes Scholar, almost to be expected – in that by directing attention to the carefully selected ‘best and the brightest’ a potential new era of international accord, led by the enlightened few and with the US acting as lodestar, could be achieved. Fulbright himself, in the preface to a special issue devoted to the programme in 1987, laid this purpose out clearly:

I do not think it is pretentious to believe that the exchange of students, that intercultural education, is much more important to the survival of our country and of other countries than is a redundancy of hydrogen bombs or the Strategic Defense Initiative. Conflicts between nations result from deliberate decisions made by the leaders of nations, and those decisions are influenced and determined by the experience and judgement of the leaders and their advisors. Therefore our security and the peace of the world are dependent upon the character and intellect of the leaders rather than upon the weapons of destruction now accumulated in enormous and costly stockpiles.<sup>21</sup>

This ‘national internationalism’ was regularly stated in official documents as well,

<sup>18</sup> Leonard Sussman, *The Culture of Freedom: The Small World of Fulbright Scholars* (Lanham MA: Rowman & Littlefield, 1992), 3.

<sup>19</sup> On Rotary in the context of the expansion of US cultural power, see, Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America’s Advance through Twentieth Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2006).

<sup>20</sup> Sam Lebovic, “The Meaning of Educational Exchange: The Nationalist Exceptionalism of Fulbright’s Liberal Internationalism,” in *The Legacy of J. William Fulbright: Policy, Power and Ideology*, eds. Alessandro Brogi, Giles Scott-Smith, and David J. Snyder (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2019), 142.

<sup>21</sup> J. William Fulbright, “Preface,” *Annals of the American Academy of Social and Political Science* 491 (1987): 10.

where the confluence of US and global interests was taken as a given. The Board of Foreign Scholarships could thus refer without contradiction to how “The Fulbright program is a model of investment in long-term national interests. By building goodwill and trust among scholars around the world, it has created a constituency of leaders and opinion-makers dedicated to international understanding.”<sup>22</sup> The Fulbright concept therefore fitted perfectly within what John Fousek referred to as the ‘nationalist globalism’ of the post-WWII period:

President Truman’s public discourse continuously linked U.S. global responsibility to anticommunism and enveloped both within a framework of American national greatness.... This discursive (and ideological) triad of national greatness, global responsibility, and anticommunism pervaded American public life in the later 1940s.<sup>23</sup>

Lebovic argues that this nationalist undertone was a built-in part of Fulbright’s own ideology – just as the (US-)educated elites around the world should lead their respective countries, so too did the US have the responsibility to provide the guidance for those elites as leader of the ‘free world’.

The fact that the programme was reliant on appropriations from Congress following the Fulbright-Hayes Act of 1961 also meant that arguments needed to be made in the context of national interest to secure the necessary political support. Pressures to quantify Fulbright’s ‘value’ for furthering USA foreign policy interests gradually increased from the late 1960s onwards, when the State Department and USIA began to adopt ‘cost effective’ validation rubrics similar to the Defense Department.<sup>24</sup> Yet since the very beginnings of the Fulbright programme, voices from the academic world called for its use-value to be understood in terms different from those used in other arms of foreign policy. As Francis Young stated clearly around the time that calls for quantification began to increase:

Perhaps one reason we have not supported the exchange program more generously is that we have expected the wrong things of it, have assigned it a short-range, foreign policy back-up role, and then wondered why it did not produce the hoped-for results. Were we to see educational exchanges in their proper relationship to foreign policy – as extending the range of diplomacy, improving the climate in which it functions, and placing it on a firmer information base – we would recognize the importance of the Fulbright-Hays program more fully, use it to better advantage, and support it more generously.<sup>25</sup>

Over the years, and especially following the departure of Fulbright himself from the Senate in 1972, respect for exchanges as a form of ‘slow media’ functioning in their own time zone has waned, and the demand for statistical evidence of effectiveness has grown. The US State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs has posted a series of evaluation studies dating from 1997 onwards, including several on the Fulbright student, scholar, and teacher programmes. The data is overwhelmingly positive in tone, but the level of the evidence presented is strikingly thin.<sup>26</sup>

Fulbright’s elitist outlook also shaped the purposes of the programme in terms of race

<sup>22</sup> *Annual Report*, Fulbright Board of Foreign Scholarships, 1991.

<sup>23</sup> John Fousek, *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 2.

<sup>24</sup> Cook, “Quarter-Century . . .”

<sup>25</sup> Francis Young, “Educational Exchanges and the National Interest,” *ACLS Newsletter* 20, no. 2 (1969): 17.

<sup>26</sup> See, <https://eca.state.gov/impact/evaluation-eca/evaluation-initiative/completed-evaluations>. Fulbright surveys include “data” of the level that 100% of the respondents thought the experience “had been valuable to them.” See Visiting Fulbright Scholar Program Outcome Assessment, based on survey responses from 1894 participants from 16 countries who had participated in the programme between 1980-2001, <https://eca.state.gov/files/bureau/fulbright-visiting-scholar-one-pager-sept-2005.pdf>.

and gender, which raises questions about its role as an emancipatory force. A member of the social upper class representing a Southern state in Congress, Fulbright the representative and Fulbright the senator were very much in line with the racial prejudices of their socio-political milieu. It is worth mentioning in stark detail Fulbright's record on civil rights:

J. William Fulbright maintained a perfect anti-integration voting record in Congress from his first election to the House in 1942 until 1970, when he first deviated from the segregationist line with his vote to extend the Voting Rights Act [VRA]. Prior to that moment of personal history, he voted against the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, 1964 and 1968, and against the Voting Rights Act of 1965. He was an active participant in various filibusters of nondiscrimination legislation between 1948 and 1964, and signed the Southern Manifesto of 1956. His only betrayal of the segregationist position was when he declined to join the doomed filibuster of the 1965 Voting Rights Act (VRA), even though he voted against it on final passage. When the VRA was up for reauthorization in 1970, and Fulbright confronted for the first time an electorate with large numbers of black voters, he cast his only pro-Civil Rights vote in over three decades. Otherwise, the Arkansas statesman stood with staunch segregationists such as James Eastland of Mississippi and Richard Russell of Georgia.<sup>27</sup>

With this outlook, it is logical that Fulbright himself was not so interested in pursuing the exchange programme with nations of the Global South, although the imperatives of US foreign policy, combined with the availability of surplus military hardware to sell, soon guided it down exactly that path. Thus, the first Fulbright agreements were signed with China in 1947 and Burma, the Philippines, and Greece in 1948.<sup>28</sup>

On the issue of gender, the programme was more positive in its impact. Reviewing the relevance of gender in the working and impact of the programme, Molly Bettie has argued that it was open to female participants from the start and that the first appointments to the Board of Foreign Scholarships included professors Helen White (University of Wisconsin), Sarah Gibson (Vassar College) and Margaret Clapp (Wellesley College).<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, social conservatism still reigned regarding gender roles in the US, and during the first years women were only making up one-third of Fulbright student grantees.<sup>30</sup> Most female participants from the US were white, middle class, and travelling to Europe. Senator Fulbright was also not in favour of extending the scope of the senior scholar grants to allow their dependents (generally referring to their wives) to travel with them, despite the many reports that indicated the additional positive influence of family members in interactions with local communities. For Fulbright, the research grants for scholars should remain focused on academic excellence. Since this assumed that most individuals able to attain academic excellence were men, it is indicative of Fulbright's own understanding of gender hierarchy and the purpose of the exchange experience.

Over the years, studies of the impact of the Fulbright programme in national contexts have gradually increased, as the available data and access to archives has allowed for more detailed assessments.<sup>31</sup> These studies have built up a mosaic image of US global influence over time, taking the knowledge/power nexus as its core and liberal internationalism as its motif.<sup>32</sup> Moving beyond anecdotes, these studies have brought the Fulbright programme slowly into focus as a key vector of influence around the world, shaping the production and dissemination of knowledge across the humanities, social sciences, and applied sciences, with the United States functioning as the principal resource centre. With these studies providing an

<sup>32</sup> See David Engerman, "American Knowledge and Global Power," *Diplomatic History* 31 (2007): 599–622.

expanding foundation for further research, it is apposite to consider how we can still further the workings of this knowledge/power nexus. The following section will explore a series of analytical pathways that can be used to assess the Fulbright programme anew: ‘geographies of exchange’, ‘brain circulation’, ‘centres of calculation’, ‘enlightened nationalism’, and ‘parapublics’.<sup>33</sup>

### 3. Geographies of Exchange

Geographers have contributed a whole new perspective to the spatial significance of exchange, mapping out the circulations of knowledge in the context of broader matrixes of power on a global scale. From this perspective, exchanges become “an instrumental strategy to shape cosmopolitan identities, through transnational connections and the patronage of particular disciplines and scholars.”<sup>34</sup> Focusing attention on the role of the Ford Foundation in India during the early Cold War, Chay Brooks has sketched how the Foundation’s ‘modernist imaginary’ was transferred as a form of symbolic power to Indian individual and institutional beneficiaries. At the heart of this was a desire, indeed a belief system, that “educational philanthropy was an investment in a better functioning political order” :

Technical exchanges were about providing an experience allied to the transferral of expert knowledges acquired through American-led instruction. The administration of exchange acted as a means to converge the universal knowledge of scientific practice, the local knowledges of farms in the United States, as well as the travelling knowledges of the Indian extension workers. The apparatus of exchange formed a line of connection, a form of scalar geopolitics, between the philanthropic and educational imperatives in the boardrooms of America, and its mutation into new ‘modern’ and ‘developed’ forms of farming and village life.<sup>35</sup>

Brooks adds another perspective to the notion of exchanges acting as a form of ‘capillary power’ on a global-local scale, through which knowledge would be transferred, largely in a one-way direction.<sup>36</sup> The ‘modernist imaginary’ was in practice the deliberate imposition of hierarchies of knowledge based on a fixed understanding of ‘development’, with local knowledge and practices either subordinated or erased from the narrative as merely ‘primitive’. This situates the Fulbright programme firmly as a vector of US-led modernization, and Fulbrighters as the messengers of progress. On the mundane level, Fulbright was used to transfer knowledge and expertise in the natural and social sciences as a means to shape disciplines and educational training methods abroad. But Brooks is pointing beyond this to how modernist imaginaries generated in the metropole needed to be communicated and turned into reality in the periphery through the personal relations of Fulbright’s knowledge emissaries.

The fact that the Fulbright programme worked through bilateral committees is a crucial additional detail. The purposes of the programme in each national setting were

<sup>33</sup> The field of “friendship studies,” where friendship is categorized “as a separate category of bilateral relationships” involving symbolic interaction, affective attachment, self-disclosure, and mutual commitment, may also offer new angles for analysis. See Andrea Oelsner and Simon Koschut, “A Framework for the Study of International Friendship,” in *Friendship and International Relations*, eds. Simon Koschut and Andrea Oelsner (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); William Deresiewicz, “Faux Friendship,” *Chronicle of Higher Education* 6 December 2009, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/faux-friendship/>.

<sup>34</sup> Michael Heffernan and Heike Jöns, “Research Travel and Disciplinary Identities in the University of Cambridge, 1885-1955,” *British Journal for the History of Science* 46 (2013): 255–86.

<sup>35</sup> Chay Brooks, “‘The Ignorance of the Uneducated’: Ford Foundation Philanthropy, the IIE, and the Geographies of Educational Exchange,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 48 (2015): 45.

<sup>36</sup> On “Capillary Power,” see John Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular Sports in Britain* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986).



mapped out by local representatives in conjunction with US members (both foreign service officers and civilians, usually from business and academia). This frames the programme – particularly from the 1960s onwards when local funding began to match and even surpass the US appropriations – more as a form of co-produced or 'consensual hegemony', a site of negotiation where the interests of national and US internationalist elites merge.<sup>37</sup>

#### 4. Brain Circulation

The term 'brain circulation' was introduced into migration studies to conceptualise the significance and longer-term impact of temporary movements of highly skilled professionals.<sup>38</sup> It was Heike Jöns who took this as a model to explore "the long-term effects of the transnational circulation of academics and its meaning for the constitution of transnational knowledge networks."<sup>39</sup> By carrying out an in-depth study of the Humboldt Foundation's academic grants over a period of 56 years, involving over 1800 visiting academics to (West) Germany from 93 countries, Jöns convincingly showed how the Humboldt's targeted patronage of top-level academics in specific fields of activity unquestionably assisted with the scientific rehabilitation of post-war West Germany into professional transnational academic networks. The cumulative effects were evident in the (re-)establishment of German centres of knowledge production and the securing of expertise, contacts, and material resources. Drawing on Welch, Jöns concluded in agreement that exchanges such as Humboldt and Fulbright "are important mechanisms to sustain internationalization."<sup>40</sup>

This research is important for its scope beyond the national setting. Fulbright internationalism was about linking scholars across national domains, setting up transnational connections with the United States functioning as the central node for patronage, inspiration, expertise, and sources. Drawing on Jöns' approach, the contribution of the various Fulbright programmes across Western Europe for the shaping and sustaining of the social sciences and business administration as academic fields can be further analysed.<sup>41</sup> American Studies is a case in point, not being a recognized field in Europe in the immediate post-WWII period, yet vital in terms of orientating academic production, learning and circulation around the US metropole. American power needed its interpreters, and they in turn needed access to America, Americans, and 'Americana'.<sup>42</sup> Sites of exchange such as the Salzburg seminar, operating since 1947, acted as key centres of circulation for this development. Salzburg's annual conference acted as a guiding event regarding the latest academic trends, shaping through debate the directions taken by the academic field.<sup>43</sup> Needless to say, Fulbright

<sup>37</sup> On the significance of the bilateral committees see, Lonnie Johnson, "The Fulbright Program and the Philosophy and Geography of US Exchange Programs since World War II," in Tournes and Scott-Smith, *Global Exchanges*. On "consensual hegemony" see, John Krige, *American Hegemony and the Postwar Reconstruction of Science in Europe* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2006).

<sup>38</sup> Louise Ackers, "Moving People and Knowledge: Scientific Mobility in the European Union," *International Migration* 43 (2005): 99–131.

<sup>39</sup> Heike Jöns, "'Brain Circulation' and Transnational Knowledge Networks: Studying Long-Term Effects of Academic Mobility to Germany, 1954-2000," *Global Networks* 9 (2009): 315–38.

<sup>40</sup> Antony Welch, "The Peripatetic Professor: The Internationalization of the Academic Profession," *Higher Education* 34 (1997): 340.

<sup>41</sup> See for instance the development of psychology, sociology and political science in the Netherlands: Sjaak Koenis and Janneke Plantenga, eds., *Amerika en de sociale wetenschappen in Nederland* (Amsterdam, 1986).

<sup>42</sup> Giles Scott-Smith, "The Ties That Bind: Dutch-American Relations, US Public Diplomacy and the Promotion of American Studies in the Netherlands since the Second World War," *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 2 (2007): 283–305.

<sup>43</sup> On Salzburg see Oliver Schmidt, "No Innocents Abroad: The Origins of the Salzburg Seminar and American Studies in Europe," in *Here, There, and Everywhere: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Export of Popular Culture*, eds. Reinhold Wagnleitner and Elaine Tyler May (Hanover: New England University Press, 2000); Inderjeet Parmar, "Challenging Elite Anti-Americanism in

grantees figured prominently in this process as the principal guides, both through academic status and disciplinary insight.<sup>44</sup>

### 5. Centres of Calculation

A centre of calculation, as formulated by philosopher of science Bruno Latour, refers to a site where knowledge production takes place through the gathering of resources from other locations.<sup>45</sup> Centres thus function as central nodes within circulatory movements of experts, their congregation over time resulting in the building and the shaping of research fields and scientific disciplines. Such centres can function at all levels of activity, starting from the individual and moving up through various scales of the institutional. Commenting on the essential factor of mobility for the creation and sustenance of each centre, Jöns outlined it thus:

Scientists use encounters with other people and spatial contexts systematically in order to gather new resources for the production and support of their arguments. Depending on the field of study and period of time, the mobilized research objects, infrastructure and expertise may include documents, books, data, instruments, machines, methods, stones, plants, animals, people, specimen, artefacts, questionnaires, diaries, observations, maps and drawings as well as research assistants and collaborators.<sup>46</sup>

The centre model is useful for understanding the processes of knowledge accumulation, and its consequences, within the context of imperial ‘discovery’ and expansion. Recent studies have delved into the mechanisms of mobility and the centres around which and through which this mobility occurs, with organized educational exchange being a pivotal vector.<sup>47</sup> In this context, the Fulbright programme has had multiple shifting centres, depending on the disciplinary and institutional paths taken by the student and scholar grantees themselves. In terms of the United States, a small example can be given as to how Fulbright scholars from the Netherlands moved away from the centres of expertise among the elite universities over time to engage more with other sites spread across the country.

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the Cold War: American Foundations, Kissinger’s Harvard Seminar and the Salzburg seminar in American Studies,” in *Soft Power and US Foreign Policy*, eds. Michael Cox and Inderjeet Parmar (London: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>44</sup> Building on the networking power of Fulbright grantees, their academic status, and the connections laid by their alumni associations (including their political lobbying), it would be possible to develop further the meanings and significance of the “Fulbright habitus”. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge, 1984).

<sup>45</sup> See Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), esp. 179–257.

<sup>46</sup> See Heike Jöns, “Centre of Calculation,” in *The SAGE Handbook of Geographical Knowledge*, eds. John A. Agnew and David N. Livingstone (London: Sage, 2011), 158–70.

<sup>47</sup> See Heike Jöns, Peter Meusburger, and Michael Heffernan, eds., *Mobilities of Knowledge* (Cham: Springer, 2017).

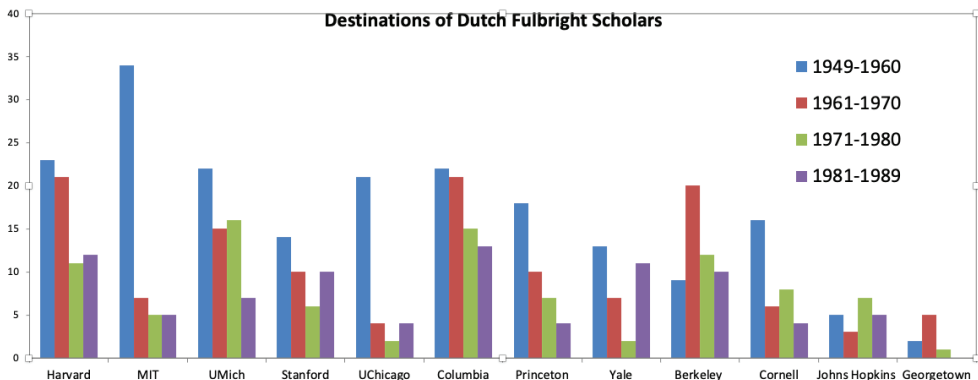


Figure 1: Destinations of Dutch Fulbright Scholars

Source: Archive of the Fulbright Commission of The Netherlands, Roosevelt Institute for American Studies, Middelburg, The Netherlands

Outside of the United States, Fulbright scholars may contribute to the accumulation of knowledge in specific sectors, but they may also simply represent forms of academic capital that indicate ongoing symbolic ties with the US metropole.<sup>48</sup>

## 6. Parapublics

In an extensive study of Franco-German relations, Ulrich Krotz developed the notion of ‘parapublics’ as providing an often-hidden layer of intensive interaction. Defining them as “neither strictly public nor properly private,” Krotz outlined the characteristics:

Parapublic underpinnings are reiterated interactions across borders by individuals or collective actors. Such interaction is not public-intergovernmental, because those involved in it do not relate to each other as representatives of their states or state-entities. Yet, these contacts are also not private, because the interaction is to a significant or decisive degree publicly funded, organized, or co-organized....Parapublic underpinnings are a distinct type of international activity.<sup>49</sup>

Krotz focused specifically on youth exchanges, city and town ‘twinning’, Franco-German societies, and media. Materially, they provide resources and so encourage behaviour through patronage. Collectively, these activities “produce and reproduce a certain kind of personnel” and “generate and perpetuate social meaning and purpose, that is, they construct international value.” But the real value of Krotz’s work comes from his conclusion that the results were in important ways limited. There developed no Franco-German public sphere of any merit, and “French and German domestic social compacts” and separate social spheres remained largely intact. The parapublic channels instead functioned to normalize existing inter-state relations rather than generate some kind of novel sense of collective identity or alteration of political processes. The value of these channels comes from their social purpose and

<sup>48</sup> See on this point Scott-Smith, “The Fulbright Program in the Netherlands,” for the overwhelming influence of MIT within the Dutch physics community during the 1950s; also Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Capital*, ed. J. Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 241–58.

<sup>49</sup> Ulrich Krotz, “Ties That Bind? The Parapublic Underpinnings of Franco-German Relations as Construction of International Value” (Working Paper 02.4, Program for the Study of Germany and Europe, Harvard 2002), 2–3.

processes of normalization being institutionalized in inter-state relations. They contribute, in other words, to a sense of order in international affairs.

To an extent, Fulbright exchanges also contribute to such an outcome. The focus here is on the normative power of repeated cultural interactions, something that the existence of bilateral Fulbright committees necessarily facilitates as their *raison d'être*.<sup>50</sup> Fulbright agreements are also parapublic, with grantees being designated as informal 'cultural ambassadors' operating outside of diplomatic channels. The sense of order refers to the assumption, on some level, of alignment with the interests and assets of the United States, be that political, economic, or cultural-intellectual, even if this is unquestionably combined with the intention of national gain. Despite functioning on an elite level, Fulbright exchanges are therefore also a form of normalization – a sign that bilateral relations are stable enough for a joint investment in academic endeavours and integrated futures.

## 7. Enlightened Nationalism

The notion that increasing cross-border contacts necessarily break down national cultural barriers and propel the creation of an 'international community' is a truism for the standard 'Fulbright ideology' discussed above.<sup>51</sup> Since "educational exchange [is] one of the main types of cross-border contact favored by theorists of international community," Calvert Jones set out to test its assumptions by means of a detailed study of US students who had studied abroad. Based on a cohort of 571 students, Jones concluded that there was no recognizable sense of 'international community' being generated (i.e. changing perceptions of cultural affinity), but that the experience did cause a positive reduction in the perception of threat. In contrast to this, the study experience did heighten the sense of national identity and difference, if not something of a chauvinistic pride. This caused a questioning of the basic criteria for 'international community', but in a way that merged Liberal and Realist suppositions.

Perhaps a different conception of international community is needed, one that relies less on the realization of fundamental similarities, shared outlooks, and the warmth of human kinship – Hedley Bull's "common culture of civilization", Deutsch's "we-feeling" – and more on the conviction that cultural differences may be profound but need not be threatening. .... The idea of community, then, would be more akin to earlier classic liberal perspectives emphasizing civility and tolerance than to more recent understandings of international community that draw from social psychology and emphasize the growth of a shared identity or common culture.<sup>52</sup>

Jones concludes that a form of "enlightened nationalism" may be the most striking outcome, where "cross-border contact may indeed encourage peace-promoting norms and a sense of community, just not through the generation of a shared identity." This claim carries on neatly from the parapublics of Kotz, downgrading expectations as to the outcomes of educational exchange, but at the same time re-directing attention to the normative power of these forms of cultural interaction over time. At the same time, it diverges from the 'global club' mentality of Fulbrighters, and neither can it contribute to understanding the social significance of their alumni associations.

<sup>50</sup> For a different take on this normative power, see Heidi Erbsen, "The Biopolitics of International Exchange: International Educational Exchange Programs – Facilitator or Victim in the Battle for Biopolitical Normativity?," *Russian Politics* 3 (2018): 68–87.

<sup>51</sup> See on this point Jens Wegener, "Creating an "International Mind"? The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Europe 1911-1940" (PhD Dissertation, European University Institute, Florence, 2015).

<sup>52</sup> Calvert Jones, "Exploring the Microfoundations of International Community: Toward a Theory of Enlightened Nationalism," *International Studies Quarterly* 58 (2014): 690.

## 8. Conclusion

These five approaches provide a cross-section of methods that can be used to move our understanding of the influence of the Fulbright programme on the international system beyond the 'tissue of clichés'. Personal relations remain at the centre of its method, but the key lies in situating these relations within economies of exchange that reveal the wider power relations at work. Orthodox understandings of the Fulbright programme's normative power rarely moved beyond how these interpersonal relations were meant to generate a global community of enlightened professionals.

Geographies of exchange situates the purpose of these interactions within a spatial matrix of power, with the United States at its centre. While this would fit the Fulbright's administrative outlook during the first two decades after WWII, the evolution of the respective bilateral agreements into an increasingly shared enterprise from the 1960s onwards (to the point today where the US is a minority shareholder in many significant cases) points to the need for a framework that can take this mutuality into account. This in no way dislocates Fulbright from networks of American power – it in many ways strengthens the claim of hegemonic relations being mutually supportive between allies – but instead expands its meaning to include the symbolic capital of its modernizing emissaries.

Both brain circulation and centres of calculation are useful concepts for encapsulating the contribution of Fulbright exchanges over time in the establishment and stabilization of sites of disciplinary expertise with transnational influence. Here the contribution of global circulations for the solidification of the US position as 'knowledge metropole' can be further explored. In contrast, the concepts of parapublics and enlightened nationalism move away from the transformative power of an elite-based analysis to emphasise instead the normative contributions of cultural and educational exchanges on a mundane level, where the focus lies more on their contribution to 'managing the system' than 'changing the system'. But power relations are not absent here either, since perpetuating the status quo is also perpetuating existing hierarchies of status and influence. Each of these pathways, by grounding and carefully framing the study of educational exchange, therefore provide the basis for analysing the Fulbright programme's contribution to knowledge transfer, institution-building, and inter-national relations. Behind the soaring rhetoric of the Fulbright-Hays Act and Fulbright ideology as a whole, therefore, lies a field of research that still needs to be fully mapped out.

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## Japanese Non-State Actors' Under-Recognised Contributions to the International Anti-Nuclear Weapons Movement

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### Abstract


*Since the 1950s, Japanese non-state actors in the international anti-nuclear weapons movement have disseminated the dangers of nuclear weapons, tied to Japanese experiences of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Coming from the only country that has experienced nuclear attacks, they provide much needed evidence of the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons. These actors include survivors of the atomic bombings, commonly known as hibakusha, who have initiated and persistently maintained the humanitarian focus on nuclear discourse for decades. This paper examines their contributions to eyewitness testimonies on the impacts of nuclear weapons and their efforts leading to major milestones in international efforts for nuclear abolition. It also focuses on the roles played by the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organization (Nihon Hidankyo) and the Japan Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (JALANA), which made tremendous contributions facilitating the success of the World Court Project in the 1990s and the Humanitarian Initiative in the 2010s that led to the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Non-state Japanese contributions were, unfortunately, under-recognised, and the successes of international nuclear abolition were often attributed to other international actors. Hence, this paper recognises the contributions of non-state Japanese actors in sustaining the international anti-nuclear weapons movement and achieving the nuclear ban treaty.*

**Keywords:** Non-state actors, Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, *Hibakusha*, Nihon Hidankyo, Japan Association of Lawyers against Nuclear Arms

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## 1. Introduction

Since the United States' (US) atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, there have been consistent calls for a nuclear-weapon-free world, including the first resolution urging for nuclear disarmament made by the United Nations (UN) in January of 1946.<sup>1</sup> In Japan, non-state actors have been active in the anti-nuclear weapons movement since the 1950s, even at the international level, though their contributions remain relatively little-known. The term “non-state actors” is used in reference to individuals and organisations who are distinct from state authorities, yet are involved with international networks wielding power substantial enough to influence the political landscape.<sup>2</sup> This paper examines the contributions of these key actors, especially the survivors of atomic bombings (commonly known as *hibakusha*<sup>3</sup>), in framing the international nuclear abolition efforts from a humanitarian perspective. We must also recognise the contributions of nuclear test victims – e.g., the Marshall Islanders affected by US weapon tests from 1946–58.<sup>4</sup> While the Marshall Islands' state authority is a member of the UN Human Rights Council and actively campaigns against nuclear fallout, it is the *hibakusha* and not their government at the forefront of Japanese anti-nuclear efforts.

Such movements have considerable currency in the academic literature on global peace and disarmament.<sup>5</sup> But the key role of Japanese non-state actors has not been taken as seriously in scholarly research as they should be due to their massive and decades-long efforts. Regardless, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists once featured Frances Crowe for her activism in peace movements against nuclear weapons and nuclear energy.<sup>6</sup> Magno emphasises the role of a Catholic group in the US called the Plowshares,<sup>7</sup> which uses biblical language as a strategy to emphasise the need to protect humanity from the threat of nuclear weapons. Feminist groups, too, have played a part in the anti-nuclear weapons movement. Branciforte posits how La Ragnatela Women's Peace Camp was established in 1983 to protest NATO's plan to deploy cruise missiles in Sicily, offering women a voice to discuss conflict and peace while propagating feminist discourses on nuclear disarmament through its global links with women's peace groups.<sup>8</sup> Ruff explains how the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was established in 2007, and to what extent it transformed the disarmament landscape into a transnational one when negotiating the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). With unprecedented support from governments

<sup>1</sup> Peter Buijs, “How Physicians Influenced Dutch Nuclear Weapon Policies: A Civil Society Case Study,” *International Relations Journal*, Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University 14, no. 4 (2021): 476, accessed April 14, 2022, <https://irjournal.spbu.ru/article/view/13029/8964>.

<sup>2</sup> Daphne Josselin and William Wallace, “Non-State actors in World Politics: A Framework,” in *Non-State Actors in World Politics*, ed. Daphne Josselin and William Wallace (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 3-4.

<sup>3</sup> Japanese words lack plurals in the English sense.

<sup>4</sup> “Pacific Island Used in Nuke Tests Urges People to Remember History,” September 7, 2020, *Kyodo News*, accessed April 25, 2022, <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/09/a869a4c7bb25-pacific-island-used-in-nuke-tests-urges-people-to-remember-history.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Greta Jones, “The Mushroom-Shaped Cloud: British Scientists' Opposition to Nuclear Weapons Policy, 1945–57,” *Annals of Science* 43, no. 1 (1986): 1-26; Jacob Nebel, “The Nuclear Disarmament Movement: Politics, Potential, and Strategy,” *Journal of Peace Education* 9, no. 3 (2012): 225-47; Christoph Laucht and Martin Johnes, “Resist and Survive: Welsh Protests and the British Nuclear State in the 1980s,” *Contemporary British History* 33, no. 2 (2019): 226-45; Rebecca Davis Gibbons, “The Humanitarian Turn in Nuclear Disarmament and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons,” *The Nonproliferation Review* 25, no. 1-2 (2018): 11-36.

<sup>6</sup> “Frances Crowe, 95-Year-Old Antinuclear Activist,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 70, no. 6 (2014): 1-9, doi: 10.1177/0096340214555076.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Magno, “The Plowshares Anti-Nuclear Movement at 35: A Next Generation?,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 72, no. 2 (2016): 85-8.

<sup>8</sup> Laura Branciforte, “The Women's Peace Camp at Comiso, 1983: Transnational Feminism and the Anti-Nuclear Movement,” *Women's History Review* 31 no. 2 (2022): 316-43.

and international civil societies, ICAN promoted a humanitarian context for the elimination of nuclear weapons.<sup>9</sup>

While western activists and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been mentioned, the literature on their Japanese counterparts is scarce. Tomonaga Masao,<sup>10</sup> a medical doctor and *hibakusha* from Nagasaki, has been vocal and active in scholarly literature. As part of the Eminent Persons Group established by then foreign minister Kishida Fumio, Tomonaga published an article on the group's recommendations to the Japanese government to promote bridge-building measures between states that support TPNW and those that oppose it.<sup>11</sup> After the TPNW's entry into force in January 2021, a greater divide between nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states emerged. Consequently, Tomonaga has stated that civil society must not rely on *hibakusha* activism alone.<sup>12</sup> Undeniably, Japan's anti-nuclear activism, which is implicitly connected to the role of *hibakusha*, is robust due to the city-to-city diplomacy supported by the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as global ambassadors for nuclear abolition.<sup>13</sup> However, the Mayors for Peace campaign launched in 1983 by the two mayors, which has linkages with over 8000 cities, has scarcely been acknowledged by the international community. Miyazaki insists that the TPNW's entry into force would not have been possible without the collaboration of the mayors and *hibakusha* with the larger transnational civil society network.<sup>14</sup>

While making the point that current academic literature underestimates the role of Japanese non-state actors' contributions to the anti-nuclear weapons movement, this paper also focuses on the roles played by the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organization (Hidankyo) and the Japan Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (JALANA) in international efforts for the World Court Project (WCP) in the 1990s, as well as the Humanitarian Initiative in the 2010s, as these are preludes to the TPNW. Interviews with our key informants, which include *hibakusha*, representatives from Japanese organisations, and experts on anti-nuclear weapons issues, provide first-hand information and insights, highlighting the eyewitness testimonies of survivors as particularly crucial to the discourse.<sup>15</sup>

Compared to its peers worldwide, the Japanese anti-nuclear movement has a unique characteristic – it regards helping *hibakusha* as a main objective.<sup>16</sup> Collectively, Japanese organisations and *hibakusha* play a central role in the movement's humanitarian framing. While their contributions have been generally acknowledged by insiders – i.e., prominent persons and international organisations – they receive far less recognition than they deserve<sup>17</sup> because most of their contributions occur behind the scenes. More often than not, the success of international nuclear abolition is attributed to other international actors, particularly ICAN,

<sup>9</sup> Tilman Ruff, "Negotiating the UN treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Role of ICAN," *Global Change, Peace & Security* 30 no. 2 (2018): 233–41.

<sup>10</sup> Surnames are listed first, in line with an announcement by the Japanese government in 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Tomonaga Masao, "Can Japan Be A Bridge-BUILDER Between Deterrence-Dependent States and Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty Proponents?," *Medicine, Conflict and Survival* 34 no. 4 (2018): 289–94.

<sup>12</sup> Tomonaga Masao, "Voices of Nagasaki after 75 Years," *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament* 4 no. sup1 (2021): 276–83.

<sup>13</sup> Miyazaki Hirokazu, "Hiroshima and Nagasaki as Models of City Diplomacy," *Sustain Sci* 16 (2021): 1215–228.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 1218.

<sup>15</sup> Glenn D. Hook, "Evolution of The Anti-Nuclear Discourse in Japan," *Current Research on Peace and Violence* 10, no. 1 (1987): 32.

<sup>16</sup> Makiko Takemoto, "Nuclear Politics, Past and Present: Comparison of German and Japanese Anti-nuclear Peace Movements," *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 3, no. 1 (2015): 91.

<sup>17</sup> Akiko Naono, "Ban the Bomb! Redress the Damage!: The History of the Contentious Politics of Atomic Bomb Sufferers in Japan," *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 6, no. 2 (2018): 223–24.

which won the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize following the adoption of the TPNW.<sup>18</sup>

It is prudent to begin delving into our topic by first examining the way in which the nuclear abolition social movement's objective is framed. Framing calls attention to a single issue, underscores the importance of a collective narrative, and transforms negative events into feelings of grievance or injustice.<sup>19</sup> When framing accentuates a common interpretation (i.e., a collective action frame),<sup>20</sup> it can persuade relevant stakeholders to take action.<sup>21</sup> A common interpretation or narrative that legitimizes the activities of social movement organizations is known as a collective action frame. A collective action frame's main objective is to change the framing of an issue such that the source of the problem is identified.<sup>22</sup> This framework helps us understand the extent to which Japanese non-state actors have contextualised the nuclear abolition movement through a humanitarian perspective. The mobilisation of eyewitness testimonies from survivors and victims lends credence to a distinct narrative underscoring the humanitarian consequences, thereby providing justification for a ban on nuclear weapons. In identifying the source of the problem as the need to ban nuclear weapons due to their humanitarian consequences, the movement is put in the opposite position of the Japanese government, which is against TPNW.

## 2. From the 1950s Onward: Eyewitness Testimonies

Abolition efforts have been built on the basis of nuclear weapons' catastrophic humanitarian consequences, attested by eyewitness testimonies.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, the Japanese government had only protested once<sup>24</sup> – a protest was sent through the Swiss government on 10 August 1945, claiming that the then-new bombs were against international laws regulating hostilities in armed conflict.<sup>25</sup> After Japan surrendered on 15 August 1945, the US-led occupation eventually resulted in close bilateral security relations starting in 1951,<sup>26</sup> which made it impossible for Japan to support the TPNW despite calling for a world without nuclear weapons. It is against this backdrop that Japanese non-state actors have raised the issue instead, urging policymakers to take action. Since 1957, one year after Hidankyo's formation, *hibakusha* have consistently warned that nuclear weapons and mankind cannot coexist,<sup>27</sup> stressing their catastrophic humanitarian consequences and immorality.

Hidankyo's credibility<sup>28</sup> as the moral authority in framing the humanitarian discourse was established immediately – it remains the nationwide *hibakusha* umbrella group, and all its officials and members are *hibakusha*. Hidankyo was formed when there was overwhelming

<sup>18</sup> "Anti-Nuclear Campaign ICAN Says Nobel Peace Prize A 'Great Honor,'" *Reuters*, October 6, 2017, para. 1, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nobel-prize-peace-ican-idUSKBN1CB128>.

<sup>19</sup> David A. Snow, Rens Vliegthart, and Pauline Ketelaars, "The Framing Perspective on Social Movements: Its Conceptual Roots and Architecture," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, ed. David A. Snow, S. A. Soule, H. Kriesi, and H. J. McCammon, 2nd ed., (New Jersey: Wiley Blackwell, 2019), 396.

<sup>20</sup> Robert D. Benford, and David A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 613.

<sup>21</sup> Silpa Sathesh and Robert D. Benford, "Framing and Social Movements," in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology* Vol. 2, ed. by George Ritzer and Chris Rojek (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2020), 1-5.

<sup>22</sup> Benford and Snow, "Framing," 616.

<sup>23</sup> Kurosaki Miyako, "A 75-year Rally against Nuclear Weapons Brings the World Closer to Justice," *All Things Nuclear*, January 15, 2021, para.1, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://allthingsnuclear.org/guest-commentary/a-75-year-rally-against-nuclear-weapons-brings-the-world-closer-to-justice/>.

<sup>24</sup> Sasaki Takeya, JALANA's President, interviewed by the author, Hiroshima, October 23, 2018.

<sup>25</sup> Arthur Booth, "Atomic bombs and human beings," *International Social Science Journal* 30, no. 2 (1978): 385. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000028972>.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 379 and 386.

<sup>27</sup> "Hiroshima Peace Activist Vows to Continue Nuke Ban Campaign after UN Treaty Adoption," *The Mainichi*, July 10, 2017, para.3, accessed December 8, 2021, <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20170710/p2a/00m/0na/014000c>.

<sup>28</sup> Benford and Snow, "Framing," 621.

public support for *hibakusha* and the nationwide “ban-the-bomb movement”<sup>29</sup> following a nuclear fallout incident in 1954 involving a Japanese tuna fishing boat ironically named *Daigo Fukuryu-maru*, which literally means, Lucky Dragon No. 5. Prior to this, *hibakusha* were marginalised<sup>30</sup> for over a decade, particularly during the US-led occupation, during which authorities censored all relevant reports related to atomic bombs.<sup>31</sup> But the Lucky Dragon Incident led to the 1955 First World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs, finally providing a platform for *hibakusha* to speak out,<sup>32</sup> share their experiences, and call for nuclear abolition.<sup>33</sup> Other *hibakusha* were motivated to follow suit,<sup>34</sup> thus the conference was a clear indication that the newly-minted domestic anti-nuclear weapons movement had a global aim,<sup>35</sup> which explains its decades-long efforts contributing to the international movement. From the beginning, *hibakusha* have framed their messages in terms of “severity”, “urgency”, “efficacy”, and “propriety” (the four common frames in the anti-nuclear weapons movement) to encourage action with one voice,<sup>36</sup> stressing the necessity of collective change.

Fujimori Toshiki, Hidankyo’s assistant secretary-general,<sup>37</sup> explains that *hibakusha* strive to highlight the disastrous short- and long-term impacts of nuclear weapons to raise global awareness of their humanitarian consequences.<sup>38</sup> From 1957–78, 12 overseas visits were arranged by Hidankyo, most of which involved one *hibakusha* being sent out per visit. Since 1980, the organisation has arranged overseas trips for *hibakusha* annually (usually a few such trips to different events).<sup>39</sup> In total, 685 *hibakusha* participated in 175 overseas visits arranged from 1957–2019.<sup>40</sup> Fujimori, being a *hibakusha* himself, frequently travelled to bear testimonies against nuclear weapons. However, since early 2020, these overseas visits have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In short, Hidankyo aims to succeed by influencing international political and legal bodies. Hence, the five nuclear powers (China, France, the US, Russia and the UK) under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the UN have been targeted specifically. Hidankyo has maintained regular engagements with the UN since its first trip there in 1974.<sup>41</sup> As early as 1975, it submitted a petition to the UN calling for an international treaty to ban nuclear weapons completely.<sup>42</sup> At the first UN Special Session on Disarmament in 1978, 41 *hibakusha* from Hidankyo were among the 500-strong Japanese delegation<sup>43</sup> – the biggest overseas delegation present – and submitted about 19 million signatures calling

<sup>29</sup> Naono, “Ban,” 224 and 226.

<sup>30</sup> Tachibana Seiitsu, “The Quest for a Peace Culture: The A-Bomb Survivors’ Long Struggle and the New Movement for Redressing Foreign Victims of Japan’s War,” *Diplomatic History* 19, no. 2 (1995): 336.

<sup>31</sup> Hook, “Evolution,” 36.

<sup>32</sup> Tachibana, “The Quest,” 336.

<sup>33</sup> Peter J. Kuznick, “Nagasaki and the *Hibakusha* Experience of Sumiteru Taniguchi: The Painful Struggles and Ultimate Triumphs of Nagasaki *Hibakusha*,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal - Japan Focus* 18, issue 16, no. 1 (2020): 8, accessed April 17, 2022, <https://apjif.org/-Peter-J--Kuznick/5447/article.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>35</sup> Hook, “Evolution,” 37.

<sup>36</sup> Benford and Snow, “Framing,” 617.

<sup>37</sup> Designations of key informants were accurate at the time of interviews.

<sup>38</sup> Fujimori Toshiki, email message to the author, September 26, 2017.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Hidankyo, “Chronology of *Hidankyo*’s International Activities,” para.25, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://www.ne.jp/asahi/hidankyo/nihon/english/about/about2-01.html>.

<sup>41</sup> Hidankyo, “History,” para.9, 18–19.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, para.8.

<sup>43</sup> Naono, “Ban,” 239.

for nuclear abolition.<sup>44</sup> Hidankyo has persistently submitted petitions and signatures to the UN since, and it also speaks at UN events, participates in its NGOs' meetings, organises exhibitions, and participates in NPT Review Conferences to consistently remind states of the threat of nuclear weapons.<sup>45</sup> Millions of signatures have been collected by Hidankyo over the years, demonstrating not only the moral authority of *hibakusha* but also their persistence in maintaining the anti-nuclear weapons sentiment among the general public.

In its efforts to influence the five nuclear powers, Hidankyo sent delegations to each of them in 1985 in conjunction with the 40th anniversary of the atomic bombings, petitioning for nuclear abolition.<sup>46</sup> To support allies, Hidankyo works closely with other organisations such as ICAN,<sup>47</sup> Peace Boat, and Soka Gakkai International,<sup>48</sup> often accepting requests from organisers of anti-nuclear weapons events worldwide to be either present or serve as guest speakers. Additionally, Hidankyo was involved in a series of demonstrations in several European countries in the 1980s, which gathered 100,000 people to protest US and Soviet missile deployments.<sup>49</sup>

The eyewitness testimonies given by *hibakusha* concerning the widespread deaths, injuries, and long-term physical and psychological impacts caused by the atomic bombings have formed the basis of the humanitarian framing of nuclear weapons.<sup>50</sup> Tomonaga has highlighted their extreme effects – e.g., heat rays and radiation. Eyewitness testimonies tell how scorching heat burnt practically everything and everyone, to the extent that rivers were filled with bodies because victims had jumped in to escape the heat or simply to drink.<sup>51</sup> In addition to their physical injuries, *hibakusha* suffer lifelong sickness, risk developing illnesses as a result of radioactive exposure, and live with the bombings' psychological impact (e.g., survivor's guilt).<sup>52</sup> The invisible scars are equally as painful as the physical ones.

Eyewitness testimonies thus form a unique trait of Japanese contributions by providing a human face to the discourse. Yanagawa Yoshiko, who survived Hiroshima at 16, testified about seeing “a living hell that went beyond description” after crawling out from the ruins of her school building.<sup>53</sup> She also shared regret about simply fleeing for her life, ignoring injured people calling for help, and decided to speak publicly about her experience so that the tragedy would not be repeated.<sup>54</sup> These testimonies carry a high degree of moral authority and are considered the most effective way to raise awareness about the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons. It would not be an over-exaggeration to say that *hibakusha* are the soul

<sup>44</sup> Lawrence S. Wittner, “The Forgotten Years of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1975-78,” *Journal of Peace Research* 40, no. 4 (2003): 448.

<sup>45</sup> Jeff Kingston, “Atomic Bomb Survivors Nominated for Nobel Prize,” *The Japan Times*, August 1, 2015, para.5, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2015/08/01/commentary/atomic-bomb-survivors-nominated-nobel-prize/#.Xh2HFMj7SyI>.

<sup>46</sup> Hidankyo, “History,” para.13.

<sup>47</sup> “No Move *Hibakusha*,” *Pressenza New York*, March 27, 2017, para.1, accessed April 17, 2022, <https://www.pressenza.com/2017/03/no-more-hibakusha/>.

<sup>48</sup> “Peace Boat In New York: Advocating for A World Free Of Nuclear Weapons At The Un And Beyond,” *Peace Boat US*, October 29, 2019, para.2, accessed April 17, 2022, <https://www.peaceboat-us.org/peace-boat-in-new-york-advocating-for-a-world-free-of-nuclear-weapons-at-the-un-and-beyond/>.

<sup>49</sup> Hidankyo, “History,” para.12.

<sup>50</sup> Tomonaga Masao, interviewed by the author, Nagasaki, October 18, 2018.

<sup>51</sup> Egashira Chiyoko, “From Memories of Darkness and Hardship: Up Until the Day Shiroyama Primary School was Closed,” in *The Light of Morning: Memoirs of the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Survivors*, trans. Brian Burke-Gaffney (Nagasaki: Nagasaki National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims, 2005), 28.

<sup>52</sup> Egashira, “From Memories,” 27.

<sup>53</sup> Yanagawa Yoshiko, “Yoshiko Yanagawa (Female),” *Memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Messages from Hibakusha*, 2005, para.1, accessed December 9, 2021, <http://www.asahi.com/hibakusha/english/hiroshima/h00-00007e.html>.

<sup>54</sup> Yanagawa, “Yoshiko,” para.3.

of the international movement, having resolutely testified for decades, thus maintaining the momentum of the anti-nuclear weapons movement.<sup>55</sup>

*Hibakushas'* indispensable contributions are acknowledged by experts and prominent figures in the field. Professor Kurosawa Mitsuru of Osaka Jogakuin University points out that *hibakusha* efforts were the precedent for the humanitarian approach against nuclear weapons, which began in the 2010s.<sup>56</sup> In 2015, the then UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, commended their 70-year advocacy and challenged those who doubted the need for nuclear abolition to listen to *hibakushas'* stories.<sup>57</sup> Iwasaki Makoto, executive director of the Hiroshima Peace Media Center, points out that *hibakusha* have inspired the international campaign,<sup>58</sup> a viewpoint shared by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) president, Peter Maurer, who has stated that the world maintains a hope of nuclear abolition largely due to survivor contributions.<sup>59</sup> Professor Hirose Satoshi, vice-director of the Research Center for Nuclear Weapons Abolition (RECNA), also confirms that the most significant contributions by non-state actors leading to the TPNW are *hibakushas'* testimonies.<sup>60</sup> This was especially so in Hidankyo's early phases, when most people, including the Japanese, were still largely unaware of the scale of the atomic bombings due to US censorship. *Hibakusha* do not call for revenge or hatred, but only a nuclear-weapons-free world, thus demonstrating a humanitarian angle and message.<sup>61</sup> According to Akiba Tadatoshi, Hiroshima's mayor from 1999–2011, calling for world peace is one of *hibakushas'* three extraordinary contributions, in addition to their strong resolution to live on and their contribution to the prevention of a third use of nuclear weapons.<sup>62</sup>

Among the prominent *hibakusha* in Japan and at the international level was Taniguchi Sumiteru from Nagasaki. Although he survived the atomic bombing at 16 and spent nearly two years in a hospital, Taniguchi suffered from radiation-related illness and pain daily until his passing at the age of 88 in August 2017.<sup>63</sup> Yet, he still joined anti-nuclear weapons activities starting as early as the 1950s, when they first emerged in Japan, becoming a core Hidankyo leader. Often taking the lead in these activities, Taniguchi participated in 396 protests against nuclear weapons and testing.<sup>64</sup> He gained international fame as an atomic bomb survivor in 1970, when a photograph of him, taken in September 1945 and showing his severely burnt back, was publicly released from the US archives.<sup>65</sup> Sergeant Joe O'Donnell, the young US Marine who took the photograph, was affected by Taniguchi's suffering, declaring that he

<sup>55</sup> Mark Clapson, "Commemoration and Controversy: Remembering Air Raids and Their Victims Since 1945," in *The Blitz Companion: Aerial Warfare, Civilians and the City since 1911*, ed. Mark Clapson (London: University of Westminster Press, 2019), 209.

<sup>56</sup> Kurosawa Mitsuru, interviewed by the author, Osaka, October 24, 2018.

<sup>57</sup> Ban Ki-moon, "70th Anniversary of the Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki," August 6, 2015, para.3-4, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/articles/2015-08-06/70th-anniversary-bombings-hiroshima-and-nagasaki>.

<sup>58</sup> Iwasaki Makoto, interviewed by the author, Hiroshima, October 23, 2018.

<sup>59</sup> Magnus Lovold, "Courage, Responsibility and the Path towards A World without Nuclear Weapons: A Message to Youth," August 21, 2019, para.5, accessed April 16, 2022, <https://blogs.icrc.org/law-and-policy/2019/08/21/courage-responsibility-path-towards-world-without-nuclear-weapons/>.

<sup>60</sup> Hirose Satoshi, interviewed by the author, Nagasaki, October 19, 2018.

<sup>61</sup> Kingston, "Atomic," para.9.

<sup>62</sup> Akiba Tadatoshi, "Postscript: The Survivors," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 61, no. 4 (2005): 63.

<sup>63</sup> Motoko Rich, "Sumiteru Taniguchi, 88, Who Survived Nagasaki to Become Activist, Dies," *New York Times*, August 31, 2017, para.1-2, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/31/world/asia/taniguchi-nagasaki-atomic-bomb.html>.

<sup>64</sup> Rich, "Sumiteru," para.19.

<sup>65</sup> Tanaka Miya, "Hibakusha Memoir 'The Atomic Bomb on My Back' to be Published in English," *The Japan Times*, July 23, 2020, para.13-14, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/07/23/national/history/hibakusha-memoir-english/>.

“would not take other pictures of burned victims unless ordered to do so”.<sup>66</sup> Taniguchi often used this photograph to directly show his audience the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.<sup>67</sup> To contribute to policy and legal changes, he actively joined key international events, including the NPT Review Conferences in 2005, 2010,<sup>68</sup> and 2015,<sup>69</sup> speaking there to urge governments and civil society to work towards their total elimination. Taniguchi’s lifetime devotion made him a frontrunner for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015.<sup>70</sup> He still travelled to Malaysia to speak at the “Coalition of Younger Generation Say ‘NO TO WAR’” symposium in March 2016,<sup>71</sup> despite having been admitted to the hospital for two weeks in the previous month<sup>72</sup> – it was his last overseas trip before succumbing to cancer in 2017.<sup>73</sup>

Watanabe Rika, the international coordinator of Peace Boat’s *Hibakusha* Project, attests that such personal stories are the strongest messages of the movement.<sup>74</sup> The testimonies of *hibakusha* often touch the hearts of listeners, who readily agree because they only want to ensure that no one else will suffer similarly. Their testimonies also detail the long-term physical and mental effects, forcing listeners to consider the impact of more powerful nuclear weapons today. Such narratives have motivated individuals such as Suzuki Keina<sup>75</sup> of the International Signature Campaign in Support of the Appeal of the *Hibakusha* for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (or *Hibakusha* Appeal),<sup>76</sup> who stated that his life changed after meeting *hibakusha*, thus demonstrating the effectiveness of eyewitness testimony.<sup>77</sup>

### 3. 1990s: Contributing to the World Court Project

The advisory opinion on the threat or use of nuclear weapons issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1996, a result of the WCP, was a significant milestone, and one in which Japanese non-state actors played a key role. The WCP was a bold plan initiated in 1992 by three international NGOs – the International Peace Bureau, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), and International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA).<sup>78</sup> Specifically, the ICJ was asked whether or not the threat or the use of nuclear weapons was permitted under international law. As the WCP received crucial contributions from the Japanese anti-nuclear weapons movement (particularly JALANA and Hidankyo), it continued to receive support from international initiatives and grow tremendously through such contributions. This helped ensure the WCP’s success, which in

<sup>66</sup> Susan Southard, *Nagasaki: Life After Nuclear War* (New York: Penguin Books, 2016), 125.

<sup>67</sup> Southard, *Nagasaki*, 285.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

<sup>69</sup> Akitoshi Nakamura, “Photo Gallery: Ground Zero Nagasaki.” *International Review of the Red Cross* 97, no. 899 (2015): 551.

<sup>70</sup> Obata, “*Hibakusha*,” para.4.

<sup>71</sup> Salleh Buang, “A Difficult, But Worthy Cause,” *New Straits Times*, March 3, 2016, para.15–16, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.nst.com.my/news/2016/03/130782/difficult-worthy-cause>

<sup>72</sup> Obata Eisuke, “*Hibakusha*: Paving the Way Toward the Abolishment of Nuclear Weapons,” *The Mainichi*, May 11, 2016, para.19, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://Mainichi.jp/english/articles/20160511/p2a/00m/0na/010000c>.

<sup>73</sup> Rich, “Sumiteru,” para.11.

<sup>74</sup> Watanabe Rika, interviewed by the author, Tokyo, September 6, 2017.

<sup>75</sup> “A-Bomb Survivor Toshiki Fujimori Urges Nuclear Haves and Have-Nots to Join Hands on Abolition,” *The Japan Times*, December 9, 2019, para.6, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/10/11/national/atomic-bomb-toshiki-fujimori-nuclear-haves-have-nots/>.

<sup>76</sup> *Asahi Shimbun*, “*Hibakusha* Group Awarded Prize for Work to Ban Nuclear Weapons,” March 18, 2021, para.3, accessed December 9, 2021, <http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14279688>.

<sup>77</sup> Kate Dewes, “Hiroshima and the World: Inspired by *Hibakusha*,” *Hiroshima Peace Media Center*, February 23, 2009, para.2, accessed April 1, 2022, <http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=19698>.

<sup>78</sup> Mike Moore, “World Court Says Mostly No to Nuclear Weapons,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 52, no. 5 (1996): 40.



turn resulted in the 1996 ICJ advisory opinion on the legal status of nuclear weapons.<sup>79</sup>

The involvement of Japanese lawyers began in 1989 when a group attended IALANA's assembly in The Hague. Determined to work towards nuclear abolition, they formed the Kanto Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms in August 1993, which later evolved into JALANA in August 1994, serving as IALANA's local affiliate in supporting the WCP. Sasaki Takeya, its president, explains that the founding assembly in Hiroshima was attended by 20 lawyers and scholars, including himself as moderator.<sup>80</sup> JALANA grew to include 300 lawyers as members.<sup>81</sup>

Since the ICJ only accepts cases or requests from governments or certain UN bodies, WCP campaigners first tried to convince the World Health Organization (WHO) and like-minded governments to ask for an advisory opinion.<sup>82</sup> These actors strongly supported their campaign, so two requests were submitted to the ICJ: (1) a 1993 WHO resolution inquiring whether the use of nuclear weapons violated international law in general, and the WHO constitution specifically, in terms of such weapons' impact on health and the environment; and (2) a 1994 UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution asking if "the threat or use of nuclear weapons in any circumstance [is] permitted under international law".<sup>83</sup>

In parallel, supporters of the WCP worldwide, including Japanese organisations, launched extensive public campaigns and attained remarkable achievements, including collecting millions of signed Declarations of Public Conscience, 11,000 signatures from legal fraternities, documents proving 50 years' worth of "citizens' opposition to nuclear weapons", and endorsements by more than 700 citizen groups<sup>84</sup> – all even before the 1995 oral hearings began. Sasaki highlights how the newly formed JALANA swung into action immediately,<sup>85</sup> working closely with *hibakusha* and other members of civil society to collect signatures for the Declarations of Public Conscience. These declarations were based on the Martens Clause from the preamble of the 1899 Hague Convention (II) and the 1907 Hague Convention, which states how "the dictates of the public conscience" are required for situations not covered by existing rules of international humanitarian law (IHL).<sup>86</sup> JALANA and its partner organisations collected and shipped<sup>87</sup> over three million signatures from Japan that formed the majority of the four million signatures collected worldwide,<sup>88</sup> thus illustrating strong domestic support and the enormous efforts put into the signature drives in Japan. Furthermore, JALANA sent related books and audiovisual material, including photographs and videos, to the ICJ library and judges to highlight the disastrous humanitarian consequences.<sup>89</sup> Such concrete evidence evoked public conscience regarding the weapons' inhumanity and illegality.

Crucially, JALANA worked with IALANA to find ways for the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to testify at the ICJ, which could only accept statements from governments or international organisations. But the US-aligned Japanese government was obviously not

<sup>79</sup> Dewes, "Hiroshima," para.7–8.

<sup>80</sup> Sasaki, interview.

<sup>81</sup> Okubo Kenichi (JALANA secretary-general), interviewed by the author, Hiroshima, October 23, 2018.

<sup>82</sup> Moore, "World," 40.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* 40.

<sup>84</sup> Dewes, "Hiroshima," para.7–8.

<sup>85</sup> Sasaki, interview.

<sup>86</sup> Rupert Ticehurst, "The Martens Clause and the Laws of Armed Conflict," *International Review of the Red Cross* 37, no. 317 (1997): 125 and 128.

<sup>87</sup> Sasaki, interview.

<sup>88</sup> Dewes, "Hiroshima," para.8.

<sup>89</sup> Sasaki, interview.

willing to submit statements from the two mayors. Hence, in 1995, JALANA and IALANA found a willing partner in Nauru, which was ready to apply the testimony of Hiroshima's mayor to the ICJ. A lawyer representing Nauru's government contacted Sasaki, who was heavily involved in the WCP and believed that the mayor of Hiroshima would go to the ICJ if Nauru applied for a testimony.<sup>90</sup> In a strategic move, JALANA informed the Japanese government of Nauru's plan. In mid-September, an appointment between JALANA and the Japanese foreign ministry was cancelled that very day by the ministry, which applied for testimonies from the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the ICJ instead.<sup>91</sup> Nauru's intentions likely left the Japanese government with no other choice – Japan would have been in an even more awkward position internationally if the Hiroshima mayor were to testify due to Nauru's intervention.<sup>92</sup>

The Japanese government appeared to have (superficially) changed its stance by allowing the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to testify due to strong domestic public pressure.<sup>93</sup> It even unsuccessfully pressured both mayors in a desperate move to make them speak in line with the government's stance. But the mayors were determined to speak out for the people and were clear about their goals of abolishing nuclear weapons.<sup>94</sup> At the oral hearings, the mayors made powerful statements and presented photographs showing the consequences of the atomic bombings. Also present were more than 50 *hibakusha* supporting the WCP.<sup>95</sup> While most people may not know what went on behind the scenes, JALANA was delighted that it had contributed to and made possible the strong testimonies of the two mayors at the ICJ.<sup>96</sup>

JALANA's hard work, and that of other organisations worldwide, resulted in overwhelming global backing for the WCP, seen in the huge number of documents sent to the ICJ. On 8 July 1996, the ICJ ruled on both requests – it was unable to give an advisory opinion to the WHO request because the question involved the use of force and (dis)armament, i.e., it was beyond the WHO's public health scope.<sup>97</sup> However, with the second request, the ICJ concluded that “the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law”, but was unable to decide if their threat or use was lawful or otherwise when a country's existence was threatened.<sup>98</sup> Nonetheless, its decisions were an unprecedented achievement for all actors working towards the WCP, including Japanese non-state actors.

It was a historic success in that the ICJ accepted statements and evidence from non-state actors including individuals, *hibakusha*, and victims of nuclear tests.<sup>99</sup> It was also the only time thus far that the ICJ deliberated on the legal status of nuclear weapons. While the Japanese movement contributed significantly to the WCP, this movement also grew tremendously in strength through its involvement in the WCP. Thus, strong grounds were established for the anti-nuclear weapons movement and for like-minded governments to pursue a ban treaty.

<sup>90</sup> Sasaki, interview.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Masami Nishimoto, “My Life: Interview with Former Hiroshima Mayor Takashi Hiraoka, Part 15,” *Hiroshima Peace Media Center*, November 5, 2009, para.5, accessed April 19, 2022, <http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=23439>.

<sup>93</sup> Dewes, “Hiroshima,” para.8.

<sup>94</sup> Nishimoto, “My,” para.6–8.

<sup>95</sup> Dewes, “Hiroshima,” para.8.

<sup>96</sup> Sasaki, interview.

<sup>97</sup> International Court of Justice, “Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 1996,” 1996: 228, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/95/095-19960708-ADV-01-00-EN.pdf>.

<sup>98</sup> ICJ, “Legality,” 266.

<sup>99</sup> Dewes, “Hiroshima,” para.7.

#### 4. 2010s: Strengthening the Humanitarian Initiative

The decades-long lack of progress on disarmament resulted in renewed efforts from anti-nuclear weapons activists and state governments in the 2010s to divert the discourse from traditional security to the humanitarian consequences instead.<sup>100</sup> Later known as the “Humanitarian Initiative”, the goal was to achieve a ban treaty from a humanitarian perspective, with or without the participation of nuclear powers, by building upon the solid ground established by *hibakusha* over previous decades. Particularly, this reframing of nuclear weapons was inspired by successful campaigns banning landmines in 1997 and cluster munitions in 2008 that focused on the humanitarian consequences of the weapons with the aim of de-legitimising them.<sup>101</sup> The momentum was further encouraged by positive developments in 2009, particularly Barack Obama’s 5 April speech in Prague that called for a nuclear-weapons-free world.<sup>102</sup> In September 2009, the UN Security Council Summit endorsed a resolution on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation for the first time.<sup>103</sup> In April 2010, the ICRC strongly urged governments to focus on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons and their legality under IHL, questioning their compatibility with the rules of war<sup>104</sup> and amplifying the humanitarian reframing.<sup>105</sup> The world’s only three-time Nobel Peace Prize recipient,<sup>106</sup> the ICRC, provided a powerful moral voice owing to its first-hand experience together with the Japanese Red Cross (JRC) in providing relief to victims of the atomic bombings. Furthermore, it is effectively the “guardian” of IHL, which limits suffering in armed conflict due to its unique mandate stemming from the Geneva Conventions.<sup>107</sup> The ICRC’s strong stance also represented that of the entire Red Cross and Red Crescent (RCRC) movement worldwide. Oyama Hiroto, deputy director of the Office of the President of the JRC, confirms that the RCRC was subsequently approached and consulted by more states and civil society groups on the issue.<sup>108</sup> After all, not only did the movement play a significant role in promoting IHL, but JRC hospitals have been treating *hibakusha* since 1945. In parallel, the ICAN mounted intensive public campaigns against nuclear weapons by working closely with *hibakusha* and survivors of nuclear weapons tests to provide powerful eyewitness testimonies.<sup>109</sup> Several prominent organisations in the Japanese movement were also part of the ICAN network, including Mayors for Peace (ICAN’s first international partner in 2006, one year before its official launch).<sup>110</sup> Another Japanese organisation, Peace Boat, is a part of ICAN’s International Steering Group and coordinates ICAN’s campaigns in Japan.<sup>111</sup>

The humanitarian reframing of nuclear weapons stemmed from non-state actors and

<sup>100</sup> Alexander Kmentt, “The Development of the International Initiative on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons and Its Effect on the Nuclear Weapons Debate,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 97, 899 (2015): 68.

<sup>101</sup> John Borrie, “Humanitarian Reframing of Nuclear Weapons and the Logic of a Ban,” *International Affairs* 90, no. 3 (2014): 626.

<sup>102</sup> Kmentt, “The Development,” 684.

<sup>103</sup> Julian Borger, “Obama Hails Historic Resolution to Rid World of Nuclear Weapons,” *The Guardian*, September 24, 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/sep/24/nuclear-weapons-un-security-council>.

<sup>104</sup> Kmentt, “The,” 682–84.

<sup>105</sup> Borrie, “Humanitarian,” 640.

<sup>106</sup> David P. Forsythe, *The Humanitarians: The International Committee of the Red Cross* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2 and 292.

<sup>107</sup> Kmentt, “The Development,” 684.

<sup>108</sup> Oyama Hiroto, “How the Red Cross Has Been Playing Its Role in a Humanitarian Approach towards the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons,” *Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation* 71 (2014), para.4, accessed April 19, 2022, <http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/hpcf/heiwabunka/pce071/English/14E.html>.

<sup>109</sup> Dimity Hawkins, Dave Sweeney, and Tilman Ruff, “ICAN’s Origins - From Little things, Big Things Grow...,” *International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons*, October 2019, para.20, accessed December 9, 2021, [https://www.icanw.org/ican\\_origins](https://www.icanw.org/ican_origins).

<sup>110</sup> Hawkins, Sweeney, and Ruff, “ICAN’s Origins,” para.27.

<sup>111</sup> Kawasaki Akira, email message to author, November 20, 2018.

influenced like-minded state governments, many of which were already supportive of earlier campaigns against landmines and cluster munitions.<sup>112</sup> When international momentum pushed for the organisation of three conferences in 2013–14 (in Oslo, Norway; Nayarit, Mexico; and Vienna, Austria, respectively) focusing on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons, *hibakusha* played a crucial role in the discourse.<sup>113</sup> Hidankyo prominently participated in all three of the conferences by sending *hibakusha* to testify. Victims of nuclear tests also spoke to strengthen the argument.<sup>114</sup> The voices of survivors, shut out from security-based nuclear discourse, were instead at the centre of the humanitarian discourse.<sup>115</sup> Ultimately, the three conferences gave legitimacy to *hibakusha* and victims of nuclear tests for their unilateral message of banning nuclear weapons due to the humanitarian consequences.

At the Oslo conference, Tomonaga Masao shared Nagasaki University's research done in 1995 on the psychological states of *hibakusha* – they still suffered post-traumatic stress disorder even after 50 years, in addition to the negative impacts on their physical health, financial situations, and social relations.<sup>116</sup> Tanaka Terumi, Hidankyo's secretary-general, shared his personal experiences in the hope that the world could understand the catastrophic consequences.<sup>117</sup> In a media interview upon returning home, Tanaka asserted that these conferences were moving in the right direction by focusing on the weapons' inhumanity.<sup>118</sup> Meanwhile, JALANA, which had been working closely with *hibakusha* for decades, submitted its recommendations to the Oslo Conference to confirm the inhumanity of nuclear weapons.<sup>119</sup> The Nayarit conference strengthened the humanitarian perspective by allocating one whole session to testimonies of *hibakusha*, including that of a teenage girl who was affected by third-generation consequences.<sup>120</sup> At the Vienna conference, an 82-year-old Hiroshima *hibakusha* based in Canada, Setsuko Thurlow, made a moving speech urging the world to start negotiating a ban treaty. After surviving the bombing at 13 while most of her classmates perished, Thurlow has been speaking globally on the issue for decades.<sup>121</sup>

As rightly summarised by the chair of the Nayarit conference, the Humanitarian Initiative was at “a point of no return”, having received pledges from like-minded governments to proceed towards an international treaty.<sup>122</sup> The first conference had involved 127 states, which increased to 146 and 158 states at the next two conferences respectively,<sup>123</sup> clearly indicating increased support from states for such “reframing”.<sup>124</sup> Collectively, these conferences led to an unstoppable momentum. The contributions of *hibakusha* were affirmed by the ICRC when its president, Peter Maurer, stated in 2015 that *hibakushas'* testimonies pointed to all aspects

<sup>112</sup> Borrie, “Humanitarian,” 629 and 637.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 633.

<sup>114</sup> Kmentt, “The Development,” 697.

<sup>115</sup> Elizabeth Minor, “Changing the Discourse on Nuclear Weapons: The Humanitarian Initiative,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 97, no. 899 (2015): 717.

<sup>116</sup> “After the Atomic Bomb: *Hibakusha* Tell Their Stories,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 97, no. 899 (2015): 511.

<sup>117</sup> Fujimura Junpei, “Interview with Terumi Tanaka, Head of the Japan Confederation of A- and H-bomb Sufferers Organizations, On Nuclear Disarmament Conference in Oslo,” *Hiroshima Peace Media Center*, March 25, 2013, para.2, accessed April 19, 2022, <http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=20442>.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, para.5.

<sup>119</sup> Sasaki, interview.

<sup>120</sup> Rebecca Johnson, “Banning Nuclear Weapons: Point of No Return,” *Open Democracy*, February 19, 2014, para.6, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/banning-nuclear-weapons-point-of-no-return/>.

<sup>121</sup> Shervin Taheran, “Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons Conference in Vienna,” *Arms Control Now*, May 15, 2015, para.9–11, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.armscontrol.org/blog/2015-05-15/humanitarian-impact-nuclear-weapons-conference-vienna>.

<sup>122</sup> Johnson, “Banning,” para.2.

<sup>123</sup> Kmentt, “The Development,” 689, 692 and 696.

<sup>124</sup> Minor, “Changing,” 716.

of the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons, which was the focus of these conferences.<sup>125</sup> Significantly, Peter Buijs, chair of the Netherlands' IPPNW, described the Humanitarian Initiative as an "ICRC-inspired Human Impact of Nuclear Weapon's Approach, linked to *hibakusha*-experiences".<sup>126</sup> Likewise, the ICAN also acknowledged that it was humanitarian framing that led to the TPNW.<sup>127</sup>

## 5. Towards a Nuclear Ban Treaty

Despite opposition against the humanitarian reframing from nuclear powers and countries under the US nuclear umbrella,<sup>128</sup> the Humanitarian Initiative led to an unprecedented diplomatic process aiming to negotiate a nuclear ban treaty. It was then that Hidankyo spoke during the general debate on disarmament efforts of the First Committee of the UNGA in October 2016. Its deputy secretary-general, Fujimori Toshiki, handed over 564,240 signatures to the chair, Ambassador Sabri Boukadoum,<sup>129</sup> all collected through the aforementioned *Hibakusha* Appeal, the signature campaign calling for a treaty to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons.

At the same time, the Peace Boat strategically timed its voyage to reach New York in October 2016 to help build momentum ahead of a UNGA meeting that was expected to vote on whether nuclear weapons should be banned.<sup>130</sup> A series of activities were arranged for *hibakusha* arriving aboard the Peace Boat. Morikawa Takaaki from Hiroshima spoke on a panel discussion at the UN while Fukahori Joji from Nagasaki talked about his experiences with students at the UN International School.<sup>131</sup> Clifton Truman Daniel, the grandson of President Harry S. Truman, the US president who had ordered the use of atomic bombings, attended the events in New York as one of the supporters of *hibakusha* and the nuclear ban treaty.<sup>132</sup>

The ambivalent Japanese government finally made its stance clear on 27 October 2016, voting *against* a UNGA resolution to begin negotiations for the ban treaty in that coming March.<sup>133</sup> Japan voted similarly when the UNGA passed a resolution in December 2016 to organise a multilateral conference from 27–31 March 2017, and from 15 June–7 July to negotiate a ban treaty.<sup>134</sup> On 27 March, Japan appeared to clarify its position that it could not participate in the negotiations on the grounds that the absence of participation by nuclear-weapon-wielding states was unlikely to lead to the elimination of nuclear weapons.<sup>135</sup> Japan,

<sup>125</sup> "Seventy Years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Reflections on the Consequences of Nuclear Detonation," *International Review of the Red Cross* 97, no. 899 (2015): 556.

<sup>126</sup> Buijs, "How Physicians," 478.

<sup>127</sup> Gibbons, "The Humanitarian," 33.

<sup>128</sup> Minor, "Changing," 717.

<sup>129</sup> United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), "Handing Over of Signatures in Support of the "Appeal of the *Hibakusha*" for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons," October 7, 2016, para. 1–3, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/update/handing-over-of-signatures-in-support-of-the-appeal-of-the-hibakusha-for-the-elimination-of-nuclear-weapons/>.

<sup>130</sup> Seana K. Magee, "*Hibakusha* Join Activists at U.N. Event in Calling for Nuke Ban Treaty," *The Japan Times*, October 22, 2016, para. 1–2, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/10/22/national/hibakusha-join-activists-u-n-event-calling-nuke-ban-treaty/>.

<sup>131</sup> Magee, "*Hibakusha*," para. 3 & 13.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 15.

<sup>133</sup> Akimoto Daisuke, "The Nuclear Weapons Prohibition Treaty and The Paradox of Japan's Nuclear Identity," *Journal of International & Global Studies* 9, no. 2 (2018): 60, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1402&context=jigs>.

<sup>134</sup> Akimoto, "The Nuclear," 60.

<sup>135</sup> Kurosawa Mitsuru, "The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons: Its Significance and Challenges," *Osaka University Law Review* 65 (2018): 8, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://ir.library.osaka-u.ac.jp/repo/ouka/all/67739/oulr065-001.pdf>.

the nuclear powers, and their allies claimed that the TPNW risked weakening the NPT.<sup>136</sup> Their “defensive engagement” manifested the moral authority of the non-state actors and like-minded state actors in the humanitarian reframing.<sup>137</sup> Despite the Japanese government’s boycott, Kawasaki Akira, an ICAN International Steering Group member and Peace Boat executive committee member, pointed out that *hibakusha* continued to work hard to ensure the success of the conferences (from March until July 2017), thus contributing tremendously to the TPNW’s adoption.<sup>138</sup> It is noteworthy that the conferences were open to participation by international organisations and civil society, thus signifying the centrality of non-state actors in the nuclear abolition discourse.<sup>139</sup>

On 7 July 2017, the last day of the second round of negotiations, the TPNW was adopted by 122 states. The treaty was opened for signatures on 20 September 2017,<sup>140</sup> and entered into force on 22 January 2021, 90 days after the 50<sup>th</sup> ratification.<sup>141</sup> It is the first multilateral treaty which comprehensively bans nuclear weapons, including their development, testing, production, manufacturing, possession, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use.<sup>142</sup> Thus, the Humanitarian Initiative has succeeded on the first step towards nuclear abolition by officially declaring these weapons illegal. Together, it has successfully shifted the narrative of the discourse away from security, emphasising humanitarian reasons instead. Of exceptional significance was the collaboration between *hibakusha* and the international movement.<sup>143</sup> For Japanese advocates, the TPNW has had tremendous significance on their work. The treaty’s adoption and the awarding of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize to ICAN, which also dedicated the prize to *hibakusha* and victims of nuclear tests,<sup>144</sup> was an emotional moment for Japanese advocates for nuclear abolition, which has enhanced domestic momentum.<sup>145</sup>

The *Hibakusha* Appeal collected 13.7 million signatures worldwide between April 2016 and December 2020, including 1,497 signatures from present and former heads of Japanese local governments.<sup>146</sup> These achievements impressed the International Peace Bureau into awarding the 2020 Sean MacBride Peace Prize to Hidankyo’s Tanaka, the campaign’s initiator.<sup>147</sup> Despite its government’s negative stance, Hidankyo remains committed to its struggle and constantly looks for opportunities to pressure the government. When the TPNW entered into force, Hidankyo launched a nationwide signature campaign to pressure the government into joining the treaty.<sup>148</sup> Note that for its decades-long advocacy, Hidankyo has

<sup>136</sup> Kurosawa, “The Treaty,” 17.

<sup>137</sup> Minor, “Changing,” 719.

<sup>138</sup> Kawasaki, email.

<sup>139</sup> Kurosawa, “The Treaty,” 7.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>141</sup> Buijs, “How Physicians,” 478.

<sup>142</sup> UN, “Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons,” 2017, 3, accessed December 9, 2021, [https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/2017/07/20170707%2003-42%20PM/Ch\\_XXVI\\_9.pdf](https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/2017/07/20170707%2003-42%20PM/Ch_XXVI_9.pdf).

<sup>143</sup> Kurosaki, “A 75-year Rally,” para.7.

<sup>144</sup> Reuters, “Anti-Nuclear,” para.7.

<sup>145</sup> Tanaka Masato (senior reporter of *Asahi Shimbun*), interviewed by the author, Osaka, October 24, 2018.

<sup>146</sup> Kubota Tsuyoshi, “*Hibakusha* Appeal Network Collects Final Tally of 13.7 Million Signatures Calling on Countries to Join Nuclear Ban Treaty,” *Hiroshima Peace Media Center*, January 14, 2021, para.1&5, accessed December 9, 2021, <http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=103119>.

<sup>147</sup> International Peace Bureau, “Sean MacBride Peace Prize Ceremony 2020/21,” para.1, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.ipb.org/news/sean-mac-bride-peace-prize-ceremony-2020-21/#:~:text=On%20March%2C%2017th%202021%2C%20the%20Appeal%20of%20the%20Hibakusha>.

<sup>148</sup> Mizukawa Kyosuke, “Seven A-Bomb Survivors’ Groups Initiate Signature Campaign to Call on Japanese Government to Ratify Nuclear Ban Treaty,” *Hiroshima Peace Media Center*, March 23, 2021, para.4, accessed December 9, 2021, <https://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=104602>.

been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize several times since 1985.<sup>149</sup>

Magnus Lovold, the ICRC arms policy adviser, asserts that it is hard to imagine the creation of TPNW without persistent *hibakusha* efforts stressing the weapons' devastating impacts.<sup>150</sup> Kawasaki underscores such efforts, which, together with those of nuclear test victims, have created a global *hibakusha* movement emphasising the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.<sup>151</sup> The TPNW's preamble has recognised *hibakusha* for promoting the principles of humanity in their calls for nuclear abolition.<sup>152</sup> But beyond that, *hibakushas'* tremendous contributions are unfortunately not necessarily recognised by the general public.

## 6. Conclusion

Japanese anti-nuclear weapons actors have collectively played an indispensable, though largely invisible role in calling for a world without nuclear weapons, demonstrating the humanitarian consequences of these weapons. The 2010s Humanitarian Initiative diverted the discourse away from security and towards humanitarian consequences, a core message that has been iterated by *hibakusha* from the beginning. The sending of *hibakusha* abroad by Hidankyo since the 1950s has established a credible international humanitarian framing to push for a nuclear ban treaty. Similarly, JALANA's contributions to the ICJ advisory opinion on nuclear weapons are little known to the general public. Their persistent efforts have inspired and helped maintain international momentum, ensuring that the atomic bombings are not just stagnant historical events but active discussion topics. No anti-nuclear weapons discourse can possibly be held without discussing Hiroshima, Nagasaki, or *hibakusha*, even while being overshadowed by the Japanese government's opposition to the TPNW, and while international players are often credited for such abolition efforts. This paper demonstrates that the Japanese anti-nuclear weapons movement is an under-recognised pillar of strength and a source of inspiration for the international anti-nuclear weapons movement.

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<sup>149</sup> Kingston, "Atomic," para.1.

<sup>150</sup> Lovold, "Courage," para.3.

<sup>151</sup> Kawasaki, email.

<sup>152</sup> UN, "Treaty," 3.

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## Securitization of Disinformation in NATO's Lexicon: A Computational Text Analysis

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### Abstract

*Following the Russian meddling in the 2016 US elections, disinformation and fake news became popular terms to help generate domestic awareness against foreign information operations globally. Today, a large number of politicians, diplomats, and civil society leaders identify disinformation and fake news as primary problems in both domestic and foreign policy contexts. But how do security institutions define disinformation and fake news in foreign and security policies, and how do their securitization strategies change over years? Using computational methods, this article explores 238,452 tweets from official NATO and affiliated accounts, as well as more than 2,000 NATO texts, news statements, and publications since January 2014, presenting an unsupervised structural topic model (stm) analysis to investigate the main thematic and discursive contexts of these texts. The study finds that NATO's threat discourse and securitization strategies are heavily influenced by the US' political lexicon, and that the organization's word choice changes based on their likelihood of mobilizing alliance resources and cohesion. In addition, the study suggests that the recent disinformation agenda is, in fact, a continuity of NATO's long-standing Russia-focused securitization strategy and their attempt to mobilize the Baltic states and Poland in support of NATO's mission.*

**Keywords:** Securitization, NATO, Russia, text analysis, structural topic model

### 1. Introduction

In recent years, disinformation, information warfare, and fake news have become important strategic and political concepts in international relations.<sup>1</sup> Although these terms are just as old as the term 'propaganda', their mainstream use in the context of digital communication skyrocketed after the 2016 US elections.<sup>2</sup> Even before the elections, these terms had begun to enter the foreign policy discourse of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Lanoszka, "Disinformation in International Politics," *European Journal of International Security* 4, no. 2 (June 2019): 227–48, <https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2019.6>; Christina la Cour, "Theorising Digital Disinformation in International Relations," *International Politics* 57, no. 4 (2020): 704–23.

<sup>2</sup> Nir Grinber g et al., "Fake News on Twitter during the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election," *Science* 363, no. 6425 (2019): 374–78.

following the 2014 Russian military operations in Ukraine. Prior to the annexation of Crimea, Russia had already designated information warfare as part of its 2010 Military Doctrine, which was updated again in 2014 with a special emphasis on digital communication.<sup>3</sup> A year prior to that, the importance of the digital space for military doctrinal considerations was outlined by General Valery Gerasimov, the Russian Chief of the General Staff. In his 2013 article titled ‘The Value of Science is in the Foresight’, Gerasimov wrote: “*The very ‘rules of war’ have changed. The role of nonmilitary means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and, in many cases, they have exceeded the power of force of weapons in their effectiveness. ... All this is supplemented by military means of a concealed character.*”<sup>4</sup> These three statements are generally accepted as the doctrinal basis of modern Russian information operations that were demonstrated in Ukraine in 2014, and also later in Syria in late 2015.<sup>5</sup>

Since then, strategic communicative actions that are intended to influence, mislead, and confuse foreign populations have assumed a central position in global debates about politics and foreign policy. Given the impact of such actions on elections, polarization, and crisis management, it was natural for the rhetoric about these actions to assume such a central position.<sup>6</sup> However, over time, popular buzzwords like ‘disinformation/misinformation’, ‘fake news’, and ‘information operations’ have proliferated in global political mainstream discourse, assuming an accusatory nature worldwide as more leaders, diplomats, and politicians have begun using them to discredit and delegitimize their political opponents. This dynamic was later conceptualized as ‘discursive deflection’<sup>7</sup> and has become acutely visible in the foreign policy domain as more countries have begun securitizing the concepts ‘fake news’, ‘disinformation’, and ‘information warfare’ to similarly discredit and delegitimize rival countries.<sup>8</sup> Broadly speaking, ‘discursive-deflection’ is the strategy of discrediting competitors and rivals by portraying oneself as the sole source of truth. While the domestic political use of these terms is well-studied, we are still somewhat in the dark with regard to why countries choose to securitize these terms and what happens in their interactions with other countries when they do so.

The foreign policy use of such terms predates the 2016 US elections and proliferated after the Russian military involvement in Crimea and Donbas.<sup>9</sup> The primary reason for this contextual proliferation was the Russian decision to deny the initial stages of both its involvement in Ukraine and its broader strategy of distracting and dividing Western attention over Russian military operations.<sup>10</sup> There is still a debate over whether it was really Russian information operations that had derailed NATO’s response in Ukraine, or if disinformation

<sup>3</sup> Bettina Renz, “Russian Military Capabilities after 20 Years of Reform,” *Survival* 56, no. 3 (2014): 61–84.

<sup>4</sup> Mark Galeotti, “The Mythical ‘Gerasimov Doctrine’ and the Language of Threat,” *Critical Studies on Security* 7, no. 2 (2019): 157–61.

<sup>5</sup> Polina Sinovets and Bettina Renz, “Russia’s 2014 Military Doctrine and beyond: Threat Perceptions, Capabilities and Ambitions,” NATO Research Papers (Rome: NATO Defense College, July 2015), <https://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=830>.

<sup>6</sup> Samantha Bradshaw and Philip N. Howard, “The Global Organization of Social Media Disinformation Campaigns,” *Journal of International Affairs* 71, no. 1.5 (2018): 23–32.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew S. Ross and Damian J. Rivers, “Discursive Deflection: Accusation of ‘Fake News’ and the Spread of Mis- and Disinformation in the Tweets of President Trump,” *Social Media + Society* 4, no. 2 (2018), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118776010>; Christopher A. Smith, “Weaponized Iconoclasm in Internet Memes Featuring the Expression ‘Fake News,’” *Discourse & Communication* 13, no. 3 (2019): 303–19.

<sup>8</sup> Matthew A. Baum and Philip B. K. Potter, “Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy in the Age of Social Media,” *The Journal of Politics* 81, no. 2 (2019): 747–56.

<sup>9</sup> Irina Khaldarova and Mervi Pantti, “Fake News,” *Journalism Practice* 10, no. 7 (2016): 891–901.

<sup>10</sup> Ulises A. Mejias and Nikolai E. Vokuev, “Disinformation and the Media: The Case of Russia and Ukraine,” *Media, Culture & Society* 39, no. 7 (2017): 1027–42.

discourses are employed in order to shift the blame over to Russia for the time when NATO was already divided over its commitment to Ukraine.<sup>11</sup> While there is robust evidence of Russian information operations in Ukraine and their role in spreading disinformation in NATO countries, NATO's sustained apathy towards the rising Russian military influence in the Black Sea after 2014 and in Syria after 2015 support the latter claim.

Critics of Western disinformation discourses, for example, argue that such discourses have turned into 'floating (or empty) signifiers' that have no specific or agreed-upon meaning.<sup>12</sup> In that vein, blaming others for engaging in disinformation often detracts attention from a mistake or failed policy enacted by the blamer.<sup>13</sup> In this case, critics argue that Western discourses on disinformation are intended to distract attention from NATO or EU divisions, or more domestic-level polarization dynamics, by creating a unique empty signifier (disinformation) to be employed as a rallying rhetoric that bolsters the significance of external threats.<sup>14</sup> In this way, disinformation and its associated terms, like misinformation, fake news, and information war, get securitized, receiving disproportionate levels of attention in the policy domain. In this context, disinformation and its associated terms are used to exaggerate an existing threat and create a rallying discourse meant to channel the attention of divided Western nations away from their internal disagreements and towards an inflated external threat. Some scholars go even further, arguing that disinformation is being securitized in the West (especially in NATO) to the extent that the 'war on terror' was securitized through the 2000s.<sup>15</sup> In this line, disinformation is alleged to have become a new strategic glue intended to help Western nations pool together their increasingly diverging interests and resources in support of a common cause.<sup>16</sup>

Securitization of disinformation in domestic politics is relatively well-studied.<sup>17</sup> Although these terms entered mainstream debates after the 2016 US elections, former President Donald Trump, too, securitized fake news to delegitimize his opponents by constructing rival disinformation as a national security problem, indirectly attributable to China.<sup>18</sup> Following the tornado of accusations in the US, political actors in Britain, France, Italy, South Africa, Kenya and others have begun blaming each other for engaging in organized disinformation.<sup>19</sup> Even in Sweden, there is empirical evidence that suggests accusing journalists of spreading fake news results in the self-censorship of such outlets.<sup>20</sup> There are further cases of evidence

<sup>11</sup> Volodymyr Lysenko and Catherine Brooks, "Russian Information Troops, Disinformation, and Democracy," *First Monday* 23, no. 5 (2018), doi: <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v22i5.8176>.

<sup>12</sup> Johan Farkas and Jannick Schou, "Fake News as a Floating Signifier: Hegemony, Antagonism and the Politics of Falsehood," *Javnost - The Public* 25, no. 3 (2018): 298–314.

<sup>13</sup> Linda Monsees, "'A War against Truth' - Understanding the Fake News Controversy," *Critical Studies on Security* 8, no. 2 (2020): 116–29.

<sup>14</sup> Lluís Mas-Manchón et al., "Patriotic Journalism in Fake News Warfare: El País' Coverage of the Catalan Process," *The Political Economy of Communication* 8, no. 2 (2021), <http://www.polecom.org/index.php/polecom/article/view/123>.

<sup>15</sup> Lanoszka, "Disinformation in International Politics."

<sup>16</sup> Mario Baumann, "'Propaganda Fights' and 'Disinformation Campaigns': The Discourse on Information Warfare in Russia-West Relations," *Contemporary Politics* 26, no. 3 (2020): 288–307.

<sup>17</sup> Deen Freelon and Chris Wells, "Disinformation as Political Communication," *Political Communication* 37, no. 2 (2020): 145–56. Ric Neo, "When Would a State Crack Down on Fake News? Explaining Variation in the Governance of Fake News in Asia-Pacific," *Political Studies Review* (2021), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F14789299211013984>.

<sup>18</sup> Francesca Polletta and Jessica Callahan, "Deep Stories, Nostalgia Narratives, and Fake News: Storytelling in the Trump Era," in *Politics of Meaning/Meaning of Politics: Cultural Sociology of the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election*, ed. Jason L. Mast and Jeffrey C. Alexander, Cultural Sociology (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 55–73.

<sup>19</sup> Florian Saurwein and Charlotte Spencer-Smith, "Combating Disinformation on Social Media: Multilevel Governance and Distributed Accountability in Europe," *Digital Journalism* 8, no. 6 (2020): 820–41; Jacinta Mwende Maweu, "'Fake Elections'? Cyber Propaganda, Disinformation and the 2017 General Elections in Kenya," *African Journalism Studies* 40, no. 4 (2019): 62–76.

<sup>20</sup> W. Lance Bennett and Steven Livingston, "The Disinformation Order: Disruptive Communication and the Decline of Democratic Institutions," *European Journal of Communication* 33, no. 2 (2018): 122–39.

supporting the claim that elite-level discourses on disinformation have a direct effect on how society perceives information and facts in general, creating a measurable effect on public trust towards such facts and information.<sup>21</sup> In Singapore, for example, delegitimizing rival parties and news outlets through disinformation discourse is considered ‘acceptable’ as part of the state’s duty to discipline the opposition and its political actors.<sup>22</sup> Similar trends emerging in democracies and authoritarian countries alike, such as in Austria, Australia, Poland, Russia, and South Africa, demonstrate the universality of instrumentalizing disinformation discourse as a political delegitimization tactic.<sup>23</sup>

While a robust scholarship is emerging on the domestic political uses of disinformation discourse, there has so far been no longitudinal large-N study that explores how such constructions emerge in international politics. Furthermore, there has yet to be an exploration of how such discourses evolve over time, and under what contexts, in foreign affairs. We know that disinformation and fake news are important issues in world politics and that they are frequently used to bring an issue to public attention, but we remain in the dark over the contextual and temporal nuances that drive the ways in which these concepts are discursively constructed in foreign policy discourse.

This study aims to provide an early addition to the emerging literature on foreign policy uses of disinformation discourses by focusing on how the NATO has used them in its documents and social media posts. It does so by studying 238,452 tweets from official NATO and affiliated accounts, as well as more than 2,000 NATO texts, news statements, and publications since January 2014, and by using computational methods to present an unsupervised structural topic model (stm) analysis that explores the main thematic and discursive contexts of these texts. Ultimately, we hope to trigger a wider debate on the securitization of disinformation and fake news in foreign policy, and also to shed light on the greater explanatory value of computational methods in studying large-N text data based on such securitization strategies.

## 2. Securitizing Disinformation

Over the last few years, defining misleading content and measuring the legitimacy of its dissemination have been at the forefront of journalistic, political, and scientific debates.<sup>24</sup> Even before its proliferation in 2016, disinformation was a widely-used term in mainstream discourse, co-existing with other terms such as infoglut, or information overload.<sup>25</sup> While disinformation and misinformation were first used interchangeably, today, disinformation refers to the deliberate dissemination of false information with the intention of misleading and confusing an audience. Misinformation, on the other hand, strictly refers to the unintended diffusion of false information without malintent. There are also bridge terms such as ‘malinformation’, which refers to information that is factually accurate but is deployed to damage the image of an individual or an entity, or the concept of ‘problematic information’ as

<sup>21</sup> Emily Van Duyn and Jessica Collier, “Priming and Fake News: The Effects of Elite Discourse on Evaluations of News Media,” *Mass Communication and Society* 22, no. 1 (2019): 29–48.

<sup>22</sup> Netina Tan, “Electoral Management of Digital Campaigns and Disinformation in East and Southeast Asia,” *Election Law Journal: Rules, Politics, and Policy* 19, no. 2 (2020): 214–39.

<sup>23</sup> Edson C. Tandoc Jr, Zheng Wei Lim, and Richard Ling, “Defining ‘Fake News,’” *Digital Journalism* 6, no. 2 (2018): 137–53. Xymena Kurowska, and Anatoly Reshetnikov, “Neutrollization: Industrialized Trolling as a Pro-Kremlin Strategy of Desecuritization,” *Security Dialogue* 49, no. 5 (2018): 345–63.

<sup>24</sup> Jr, Lim, and Ling, “Defining ‘Fake News’”.

<sup>25</sup> Mark Andrejevic, *Infoglut: How Too Much Information Is Changing the Way We Think and Know* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

defined by Caroline Jack.<sup>26</sup> Although it is not directly mentioned, all of these concepts refer to the digital space, where information manipulation is disseminated faster and more broadly on social media and digital communication technologies as compared to other forms of media.

As the terms ‘disinformation/misinformation’, ‘fake news’, ‘information operation’, and ‘hybrid war’ are often used interchangeably in political discourse, there are little clear-cut differences in the strategic meaning of each word choice.<sup>27</sup> Politicians and leaders often use these terms as a bag of buzzwords without a clear operational definition of what each term precisely means. All of these buzzwords generate roughly the same effect, the delegitimization of their target, on consumers of such messages.<sup>28</sup> Especially problematic is the fact that once the discourse on disinformation is weaponized to delegitimize rivals, there is very little such rivals can do to defend themselves. Given the significant political charge of these terms, individuals or institutions that are alleged to be engaging in disinformation-related activities often have to enter into a fruitless spar of words to challenge such allegations, which usually leads to further controversy. This renders the accuser – or the side that securitizes disinformation – more advantageous compared to the accused, generating a dynamic similar to the ‘attacker’s advantage’ in cyber security, where the defender is continuously blindsided.<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, the securitization of disinformation – that is, discursively constructing disinformation as a security concern – is becoming almost as controversial as disinformation itself, and can often be deployed to muddle the waters of a healthy debate. Its problem lies within its success; namely, how successfully disinformation gets securitized and rallies policy resources around itself. This fits into Buzan et. al.’s criteria for a ‘successful speech-act’, which should take place in a medium most appropriate for its dissemination and have a clear, mobilizable referent object (i.e. ‘those that spread disinformation’).<sup>30</sup> By securitizing disinformation in the medium that is most conducive for its dissemination (social media and the Internet), speakers get a chance to use the speed and volume advantage of digital communication technologies against their opponents. Also, such discursive constructions must be sedimented (1) rhetorically: have a clear argumentative function, (2) discursively: contain clear power and hegemonic relations within, (3) culturally: refer to a well-known case or instance, and (4) institutionally: in a way that mobilizes policy resources.<sup>31</sup>

Yet, for the Copenhagen school, not all speech acts constitute securitization. Securitization is a very particular discursive construct that designates a specific existential threat requiring the mobilization of uncommon resources and measures that go beyond the norms of institutional and political responses.<sup>32</sup> In many cases, securitization happens to trigger and

<sup>26</sup> Susan Morgan, “Fake News, Disinformation, Manipulation and Online Tactics to Undermine Democracy,” *Journal of Cyber Policy* 3, no. 1 (2018): 39–43; Caroline Jack, “Lexicon of lies: Terms for Problematic Information,” *Data & Society* 3, no. 22 (2017): 1094–096.

<sup>27</sup> Andrew M. Guess and Benjamin A. Lyons, “Misinformation, Disinformation, and Online Propaganda,” in *Social Media and Democracy: The State of the Field, Prospects for Reform*, ed. Joshua A. Tucker and Nathaniel Persily, SSRC Anxieties of Democracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 10–33.

<sup>28</sup> Joshua A. Tucker et al., “Social Media, Political Polarization, and Political Disinformation: A Review of the Scientific Literature,” *Hewlett Foundation* (blog), March 19, 2018, <https://hewlett.org/library/social-media-political-polarization-political-disinformation-review-scientific-literature/>.

<sup>29</sup> Chau Tong et al., “‘Fake News Is Anything They Say!’ — Conceptualization and Weaponization of Fake News among the American Public,” *Mass Communication and Society* 23, no. 5 (2020): 755–78.

<sup>30</sup> Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, UK ed. edition (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

<sup>31</sup> Michael C. Williams, “Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics,” *International Studies Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (2003): 511–31.

<sup>32</sup> Olav F. Knudsen, “Post-Copenhagen Security Studies: Desecuritizing Securitization,” *Security Dialogue* 32, no. 3 (2001): 355–68.

facilitate these institutional changes by ‘shocking’ power brokers and bureaucracies into action, either through internal bureaucratic peer pressure, or through public opinion pressure (audience costs). As such, disinformation has been lifted ‘above politics’ in Western rhetoric as a peculiar threat that requires the sidelining of daily political squabbles, mobilizing unique resources, and addressing it in unity that would otherwise not materialize.<sup>33</sup> Ultimately, the discursive constructions of disinformation constitute acute cases of securitization as they generate amity-enmity relations only among countries that adopt this discursive strategy.<sup>34</sup>

Social media offers a unique challenge for the study of securitization. Traditionally, securitizing statements are extracted from lengthy speeches and texts through discourse analysis. However, the advent of faster and higher-volume digital communication technologies have led to a shift of state and elite discourses from older to newer media systems.<sup>35</sup> To that end, due to their word limits, platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram do not provide contiguous discursive framing opportunities for researchers to study securitization dynamics.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, since elite and state-level discourses on social media are often written by assistants, communication representatives, or PR firms, they don’t constitute the ‘performative actions’ that are the cornerstone of securitization.<sup>37</sup> This generates a significant ‘context gap’ in which researchers may not fully understand the wider thematic and lexical ecosystem that such social media posts may inhabit. Interpreting securitization in such media platforms thus necessitates more robust techniques of ‘horizon scanning’ that would allow researchers to extract long-term discursive variances and contexts.

Computational text analysis methods largely deliver this horizon scanning. What social media posts lack due to word and character limits, they provide in an immense volume of data that yields ample context in longitudinal analyses. By extracting large quantities of text data from social media, researchers can not only interpret the changing contours and contexts of securitization, but they can also cross-check these findings with more traditional forms of discursive construction outlets such as speeches, documents, and archival material. That is why in this study, we not only engage in a large-scale longitudinal ‘old form’ securitization analysis by focusing on NATO archives, we also add in ‘new form’ analysis by extracting a large tweet dataset from official NATO accounts.

The logic of interpreting how disinformation gets securitized by relying on NATO documents is two-fold: first, NATO has been evolving to find new *raison d’être* since the end of the Cold War and has sought to capitalize on the securitization of new threats, such as terrorism, cybersecurity, Syria, and forced migration.<sup>38</sup> Disinformation and information war are two of the recent additions to this threat portfolio that helps us understand how NATO’s discourses on security adapt to a new-medium threat. Second, it enables us to understand how institutional security arrangements like NATO reinvent their security identities and construct their amity-enmity relations in light of newer technologies. Since identity and action are

<sup>33</sup> Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, “Macrosecuritisation and Security Constellations: Reconsidering Scale in Securitisation Theory,” *Review of International Studies* 35, no. 2 (2009): 253–76.

<sup>34</sup> Buzan and Wæver, “Macrosecuritisation and Security Constellations”.

<sup>35</sup> Thierry Balzacq, Sarah Léonard, and Jan Ruzicka, “‘Securitization’ Revisited: Theory and Cases,” *International Relations* 30, no. 4 (2016): 494–531.

<sup>36</sup> Gwen Bouvier and David Machin, “Critical Discourse Analysis and the Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media,” *Review of Communication* 18, no. 3 (2018): 178–92.

<sup>37</sup> Carlo Lipizzi et al., “Towards Computational Discourse Analysis: A Methodology for Mining Twitter Backchanneling Conversations,” *Computers in Human Behavior* 64 (2016): 782–92.

<sup>38</sup> Holger Stritzel and Sean C. Chang, “Securitization and Counter-Securitization in Afghanistan,” *Security Dialogue* 46, no. 6 (2015): 548–67.



considered closely linked in constructivism, and because they are never fixed or intrinsic, but are rather fluid and constituted through social processes, studying longitudinal securitization dynamics gives us valuable insight into long-term NATO security planning.<sup>39</sup>

### 3. Methodology

Since this study concerns the longitudinal dynamics of how disinformation and related terms were securitized, and since the volume of text that we are dealing with is quite large, we follow a computational methodology that combines social media text data extraction methods with traditional text analysis tools. In recent years, social media data has grown into a useful study area for social scientists as more and more governmental documents become digitized and as governments start taking an active role in social media.<sup>40</sup> While traditional forms of text analysis and discourse analysis approaches use hand coding schemes, newer methods in text mining and analysis are increasingly more preferred due to their ability to process large quantities of text data and eliminate the inter-coder reliability issues from the equation.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, these newer methods increase the causal robustness of text data by building inter- and intra-text causal inferences, strengthening the explanatory power of words as dependent or independent variables.

Table 1 - Descriptive statistics of the text dataset

##	type	all	disinfo	disinfo_ratio	rest
## 1:	tweet	238452	4112	1.72	234340
## 2:	speeches	1136	223	19.63	913
## 3:	press_releases	1083	12	1.11	1071
## 4:	thematic_topics	142	11	7.75	131
## 5:	reviews	119	44	36.97	75
## 6:	official_texts	19	4	21.05	15
## 7:	archives	16	0	0.00	16
## 8:	publications	12	9	75.00	3
## 9:	basic_texts	10	4	40.00	6

Note: 'All' denotes the aggregate number of contents within that specific document type. 'Disinfo' denotes the number of documents that contain disinformation-related keywords within. 'disinfo\_ratio' denotes the proportion of documents that contain disinformation-related keywords within the broader pool of documents analyzed.

In order to explore how NATO has securitized disinformation in recent years, we isolated 238,452 tweets from NATO and official affiliated accounts from January 2014 to February 2021 and extracted more than 2000 speeches, press releases, reviews, official texts, archival documents, and publications from the NATO e-library.<sup>42</sup> Out of this sample, we extracted documents and content that contained the keywords 'disinformation', 'misinformation', 'fake news', 'propaganda', 'hybrid warfare' and 'information warfare', and logged the number of their occurrences within these texts by date. Since this study doesn't focus

<sup>39</sup> Maria Mälksoo, "Countering Hybrid Warfare as Ontological Security Management: The Emerging Practices of the EU and NATO," *European Security* 27, no. 3 (2018): 374–92.

<sup>40</sup> Paul DiMaggio, "Adapting Computational Text Analysis to Social Science (and Vice Versa)," *Big Data & Society* 2, no. 2 (2015), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053951715602908>.

<sup>41</sup> Klaus Krippendorff, "Measuring the Reliability of Qualitative Text Analysis Data," *Quality and Quantity* 38, no. 6 (2004): 787–800.

<sup>42</sup> NATO E-Library, <https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/publications.htm>.

on the semantic differences between these keywords and considers them to be different references to disinformation as a discursive strategy, we code and merge them singularly as the variable ‘*disinfo*’. Our preliminary analysis shows that NATO has used these keywords most frequently in tweets, followed by speeches, reviews, and publications. However, when analyzed proportionally, NATO publications focus on disinformation most frequently (75% of all documents), followed by tweets (40%), reviews (36.97%), and official texts (21.05%).

Table 2 - The number of occurrences for disinformation-related keywords in each document type

##	type	N
## 1:	speeches	351
## 2:	reviews	63
## 3:	press_releases	14
## 4:	basic_texts	6
## 5:	thematic_topics	15
## 6:	official_texts	6
## 7:	publications	17
## 8:	tweet	4302

In this study, we employ structural topic modeling (STM), a text analysis approach that finds ‘topics’ in an unstructured corpus based on covariate information.<sup>43</sup> It follows a statistical logic that measures the co-occurrence likelihoods of keywords and terms that are likely to appear with each other, deriving topical meanings out of those likelihoods. Topic modeling is increasingly being used in social sciences for studies of large volumes of text, such as archival documents or social media text datasets, by producing “*each word on the basis of some number of preceding words or word classes,*” and “*generate[ing] words based on latent topic variables inferred from word correlations independent of the order in which the words appear.*”<sup>44</sup> In recent years, topic modeling has become a widely-used method to study large Twitter datasets and political discussions that happen on other social media platforms.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Margaret E. Roberts, Brandon M. Stewart, and Dustin Tingley, “Stm: An R Package for Structural Topic Models,” *Journal of Statistical Software* 91, no. 1 (2019): 1–40.

<sup>44</sup> Hanna M. Wallach, “Topic Modeling: Beyond Bag-of-Words,” in *Proceedings of the 23rd International Conference on Machine Learning, ICML ’06* (New York, NY, USA: Association for Computing Machinery, 2006), 977–84.

<sup>45</sup> Liangjie Hong and Brian D. Davison, “Empirical Study of Topic Modeling in Twitter,” in *Proceedings of the First Workshop on Social Media Analytics, SOMA ’10* (New York, NY, USA: Association for Computing Machinery, 2010), 80–88; Jim Giles, “Computational Social Science: Making the Links,” *Nature News* 488, no. 7412 (2012): 448; Hai Liang and King-wa Fu, “Testing Propositions Derived from Twitter Studies: Generalization and Replication in Computational Social Science,” *PLOS ONE* 10, no. 8 (2015), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0134270>

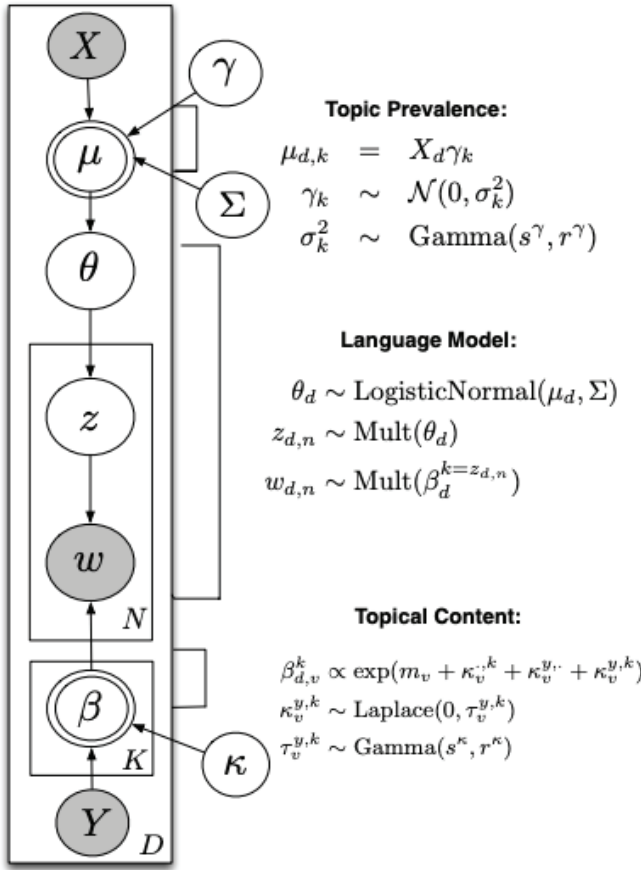


Figure 1: Plate Diagram for Structural Topic Model: “The model combines and extends three existing models: the correlated topic model (CTM), the Dirichlet-Multinomial Regression (DMR) topic model and the Sparse Additive Generative (SAGE) topic model. The logistic normal prior on topical prevalence in the standard CTM is replaced by a logistic-normal linear model. The design matrix for the covariates  $X$  allows for arbitrarily flexible functional forms of the original covariates using radial basis functions (our R package also provides B-splines). The distribution over words is replaced with a multinomial logit such that a token’s distribution is the combination of three effects (topic, covariates, topic-covariate interaction) operationalized as sparse deviations from a baseline word frequency ( $m$ ). Our software provides the analyst with a choice of regularizing priors for the GLM coefficients ( $\kappa, \gamma$ ) with defaults: Normal-Gamma prior pooled by topic for  $\gamma$  and the “Gamma Lasso” prior [10] for  $\kappa$ .”<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Margaret E. Roberts et al., “The Structural Topic Model and Applied Social Science,” in *ICONIP2013* (International Conference on Neural Information Processing, Daegu, South Korea, 2013), <https://scholar.princeton.edu/files/bstewart/files/stmnips2013.pdf>.

A longitudinal analysis of the specific keywords sorted by document type reveals a clear difference in word choice between different NATO documents. In NATO Basic Texts, the most-preferred reference keyword is ‘hybrid warfare’, whereas in press releases, reliance on the word ‘misinformation’ gradually evolves into ‘disinformation’ by 2018. NATO reviews also largely prefer ‘misinformation’, but NATO speeches and tweets are more diverse, with a heavier use of the terms ‘propaganda’, ‘disinformation’, and ‘fake news’. This difference is an interesting demonstration of how elastic these terms are and how different institutional cultures and outlets can prefer one over the other in their communication strategies.

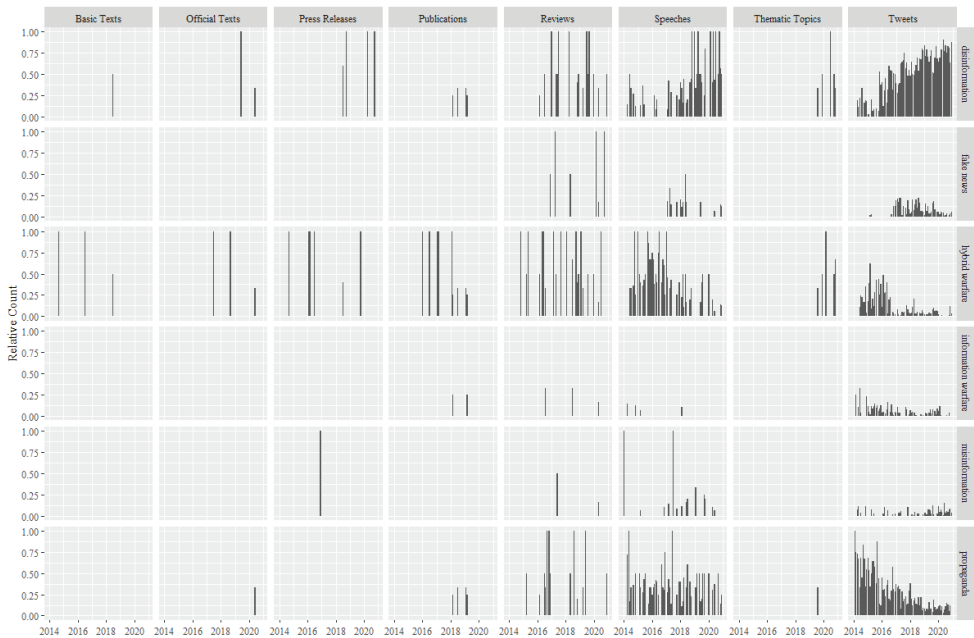


Figure 2: Longitudinal temporal histogram of top keywords (disinformation, fake news, hybrid warfare, information warfare, misinformation, propaganda) as they appear in NATO texts

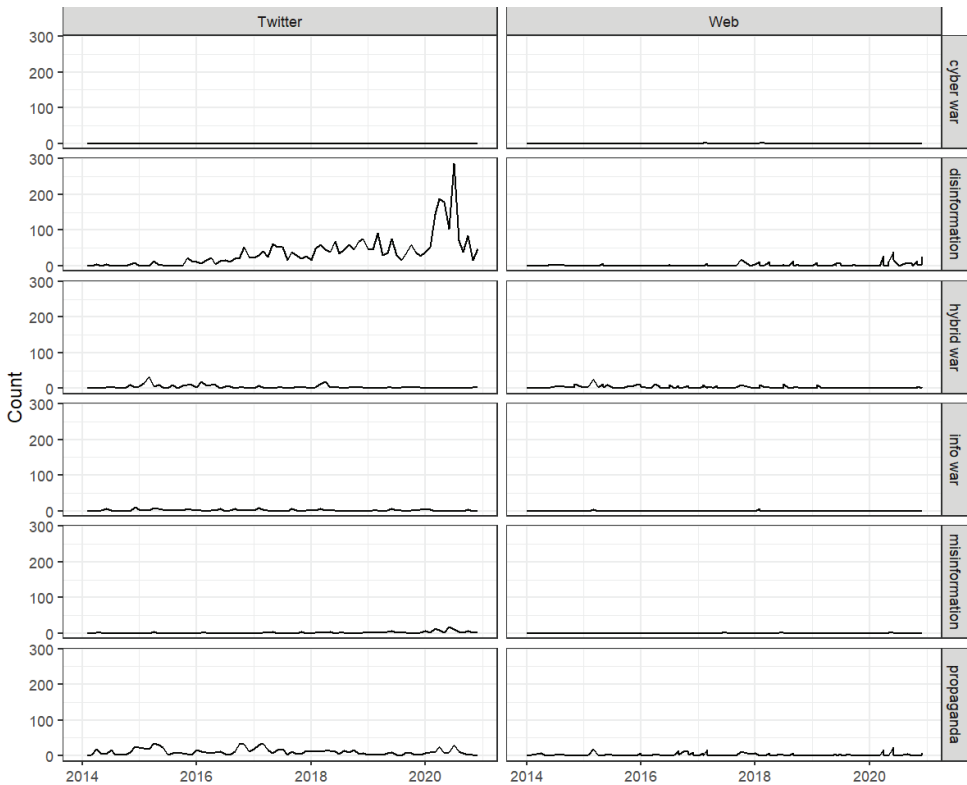


Figure 3: Longitudinal temporal frequency of top keywords as they appear in NATO Twitter texts vs official documents

The differences between NATO official texts and tweets are particularly interesting. Although NATO official texts shift from a ‘hybrid war’-focused discourse to ‘disinformation’-focused discourse by 2018, the reliance on ‘disinformation’ discourse in tweets is more striking. By late 2016 (the US elections), ‘disinformation’ becomes a clear discursive choice in NATO tweets, skyrocketing in much of 2020 due to COVID and vaccine-related securitization discourses globally. This could be interpreted as the discursive anchoring capacity of the United States for NATO, as the constructions of securitization in American political culture affects the wider institutional discourse of NATO. Perhaps as the clearest sign of the temporal variations in word choice shifts, NATO’s Twitter accounts use the words ‘disinformation’, ‘information warfare’, and ‘misinformation’ overwhelmingly more often in comparison with its official texts and statements, which rely more on ‘cyber war’ and ‘hybrid war’. As for NATO and affiliated accounts that use the keyword ‘disinformation’, four clear accounts stand out. These are @STRATCOMCOE (NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence), @NATOMoscow (NATO Information Office Moscow), @NATOBrazeB (NATO Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy), and @NATOpres (Official Twitter account of the @NATO Spokesperson). As for which NATO country representations use this word the most, Latvia (@LV\_NATO), Lithuania (@LitdelNATO), United States (@USNATO), Ukraine (@NATOinUkraine) and Germany (@GermanyNATO) stand out the

most.

Table 3- Official NATO-affiliated accounts sorted by the ratio of disinformation-related tweets as part of their aggregate tweets

##	screen_name	V1	ratio
## 1:	STRATCOMCOE	500	19.01
## 2:	NATOMoscow	417	15.86
## 3:	NATOBrazeB	398	15.13
## 4:	NATOpres	231	8.78
## 5:	LV_NATO	119	4.52
## 6:	LitdelNATO	104	3.95
## 7:	NATORomeroC	90	3.42
## 8:	NATO	89	3.38
## 9:	USNATO	82	3.12
## 10:	NATOinUkraine	74	2.81
## 11:	GermanyNATO	62	2.36
## 12:	CanadaNATO	52	1.98
## 13:	ItalyatNATO	45	1.71
## 14:	PLinNATO	43	1.63
## 15:	UKNATO	42	1.60
## 16:	SwedenNato	35	1.33
## 17:	Slovakia_NATO	31	1.18
## 18:	NATODepSpox	27	1.03
## 19:	SHAPE_NATO	23	0.87
## 20:	SpainNATO	23	0.87

Our ‘keyness measures’<sup>47</sup> (two-by-two frequencies of words within a sample) indicate that while NATO’s official documents are more general with regard to its strategic word choices, NATO’s tweets are overwhelmingly focused on the terms ‘disinformation’, ‘propaganda’, and ‘fake news’ within the context of Russia (‘pro-Kremlin’, ‘Russian’, and ‘Kremlin’ designations).

<sup>47</sup> Anna Marchi and Charlotte Taylor, eds., *Corpus Approaches to Discourse: A Critical Review*, 1st edition (New York: Routledge, 2018).

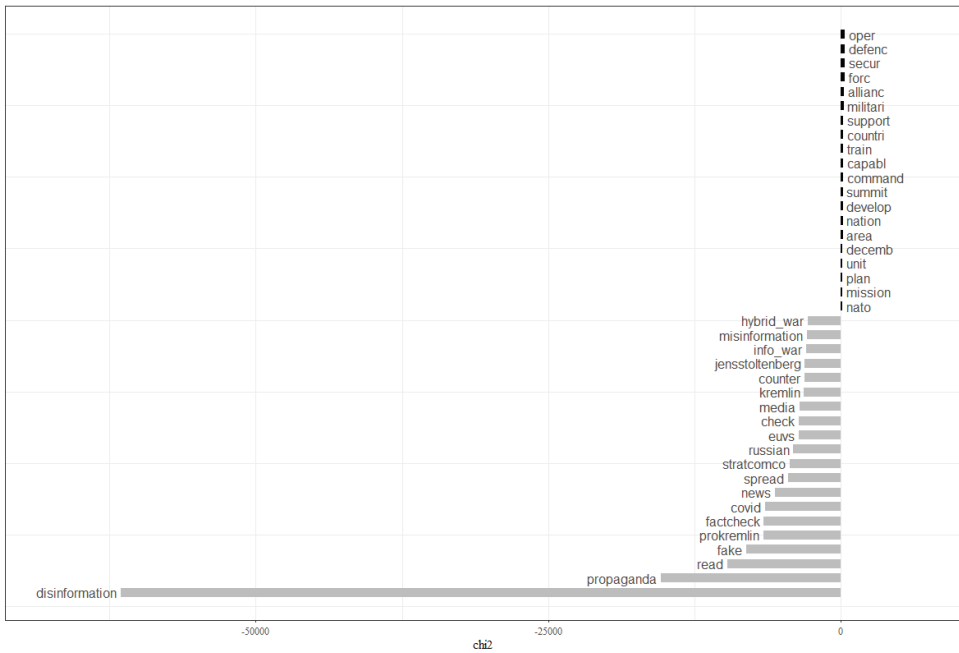


Figure 4: Keynes (textual context – most and least likely correlations) graph of tweets and official documents relative to keyword ‘disinformation’. Highest likelihood keyword is itself: ‘disinformation’. After that, the plot shows ranked keywords from bottom to up, according to how frequently they appear with the main keyword ‘disinformation’.

#### 4. Unsupervised Structural Topic Model Results

For the structural topic models, we used the *stm* package for R, developed by Molly Roberts, Brandon Stewart and Dustin Tingley.<sup>48</sup> *Stm* was developed as part of its developers’ quest to come up with a methodological tool that would allow them to generate causal inferences from text data. By measuring document-level covariate measures, it introduces a new form of qualitative inference and within-text estimation algorithms for better topic correlations. This ultimately helps us generate more accurate topic associations and themes within complex, lengthy documents.

<sup>48</sup> Roberts, Stewart, and Tingley, “Stm.”

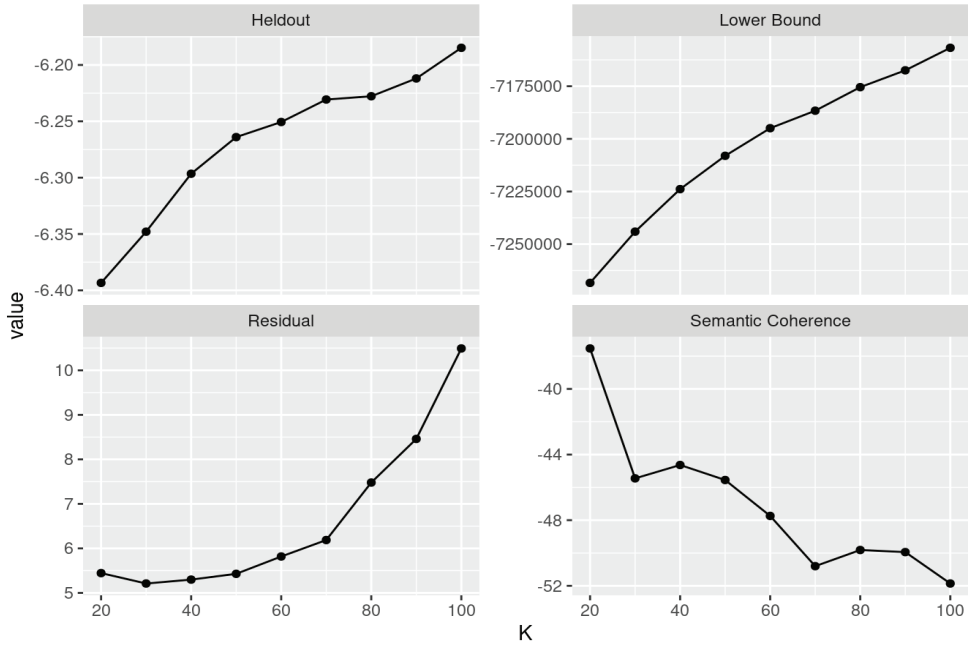


Figure 5: Topic count graph demonstrating the optimization rationale for our stm algorithm’s choice of 50 topic models. The ‘K-value’ shows the optimum number of ‘structural topic models’ the algorithm has to go through the text to find the optimum semantic coherence. In other words, the K number designates the optimum number of structural topic models in texts that have the highest statistical coherence coefficients. Often, K values are assigned by the programmer and an optimum number gets eyeballed after several trial and error runs. K-value optimization uses machine learning to iterate through the text multiple times to find the optimum K-value by statistical clustering of frequently collocated word combinations.

Our unsupervised machine learning tests within NATO documents and tweets containing disinformation-related trigger words yielded 50 topic models with an optimum combination of semantic coherence and heldout values. Out of these 50 models, our algorithm found that 10 of them had greater semantic salience, and thus had a statistically higher likelihood of forming a coherent ‘topic’. Since not all word combination likelihoods imply a theme, K-means clustering is required to measure the co-occurrence likelihood of words that make up a topic in relation to the statistical significance of other topics.<sup>49</sup> These are the topics classified and numbered by our stm algorithm as 1, 4, 7, 9, 14, 16, 23, 35, 39, 47.

Topic 1 demonstrates the over-reliance on the term ‘disinformation’ as the dominant discursive anchor for NATO documents, mostly correlating with keywords associated with its spread, the role of fact-checking, and misinformation, which is a less-used term. Topic 16 demonstrates that the term ‘Russian’ is highly correlated with the terms ‘fake’ and ‘news’ within the context of info(rmat)ion\_war(fare), as well as ‘troll’. The second most salient

<sup>49</sup> Wang, Hongning, Duo Zhang, and ChengXiang Zhai, “Structural Topic Model for Latent Topical Structure Analysis,” (Proceedings of the 49th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics: Human Language Technologies, 2011), 1526–535; Margaret E. Roberts, Brandon M. Stewart, Dustin Tingley, Christopher Lucas, Jetson Leder-Luis, Shana Kushner Gadarian, Bethany Albertson, and David G. Rand, “Structural Topic Models for Open-Ended Survey Responses,” *American Journal of Political Science* 58, no. 4 (2014): 1064–082.



model is Topic 23, which builds around the keyword ‘propaganda’. This model correlates most significantly with the n-gram clusterings: ‘strateg\_’, ‘fact’, ‘truth’, and ‘counter’, suggesting that such emphasis is generally made within the context of combating external propaganda efforts. The third most salient Topic Model is 4, which is built around Russia and the n-grams ‘Ukrain\_’, ‘hybrid\_war’, ‘Putin’, and ‘Moscow’. At least within the context of Russian military involvement in Crimea and Donbass, NATO has largely relied on the term ‘hybrid warfare’ instead of ‘disinformation’ or ‘misinformation’, suggesting that it doesn’t consider this military entanglement within the context of ‘disinformation’.

To understand NATO’s most active institution dealing with disinformation defense, Topic 35 is instructive. There, the keyword ‘disinformation’ correlates with STRATCOMCOE (NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence in Riga, Latvia) and RigaStratCom, revealing NATO’s frontier defense mechanism of choice in issues related to disinformation. This is in line with Topic 30, where geographies correlated with our ‘disinformation’ keyword cluster reveals ‘europ\_’, ‘baltic’, ‘german\_’, ‘danger’, and ‘prepar\_’, hinting at NATO’s perceived geographic vulnerability against disinformation attempts. A secondary vulnerability cluster emerges in Topic 49, where the ‘lithuania’, ‘estonia’, ‘japan’, ‘poland’, and ‘baltic’ designations correlate with ‘target’ and ‘defens\_’ n-grams<sup>50</sup>. In Topic 14, we discover the emergence of COVID-related disinformation issues, although the correlated terms are not yet sufficient to infer a political trend of preference.

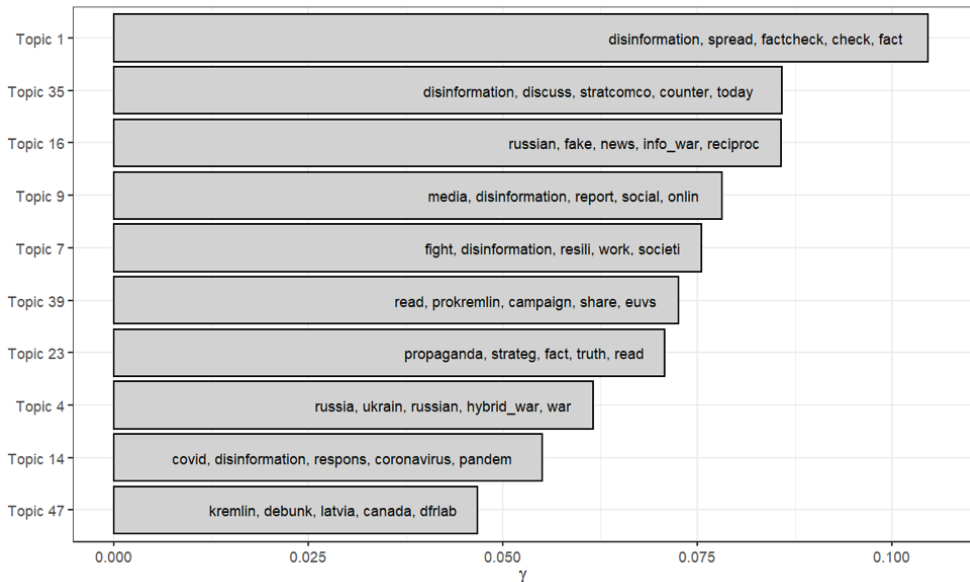


Figure 6: Top ten topics by prevalence and gamma-values ( $\gamma$ ) that measure their levels of contribution to each topic

A longitudinal topic frequency analysis of Topic 1 shows that the keyword ‘disinformation’ indeed enters the NATO lexicon after the Russian military involvement in Ukraine. However,

<sup>50</sup> In computational linguistics, an n-gram is a continuous sequence of ‘n-items’ (letters, words) that form a part of speech or text. Often, n-grams are used for ‘stemming’, reducing words to their simplest base. For example, words ‘attacked’, ‘attacking’, ‘attacker’ derive from the n-gram stem ‘attac\_’. Marc Damashek, “Gauging Similarity with N-Grams: Language-Independent Categorization of Text,” *Science* 267, no. 5199 (1995): 843–48.

we observe a clear difference between NATO official texts (web) that don't prefer this term and NATO tweets that overwhelmingly rely on it. The peak in early 2014 is followed by a second peak after late 2016, possibly owing to the US elections, reaching its all-time peak in 2020, predictably due to COVID-related concerns. Topic 4 demonstrates how Russian involvement in Ukraine, as well as the 'hybrid war' narrative, becomes less popular over time. Despite its significant salience in NATO tweets and a slight reference in its documents in 2014, these references largely disappear from NATO's discursive attention zone by 2016.

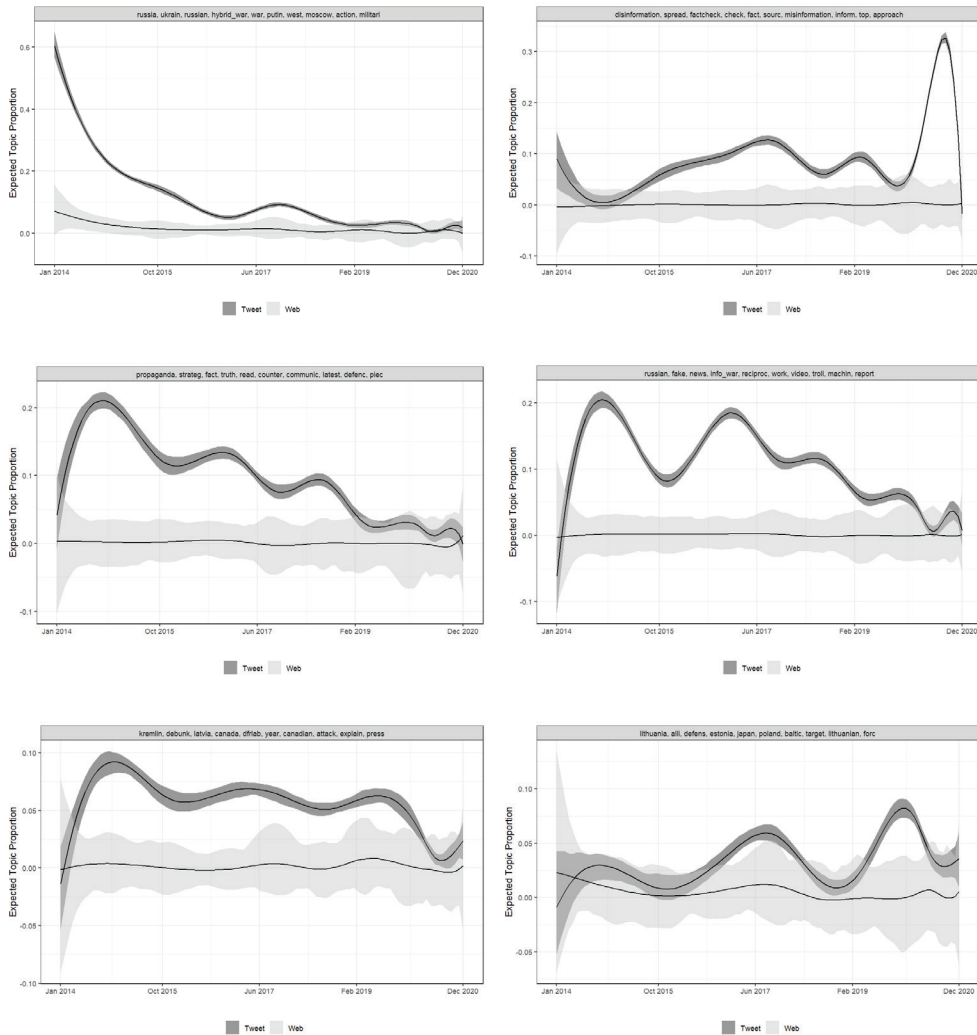


Figure 7: Longitudinal temporal frequencies of 6 highest-salience topic models

The tendency to pinpoint Russia in statements containing the keywords ‘fake news’, ‘troll’, and ‘information warfare’ is once again clearest in tweets as opposed to official statements, as seen in Topic 16. This tendency peaks once during the Russian military operation in Ukraine, peaks a second time around the US elections in 2016, gradually disappears from NATO’s Twitter focus after 2017, and exhibits a brief third peak around the poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal in Salisbury, UK, in March 2018. The same goes for Topic 23, which focuses on terms correlated with ‘propaganda’. It peaks with the Russian involvement in Ukraine, marking a second brief peak around the US elections in 2016 and a third peak around the Skripal poisoning incident in 2018, later disappearing from the NATO lexicon. Regarding NATO’s reference to the Baltics and Germany as potential vulnerabilities against disinformation and hybrid war, Topic 30 produces a more varied picture. Here, we observe a significant and comparable activity within NATO tweets and official documents alike. Both NATO tweets and official documents follow similar curves around the same periods (Ukraine war, US elections in 2016, Skripal poisoning, and COVID onset in March 2020), suggesting that such geographic vulnerabilities aren’t new and carry on with significant strategic baggage from the past. Indeed, as Topics 47 and 49 also demonstrate, concerns and vulnerabilities around Canada, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, and the Baltic states are emphasized continuously both in NATO official documents and in tweets.

To sum up, NATO’s discourse on disinformation presents a discursive continuity and is broadly in line with its securitization preferences prior to the popularization of the terms ‘fake news’ or ‘information operations’. By leveraging a buzzword that has mainstream popularity, NATO’s discursive efforts refocus the alliance’s strategic agenda back on Russia, and semantically clusters these securitization moves on existing competition areas with Moscow. Since securitization is the process by which regular events, actors, and phenomena are elevated into a policy frame that requires special measures, NATO’s disinformation discourse directly fits into the theoretical spectrum. NATO’s 2018 Brussels Summit Declaration and 2019 London Declaration both prioritized disinformation as a major strategic-level alliance threat, and combating information warfare has been integrated into NATO military exercises since 2017. NATO has been running wargames that focus on coordinated Russian-origin disinformation campaigns against NATO battlegroups in Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, and has been investing in the establishment of new digital countermeasure labs.<sup>51</sup> In other words, as a successful securitization effort, disinformation has been receiving ample attention, resources, and cohesion-building initiatives within the NATO framework. As part of this strategy, NATO’s securitization efforts have a clear securitizing agent (alliance), existential threat (Russian-origin information warfare), a referent object (alliance cohesion, electoral integrity), and an audience (international public opinion), along with new doctrinal changes and investment schemes.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

Our analysis has shown that NATO has developed different disinformation-related communication strategies for two outlets: a more up-to-date and faster-developing threat discourse for its Twitter presence, and a more traditional, slow-moving threat presence visible in its official documents. This is particularly interesting and acutely visible in other

<sup>51</sup> “NATO’s Approach to Countering Disinformation: A Focus on COVID-19”, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 17 July 2020, <https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/177273.htm>.

20<sup>th</sup> century military topics like command and control cohesion, missile defense, air defense architecture, naval defense, satellites, and military intelligence-related topics that are more frequently mentioned in official documents and much less referenced on Twitter. However, the overwhelming majority of disinformation, misinformation, hybrid war, information warfare, and fake news-related communication topics are securitized on Twitter. This shows the emergence of two NATO discourses: one for its official documents, and one for its social media presence and messaging.

The advent of digital communication technologies and social media has been significant for the evolution of securitization. Since securitization entails the production and dissemination of insecurity frames through discursive networks, a more dynamic, interconnected information ecosystem is more conducive for collective meaning-making. On social media, the formation of insecurity processes are more rapid and interactive, and are able to influence and alter the traditional, boring securitizing acts of elites. To that end, media outlets like Twitter provide a more interactive and fast-paced securitizing environment where elites and non-elites can set the security agenda and mobilize the masses. The most clear expression of this novel medium, as demonstrated in our results, is that NATO's Twitter securitization efforts change much faster, and spread more widely than traditional outlets like official speeches, texts, and reports.

This could be interpreted in two ways: first, NATO may prefer securitizing disinformation exclusively on Twitter, since such threats are generally more visible and debated on social media platforms. The second interpretation is that NATO's official statements and documents could largely be focusing on macro-level doctrinal issues, which pose a direct military security threat to its members, rather than disinformation, which is a nuisance but poses no direct military threat. Since disinformation is being discussed in contemporary policy debates within the context of electoral integrity and social polarization, their actual military relevance may not be salient enough to be taken into account in formal NATO documents. In either case, our study of the NATO lexicon demonstrated that disinformation and related terms are constructed as uniquely 'Russian' nuisances. This isn't surprising since most of these terms, or at least their digital interpretations, have entered the NATO lexicon after the Russian military involvement in eastern Ukraine and Crimea. However, since then, Russia remained the only country against which NATO has constructed its disinformation narratives, indicating that Russia is NATO's sole disinformation concern. Although very recently China has emerged as a runner-up country within the context of COVID-related disinformation concerns, Russia is largely the main threat in NATO's lexicon. This could be counterproductive to long-term NATO efforts to combat disinformation, given the global prevalence of fake news and information meddling. While Russian disinformation efforts are observably valid, cornering a universal problem like disinformation into the limited space of NATO's interactions with a single country may lead to conceptual contraction. This, in turn, may prevent NATO from mobilizing full alliance resources against disinformation, defined as a global and universal problem.

Overall, our analysis has shown that NATO still defines its security identity against Russia, and there has not been a significant shift in NATO's securitization dynamics since the Cold War, as evidenced by our comparative analysis of older and newer NATO texts. Although Chinese disinformation attempts have also begun to enter NATO's threat-related language, the organization's primary discursive security identity continues to develop against

and around Russia. This is most evident in our longitudinal analysis of the pre- and post-2014 documents that similarly prioritize Russia as a threat, implying that it is not really the disinformation or fake news agenda that is rendering Russia a threat for NATO. This bolsters the hypothesis that even if technologies change, the NATO-Russia rivalry will remain securitized in the same way. In other words, the contemporary disinformation and fake news agenda is a continuation of the same NATO-Russia rivalry – at least in discursive form – through newer mediums.

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## Ontological Security and Iran's Missile Program

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### Abstract

*This article attempts to answer the question of why Iran is reluctant to discuss its missile program. Unlike other studies that focus on the importance of Iran's missile program in providing deterrence for the country and establishing a balance of military power in the region, or that view the missile program as one of dozens of post-revolutionary contentious issues between Iran and the United States, this article looks into Iran's ontological security. The paper primarily argues that the missile program has become a source of pride for Iranians, inextricably linked to their identity. As a result, the Iranian authorities face two challenges when it comes to sitting at the negotiation table with their Western counterparts: deep mistrust of the West, and the ensuing sense of shame over any deal on the missile issue. Thus, Iranian officials opted to preserve the identity components of the program, return to normal and daily routines of life, insist on the missile program's continuation despite sanctions and threats, and emphasize the dignity and honor of having a missile program. The article empirically demonstrates how states can overcome feelings of shame and mistrust. It also theoretically proves that when physical security conflicts with ontological security, governments prefer the former over the latter, based on the history of Iran's nuclear negotiations. They appeal to create new narratives to justify changing their previous policies.*

**Keywords:** Iran's missile program, ontological security, United States, nuclear negotiations, identity

### 1. Introduction

Concerns about the development of Iran's missile program are not new in the international community. For more than three decades, the West has consistently expressed concern about the scope of Iran's missile program, as well as its motives and purposes.<sup>1</sup> The August 2002 disclosure of the new dimensions of Iran's nuclear program heightened these concerns, as there had been suspicions about possible links between the nuclear and missile programs. Therefore, a new concept of "nuclear terror" was coined on the account that Iran was pursuing both nuclear and missile programs.<sup>2</sup> Such claims have been consistently refuted by Iranian

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen M. McCall, "Iran's Ballistic Missile and Space Launch Programs," *Congressional Research Service*, January 9, 2020, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/IF10938.pdf>; "Gulf States: Nuclear talks should address Iran missile programme," *Reuters Agency*, June 16, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/gcc-foreign-ministers-iran-missile-programme-should-be-addressed-nuclear-talks-2021-06-16/>.

<sup>2</sup> Brenda Shaffer, "If Iran is Not Checked, Nuclear Terror is Next: America Needs a Plan," *Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs*, August 9, 2004, <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/if-iran-not-checked-nuclear-terror-next-america-needs-plan>.

officials.<sup>3</sup> However, the West's attention brought Iran's nuclear program to a halt in at least two cases. In the first case, on November 14, 2004, Iran's uranium enrichment program was temporarily suspended as part of an agreement between Iran and the E3 (France, Germany, and the United Kingdom), and Iran voluntarily implemented the Additional Protocol of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In the second case, on July 14, 2015, Iran signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), accepting serious restrictions on the number of active centrifuges, the percentage of enrichment, the amount of enriched uranium reserves, and the condition and quality of new inspections by IAEA inspectors, despite not giving up its enrichment. Although these restrictions, which lasted until 2019 and to which Iran adhered, helped to alleviate Western concerns, they did not completely eliminate them. That is why Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal on May 8, 2018, and reimpose sanctions on November 5, 2018, drew widespread condemnation both inside and outside of the United States. Joe Biden was one of the critics who stressed the need to return to JCPOA and tighten restrictions.

Compared to the nuclear program, the historical course of Iran's missile program is completely different; Iran has never agreed to sit at the negotiation table to discuss the quantity and quality of this military program and express its demands. In the case of the nuclear program, Iran was able to persuade the West that enrichment is its "red line," and that the quantity and quality of enrichment can be negotiated, but it has so far refused to withdraw from its previous positions on the missile program. Furthermore, for many countries, the nuclear program is primarily for civilian purposes, with the goal of producing clean energy. Therefore, countries cannot be prevented from moving towards producing clean energy while global warming has become a serious international concern. The nuclear program is of both civilian and military nature,<sup>4</sup> and it is unclear in which direction Iran is heading. The US National Intelligence Agency's report explicitly states that Iran's nuclear program was for military purposes until 2003, but from this year onward the country put a halt on it.<sup>5</sup> The IAEA reports, on the other hand, have always been ambiguous, as they have never expressed confidence in Iran's intention to develop a nuclear weapon.<sup>6</sup> Under such circumstances, it is difficult to convince the world's public opinion about the nature of Iran's nuclear program and the motivation for its continuation. Lupovici<sup>7</sup> refers to this condition as a "dual use security dilemma." According to him, once a dual-use technology is securitized (e.g., Iran's nuclear program), this framing sustains the security dilemma because rivals could always point to the ability to use the technology for military purposes, and thus to resecuritize it continuously. The military nature of Iran's missile program, on the other hand, is undeniable, and therefore,

<sup>3</sup> Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Spokesman's Reaction to GCC's Baseless Anti-Iran Accusations," June 19, 2021, <https://en.mfa.gov.ir/portal/NewsView/642364>; Ali Khamenei, "Statements in A Meeting with Nuclear Scientists," February 22, 2012, <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=19124>; Ali Khamenei, "Supreme Leader's Message to International Conference on Nuclear Disarmament," April 17, 2010, <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/treatise-content?id=228>; Ali Khamenei, "Statement On the 20th Anniversary of Ayatollah Khomeini's Death," June 4, 2009, <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=7089>; Ali Khamenei, "The President of Tajikistan Met with the Leader of the Revolution," January 18, 2006, <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/news-content?id=1352>.

<sup>4</sup> Jacques E. C. Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation: Identity, Emotions, Foreign Policy* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511491412>.

<sup>5</sup> Gregory F. Treverton, "The 2007 National Intelligence Estimate on Iran's Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities," *Center for Study of International*, May 2, 2013, <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/csi-intelligence-and-policy-monographs/pdfs/support-to-policymakers-2007-nie.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> IAEA Board Reports, "Verification and Monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)," *IAEA*, March 3, 2020, <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/focus/iran/iaea-and-iran-iaea-reports>.

<sup>7</sup> Amir Lupovici, "The Dual-Use Security Dilemma and the Social Construction of Insecurity," *Contemporary Security Policy* 42, no. 3 (2021): 257–85, doi: 10.1080/13523260.2020.1866845.

convincing the international community appears to be difficult. It should be noted that, unlike North Korea, Iran has never used its nuclear program to threaten other countries, nor has it initiated the program in response to Western pressure; however, the missile program has always been viewed as a means of deterrence and defense against threats. Iran has used its missile programs in at least three instances in recent years, two of which were targeted specifically at the United States. In the first case, Iran launched missile strikes targeting the ISIS headquarters in Deir-Ez-Zor, Syria, on June 19, 2017, in retaliation of an ISIS-linked terrorist attack on the Iranian parliament on June 7, 2017. In the second incident, on June 20, 2019, it used its missiles to shoot down a US Global Hawk drone that was allegedly violating Iranian airspace in the south of the country. In the latest case, Iran attacked two US military bases in Iraq in retaliation of the assassination of Qasem Soleimani, commander of the Quds Force, by US drones on January 3, 2020. This was unprecedented, as the last foreign government attack against a US territory occurred on December 7, 1941, when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Therefore, Iran has demonstrated that it has no red lines in using its missile program. This level of military capability, as well as its likely advancement in the future, has been a source of concern among European and American leaders.<sup>8</sup> US President Joe Biden promised to address the issue of Iran's nuclear and missile programs. However, this measure does not seem to be easy, at least in the case of Iran's missile program, and it will likely become one of his foreign policy challenges. One of the serious difficulties is that Iran has so far not expressed a willingness to talk about it and has always separated the nuclear negotiations from the negotiations on the missile program.

The main question that this article addresses is, why is Iran reluctant to negotiate over its missile program? The article examines the role of ontological security in this context. It makes two arguments: First, ontological security is as important as physical security, and, contrary to Mitzen's argument, it cannot be considered only when physical security and the security dilemma fail to explain an issue. Ontological security, like physical security, is a powerful and significant behavioral motivator in countries' foreign policies. States, according to Huysmans and McSweeney, require predictability and order, and they thrive on routine and secure relationships with others.<sup>9</sup> States construct their identities through these routinized relationships with others. Second, unlike the nuclear program, which was symbolically important for Iran in acquiring the right to produce nuclear energy, the missile program provides both physical and ontological security. While Iran can provide physical security without pursuing a missile program, it cannot achieve ontological security in any other way, since its ontological security is a result of its revolutionary Islamic identity over the last forty-three years and cannot be easily changed. Iran's missile program has become a source of pride for the country over the last four decades and disregarding it undermines its credibility. However, such a hypothesis does not apply to Iran's nuclear program since it has not been able to lead to the proliferation of nuclear weapons and deterrence, nor has it been able to produce enough nuclear power to meet the needs of the country. So, insisting on maintaining the program could lead to additional sanctions. While the development of the missile program may result in sanctions against Iran, it will also prevent any military attack on the country and maintain the regime's credibility among the Iranian people. Iranian officials

<sup>8</sup> "Brussels Summit Communiqué", NATO, June 14, 2021, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_185000.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_185000.htm).

<sup>9</sup> Jeff Huysmans, "Security! What Do You Mean? From Concept to Empty Signifier," *European Journal of International Relations* 4, no. 2 (1998): 226–55.

can regenerate the ideological-revolutionary identity created after the Islamic Revolution by emphasizing the country's independence, nationalism, and the need for a missile program, saving the regime from uncertainty and existential anxiety.

This article makes two original contributions. First, it demonstrates how Iran has integrated its missile program into its ontological security, an issue that has received less attention as most papers, instead, have focused on Iran's nuclear program or quality and quantity of Iran's missile capability. A second original insight revolves around the issue of how states can overcome feelings of shame and mistrust. In constructing its arguments, the article provides a brief overview of Iran's missile program. It then illustrates how ontological security can explain Iran's behavior over the missile program. The final section of the article discusses the weaknesses of the ontological security theory based on the studied case.

## 2. Literature Review

Iran has focused on improving its ballistic missile capabilities in recent years in order to demonstrate power at a regional level.<sup>10</sup> The origins of Iran's missile program can be traced back to its missile needs during the war with Iraq, which led to the country's self-sufficiency in missile production.<sup>11</sup> Iran's move toward missile capability was motivated by its inability to purchase weapons and respond to Iraq's missile attacks because of global sanctions. Therefore, Iran secretly purchased Scud missiles from Syria, North Korea, Libya, and China, and used them in the war while conducting research to develop its own missiles at the same time.<sup>12</sup> In the late 1990s, Iran launched several serious missile projects. These projects included strengthening the range and capacity of the Shahab-3 and Shahab-4 missiles, which could also launch satellites. With Iran's access to the Ashoura, the Ghadr-110, and the Sejil missiles, all of which have a range of over 2,000 kilometers, any geographic location in the Middle East appears to be within Iranian missile range; from Incirlik Air Base in Turkey to Diego Garcia Air Base in the Indian Ocean, and from Tel Aviv to US military bases in the Red Sea.<sup>13</sup>

The question of why Iran is hesitant to negotiate its missile program has been answered in three ways. The proponents of the defensive realism theory have claimed that given the geopolitical implications of Iran's situation in an unstable region<sup>14</sup> where countries like Pakistan and Israel are armed with nuclear weapons, the country should have its own missile capabilities. Such proponents believe that the United States has threatened Iran over the last four decades, explicitly advocating for regime change.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, Iran's effort to acquire missile capabilities is motivated by regional deterrence logic and the desire to maintain its regional position.<sup>16</sup> In this regard, Amir Hatami, the Hassan Rouhani administration's

<sup>10</sup> Farzin Nadimi, "Iran's Asymmetric Naval Warfare," *Policy Focus*, September 7, 2008, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/irans-asymmetric-naval-warfare>.

<sup>11</sup> Dinshaw Mistry, "European Missile Defense: Assessing Iran's ICBM Capabilities," *Arms Control Today*, October, 2007, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2007-10/iran-nuclear-briefs/european-missile-defense-assessing-iran%E2%80%99s-icbm-capabilities>.

<sup>12</sup> Uzi Rubin, "The Global Range of Iran's Ballistic Missile Program," *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs* 5, no. 26 (2006): 63.

<sup>13</sup> McCall, "Iran's Ballistic Missile and Space Launch Programs," 2.

<sup>14</sup> Mohammadreza Hafeznia, *Political Geography of Iran* (Tehran: Samt, 2013).

<sup>15</sup> Ali Ghadim Malalou and S.A Jafari, "The Role and Effect of The U.S. Missile Strategy on I.R.I Missile Strategy," *Journal of Defense Policy* 26, no. 102 (2018): 71-104.

<sup>16</sup> Ehsan Yari, "Geopolitical Requirements and Strategic Requirements of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Missile Program in the Anarchic Environment of the International System," *Scientific Journal of Security Horizons* 12, no. 42 (2019): 38-61; Hamidreza Ghavam Maleki, "The Role of Missiles in Iran's Deterrence Strategy," *Doctrine of Political, Defense and Security Policy* 2, no. 3

minister of defense, stated that “our country is in a geopolitical and strategic position. History also says that this region has always been subject to malicious intent of occupation. In recent days, we have seen the repetition of the phrase ‘all options are on the table’, and our enemy has constantly threatened us with military attack and bombing... Our priority is the issue of missiles, in which we have a strong position and we must upgrade it.”<sup>17</sup>

Proponents of the offensive realism theory view Iran’s nuclear and missile programs through the lens of power maximization<sup>18</sup> Iran’s goal, they believe, is to prioritize both programs simultaneously in order to develop offensive military capabilities.<sup>19</sup> In this regard, some scholarly works explain how Iran has sought to expand its regional power and ideologies since the 1979 Revolution. The country also pioneered an alternative approach to the prevailing international order, calling for the establishment of a new Islamic order. Acquiring missile capabilities is a prelude to Iran’s attainment of such a stance. The ideological conflicts between Iran and the United States amplify Iran’s political will to achieve this position. According to Ghadim Malalou and Asghar Jafari, “Iran is seeking to acquire hi-tech missile technologies and increase its defense capabilities due to its ideological conflict with the United States.”<sup>20</sup> In addition to gaining missile power, Iran is attempting to strengthen its proxy groups in the region. Iran’s military action in arming groups such as Hizbollah in Lebanon, the Popular Mobilization Forces (al-Hashd ash-Sha’bī) in Iraq, and Houthis in Yemen is part of this grand strategy.<sup>21</sup> In contrast, some analysts believe that the West’s efforts to address Iran’s missile program should be seen as “Iran phobia” or “Islamophobia.”<sup>22</sup> The main argument of these scholars is that the West does not want Iran and the Muslim world to be powerful and independent. Therefore, they obstruct the development of scientific programs in the Muslim world that would guarantee their independence. These scholars state “Iranophobia is the constant policy of U.S. and European countries against Iran.”<sup>23</sup>

The third group, which consists of proponents of the liberal approach, also emphasizes the economic circumstances necessary for Iranian society to achieve missile capabilities. Iran’s attempt to acquire the knowledge of missile production could put the government on a list of countries exporting military equipment, which would allow it to diversify its revenue streams beyond oil and gas sales. Therefore, diversifying Iran’s revenue portfolio has been and will continue to be a serious consideration for Iranian officials.<sup>24</sup> Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran’s Supreme Leader, has called Iran’s reliance on oil revenues “an economic problem,” and has suggested that “non-oil exports should increase to the point where Iran

(2011): 97–117; Bharath Gopalaswamy, “Iran’s Missile Program,” *BASIC Getting to Zero Papers 4* (2008): 2-3.

<sup>17</sup> Amir Hatami, “Iran’s Response to Western Concerns: Our Priority is Missile Power,” *Euronews*, August 18, 2018, <https://per.euronews.com/2018/08/18/our-focus-is-on-missile-power-iran-defense-minister-reacts-to-western-concerns>.

<sup>18</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014).

<sup>19</sup> Shahram Chubin and Robert S. Litwak, “Debating Iran’s Nuclear Aspirations,” *Washington Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (2003): 99–114. Also, see Ash Jain, *Nuclear Weapons and Iran’s Global Ambitions: Troubling Scenarios*, (Washington DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2011).

<sup>20</sup> Malalou and Jafari, “The Role and Effect of The U.S. Missile Strategy,” 71.

<sup>21</sup> Ariane M. Tabatabai and Colin P. Clarke, “Iran’s Proxies are More Powerful than Ever,” The RAND Corporation, October 16, 2019, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2019/10/irans-proxies-are-more-powerful-than-ever.html>.

<sup>22</sup> Ali Alfone, “What Iran’s Military Journals Reveal about the Role of Missiles in Strategic Deterrence,” The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, June 25, 2020, <https://agsiw.org/what-irans-military-journals-reveal-about-the-role-of-missiles-in-strategic-deterrence/>.

<sup>23</sup> “Why is the West Afraid of Iran’s Missile Program?,” *Islam Times*, February 4, 2021, <https://www.islamtimes.org/fa/article/914257>.

<sup>24</sup> “Iran Plans to Export arms with Sanctions Off,” *DW News Agency*, October 22, 2020, <https://www.dw.com/en/iran-plans-to-export-arms-with-sanctions-off/a-55365469>.

is no longer reliant on oil revenues.”<sup>25</sup> The arms market has always been booming with its global customers. As a result, Iran can also get a glimpse of this market. In this regard, in an analysis for the Strategic Research Center of the Expediency Council (the highest advisory organization to the Supreme Leader of Iran), Amir Abbasi Khoshkar proposes the sale of military arms, including Iranian missiles. He explains that “one of the most important goals of arms sales by the Islamic Republic of Iran is to attract financial and foreign exchange resources. Iran exported at least \$200 million weapons and military equipment between 2010 and 2014. Part of the foreign exchange reserves were obtained by selling weapons to the resistance axis [Hezbollah, Houthis, Iraqi militant groups], as well as Latin American and African countries... The resources obtained can be used to fund military research and lay the groundwork for improving the quantity and quality of weapons production.”<sup>26</sup>

The aforementioned studies have considered the military dimensions of Iran’s missile program as well as its importance in providing physical security. This is while ontological security is as important as physical importance for Iran and these studies ignore it. This article aims to explain how we can understand the political behavior of Iranian leaders regarding the missile program based on ontological security. Some scholars have already used ontological security to explain Iran’s political behavior in relation to its nuclear program. For example, Maysam Behravesht focuses on Iran and discusses its controversial nuclear behavior as an instance of “thin revisionism,” primarily oriented towards acquiring ontological security.<sup>27</sup> He explains that ontological security is what drives Iran to maintain an atomic capacity despite significant economic costs: “The most feasible position that would ensure the highest degree of ontological security for Iran is that of nuclear ‘threshold,’ a liminal status in which the identity assurances of latent nuclear capability are at hand while the insecurities and perils of counter-status-quo weaponization are absent.”<sup>28</sup> Arash Reisinezhad<sup>29</sup> also reiterates the narrative of Maysam Behravesht in a different manner. He emphasizes the importance of ontological security, rather than physical security, in influencing Iranian leaders’ perceptions of the nuclear program’s role in maintaining national security. According to Reisinezhad, the physical interpretation of security in light of the realism theory is insufficient to explain Iran’s decision-making drivers. Producing nuclear fuel and maintaining a uranium enrichment program are important goals for Iran, and they provide the country with a sense of pride and dignity. Thus, the primary purpose of the sanctions was not Iran’s physical security, but actually its ontological security.<sup>30</sup> The main purpose of such severe sanctions was to put Iran in a difficult economic situation in order to give up its nuclear program. They sought to make Iran regret pursuing its nuclear program, which the Iranians officials saw as a source of pride and a new identity.

Mohiaddin Mesbahi applied ontological security theory to study Iran-US relations. He believes that “ontological security has seldom been sufficiently present for Iran since the

<sup>25</sup> Ali Khamenei, “Supreme Leader Meets Economic Experts,” *The Web site of Khamenei.ir*, August 18, 2011, <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/print-content?id=101504>.

<sup>26</sup> Amir Abbasi Khoshkar, “Export of Military Equipment of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Opportunities and Capacities,” The Strategic Research Center of the Expediency Council, September 21, 2020, <https://csr.ir/fa/news/1063>.

<sup>27</sup> Maysam Behravesht, “State Revisionism and Ontological (in)security in International Politics: The Complicated Case of Iran and its Nuclear Behavior,” *Journal of International Relations and Development* 21, no. 4 (2018): 836–57. <http://doi.org/10.1057/s41268-018-0149-x>.

<sup>28</sup> Behravesht, “State Revisionism,” 20.

<sup>29</sup> Arash Reisinezhad, “Ontological Security and Iran’s Nuclear Problem,” *International Relations Research* 8, no. 1(2018): 185–214.

<sup>30</sup> Reisinezhad, “Ontological Security,” 199.

revolution. Iran's international environment has never generated a stable cognitive condition favoring normalcy and stability."<sup>31</sup> The host of complex events ranging from military threats to sanctions never allowed Iran to establish trust in the routinization of security as a predictable expectation and right. As a result, "Iran's existential security has been the subject of constant challenges, and thus its attainment has required a constant struggle."<sup>32</sup> In the current study, to limit the scope of the research, we will only focus on the behavior and mentality of Iranian officials, and we will not examine the views of US officials on Iran's missile program. Contrary to Iran's nuclear program, which Behraves and Reisinezhad attributed to ontological security, the reasons why Iran is unwilling to negotiate over its missile programs cannot be explained solely by ontological security theory. Such a limited explanation could produce the same inconclusive results as previous research based on the theories of realism and liberalism.

### 3. Theoretical Framework: Ontological Security

The concept of ontological security was first coined by psychologist R.D. Laing.<sup>33</sup> Following Laing, Anthony Giddens<sup>34</sup> applied this concept "to provide a sociological understanding for individual human beings."<sup>35</sup> According to Giddens, a human's understanding of "self" should be generated and maintained on a daily and normal basis by the individual's actions.<sup>36</sup> If individuals can always offer "answers" to basic questions about themselves, a sense of ontological security will be created.<sup>37</sup> For those who subscribe to this theory, humans require a sense of existential security and strive for a constant and stable understanding of themselves throughout their lives. Along the same lines, scholars of international relations agree that "nation-states play a vital role in addressing this need, providing a stable environment and a national narrative that individuals are embedded within."<sup>38</sup> They explain that states, as social actors, seek the security of their "identity" as a whole, in addition to physical security and provision of national interests, as well as maximization of material power. This leads to a desire to maintain national identity and subjectivity, which can have a tremendous impact on state behavior.<sup>39</sup> In this regard, international relations scholars first used this concept to underline that ontological security is an explanatory factor when realism fails,<sup>40</sup> and then applied it to an elaboration of the power of deterrence,<sup>41</sup> hybrid warfare,<sup>42</sup> information

<sup>31</sup> Mohiaddin Mesbahi, "Trust and US-Iran Relations: Between the Prisoners' Dilemma and the Assurance Game," *Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs* 4, no. 1 (2013): 7–51.

<sup>32</sup> Mesbahi, "Trust and US-Iran Relations," 29–30.

<sup>33</sup> Ronald David Laing, *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (London: Penguin Books, 1990 [1960]).

<sup>34</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (California: Stanford University Press, 1991); Bill McSweeney, *Security, Identity and Interests: A Sociology of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>35</sup> Mesbahi, "Trust and US-Iran Relations," 30.

<sup>36</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (California: Stanford University Press, 1991), 243.

<sup>37</sup> Giddens, *Modernity and Self-identity*, 47.

<sup>38</sup> Derek Bolton, "Targeting Ontological Security: Information Warfare in the Modern Age," *Political Psychology* 42, no. 1 (2020): 127–42.

<sup>39</sup> Ayşe Zarakol, "States and Ontological Security: A Historical Rethinking," *Cooperation and Conflict* 52, no. 1 (2017): 48–68; Michael Skey, "A Sense of Where You Belong in the World: National Belonging, Ontological Security and the Status of Ethnic Majority in England," *Nations and Nationalism* 16, no. 4 (2010): 715–33.

<sup>40</sup> Jennifer Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma," *European Journal of International Relations* 12, no. 3 (2006): 341–70; Brent J. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-Identity and the IR State (New International Relations)* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

<sup>41</sup> Amir Lupovici, *The Power of Deterrence: Emotions, Identity, and American and Israeli Wars of Resolve* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

<sup>42</sup> Maria Mälksoo, "Countering Hybrid Warfare as Ontological Security Management: The Emerging Practices of the EU and

warfare,<sup>43</sup> state denial of historical crimes,<sup>44</sup> and changes in the country's foreign policy.<sup>45</sup>

Ontological security, according to Mitzen, is defined as the security of the "self," and not the body, which is defined as who we are and what our identity is.<sup>46</sup> She believes that a definite need for identity is proportionate to actions with identity. As a result, uncertainty is viewed as a threat to rational action and identity. Forms of uncertainty include fear, ignorance, confusion, and indeterminacy in international relations theories.<sup>47</sup> Overcoming this fear of uncertainty is achieved through the normalization of current routines and habits of daily life.<sup>48</sup> States should be able to overcome similar threats to maintain their identities. The identity of a state, which is formed based on a narrative that has developed over time, reinforces its foreign policy actions in interstate relations. Existential anxiety and personal insecurities become important for states when they realize that their actions are incompatible with the identity and developed narrative of their "self."<sup>49</sup>

According to Steele, ontological security is construed by states' actions, which are suggestive of their identities.<sup>50</sup> Thus, for ontological security, security is driven by individual and national identity, that is, the defense of the virtual self and the collective mental image. Maintaining and shaping the mental image that each society has of itself is a central issue of national security, and any distortion in this virtual self or collective mental view that jeopardizes ontological security can cause individual and national anxiety.<sup>51</sup> It can be concluded that behaviors and actions that contradict national identity and collective mentality might result in shame. Shame is used as a metaphor to explain how identity disruptions cause states to take measures against realistic interests.<sup>52</sup> At the state level, shame is viewed as a concern about a state's ability to adapt past or future actions to the narrative that it has used to justify its behavior. Shame is intended to cause anxiety and distress about the official narratives and biographies of individuals.<sup>53</sup> The ability of actors to justify and make sense of their actions and purpose in ways that are logically compatible with the image that they have of themselves is crucial; this is the core idea of the biographical narrative. Such a narrative becomes one of the manifestations of reality as the identity of an agent depends on it. For Giddens, pride and honor are considered the opposite of shame; a firm assurance of the comprehensiveness and value of the identity narrative that an individual offers.<sup>54</sup> Honor, according to Richard Lebow, is understood in tandem with individual pride. Honor makes

NATO," *European Security* 27, no. 3 (2018): 374–92.

<sup>43</sup> Derek Bolton, "Targeting Ontological Security: Information Warfare in the Modern Age," *Political Psychology* 42, no. 1 (2020): 127–42.

<sup>44</sup> Ayşe Zarakol, "Ontological (in)security and State Denial of Historical Crimes: Turkey and Japan," *International Relations* 24, no. 1 (2010): 3–23.

<sup>45</sup> Jelena Subotic, "Narrative, Ontological Security, and Foreign Policy Change," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 12, no. 4 (2016): 610–27.

<sup>46</sup> Mitzen, "Ontological Security," 344.

<sup>47</sup> Brian C. Rathbun, "Uncertain about Uncertainty: Understanding the Multiple Meanings of a Crucial Concept in International Relations Theory," *International Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (2007): 533–34; Mälksoo, "Countering Hybrid Warfare," 379.

<sup>48</sup> Jennifer Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics and Implications for the Study of European Security," CIDEL Workshop, October 22–23, 2004, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.476.9317&rep=rep1&type=pdf>, 18–19.

<sup>49</sup> Brent J. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-Identity and the IR State (New International Relations)* (New York: Routledge, 2008a), 13.

<sup>50</sup> Brent J. Steele, "Ideals were Really Never in Our Possession; Torture, Honor and Us: Identity," *International Relation* 22, no. 2 (2008): 243–61.

<sup>51</sup> Bill Mc Sweeney, *Security, Identity, and Interests: A Sociology of International Relations* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 12–23.

<sup>52</sup> Steele, *Ontological Security*, 13.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, 65.



sense when others accept and admire it.<sup>55</sup>

Since Anthony Giddens<sup>56</sup> developed the concept of ontological security to provide a sociological understanding of individual human security, it has entered the field of international relations (IR) primarily through the work of Huysmans<sup>57</sup> and McSweeney.<sup>58</sup> This concept has been used by researchers to explain state behavior and to launch a new research agenda in international politics.<sup>59</sup> Despite the allure of ontological security for producing novel insights into some important issues in IR, its application has been met with criticism. Some scholars criticize its use at the state level. According to some critics, the concept of ontological security was originally developed for understanding and analyzing individuals, and it was not meant to be applied to states.<sup>60</sup> Other critics focus on the definition of ontological security that has been reduced to mere identity preservation and is biased toward continuity and the maintenance of the status quo.<sup>61</sup> Some scholars like Karl Gustafsson and Nina C. Krickel-Choi believe that ontological security has no clarity concerning the key concepts of ontological insecurity and anxiety. So, they propose to adherents of the ontological security theory to distinguish between normal and neurotic anxiety. They argue that not all anxiety is necessarily neurotic. Karl Gustafsson and Nina C. Krickel-Choi explain that “ontological insecurity and neurotic anxiety can be seen as synonymous, while normal anxiety is different and something that we all experience to some degree.”<sup>62</sup>

Regardless of some criticisms, Gustafsson and Krickel-Choi believe that “ontological security has proved fruitful for addressing a wide variety of theoretical and empirical concerns. It has allowed scholars interested in status revisionism, ideology, and nationalism to enter into a conversation with scholars working on identity practices, material environments, collective memory, transitional justice and reconciliation, diasporas, regionalism, foreign policy, power transitions, popular protests, populism or security communities.”<sup>63</sup> There is a growing body of work that is concerned with ontological security scholarship in IR.<sup>64</sup> One of the issues that is analyzed through this theory is the political behavior of Iranian leaders in relation to the country’s missile program. Iran’s refusal to enter into negotiations over its missile program appears to be motivated by a fear of jeopardizing its identity and ontological security. According to Huysmans and Mälksoo, Iran employs ontological security “as a strategy to manage the limits of reflexivity by fixing social relations into a symbolic and international order.”<sup>65</sup> In the following section, we will examine how this behavior is formed.

<sup>55</sup> Richard Ned Lebow, “Constructive Realism,” *International Studies Review* 6, no. 2 (2003): 347.

<sup>56</sup> Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, 243.

<sup>57</sup> Huysmans, “Security! What Do You Mean?,” 226–55.

<sup>58</sup> McSweeney, *Security, Identity, and Interests*.

<sup>59</sup> Mitzen, “Ontological Security in World Politics”; Steele, “Ideals were Really Never in Our Possession”.

<sup>60</sup> Ned Lebow, *National Identities and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Stuart Croft, “Constructing Ontological Insecurity: The Insecuritization of Britain’s Muslims,” *Contemporary Security Policy* 33, no. 2 (2012): 219–35; Alanna Crolkowski, “State Personhood in Ontological Security theories of International Relations and Chinese Nationalism: an Aceptical View,” *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 2, no. 1 (2008): 109–33.

<sup>61</sup> Christopher S. Browning and P. Joenniemi, “Ontological Security, Self-articulation and the Securitization of Identity,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 52, no. 1 (2017): 31–47; Patricia Greve, “Ontological Security, the Struggle for Recognition, and the Maintenance of Security Communities,” *Journal of International Relations and Development* 21, no. 4 (2018): 858–82.

<sup>62</sup> Karl Gustafsson and Nina C. Krickel-Choi, “Returning to the Roots of Ontological Security: Insights from the Existentialist Anxiety Literature,” *European Journal of International Relations* 26, no. 3 (2020): 890.

<sup>63</sup> Gustafsson and Krickel-Choi, “Returning to the Roots of Ontological Security,” 877.

<sup>64</sup> Brent J. Steele, “Welcome Home! Routines, Ontological Insecurity and the Politics of US Military Reunion Videos,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 32, no. 3 (2019): 322–43; R. Mac Ginty, “Circuits, the Everyday and International Relations: Connecting the Home to the International and Transnational,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 54, no. 2 (2019): 234–53; Bahar Rumelili, *Conflict Resolution and Ontological Security* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

<sup>65</sup> Huysmans, “Security! What Do You Mean?,” 242; Mälksoo, “Countering Hybrid Warfare,” 379.

#### 4. Iran and Ontological Security

In the theoretical framework, we argued that states are ashamed of actions that distort the identities they have created. Therefore, they are constantly avoiding performing such actions. This section of the article delves into the concept of ontological security and how it relates to Iran's missile program.

##### 4.1. The concept of shame and the continuation of Iran's missile conflict

To comprehend the concept of shame in the theory of ontological security, an analysis of biographical narratives is needed. Shame is formed when an agent, with a reflective attitude towards his or her actions, realizes that the actions are inconsistent with his/her and others' perceptions of him or her. Iran's biographical narrative can be understood in light of three concepts: Islamism, history, and geopolitics. Regarding the first concept, the Islamic Republic of Iran has tried to portray itself as a country that supports all anti-exploitation, anti-colonial, and anti-imperialist movements over the last forty-three years. Administrations that came to power after the revolution, regardless of their political affiliation, have always pledged to support "the underprivileged," a term used in relation to the people of Palestine, Yemen, Iraq, and Afghanistan.<sup>66</sup> Shiite Iran considers itself as the true representative of Islam and has attempted to introduce its political system as a model to other Islamic countries.<sup>67</sup> According to Islamic teachings propagated by Iranian clerics, the legitimacy of Iran's system is divine, and the government will be returned to the family of the Prophet and the twelfth Shiite Imam, a redeemer who will appear in the future. To make a provision, Iran must go through five stages: Islamic revolution, Islamic system, Islamic government, Islamic society, and finally, the Islamic civilization, of which the country is currently in the third.<sup>68</sup> To reach this end, according to Iran's 20-Year Vision Document, the country must in 2025 be "a developed one, regionally first in the economy, science, and technology, with Islamic and revolutionary identity, inspiring other nations of Islam, and with constructive and effective interaction in international and secure relations, independent, and authoritative with a defense system based on comprehensive deterrence."<sup>69</sup> Iran's missile program is part of the country's military capability to resist oppression and foreign pressure, to assist Islamic movements and the oppressed around the world, to prevent foreign interference in domestic affairs and to preserve its Islamic identity. Iranian officials believe that what distinguishes the Islamic Republic from the Pahlavi era is its independence, sense of dignity, and resistance to oppressors.<sup>70</sup> These achievements, which shape Iran's new identity, are all the result of military capabilities, including missile technology. According to the Islamic Republic's leaders, halting the development of the missile program will not only thwart Iran's grand plans, but also weaken the Islamic Republic in the eyes of its friends, bringing it

<sup>66</sup> John L. Esposito, *The Iranian Revolution: Its Global Impact* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 1990). Also see, Mohammad Jamshidi, "Why is Iran's Involvement in the Region More Important than 'the Most Essential Matters of the Country'?" October 23, 2019, <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/7111/Why-is-Iran-s-involvement-in-the-region-more-important-than-the>.

<sup>67</sup> David Menashri, *The Iranian Revolution and The Muslim World (Westview Special Studies on the Middle East)* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990). Also see: R. K. Ramazani, "Ideology and Pragmatism in Iran's Foreign Policy," *Middle East Journal* 58, no. 4 (2004): 549–59.

<sup>68</sup> Ali Khamenei, "The 'Second Phase of the Revolution' Statement Addressed to the Iranian Nation," February 11, 2019, <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/6415/The-Second-Phase-of-the-Revolution-Statement-addressed-to-the>.

<sup>69</sup> Ali Khamenei, "The 20 Year National Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran," November 14, 2003, <https://irandaportal.syr.edu/20-year-national-vision>.

<sup>70</sup> Ali Khamenei, "Statements at the Meeting of the Commanders and Staff of the Army Air Force," February 8, 2018, <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=38872>.

to shame.<sup>71</sup> Iranian authorities believe that if they retreat to the West and negotiate, they will have accepted the West's superiority over them. This entails giving in to feelings of humiliation.<sup>72</sup> An action that is not tolerable to Iranians. They are proud of their history and describe it as an ancient empire. A history in which they have never tolerated the domination of other states. French historian and archaeologist Roman Ghirshman states that "the Iranians [during the Achaemenid period] not only established a world empire but also succeeded in creating a world civilization with a vast area of influence."<sup>73</sup> He adds The Achaemenids were the first to exchange images and ideas between East and West in terms of material culture, religious beliefs and spiritual culture.<sup>74</sup> They were the first nation to resist foreign pressures and invasions (Arabs, Mongols, Alexander the Great, Afghans), and were able to integrate the invaders into their culture. The Achaemenids have never been subject to direct colonization and have always resisted all forms of aggression against their territories, which they have proudly defended. These statements have been heard and cited many times by Iranian officials and citizens as they feel a sense of pride for this history.

The Islamic Republic of Iran completed this proud record by projecting an image of the persistent revolution that had placed the Iranians in an ideal environment for at least a decade, and by claiming to be the only nation that had confronted two world superpowers. In fact, when Iranian students occupied the US embassy in Tehran in 1979 and detained 53 embassy officials and personnel, they had a sense of pride given that they were able to humiliate one of history's superpowers, the United States. Every day for several months, Tehran residents gathered in front of the US embassy and chanted anti-American slogans. To this day, the occasion has been remembered as an unforgettably great day; Ayatollah Khamenei called it "the days of God (*Ayam Allah* in Arabic)."<sup>75</sup> Iran has repeatedly propagated the claim that it is "the only independent state in the world that can stand up to the USA and resist its demands," and attempted to persuade Iranian citizens to believe it. During nuclear negotiations, they coined and used the terms "heroic flexibility"<sup>76</sup> and "greatest victory" (*fath-ol-fotuh* in Arabic) for nuclear negotiations to illustrate that they have never retreated from their long-held/strong-held revolutionary position. Given this background, it becomes clear that capitulating to Western pressures in missile programs creates a sense of shame for them, diminishing their Islamic-Iranian identity. In actuality, heroic flexibility cannot be applied to Iran's missile programs due to three main reasons. The first reason is that at its peak, Iran's nuclear program could only generate electricity. While the country had other options for generating electricity (using solar power plants, thermal power plants, and hydroelectric power plants), officials feel more secure by obtaining missile power. This sense of security encompasses not only physical security but also a psychological/identity security. Iranian officials are aware that their country is not a member of regional coalitions and does not have a strategic alliance with major powers. Due to this disadvantageous position, citizens have been told for more

<sup>71</sup> Ali Khamenei, "To Say that the World's Future is a World of Negotiation, is either from Ignorance or Treason," *Fars News Agency*, March 30, 2016, <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13950111000275>.

<sup>72</sup> Ali Khamenei, "Statements in the Meeting of Professors and Students at the University of Science and Technology," January 13, 2009, <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=4992>.

<sup>73</sup> Roman Ghirshman, *Iran: From the Earliest Times to the Islamic Conquest*, Fourth Ed, translated to Persian by Mohammad Moein (Tehran: Scientific and Cultural Pub, 1993), 230.

<sup>74</sup> Ghirshman, *Iran*, 233.

<sup>75</sup> Ali Khamenei, "Message about the National Day of Struggle against Global Arrogance[U.S]" November 4, 1990, <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/message-content?id=2376>.

<sup>76</sup> Ali Khamenei, "Imam Hassan Used the Peace Treaty to Defeat the Enemy," November 7, 2016, <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/4301/Imam-Hassan-used-the-Peace-Treaty-to-defeat-the-enemy-Leader>.

than four decades that producing weapons and achieving self-sufficiency are the only ways to gain security.<sup>77</sup> As a result of their steadfast reliance on this narrative that they have been reproducing for years, Iranian officials feel threatened by the prospect of negotiations on their nuclear program. They are unable to justify any negotiations concerning the missile program given that such concessions would, in their eyes, humiliate their country.

The second reason is that Iran had squandered all opportunities to obtain a nuclear weapon, and it was difficult to tolerate further sanctions on something for which there was no longer a reasonable justification. In particular, the economic impact of sanctions on people's lives changed their opinion that the nuclear program is worth resisting the West.<sup>78</sup> As the economic sanctions became more severe, the Iranian people turned away from the Ahmadinejad administration and its claims, voting for the moderate candidate, Hassan Rouhani, in 2013 to negotiate with the West.<sup>79</sup> The victory of Rouhani in the election aided the regime in overcoming feelings of shame, and ontological insecurity. They began to create new narratives about the nuclear program and the necessity to negotiate with the West.

On the contrary, the Principlist (*Osulgarayan*) won the presidential elections on June 18, 2021, by criticizing the Rouhani administration's foreign policy. They claimed that the Rouhani administration had signed a bad deal. According to them, the JCPOA was a dark moment in Iran's political history. The new administration does not want to repeat a similar measure in this situation, especially since the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corp (IRGC) is a strong supporter of Ebrahim Raisi and opposes any negotiation on the missile program. According to IRGC commanders, the missile program is a source of pride and national honor.<sup>80</sup> This source of pride can reconstruct Iran's ontological security.

The third reason is that, following the US withdrawal from the JCPOA, Iranian leaders heightened anti-American sentiments by exaggerating their distrust of the United States to the point where returning to the negotiation table may be inconceivable.<sup>81</sup> One of the strategies used by governments to overcome their sense of ontological insecurity is to create an imaginary enemy and magnify its threat to the country's national security. They can strengthen their former political identity and feel safe and secure as a result.<sup>82</sup>

The last concept that shapes Iran's identity is geopolitics. Iran, according to Tehran officials, is at the crossroads of international events and has long been coveted by foreign powers. Previously, the eastern, southern, and northern parts of the country were separated by the British and the Russian empires. Because of its rich oil and gas resources, Iran has been subject to foreign interference since the First World War, and its most popular administration (Mohammad Musadeq) was overthrown in 1953 by a coup d'état supported by the US and the UK.<sup>83</sup> After the Islamic Revolution, efforts were made to change the country's political system through pressure and sanctions. Therefore, Iranian officials fear that negotiating with the West on missile programs will erode the post-revolutionary identity. They are concerned

<sup>77</sup> See, Ali Khamenei, *Self-Sufficiency Jihad: The Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Ayatollah Khamenei's Statements* (Tehran: Islamic Revolution Publications, 2015).

<sup>78</sup> See, Richard Nephew, *The Art of Sanctions: A View from the Field* (Columbia University Press, 2017), 50-70.

<sup>79</sup> Farhad Rezaei, *Iran's Foreign Policy after the Nuclear Agreement Politics of Normalizers and Traditionalists* (Ankara: Springer, 2019), 16-8.

<sup>80</sup> Ali Razmjoo, "Commander of the Navy of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps: Iran's Missile Authority is a Source of National Pride," *Fars News*, June 19, 2017, <https://www.farsnews.ir/news/13960329002027>.

<sup>81</sup> Ali Khamenei, "Statement at the Last Meeting between the President and the Twelfth Cabinet," July 28, 2021, <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=48356>.

<sup>82</sup> Mitzen, "Ontological Security," 2-3; Browning and Joenniemi, "Ontological Security," 31-47.

<sup>83</sup> Ali Khamenei, "CIA Meddled, Plotted Coups against any Popular, Anti-Imperialist Government in Latin America," March 18, 2002, <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/5848/CIA-meddled-plotted-coups-against-any-popular-anti-imperialist>.

about the future and how their citizens will interpret this action. For more than forty years, they have told the people that the US and EU are Iran's enemies,<sup>84</sup> and now how should they be told that this enmity is over and that weapons can be put aside?

Iranian authorities are not only unable to abandon their missile program, but they also believe that it is one of the pillars on which they can rely to maintain their revolutionary-Islamic identity. When, under external pressures, they realize that this pillar is collapsing, they experience ontological insecurity and existential anxiety. To overcome this sense of identity insecurity, it is natural, according to the logic of ontological security, that they resort to the routine habits arising from their Islamic-revolutionary identity and the reproduction of their previous understanding of themselves. Among the behaviors that reduce ontological insecurity in Iran are the emphasis on national independence, resistance to US pressure, and the preservation of revolutionary identity. Iranian leader Ali Khamenei asserts that "the Islamic Republic has a legal form and a real form. This real form must be preserved. If the legal form remains but the real form is lost, it will be worthless. What is this natural and real form? The ideals of the Islamic Revolution, justice, human dignity, preservation of values, creation of brotherhood and equality, morality, resistance against enemies. If this real theme - which is the main part of the identity of the Islamic Republic - is lost, the legal form of the Islamic Republic will be of no use."<sup>85</sup>

#### 4.2. Iran's basic trust system in the missile program

In terms of ontological security, states prioritize the strategy of normalizing current and daily routines in order to maintain their sense of "identity" in the face of uncertainty and cognitive instability.<sup>86</sup> Iran is no exception to this principle. Iran's trust system has been harmed in two instances in recent years. First, the 2004 nuclear deal with European countries did not go as planned, and the European countries failed to keep their promises, prompting Iran to resume uranium enrichment. Second, with Trump's election, the JCPOA came to an end, despite Iran's compliance with all its nuclear commitments. Consequently, sanctions were reimposed on Iran in 2018. To Iranian authorities, it makes no sense to negotiate an agreement with states that do not abide by their promises and treaties, and any missile deal will not work any better than the nuclear one.<sup>87</sup> They even highlight the violation of the agreement with Libya following its withdrawal of its nuclear program and the failure of Trump's promises to North Korea, as objective examples.<sup>88</sup> Therefore, according to the theory of ontological security, returning to Iran's current and daily routine of "resistance to any foreign pressure" is the best option because it both preserves Iran's credibility and prevents negative consequences and future regrets. In fact, current habits and procedures are considered as goals in Iran's rigid trust system, the maintenance of which becomes the agent's purpose.<sup>89</sup> Iranian officials prefer to continue their missile tests and feel proud rather than entering into negotiations over a

<sup>84</sup> Ali Khamenei, "Why Does Iran not Accept to Negotiate with the United States?," October 5, 2019, <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/7082/Why-Does-Iran-not-accept-to-negotiate-with-the-United-States;Ali-Khamenei-What-are-the-5-Predictions-of-Imam-Khamenei-Which-Came-True?What-is-his-Most-Recent-Prediction?>, August 27, 2019, <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/6996/What-are-the-5-predictions-of-Imam-Khamenei-which-came-true>.

<sup>85</sup> Ali Khamenei, "Statements in the Meeting of Professors and Students at the University of Science and Technology," January 13, 2009, <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=4992>.

<sup>86</sup> Mitzen, "Ontological Security," 3-4.

<sup>87</sup> Ali Khamenei, "Statement at Imam Hossein University," May 23, 2016, <http://farsi.khamenei.ir/newspart-index?tid=5502>.

<sup>88</sup> Ali Khamenei, "Four Narratives of the Experience of the Cost of Compromise," June 7, 2017, <http://farsi.khamenei.ir/others-note?id=36754>.

<sup>89</sup> Mitzen, "Ontological Security," 4-5.

missile program and ultimately being humiliated by the West. If the missile program fails to provide them with physical security, it can at least strengthen their ontological security. This will be accomplished through the use of the following statements:

- 1) Western countries are not reliable.<sup>90</sup> So, it is better to rely on ourselves. They want to prevent Iran from developing self-sufficiency and missile capability.<sup>91</sup> Iran must resist these pressures.
- 2) The West is attempting to undermine Iran's sovereignty and independence.<sup>92</sup> The missile program protects its independence.
- 3) The United States opposes Iran's revolutionary and Islamic identities<sup>93</sup>, and missile programs are just one excuse. So, it is better not to give up and continue our way.<sup>94</sup>

Iran, therefore, is constructing "autobiographical identity narratives" to explain its actions.<sup>95</sup> Having a secure autobiography, as well as a firm grasp on its past and history, provides Tehran with a sense of security and allows it to move forward.

#### 4.3. The function of the missile program in creating identity and pride in Iran

As Mehran Kamrava explains "Iranian foreign and security policy is the product of deliberations and give- and- take compromises between three influential but unequal centers of power. These are the presidency and by extension the foreign ministry, whose primary field of expertise and influence is foreign policy; the IRGC, which is in charge of national security inside and outside of the country; and the Leader, currently Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has the final say on whatever the other two groups propose and recommend."<sup>96</sup> Now, unlike during Hassan Rouhani's presidency, the principlists control all three branches of power. Principlists believe that, in addition to providing security for Iran, the missile program has instilled pride in the country. Because it is a national achievement and no country has helped Iran in pursuing it, it cannot be exchanged for anything else.<sup>97</sup>

Recent studies dealing with Iran's missile program have paid much attention to the issue of Iran's deterrence and disruption of the balance of power in the region.<sup>98</sup> That is to say, Iran's missile program serves a higher purpose: it establishes the country's identity and credibility. Despite the economic, military, scientific, and technological sanctions, Iran has been able to improve the range and accuracy of its missiles while also developing new types. Every year on the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution's victory in 1979 and during "Holy

<sup>90</sup> Ali Khamenei, "Statement at the Last Meeting between the President and the Twelfth Cabinet," July 28, 2021, <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=48356>.

<sup>91</sup> Amir Ali Hajizadeh, "What is the Reason for the Success of Iran's Missile Industry," June 22, 2017, <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/others-dialog?id=36942>.

<sup>92</sup> Ali Khamenei, "Statements in the Meeting of the Iranian officials," June 12, 2017, <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=36824>.

<sup>93</sup> Ali Khamenei, "Statements in the Meeting of Professors and Students at the University of Science and Technology," January 13, 2009, <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=4992>.

<sup>94</sup> "Commander Salami: Missile Issues are an Excuse, the Goal is to Surrender the Iranian Nation," *Asrpress Agency*, May 10, 2018, <http://asrpress.ir/fa/news/8753>.

<sup>95</sup> Innes Alexandria and Brent J. Steele, *Memory, Trauma and Ontological Security. In Memory and Trauma in International Relations: Theories, Cases, and Debates*, ed. Erica Resende and Dovile Budryte (London: Routledge, 2014), 17.

<sup>96</sup> Mehran Kamrava, "Institutions and Policy in Iran's Relations with the GCC," *The Muslim World* (2021): 2.

<sup>97</sup> Ali Khamenei, "Statements in a Virtual Meeting with the Participants in the Ceremony of Honoring the Veterans of the Holy Defense," September 21, 2020, <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=46525>; see also: Ghafar Hadadi, *Frontline: Documentary Story of the Formation of the Iranian Missile Unit* (Tehran: Shahid Kazemi Publisher, 2014).

<sup>98</sup> Farhad Rezaei, "Iran's Ballistic Missile Program: A New Case for Engaging Iran?," *Insight Turkey* 18, no. 4 (2016): 184. Also see: Robert Einhorn and Vann H. Van Diepen, "Constraining Iran's Missile Capabilities," *Foreign Policy at Brookings*, March 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/constraining-irans-missile-capabilities/>.

Defense Week” in the last week of September,<sup>99</sup> Iran exhibits and boasts about its latest missile achievement.

Missiles are currently an important part of the military capabilities of great powers, and are seen as a symbol of power and prestige as well as a necessary component of the new military force. One of the reasons that this type of weapon appeals to developing countries is the increased international influence, credibility and practical independence that they gain in the face of regional competitors and superpowers.<sup>100</sup> However, none of these characteristics is as important as the sense of pride and identity gained from their accomplishments.

Fundamentally, committing acts of pride is a way for a state to establish its identity both domestically and internationally. Domestically, Iran has been attempting to portray its forty-three-year record as an efficient example, encouraging citizens to continue their support for the political system by building new missiles and acquiring new technology. They reproduce the identity and enhance a sense of pride in their citizens by emphasizing military self-sufficiency and its importance at critical times, especially in times of foreign threats and sanctions, and comparing the country’s current situation with the pre-revolutionary period, a period of military dependence as they claim. Playing epic songs repeatedly, displaying Iran’s national flag, and boasting about the accuracy of the missiles in the face of any US military threat are components of a psychological operation used by Islamic Republic officials to effectively shape the Iranian mentality. States like Iran, as Jelena Subotić explains, construct “their biographical continuity through internal efforts to maintain their self-reflexive narratives, their positive views of self, at times of crisis. Narratives are important for seeking state ontological security because they provide autobiographical justification and continuity with the ‘good past.’”<sup>101</sup>

On the international stage, Iranian officials have repeatedly stated that missiles are used to deter and ward off enemies, while also condemning Saddam Hussein’s strategic mistake in submitting to the arms control program and limiting his missile power in the 1990s.<sup>102</sup> According to the Iranian officials, Saddam Hussein and Muammar Gaddafi’s downfall was a result of their trust in the West as they agreed to comply.<sup>103</sup> Instead, the Iranian missile program has been cited as a source of national pride on at least four occasions: the Iran-Iraq War, Iran targeting the ISIS Headquarters in Deir-Ez-Zor, Syria, shooting down the US Global Hawk aircraft, and Iran’s attack on US military bases in Iraq.

#### 4.3.1. Iran-Iraq War

In the winter of 1987, as the war with Iraq turned out to be an instance of urban warfare and cities were rocket-rained, the Iraqis fired 189 missiles in approximately 50 days.<sup>104</sup> Of these, 135 landed in Tehran, 23 in Qom, 22 in Isfahan, and the others in Tabriz, Shiraz, and Karaj. The attacks killed more than 2,000 Iranians and forced a quarter of Tehran’s population to

<sup>99</sup> This week commemorates Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Iran in 1980, and Iran’s resistance to this invasion.

<sup>100</sup> Andrew W. Hull, *Role of Ballistic Missile in Third World Defenses Strategies* (Institute for Defense Analyses Alexandria VA, 1991), 3.

<sup>101</sup> Subotić, “Narrative, Ontological Security,” 5.

<sup>102</sup> Stephen Black, “UNSCOM and the Iraqi Biological Weapons Program: Implications for Arms Control,” *Political and Life Science* 18, no. 1 (1999): 62–9.

<sup>103</sup> Mohammed Elbaradei, *The Age of Deception: Nuclear Diplomacy in Treacherous Times*, trans. Firoozeh Doroshati, Second Edition (Tehran: Iran Publication, 2014), 176. Also see: Ali Khamenei, “Why Does the Leader of Iran Support Nuclear Talks?,” November 3, 2013, <http://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=27591>.

<sup>104</sup> “Iran Missile Chronology,” *The Monterey Institute of International Studies*, 2011, [https://media.nti.org/pdfs/iran\\_missile.pdf](https://media.nti.org/pdfs/iran_missile.pdf).

flee the capital city.<sup>105</sup> Although the Iranians responded by firing 75 to 77 Hwasung-5 missiles (made by North Korea), they had to pay a high price to gain access to these missiles.<sup>106</sup> Even during the height of the sanctions, Iran's missile response to the Iraqi attacks sparked a wave of pride among Iranians, who continue to respectfully refer to Hassan Tehrani-Moghaddam, who was in charge of the missile program, as "the father of Iran's missile program." Tehran's officials constantly recreate their narratives about missile-building and claim it as a major achievement. These narratives help to shape the Islamic-revolutionary identity of Iran.

#### 4.3.2. Targeting the ISIS Headquarters in Deir-Ez-Zor, Syria

After the rise of ISIS in the Middle East, Tehran found a new opportunity to show off its missile capabilities. While the moderate faction was in power and they argued that instead of building missiles, Iran should negotiate, the radical conservative faction allowed ISIS to conduct limited operations in Tehran to silence the opposition.<sup>107</sup> This operation, which was a terrorist attack on the Iranian parliament on June 7, 2017, resulted in the deaths of 17 people and injuries of 52 others. Iran used the Qiam missile for the first time on June 18, 2017, in response to the ISIS terrorist attack on the group's military base in Deir-ez-Zor, Syria. The launching of six missiles at ISIS's headquarters shortly after the group's operation inside Iran provoked a new wave of pride among Iranians. The country's media reported that the missile attacks claimed the lives of 170 ISIS members.<sup>108</sup> This action aided Iran to create a new narrative about the missile program. As Berenskoetter states "a coherent narrative can include all sorts of change as long as a sensible link from 'before' to 'after' is maintained."<sup>109</sup> Iran has demonstrated for the second time that its missile program is effective in defending its Islamic identity against other Islamic identities, such as those of ISIS and al-Qaeda.

#### 4.3.3. Shooting down the US Global Hawk Aircraft

Iran's third success in the construction of missiles and air defense systems was the downing of the US RQ-4 Global Hawk UAV near the Strait of Hormuz by the Third-of-Khordad Air Defense System. Targeting the world's largest military power's super-advanced, high-altitude, remotely-piloted surveillance aircraft, which was claimed to have entered Iranian territorial waters, heightened Iranian pride. Iran's military commanders once again demonstrated their missile and defense capabilities by displaying the plane's wreckage at an exhibition in Tehran on June 20, 2019.<sup>110</sup> Tehran's officials showed that they can always "manipulate stories to convince their followers of a specific policy, in the process of making political resources out of narratives. They seize on collectively remembered history to make specific political points of the present."<sup>111</sup>

<sup>105</sup> Guy Perrimond, "1944–2001: The Threat of Theatre Ballistic Missiles," *TTU Online*, 2002, 6, <http://www.ttu.fr/site/english/endocpdf/24pBalmisileenglish.pdf>.

<sup>106</sup> Mohammad Javad Zarif, "Defense of Mohammad Javad Zarif of Iran's Missile Program," *Pars Today*, February 3, 2017, <http://parstoday.com/fa/iran-i54019>.

<sup>107</sup> Ali Khamenei sharply criticized those who called the present and the world of tomorrow the world of negotiation and said: "The enemies are constantly strengthening their military and missile capabilities. In this situation, how can we say that the days of missiles are over?" *Mashregh News*, March 30, 2016, <https://www.mashreghnews.ir/news/550919>.

<sup>108</sup> Marjohn Shekhi, "Iran Missile Attacks Killed over 170 Terrorists in Deir Ezzor," *Mehr News Agency*, June 22, 2017, <https://en.mehrnews.com/news/126101/Iran-missile-attacks-killed-over-170-terrorists-in-Deir-Ezzor>.

<sup>109</sup> Felix Berenskoetter, "Parameters of a National Biography," *European Journal of International Relations* 20, no. 1 (2014): 279.

<sup>110</sup> Richard Sisk, "Iran Makes Show of Drone Wreckage After Trump Calls Off Retaliatory Strike," *Military Com*, June 21, 2019, <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/06/21/iran-makes-show-drone-wreckage-after-trump-calls-retaliatory-strike.html>.

<sup>111</sup> Subotić, "Narrative, Ontological Security," 3.



#### 4.3.4. Targeting the US military bases in Iraq

Following the assassination of Qasem Soleimani, the commander of Iran's Quds Force, on January 3, 2020, by a US drone attack, Iranian officials retaliated by firing 13 Qiam and Fateh-313 missiles at Iraq's Al-Taji and Ayn al-Asad military bases on January 8, 2020. Iran's swift response to the assassination of its highest-ranking major general, at a time when his glorious funeral was still ongoing, demonstrated the effectiveness of missiles in protecting Iranian pride once again. The operation was so important to Iranians, regardless of the number of casualties, that for the first time since World War II, a developing country dared to strike a military blow at US interests, and the US failed to reciprocate. What added to this sense of pride was the fact that the boastings of Trump and other US military officials before the missile strikes were absurd.<sup>112</sup>

The examples reviewed above confirm Johnston's claim that "government behavior cannot be interpreted solely in terms of realism and the search for power and security. For leaders, dignity is as important as security. If governments pay attention to security, it is because it can be effective in achieving their dignity."<sup>113</sup> The missile program has not only improved Iran's military power deterrence, but it has also elevated Iran's status among its domestic and foreign supporters. They are pleased that Iran is not merely chanting anti-American slogans in response to any American action. The Iranian authorities are pleased with their revolutionary identity and are attempting to maintain it, or, in Mitzen's terms, they are "getting back to normal."<sup>114</sup> As a result of such satisfaction with this revolutionary identity, there is little hope for dialogue and compromise.

### 5. Theoretical Critiques Based on the Iranian Case

Although the theory of ontological security appears to be capable of explaining state behavior in the face of external pressures and demands from other countries,<sup>115</sup> it has significant flaws. This theory cannot explain why governments eventually agree to negotiate and accept the demands of their opponents despite their insistence on maintaining their identity, and their fear of jeopardizing their position. The nuclear case of Iran and Libya are two prominent examples in this regard. While Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's administration (2005-2013) rejected giving any points to the other side in nuclear negotiations, Hassan Rouhani's administration practically accepted many of the demands.<sup>116</sup> The crucial question is whether this retreat jeopardized Iran's previous identity. Ontological security does not address this question. The point that the followers of ontological security theory overlook is that states care just as much about their physical security as they do about their ontological security. Choosing one of the two dimensions of security (ontological security or physical security) is a difficult task. It is determined by domestic conditions as well as the states' external environment. States may act differently in the same situations. Iran and Libya have demonstrated that states can change past narratives and create new narratives about their nuclear program. As new narratives

<sup>112</sup> "Remarks by President Trump on the Killing of Qasem Soleimani," *The White House*, January 3, 2020, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-killing-qasem-soleimani/>. Also see: Trump, Donald J. (2020), Tweeter post, January 3, 2020, <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump>.

<sup>113</sup> Johnston Alastair Iain, "Cultural Realism and Strategy in Maoist China," in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

<sup>114</sup> Mitzen, "Ontological Security," 3-4.

<sup>115</sup> Bahar Rumelili, *Conflict Resolution and Ontological Security* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

<sup>116</sup> Kelsey Davenport, "The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) at a Glance," *Arms Control Association*, March 2021, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/JCPOA-at-a-glance>.

create opportunities for action, past narratives can render certain actions unimaginable. In Iran, they began to construct new narratives to replace previous narratives of their identity. These narratives are presented in such a way that there is no clear and explicit conflict with the previous narratives. For example, in Iran Hassan Rouhani's administration replaced the "discourse of interaction and reconciliation" with the narrative of "nuclear resistance discourse." He explained to the Iranians that Iran would not relinquish its nuclear rights and that his only goal was to ensure the welfare of the Iranian people alongside the nuclear program.<sup>117</sup> On this point, Wittes has demonstrated the importance of narratives and how collective memories of past traumas impact the ongoing negotiation styles between, for example, Israelis and Palestinians.<sup>118</sup>

Wendt<sup>119</sup> and Mitzen<sup>120</sup>, on the other hand, argue that states may be willing to compromise some aspects of their physical security in order to maintain their identity, or their sense of self. Even if they are more concerned with physical security, it does not mean that their actions have no implications for their ontological security. When states hold a deterrence identity and fail to deter meaningful attack, Lupovici asserts, "they are forced to address the resulting ontological insecurity and feelings such as humiliation, shame, nostalgia, frustration, and anxiety."<sup>121</sup> Despite the constructive implications of ontological security theory in explaining states' anxieties on various issues, less attention has been paid to the process by which states overcome these concerns. Addressing this question may be a concern for future research, but if we want to provide an initial answer, a possible remedy for states' security anxiety is the reconstruction of identity over time and the construction of new narratives by governments to justify their actions to citizens.

## 6. Conclusion

States, like individuals, need assurance in the continuity of self-identity as well as a firm grasp of identity. They like to use their actions against other states to demonstrate their identity. They are not only concerned about their physical security, but ontological security is also important to them. This ontological security is provided by a sense of continuity and order in events. Iran sees itself as a victim of an unfair distribution of resources, including power and prestige in the international arena, as well as feelings of dissatisfaction, injustice, and loneliness. Threats to Iran's ontological security have contributed to the routinization of conflict with the west, which is a key source of identity reassurance. They have instigated a struggle aimed at precluding identity erosion.

Iran, suffering from a lack of great prestige in the international system, considers its missile program as a symbol of efficiency and independence. The missile program acts as a formidable barrier against identity erosion, contributing to their ontological security. It helps Iran in reconstructing its identity. The missile program not only serves as a powerful deterrent to external conquest, but also helps the leaders in viewing the country with "awe" both at home and abroad. A complete halt to the missile program will pose a threat to Iran's

<sup>117</sup> Ali Bagheri Dolatabadi and Mohsen Shafie, *From Hashemi to Rouhani: Study of Iran's Foreign Policy* (Tehran: Tisa, 2014), 337–41.

<sup>118</sup> Tamara C. Wittes, *How Israelis and Palestinians Negotiate: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of the Oslo Peace Process* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2005).

<sup>119</sup> Alexander Wendt, "Collective Identity Formation and the International State," *American Political Science Review* 88, no. 2 (1994): 384–96.

<sup>120</sup> Mitzen, "State Identity and the Security Dilemma," 344.

<sup>121</sup> Lupovici, *The Power of Deterrence*, 59.

self-identity. Surrendering to Western pressures undermines Iran's narrative of independence, self-sufficiency, and security, and discredits it in the eyes of its citizens. As Thomas Schelling explains, "this kind of face [sense of honor and respect] is one of the few things worth fighting over."<sup>122</sup>

In the context of the missile program, Iran's ontological security appears to be tied to its physical security. If Iran abandons its missile program, it will be vulnerable to security threats, and ashamed of surrendering to external pressures. Although ontological security advocates' arguments for state behavior seem plausible, states will ultimately act on the logic of realism and countering physical threats. The experience of Iran's nuclear negotiations has shown that when Iran believes that its physical security is in danger, it attempts to escape the sense of shame by creating new narratives of their identity (ontological security). Some of the actions used by states to justify their decisions include presenting themselves as the victor in negotiations, humiliating the other side, making the enemy's actions immoral, and emphasizing justice.

In response, Iran has depicted its missile program as a symbol of government efficiency, national pride and arrogance, endurance and resistance, based on which identity has been created. Therefore, as long as the political option of negotiation is not seriously on the US agenda, and it is unwilling to take into account Iranian officials' feelings of shame associated with prospective negotiations, or does not seek to restore Iran's lost trust, in accordance with the ontological security theory, Tehran will not abandon its current resistance habits.

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<sup>122</sup> Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence: With a New Preface and Afterword* (Yale University Press, 1966), 194.

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## The Rise and Fall of Homegrown Concepts in Global IR: The Anatomy of ‘Strategic Depth’ in Turkish IR\*

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### Abstract


*Asymmetry of knowledge production in global international relations manifests itself in a variety of forms. Concept cultivation is a foundational form that conditions the epistemic hierarchies prevalent in scholarly encounters, exchanges, and productions. The core represents the seemingly natural ecology of concept cultivation, while the periphery appropriates the cultivated concepts, relinquishing any claim of authenticity and indigeneity in the process. Nonetheless, there have been cases of intellectual undertakings in the periphery to conceive, formulate, and articulate conceptual frames of knowledge production. This paper, first, discusses the fluctuating fortunes of homegrown concepts in the peripheral epistemic ecologies. Second, it introduces the concept of ‘strategic depth’ as articulated by the Turkish scholar Ahmet Davutoğlu and reviews its significance for the formulation and implementation of recent Turkish foreign policy. Third, it examines the causes of its recognition and acclaim in the local and global IR communities subsequent to its inception. The paper contends that there have been three fundamental sets of causes for the initial ascendancy of the concept. These are categorized as contemplative causes, implementative causes, and evaluative causes. Fourth, it traces the sources of its fall from scholarly grace. The paper further asserts that the three fundamental sets of causes were also operational in the eventual conceptual insolvency of strategic depth. The paper concludes by addressing remedial measures to vivify concept cultivation in the periphery and to conserve the cultivated concepts.*

**Keywords:** Global IR, homegrown theory, Turkish foreign policy, strategic depth, Ahmet Davutoğlu

### 1. Introduction

Asymmetry of knowledge production in global international relations manifests itself in various forms. Concept cultivation is a foundational form that conditions the epistemic hierarchies prevalent in scholarly encounters, exchanges, and productions. The core represents

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the seemingly natural ecology of concept cultivation, while the periphery appropriates the cultivated concepts, relinquishing any claim of authenticity and indigeneity in the process.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, there have been cases of intellectual undertakings in the periphery to conceive, formulate, and articulate conceptual frames of knowledge production. The concept of ‘strategic depth’ propounded by the Turkish scholar Ahmet Davutoğlu exemplifies the attempts of local epistemic communities to overcome the conceptual marginalization they are subjected to through the cultivation of homegrown concepts.

This paper, first, discusses the fluctuating fortunes of homegrown concepts in the peripheral epistemic ecologies. Second, it introduces the concept of ‘strategic depth’ as articulated by Ahmet Davutoğlu and reviews its significance for the formulation and implementation of recent Turkish foreign policy. Third, it examines the causes of its recognition and acclaim in the local and global IR communities subsequent to its inception. The paper contends that there have been three fundamental sets of causes for the initial ascendancy of the concept. These are categorized as contemplative causes, implementative causes, and evaluative causes. Fourth, it traces the sources of its fall from scholarly grace. The paper further asserts that the three fundamental sets of causes were also operational in the eventual conceptual insolvency of strategic depth. The paper concludes by addressing remedial measures to vivify concept cultivation in the periphery and to conserve the cultivated concepts.

## 2. The Rise and Fall of Homegrown Concepts in Global IR

Thanks to a combination of material shifts in the global distribution of power and ideational transformations in approaches to the study of international affairs, once-marginalized peripheral knowledge production has increased in vitality, maturity, and productivity.<sup>2</sup> An integral element of peripheral knowledge production is the cultivation of homegrown concepts, frequently accompanied by “a self-reflexive process of exploring and exploiting native conceptual resources.”<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, a great many concepts that originated in peripheral academia have been introduced in the disciplinary progression of international relations. A recent example is the concept of ‘relationality.’ Developed by the Chinese scholar Yaqing Qin, relationality draws on “the Confucian cultural community over millennia,” and “conceives the world of IR as one composed of ongoing relations rather than discrete individual entities, assumes international actors as actors-in-relations, and takes processes defined in terms of relations in motion as ontologically significant.”<sup>4</sup> Since its inception, relationality has elicited a good deal of sustained academic interest.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the dynamics of core-periphery relations in the reproduction of an intellectual division of labor in the discipline of International Relations, see, Arlene B. Tickner, “Core, Periphery and (Neo)Imperialist International Relations,” *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2013): 627–46; Gunther Hellmann and Morten Valbjørn, “Problematizing Global Challenges: Recalibrating the ‘Inter’ in IR-Theory,” *International Studies Review* 19, no. 2 (2017): 279–309; Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, *The Making of Global International Relations: Origins and Evolution of IR at Its Centenary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> Peter Marcus Kristensen, “The BRICs and Knowledge Production in International Relations,” in Li Xing, ed., *The International Political Economy of the BRICs* (Oxon: Routledge, 2019), 18–36; Arlene B. Tickner and Karen Smith, eds., *International Relations from the Global South: Worlds of Difference* (Oxon: Routledge, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> Eyüp Ersoy, “Conceptual Cultivation and Homegrown Theorizing: The Case of/for the Concept of Influence,” in *Widening the World of International Relations: Homegrown Theorizing*, eds. Ersel Aydınli and Gonca Biltekin (Oxon: Routledge, 2018), 204–25.

<sup>4</sup> Yaqing Qin, “A Multiverse of Knowledge: Cultures and IR Theories,” *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 11, no. 4 (2018): 415–34, 427. Also see, Yaqing Qin, *A Relational Theory of World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

<sup>5</sup> For example, Cambridge Review of International Affairs had a special issue on ‘relational theorizing’ in 2019. Astrid H. M. Nordin et al., “Towards Global Relational Theorizing: A Dialogue between Sinophone and Anglophone Scholarship on Relationalism,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 32, no. 5 (2019): 570–81. Also see, Tze Ern Ho, “The Relational-Turn in

Still, in many cases, following the initial ascendancy, homegrown concepts have failed to sustain their disciplinary appeal. While the pattern of the rise and fall of homegrown concepts is observable in these cases, depending on specific circumstances, the life cycle of indigenous conceptual innovations varies in duration. As one of the most influential and resilient homegrown concepts in international relations, '*dependencia*/dependency' is illustrative of the fluctuating fortunes of peripheral disciplinary interventions.

In the wake of the Second World War, dependency was reconceived in the context of Latin America by local scholars to account for the structural dynamics and debilitating effects of the global political economy on the states and peoples of the region. Based on a novel reinterpretation of dependency, Brazilian scholar Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Chilean scholar Enzo Faletto "developed an original theory of international relations with a specific analytical version of a world order that accounts for an alternative and nuanced version of North–South relations in terms of the international political economy."<sup>6</sup> Their work was to become a seminal text in the canon of the dependency theory of international political economy.<sup>7</sup> Dependency theory has been "touted as the one authentically peripheral formula for confronting problems of development and global insertion."<sup>8</sup>

The concept, and the theory, initially achieved widespread disciplinary recognition manifested in insightful intellectual engagements both in the periphery and the core.<sup>9</sup> This peripheral theoretical perspective was also subject to severe criticism, especially from the core. As an example, according to Stanley Hoffmann, if established elites in the developing countries "that are eager to boost national power against foreign dominance" were to "follow the advice of '*dependencia*' theorists, the result is not likely to be a world of peace and justice, but a world of revolutions, and new conflicts, and new inequities."<sup>10</sup>

Nonetheless, in subsequent decades, dependency as a concept and as a theory has progressively become marginalized in the discipline. One practical reason, it can be asserted, is the substantial economic growth experienced by several developing countries, especially in Asia, in contrast to the prognoses of the theory. Ultimately, despite the foundational role of several Brazilian scholars, such as Fernando Cardoso, Celso Furtado, and Ruy Marini, dependency theory has come to occupy only a marginal position within Brazilian IR itself.<sup>11</sup> A similar trend has taken place in the core as well. For instance, in recent disciplinary history, "for a brief time, the *Dependencia* tradition from Latin America [has] been actively engaged by U.S. scholars in leading research departments," and today "like the other works in the radical tradition, the dependency approach is no longer assigned in any of the top ten departments [in the US]."<sup>12</sup>

International Relations Theory: Bringing Chinese Ideas into Mainstream International Relations Scholarship," *American Journal of Chinese Studies* 26, no. 2 (2019): 91–106.

<sup>6</sup> Arie M. Kacowicz and Daniel F. Wajner, "Alternative World Orders in an Age of Globalization: Latin American Scenarios and Responses," in *Latin America in Global International Relations*, eds. Amitav Acharya, Melisa Deciancio, and Diana Tussie (Oxon: Routledge, 2022), 11–30, 19.

<sup>7</sup> Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, *Dependencia y desarrollo en América Latina: ensayo de interpretación sociológica* (Sa: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1971).

<sup>8</sup> Arlene B. Tickner, "Hearing Latin American Voices in International Relations Studies," *International Studies Perspectives* 4, no. 4 (2003): 325–50, 326.

<sup>9</sup> For earlier examples in the core of serious analyses on dependency, see, James A. Caporaso, "Dependence, Dependency, and Power in the Global System: A Structural and Behavioral Analysis," *International Organization* 32, no. 1 (1978): 13–43; Raymond D. Duvall, "Dependence and *Dependencia* Theory: Notes toward Precision of Concept and Argument," *International Organization* 32, no. 1 (1978): 51–78.

<sup>10</sup> Stanley Hoffmann, "An American Social Science: International Relations," *Daedalus* 106, no. 3 (1977): 41–60, 56.

<sup>11</sup> Audrey Alejandro, *Western Dominance in International Relations? The Internationalization of IR in Brazil and India* (Oxon: Routledge, 2019), 26.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas J. Biersteker, "The Parochialism of Hegemony: Challenges for 'American' International Relations," in *International Relations Scholarship around the World*, eds. Arlene B. Tickner and Ole Wæver (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), 308–27, 320. On the

### 3. A Homegrown Concept in Turkish IR: Strategic Depth

The last two decades have witnessed a similar pattern of the rise and fall of homegrown concepts in Turkey. The concept of ‘strategic depth’ that was introduced by Turkish scholar Ahmet Davutoğlu in 2001 in an eponymous book, *Strategic Depth*, received extensive interest both intellectually and politically in national and, to some extent, international settings.<sup>13</sup> However, after a decade of analytical popularity, scholarly attention towards strategic depth has transformed substantially. Originally developed in military studies and referred to habitually in strategic studies and security studies,<sup>14</sup> strategic depth was redefined by Davutoğlu to construct an all-embracing metanarrative of Turkish foreign policy.

Davutoğlu received his PhD in comparative political theory, and prior to his entry into practical politics, he was an accomplished university professor and intellectual.<sup>15</sup> Davutoğlu was to become an ‘intellectual of statecraft,’ that is, a member of a “community of state bureaucrats, leaders, foreign-policy experts and advisors throughout the world who comment upon, influence and conduct the activities of statecraft,” when he began his political career in 2003 as the chief advisor to the Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.<sup>16</sup> Davutoğlu was promoted to Minister of Foreign Affairs in May 2009, and served until August 2014, when he became the Prime Minister of Turkey. Davutoğlu was to resign from his post in May 2016 only to launch his political party in December 2019.<sup>17</sup>

Ahmet Davutoğlu articulated a novel assessment of Turkish foreign policy encapsulated in the concept of strategic depth for the incremental expansion of Turkey’s influence in designated geopolitical areas called territorial, maritime, and continental basins.<sup>18</sup> In this exposition, strategic depth is comprised of geographical depth and historical depth. Drawing on the perceived opportunities provided by Turkey’s geographical environment and historical engagement, strategic depth was expected to constitute the foundation for the emerging agency of Turkey in global politics.<sup>19</sup> Multiple dimensions of this new geopolitical vision were elaborated in complementary publications by Davutoğlu subsequent to *Strategic Depth* in 2001.<sup>20</sup> Ahmet Davutoğlu’s book has become a seminal text in the analytical discussions and polemical debates on the notion of strategic depth. The book was referred to, in a

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other hand, some studies argue for the abiding relevance of the dependency theory in the discipline. See, Diego Miguel Zambrano Márquez, “Decentering International Relations: The Continued Wisdom of Latin American Dependency,” *International Studies Perspectives* 21, no. 4 (2020): 403–23.

<sup>13</sup> Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik derinlik: Türkiye’nin uluslararası konumu* [Strategic Depth: Turkey’s International Position] (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001). In this paper, strategic depth refers to the concept, *Strategic Depth* refers to the book.

<sup>14</sup> For one example, it is argued that “a key factor in China’s continental denial capability is the strategic depth that large but sparsely populated frontiers within China create. This geography allows China to secure its population and economic centers from land-based threats by leveraging ‘defense-in-depth’ against any attack, depth that raises significantly the costs for any potential adversary to coerce China through attacks on its homeland territory.” M. Taylor Fravel, “China’s Search for Military Power,” *Washington Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (2008): 125–41, 132.

<sup>15</sup> Davutoğlu’s PhD thesis was published as a monograph in 1994. Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Alternative Paradigms: The Impact of Islamic and Western Weltanschauungs on Political Theory* (Maryland: University Press of America, 1994).

<sup>16</sup> Gearóid Ó Tuathail and John Agnew, “Geopolitics and Discourse: Practical Geopolitical Reasoning in American Foreign Policy,” *Political Geography* 11, no. 2 (1992):190–204, 193.

<sup>17</sup> On Ahmet Davutoğlu both as a scholar and statesman, see, İştah Gözaydın, “Ahmet Davutoğlu: Role as an Islamic Scholar Shaping Turkey’s Foreign Policy” in *International Relations and Islam: Diverse Perspectives*, ed. Nassef Manabilang Adiong (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 91–109.

<sup>18</sup> Aaron Stein, “I. Introduction: The Search for Strategic Depth-The AKP and the Middle East,” *Whitehall Papers* 83, no. 1 (2014): 1–10.

<sup>19</sup> Alexander Murinson, “The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 6 (2006): 945–64; Joshua W. Walker, “Learning Strategic Depth: Implications of Turkey’s New Foreign Policy Doctrine,” *Insight Turkey* 9, no. 3 (2007): 32–47.

<sup>20</sup> Among others see, Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Küresel bunalım* [Global Angst] (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2002); Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Teoriden pratiğe: Türk dış politikası üzerine konuşmalar* [From Theory to Practice: Conversations on Turkish Foreign Policy] (Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2011).

somewhat sympathetic collection of essays on Ahmet Davutoğlu and strategic depth, as “a founding text,”<sup>21</sup> and “the book still the most comprehensive and the richest in content which determines the strategy for Turkish foreign policy.”<sup>22</sup> In brief, the book has been perceived as advancing an alternative and ambitious paradigm for the imagination and implementation of Turkish foreign policy.<sup>23</sup>

#### 4. The Rise of Strategic Depth and Its Causes

After its publication in April 2001, *Strategic Depth* rapidly captured the interest of academia as well as the general public opinion, turning into an indispensable reference in studies of Turkish foreign policy. As of March 2021, the book has recorded 121 editions, an unprecedented figure for a scholarly book in Turkey.<sup>24</sup> Though *Strategic Depth* has yet to be translated into English at the explicit request of its author,<sup>25</sup> the book has reached a broader international audience through its translations into multiple languages, including Albanian, Arabic, Bulgarian, Greek, Hungarian, Japanese, Persian, Russian, and Serbian.<sup>26</sup> The book also has Wikipedia entries in Arabic and Armenian, besides Turkish. Since its appearance, scholarly studies referring to strategic depth in relation to Turkish foreign policy have proliferated.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Talha Köse, Ahmet Okumuş, and Burhanettin Duran, eds., *Stratejik zihniyet: kuramdan eyleme Ahmet Davutoğlu ve stratejik derinlik* [Strategic Mindset: Ahmet Davutoğlu from Theory to Practice and Strategic Depth] (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2014), 6.

<sup>22</sup> Hasan Basri Yalçın, “*Stratejik derinlik ve karmaşık nedensellik ağı* [Strategic Depth and Complex Causality Network],” in Köse, Okumuş, and Duran, *Stratejik zihniyet* [Strategic Mindset], 147–86, 147.

<sup>23</sup> Ahmet Sözen, “A Paradigm Shift in Turkish Foreign Policy: Transition and Challenges,” *Turkish Studies* 11, no. 1 (2010): 103–23.

<sup>24</sup> The book is published by *Küre Yayınları* (Küre Publishing), along with other books written by Ahmet Davutoğlu in Turkish. See, <https://www.kureyayinlari.com/Kitaplar?Series=44>. For a news article on the publication of the 100th edition of the book, see, “Davutoğlu’nun Stratejik Derinlik Kitabı 100. Baskıyı Yaptı [Davutoğlu’s Book Strategic Depth Has Its 100th Edition],” *Anadolu Ajansı*, 28 October 2014.

<sup>25</sup> Strangely enough, Ahmet Davutoğlu gives the presence of “analyses about many countries” in the book as the rationale behind his insistence on Strategic Depth not being translated into English, while giving permission for translations into more than a dozen languages. See, “Buket Aydın’ın Ahmet Davutoğlu’yla Olan Kitap Diyaloglu Sosyal Medyanın Diline Düştü,” *Cumhuriyet*, 6 March 2021. The book’s translation into English would have contributed substantially to its internalization and, more relevantly, its incorporation into the disciplinary debates on homegrown theorizing in Turkey and Global IR.

<sup>26</sup> For example, its Arabic translation appeared in 2010, which was jointly published by Al Jazeera Center for Studies and Arab Scientific Publishers. A detailed review of the book in Arabic is provided on the webpage of Al Jazeera Center for Strategic Studies, see, Sadeq-Al Al-Faqih, “Two Readings on Ahmet Davutoğlu’s Book Strategic Depth,” *Al Jazeera Center for Studies*, 5 October 2010 [in Arabic]. For another review of the book in Arabic see, Yasin Al-Haj Saleh, “The New Turkey is not a Revived Ottoman [State],” *Journal of Palestine Studies* no. 85 (2011): 149–57 [in Arabic]. The theory and practice of strategic depth has also been discussed, at times in a critical framework, in the Arabic literature. See, among others, Muhammad Nouredin, “Turkey and the Arab Revolutions: ‘Composite’ Policies Putting an End to ‘the Strategic Depth’,” *Arab Affairs* no. 146 (2011): 77–87 [in Arabic].

<sup>27</sup> In addition, Thesis Center of the Turkish Council of Higher Education (YÖK) registers 6 MA theses (written in Turkish or English) referring to strategic depth in their titles, submitted in 2011, 2012 (two of them), 2013, 2014, and 2020. *Tez Merkezi* [Thesis Center], <https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/giris.jsp>.

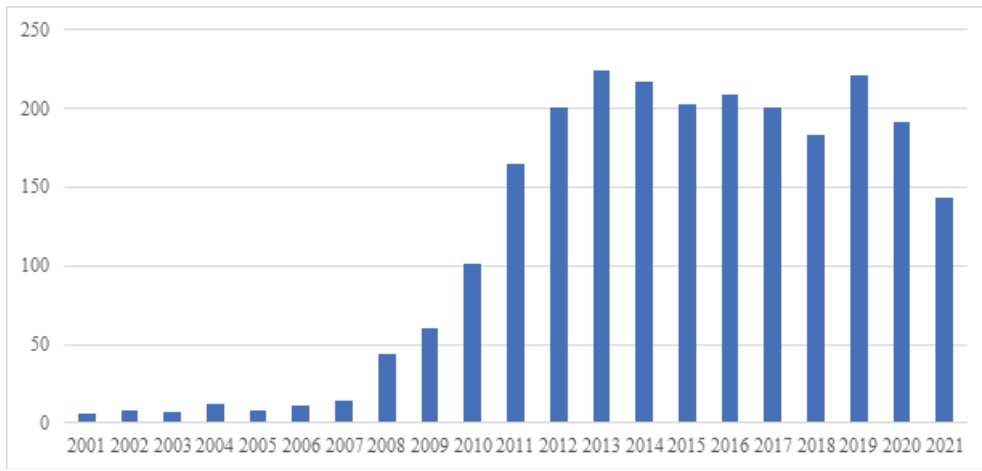


Figure 1: Number of Results in Google Scholar per year with the keyword [“strategic depth” “Turkish Foreign Policy”] in English<sup>28</sup>

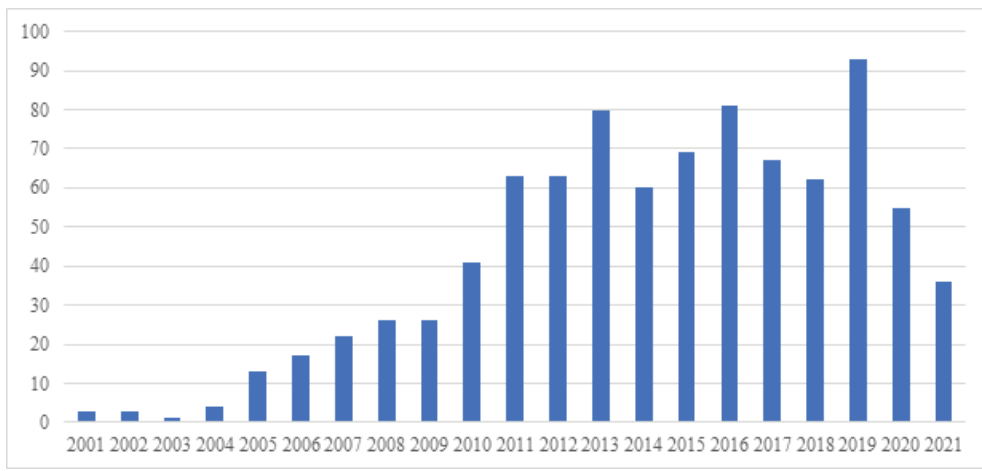


Figure 2: Number of Results in Google Scholar per year with the keyword [“stratejik derinlik” “Türk dış politikası”] in Turkish

There have been three fundamental sets of causes for the initial ascendancy of the concept. These can be categorized as contemplative causes, implementative causes, and evaluative causes. Contemplative causes are pertinent to the substance and the argumentation of strategic depth. First and foremost, strategic depth signifies a compelling alternative discourse on Turkish foreign policy predicated on quite systematic and coherent reasoning with new postulations, assumptions, and conclusions. Strategic depth represents a novel geopolitical imagination in Turkish foreign policy that entails, and in fact calls for, dynamism, activism, ambition, and expansion.<sup>29</sup> In its final paragraph, *Strategic Depth* highlights Turkey’s

<sup>28</sup> The numbers here are initial results appeared in the search. Note that redundant entries are not omitted from these numbers.

<sup>29</sup> Bülent Aras and Hakan Fidan, “Turkey and Eurasia: Frontiers of a New Geographical Imagination,” *New Perspectives on Turkey* no. 40 (2009): 193–215; İbrahim Kalın, “Debating Turkey in the Middle East: The Dawn of a New Geo-Political Imagination,” *Insight Turkey* 11, no. 1 (2009): 83–96; Murat Yeşiltaş, “The Transformation of the Geopolitical Vision in Turkish Foreign Policy,” *Turkish Studies* 14, no. 4 (2013): 661–87.

“responsibility to form a new and meaningful whole between its historical depth and strategic depth, and to actualize this whole within the geographical depth.”<sup>30</sup> In a similar vein, strategic depth has purported to construct a new identity for Turkey in global affairs, and thereby transcend dichotomous self-representations that have afflicted the Turkish mindset, arguably suffering from a self-induced cognitive dissonance.<sup>31</sup> According to *Strategic Depth*, in contrast to societies enduring “identity distress,” only those societies “that have a strong sense of identity and belonging stemming from a common time-space consciousness and that can mobilize psychological, sociological, political, [and] economic elements with this sense” can perform “constantly renewable strategic openings.”<sup>32</sup>

Implementative causes are pertinent to the application of strategic depth, both in style and in substance, in Turkish foreign policy. In general, Turkish foreign policy during the tenure of Ahmet Davutoğlu as the chief foreign policy advisor, and especially as foreign minister, was characterized by an unusual degree of activism.<sup>33</sup> For some observers, strategic depth represented a source of epiphany after decades of insouciant apathy in Turkish foreign policy.<sup>34</sup> According to the director of the Office of Public Diplomacy in Turkey at the time, “the recent activism in Turkish foreign policy...[was] driven largely by a concern to create an orderly political environment in which it is easier to address pressing issues in Turkey’s immediate neighbourhood while also turning Turkey into a major powerhouse in the region.”<sup>35</sup>

One dimension of this new activism concerned a multidimensional approach to foreign policy. For example, a commentator stated in 2010 that “the sheer number and level of visits to and from neighbouring countries [was] a clear indicator of the new activism vis-à-vis Turkey’s neighbourhood. From Moscow to Tehran, from Athens to Baghdad and Damascus, from Belgrade to Beirut, Turkey [was] engaged in a very proactive outreach.”<sup>36</sup> Others were explicit in attributing the sources of this multidimensional activism to strategic depth as it was asserted that the Justice and Development Party (JDP) government’s “multidimensional approach to foreign policy was very much influenced by Ahmet Davutoğlu’s ‘strategic depth’ perspective.”<sup>37</sup> The argument here is not that this unusual activism in Turkish foreign policy was unanimously identified as an auspicious development.<sup>38</sup> It is contended, rather, that the motives to make sense of this unusual degree of activism culminated in a growing interest in strategic depth that was generally conceived to have imparted a new ethos to Turkish foreign policy.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik* [Strategic Depth], 563.

<sup>31</sup> On Turkey’s divided identity vis-à-vis foreign policy see, Hasan Kösebalaban, “Torn Identities and Foreign Policy: The Case of Japan and Turkey,” *Insight Turkey* 10, no. 1 (2008): 5–30; Lerna K. Yanik, “Constructing Turkish ‘Exceptionalism’: Discourses of Liminality and Hybridity in Post-Cold War Turkish Foreign Policy,” *Political Geography* 30, no. 2 (2011): 80–9; Zeynep Gülsah Çapan and Ayşe Zarakol, “Turkey’s Ambivalent Self: Ontological Insecurity in ‘Kemalism’ and ‘Erdoganism,’” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 32, no. 3 (2019): 263–82.

<sup>32</sup> Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik* [Strategic Depth], 23.

<sup>33</sup> Bülent Aras, “The Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy,” *Insight Turkey* 11, no. 3 (2009): 127–42.

<sup>34</sup> Gürkan Zengin, *Hoca: Türk dış politikasında ‘Davutoğlu etkisi’* [Professor: ‘Davutoğlu Effect’ in Turkish Foreign Policy] (İstanbul: İnkılap Kitabevi, 2014).

<sup>35</sup> İbrahim Kalın, “Turkish Foreign Policy: Framework, Values, and Mechanisms,” *International Journal* 6, no. 1 (2011–2012): 7–21, 20.

<sup>36</sup> Suat Kınıkloğlu, “Turkey’s Neighbourhood and Beyond: Tectonic Transformation at Work?” *International Spectator* 45, no. 4 (2010): 93–100.

<sup>37</sup> Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yılmaz, “Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey during the AKP Era,” *Turkish Studies* 10, no. 1 (2009): 7–24, 9.

<sup>38</sup> For studies critical of this new activism see, Ziya Meral and Jonathan Paris, “Decoding Turkish Foreign Policy Hyperactivity,” *The Washington Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (2010): 75–86; Bill Park, “Turkey’s ‘New’ Foreign Policy: Newly Influential or Just Overactive?” *Mediterranean Politics* 19, no. 2 (2014): 161–64.

<sup>39</sup> For examples from France see, Alican Tayla, “Un nouveau paradigme pour la Turquie? [A New Paradigm for Turkey?]”

Evaluative causes are pertinent to the factors that condition the assessments of the thought and practice of strategic depth. On the articulation of strategic depth, one conditioning parameter has been the ideological orientation of the discursive framework wherein the concept is devised. Strategic depth did advance a reasonably cogent alternative to the prevalent narratives about Turkish foreign policy with distinct ideological underpinnings. One observer noted that there had been three different geopolitical imaginations with paradigmatic pretensions in Turkey, which were Kemalist geopolitics, Turkist-nationalist geopolitics, and Islamist-conservative geopolitics. Strategic Depth, it is further claimed, is “a geopolitical text that is both the source and the agent of the discursive constitution of” the Islamist-conservative geopolitical imagination in Turkey.<sup>40</sup> Among the ‘identity actors’ in Turkish foreign policy, Hasan Kösebalaban subsumed strategic depth under Islamic liberalism.<sup>41</sup> Accordingly, strategic depth captivated the attention of conservative intelligentsia immediately after its inception.

On the implementation of strategic depth, two critical junctures proved to be momentous. The first one was the advent of a single-party government in 2003, two years after the publication of *Strategic Depth*, whose ideological orientation was congruous with the premises and the dictates of the new foreign policy approach put forward in the book. As a counterfactual, without the JDP coming to power in November 2002, strategic depth would not have been subjected to the same level of analytical scrutiny. The second pivotal moment was the promotion of Ahmet Davutoğlu from the chief foreign policy adviser to the foreign minister in May 2009. This has created a practical necessity for scholars and policy analysts alike to reflect more scrupulously upon the opinions and intentions of the person customarily dubbed as ‘the architect’ of new Turkish foreign policy.<sup>42</sup> The proliferation of scholarly publications referring to strategic depth after 2009 in the abovementioned graphs can be explained, in part, with reference to the growing interest in the worldview of this “energetic foreign minister.”<sup>43</sup>

In particular, the rapid rapprochement observed in Turkey’s relations with Syria after 2003 appeared as a veritable vindication of the promise of strategic depth at the time. While the unresolved disputes brought the two states to the very brink of war in 1998,<sup>44</sup> bilateral relations reached an advanced level in the ensuing period. In 2007, Ahmet Davutoğlu declared that “in contrast to that of 5-10 years ago, Turkey’s level of relations with Syria today [stood] as a model of progress for the rest of the region.”<sup>45</sup> In September 2009, visa liberalization was announced between the two countries, and the inaugural meeting of the high-level strategic cooperation council convened in Damascus three months later.<sup>46</sup> In Syria, Turkey was also

*Confluences Méditerranée* no. 79 (2011) : 57–65; Gérard Groc, “La doctrine Davutoglu: une projection diplomatique de la Turquie sur son environnement [Davutoglu Doctrine: Turkey’s Diplomatic Projection on Its Environment],” *Confluences Méditerranée* no. 83 (2012) : 71–85; Jana Jabbour, “Le retour de la Turquie en Méditerranée: La ‘profondeur stratégique’ Turque en Méditerranée pré- et post-printemps Arabe [Turkey’s Return to the Mediterranean: Turkish ‘Strategic Depth’ in the Mediterranean Pre- and Post-Arab Spring],” *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* no. 89 (2014) : 45–56.

<sup>40</sup> Murat Yeşiltaş, “Türkiye’yi stratejileştirmek: *Stratejik derinlik*’te jeopolitik muhayyile [Strategizing Turkey: Geopolitical Imagination in Strategic Depth],” in Köse, Okumuş, and Duran, *Stratejik zihniyet* [Strategic Mindset], 89–122, 90.

<sup>41</sup> Hasan Kösebalaban, *Turkish Foreign Policy: Islam, Nationalism, and Globalization* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 20. The other identity actors are liberal secularism, Islamic nationalism, and secularist nationalism. Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> See, among many others, Simon A. Waldman and Emre Caliskan, *The ‘New Turkey’ and Its Discontents* (New York: Hurst & Company, 2017); Soner Cagaptay, *Erdogan’s Empire: Turkey and the Politics of the Middle East* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2020).

<sup>43</sup> F. Stephen Larrabee, “Turkey’s New Geopolitics,” *Survival* 52, no. 2 (2010): 157–180, 157.

<sup>44</sup> Damla Aras, “Similar Strategies, Dissimilar Outcomes: Appraising of the Efficacy of Turkey’s Coercive Diplomacy with Syria and in Northern Iraq,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 34, no. 4 (2011): 587–618.

<sup>45</sup> Ahmet Davutoğlu, “Turkey’s Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007,” *Insight Turkey* 10, no. 1 (2008): 77–96, 80.

<sup>46</sup> Ömer Taşpınar, “Turkey’s Strategic Vision and Syria,” *The Washington Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (2012): 127–40, 137.



seen as “the most likely place” for “a reasonably free, democratic and secular model that works in a Muslim society.”<sup>47</sup> Those were the “years of euphoria” in Turkey’s relations with Syria.<sup>48</sup>

## 5. The Fall of Strategic Depth and Its Causes

Over the course of the last decade, despite initial conceptual celebrity, strategic depth has fallen from scholarly grace. This has not been a descent in quantitative terms, though, as the number of scholarly publications continues to reveal an enduring interest in strategic depth.<sup>49</sup> Strategic depth has fallen in credibility as an analytical framework, as well as a practical template for Turkish foreign policy. Worse, the concept has become a target of vindictive animadversions, and on some occasions, a victim of denigrating ridicule. There have been three fundamental sets of causes for the ultimate downfall of the concept.

In terms of contemplative causes, several critiques have addressed perceived deficiencies in the conception and argumentation of strategic depth. It is argued, for instance, that

...“historical” and “geostrategic” pillars [of strategic depth] are informed by a certain conservative communitarianism on the one hand, and interest-maximizing opportunism on the other. Since the Foreign Minister sensibly downplays the former, given the great diversity, complexity, and sensitivity of Turkey and its neighborhoods, and since the latter is effectively amoral, the “strategic depth” doctrine lacks normative traction. Therefore, it has been only partially successful in capturing the imagination of those within and beyond Turkey.<sup>50</sup>

One possible criticism involves the conception of ‘history’ in strategic depth. History is constitutive of the analytical framework propounded by Ahmet Davutoğlu as *Strategic Depth* is replete with references to historical consciousness, historical alienation, historical memory, historical legacy, de-historicization, and above all, historical depth.<sup>51</sup> In Davutoğlu’s view, as an example, “societies’ perceptions of space which take their own geographical locations as the axis, and their perceptions of time which take their own historical experiences as the axis constitute the infrastructure of the mindset that influence [foreign policy?] orientations and foreign policymaking.”<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, in this historical experience, the Ottoman Empire occupies a magisterial position, and represents more than a political entity. Turkey, to quote Davutoğlu, “is the center of a civilization [qua the Ottoman Empire] that established a unique and long-lasting political order in the past, which also comprised the intersection points of the world main landmass.”<sup>53</sup>

Notwithstanding, as one of the ironies of strategic depth, the concept would not have

<sup>47</sup> Sadik J. Al-Azm, “The ‘Turkish Model’: A View from Damascus,” *Turkish Studies* 12, no. 4 (2011): 633–41, 637.

<sup>48</sup> Ahmet K. Han, “Paradise Lost: A Neoclassical Realist Analysis of Turkish Foreign Policy and the Case of Turkish-Syrian Relations,” in *Turkey-Syria Relations: Between Enmity and Amity*, eds. Raymond Hinnebusch and Özlem Tür (Oxon: Routledge, 2013): 55–69, 63.

<sup>49</sup> See the two graphs above. Note that in the English literature the year 2013 recorded the highest number, and in the Turkish literature the year 2019 recorded the highest number.

<sup>50</sup> Nora Fisher Onar, “‘Democratic Depth’: The Missing Ingredient in Turkey’s Domestic/Foreign Policy Nexus?” in *Another Empire? A Decade of Turkey’s Foreign Policy under the Justice and Development Party*, eds. Kerem Öktem, Ayşe Kadioğlu, and Mehmet Karlı (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi University Press, 2009), 61–75, 62.

<sup>51</sup> Ahmet Davutoğlu does not represent a completely unique figure among Turkish foreign policymakers in treating the historical legacy of Turkey as constitutive of the geopolitical imagination conditioning Turkish foreign policy. For example, the late İsmail Cem, Turkish foreign minister between June 1997 and July 2002, ascribed a central role to the influence of history in his approach to the thought and practice of Turkish foreign policy. See, Mehmet Ali Tuğtan, “Kültürel değişkenlerin dış politikadaki yeri: İsmail Cem ve Ahmet Davutoğlu [The Place of Cultural Variables in Foreign Policy: İsmail Cem and Ahmet Davutoğlu],” *Uluslararası İlişkiler* 13, no. 49 (2016): 3–24.

<sup>52</sup> Davutoğlu, *Stratejik derinlik* [Strategic Depth], 29.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

constituted a point of departure for the Ottoman Empire insofar as for the Ottoman Empire, there had been no previous Ottoman Empire. That is, for the Ottoman Empire, for its foreign policy elites and the intelligentsia, there was no previous historical experience to draw on, and there was no historical depth to capitalize upon. All the strategic depth the Ottoman Empire used to possess, it created on its own by persevering through challenges.<sup>54</sup> For the Ottoman Empire, strategic depth was something to be constituted prospectively. On the other hand, in Ahmet Davutoğlu's formulation, strategic depth is conceived as something to be restituted retrospectively. This is a significant difference between the historical experience of the Ottoman Empire and the interpretation of this experience in *Strategic Depth*.

In terms of implementative causes, the loss of credibility for strategic depth lies in its analytical utility, explanatory value, and prescriptive capacity becoming contingent upon its practicality. In general, concepts can be controverted and invalidated by state of affairs evolving in the absence of direct involvement of those that formulate and promote them. In the case of strategic depth, however, Ahmet Davutoğlu's unmediated position in the execution of the concept he had systematized exacerbated the tragic fall of strategic depth. Davutoğlu's propensity to relate *his* theory to *his* practice further solidified the association between the credibility of strategic depth and the practical performance of its implementation.<sup>55</sup> His grandiloquent discourse did not help, either. In the immediate aftermath of his promotion to foreign minister, for example, Davutoğlu declared that "no development takes place in the surrounding regions at the moment without the will, knowledge, and approval of Turkey. God willing, when we celebrate the centenary of the Republic, nothing will take place in the world without the approval and knowledge of Turkey."<sup>56</sup>

In defiance of self-assured statements, the evolution of Turkish foreign policy in the ensuing period was to bring about a good deal of disillusionment with strategic depth. This disillusionment can be traced in the eventual realization of the five principles of 'Turkey's new foreign policy' elaborated by Ahmet Davutoğlu in 2008.<sup>57</sup> These were balance between security and democracy, zero problem policy towards neighbors, developing relations with neighboring regions, multi-dimensional foreign policy, and rhythmic diplomacy.<sup>58</sup> Concerning the first principle, as an example, Davutoğlu was of the opinion that "if there is not a balance between security and democracy in a country, it may not have a chance to establish an area of influence in its environs," and "Turkey's most important soft power is its democracy."<sup>59</sup>

Concurring with Davutoğlu, another influential figure made a similar claim that "one of the basic footholds of Turkey's soft power is its democracy experience," and "the gradual institutionalization of democracy day by day and strengthening of its legitimacy among the public is at the forefront of the dynamics that ensure Turkey's becoming a regional and

<sup>54</sup> For two classics on the history of the Ottoman Empire see, Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600* (London: Phoenix, 1973); Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

<sup>55</sup> This propensity existed even prior to his promotion to foreign minister during his tenure as chief foreign policy adviser. See the many interviews in Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Teoriden pratiğe: Türk dış politikası üzerine konuşmalar*.

<sup>56</sup> "Davutoğlu Türkiye'nin bölgedeki durumunu açıkladı [Davutoğlu Explained Turkey's Situation in the Region]," *Hürriyet*, May 20, 2009.

<sup>57</sup> Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision".

<sup>58</sup> For overall critiques of these principles see, Binnur Özkececi-Taner, "Disintegration of the 'Strategic Depth' Doctrine and Turkey's Troubles in the Middle East," *Contemporary Islam* no. 11 (2017): 201-14; Aylin Gürzel and Eyüp Ersoy, "From Regionalism to Realpolitik: The Rise and Fall of Turkey as a Middle Power in the Middle East," in *Middle Powers in Asia and Europe in the 21st Century*, eds. Giampiero Giacomello and Bertjan Verbeek (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2020), 119-36.

<sup>59</sup> Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision," 79-80.

global actor.”<sup>60</sup> Nonetheless, a critical assessment that “the later phase of the AKP [JDP] era is a kind of limited or majoritarian understanding of democracy with new elements of exclusion built into the democratic system” was to be vindicated by later developments that severely undermined Turkey’s democratic credentials.<sup>61</sup> In 2016, the year Davutoğlu left office, Turkey was ranked 97<sup>th</sup> among 167 countries in the world in terms of the state of its democracy.<sup>62</sup> And the same year, Freedom House identified Turkey as ‘partly free.’<sup>63</sup>

In particular, the eruption of the Arab uprisings in 2011, especially in Syria, and the ensuing tragic course of events caught Ahmet Davutoğlu, the foreign minister, by surprise, and yet he approached the developments with unwarranted overconfidence and a propensity to take undue risks.<sup>64</sup> These events exposed the shortcomings and limitations of strategic depth, and revealed that it was not well equipped to face the new geopolitical realities including scenarios of a regime change in Syria.<sup>65</sup> As a result, Turkey has suffered, and continues to do so, in many ways and in many forms, from the adverse ramifications of the developments in Syria.<sup>66</sup> In the end, strategic depth has become a conceptual collateral damage of the Syrian civil war.

In terms of evaluative causes, politicization of the intellectual life and the concomitant epistemic polarization appear to have conditioned the assessments of the thought and practice of strategic depth. In general, politicization can take two primary forms. First, the concept itself can be politicized, and second, the individual(s) that have cultivated the concept can be politicized. In a concept’s ultimate loss of credibility, contemplative causes and implementative causes are necessary causes, but not sufficient ones. That is, a concept with weak contemplation and ineffective implementation can still be subject to non-partisan scholarly engagements, and in a non-politicized, non-polarized intellectual setting, a dynamic and productive debate can still arise about the relative merits of the concept. Nevertheless, politicization and polarization foreclose, or at least compromise, this potentiality, and instead pave the way for categorized factional approaches to the concept between its proponents and its opponents.

For proponents of strategic depth, the lack of detached assessments of the underlying premises of the concept has impaired its cultivation. One premise concerns the historical

<sup>60</sup> İbrahim Kalın, “Türk dış politikası ve kamu diplomasisi,” in *Müsiad araştırma raporları: yükselen değer Türkiye*, ed. Ali Resul Usul (İstanbul: Mavi Ofset, 2010), 49–65, 54.

<sup>61</sup> Ziya Öniş, “Sharing Power: Turkey’s Democratization Challenge in the Age of the AKP Hegemony,” *Insight Turkey* 15, no. 2 (2013): 103–22, 107.

<sup>62</sup> “Democracy Index 2016: Revenge of the ‘Deplorables,’” *The Economist Intelligence Unit*, <http://dagobah.com.br/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Democracy-Index-2016-EIU.pdf>. Currently, Turkey ranks 103<sup>rd</sup> among 167 countries. See, “A New Low for Global Democracy,” *The Economist*, <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2022/02/09/a-new-low-for-global-democracy>.

<sup>63</sup> “Freedom in the World 2016,” *Freedom House*, [https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FH\\_FITW\\_Report\\_2016.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FH_FITW_Report_2016.pdf). Currently, Turkey is identified as ‘not free.’ See, “Global Freedom Status,” *Freedom House*, <https://freedomhouse.org/explore-the-map?type=fiw&year=2022>.

<sup>64</sup> İmran Demir, *Overconfidence and Risk Taking in Foreign Policy Decision Making: The Case of Turkey’s Syria Policy* (Cham: Routledge, 2017). Also see, Özlem Demirtas-Bagdonas, “Reading Turkey’s Foreign Policy on Syria: The AKP’s Construction of a Great Power Identity and the Politics of Grandeur,” *Turkish Studies* 15, no. 1 (2014): 139–55.

<sup>65</sup> The memoirs of the last Turkish ambassador to Damascus provides a rich personal account of Turkish policy towards Syria in that period. See, Ömer Önhon, *Büyükelçinin gözünden Suriye* [Syria through the Eyes of the Ambassador] (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2021). Also see, Ali Husain Bakir, “Determinants of the Turkish Position towards the Syrian Crisis: Immediate Dimensions and Future Repercussions,” *Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies*, June 2011, [https://www.dohainstitute.org/ar/lists/ACRPS-PDFDocumentLibrary/document\\_6BF7FC4E.pdf](https://www.dohainstitute.org/ar/lists/ACRPS-PDFDocumentLibrary/document_6BF7FC4E.pdf) [in Arabic].

<sup>66</sup> See, among others, Esther Meininghaus and Carina Schlüsing, “War in Syria: The Translocal Dimension of Fighter Mobilization,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 31, no. 3 (2020): 475–510; Hasan Kösebalaban, “Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy towards Syria,” *Middle East Critique* 29, no. 3 (2020): 335–44.

underpinnings of strategic depth. History is not just an analytical category in strategic depth, but constitutive of an identity. Thus, conception of history becomes construction of identity, and an examination of the function of history in the construction of strategic depth is perceived as subversive to the imagined identity by proponents of the concept. As a result, any analytical discussion of strategic depth is prone to beget existential disputation. Besides, Turkey, as a post-imperial nation-state, has its own shadow, i.e., the Ottoman Empire. Proponents of strategic depth in Turkey seem to bear an innate temptation to look at the shadow of the past to appraise the thought and practice of the concept. Contrary to the impulsion of the proponents of strategic depth to cast the light of the luminous history on the concept, strategic depth has remained in the twilight of the past. Conceptual defeat is an orphan as well, and today strategic depth is mostly forsaken by its former proponents.

On account of the politicization of strategic depth, two groups of opponents have emerged. For the political opponents, political affiliation of Ahmet Davutoğlu has converted the concept into a target of political rivalry. As an example, identifying Ahmet Davutoğlu with the concept, the leader of the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) scolded the formation of a new political party by Davutoğlu, arguing that “the claims of strategic pits [*stratejik çukurlar*] to future are a vain objective, [and] an abortive effort.”<sup>67</sup> During the tenure of Ahmet Davutoğlu as the foreign minister and prime minister, strategic depth was persistently denounced by members of the opposition parties in the parliamentary debates at the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM). For example, it was described as a black hole, political blindness, bottomless well, strategic pit, strategic catastrophe, world of dreams, strategic quagmire, and strategic rout, among others.<sup>68</sup>

For the intellectual opponents of strategic depth, one analytical impediment arguably pertains to the construction of a particular identity through the concept, and trenchant criticisms of strategic depth are perceived as subversive to the imagined identity. Hence, different framing strategies for identity subversion are employed in analyses of strategic depth. One framing strategy depicts strategic depth within the discursive framework of neo-Ottomanism.<sup>69</sup> Another framing strategy portrays the concept within the discursive framework of Islamism/Pan-Islamism.<sup>70</sup> One observer asserted, for instance, that “strategic depth offers a new ‘geopolitical discourse’ about Turkey’s position in the world system that represents *a secularized form of Islamic politics* oriented towards increasing the power of Turkey in those regions with which it had close ties historically during the Ottoman Empire.”<sup>71</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Buket Güven, “MHP genel başkanı Bahçeli: yeni parti arayışları kompo ve kurgu mucitlerinin ucuz siparişidir [MHP Leader Bahçeli: Pursuits of New Party are a Cheap Order of Conspiracy and Fiction Engineers],” *Anadolu Ajansı*, December 17, 2019.

<sup>68</sup> See the results of the search with the keyword ‘strategic depth’ in Turkish in the proceedings archive of the Turkish Assembly between the years 2009-2017, “Tutanak sorgu [Proceedings Search],” *Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*, <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/Tutanaklar/TutanakSorgu>.

<sup>69</sup> Hugh Pope, “Pax Ottomana? The Mixed Success of Turkey’s New Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 6 (2010): 161–71; Mustafa Türkeş, “Decomposing Neo-Ottoman Hegemony,” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 18, no. 3 (2016): 191–216; M. Hakan Yavuz, *Nostalgia for the Empire: The Politics of Neo-Ottomanism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020). References to neo-Ottomanism are also widespread in scholarly publications in Middle Eastern countries. For examples from Iran see, Vali Golmohammadi, Sayyed Muhammad-Kazem Sajjadpour, and Masoud Mousavi Shefaee, “Erdoganism and Understanding Turkey’s Middle East Policy,” *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (2016): 69–92 [in Persian]; Muhammad Baker Hashmetzadeh, Hamidreza Hamidfar, and Yaser Gaimee, “Strategy of Iran and Turkey in Crisis Management in the Region of West Asia: Case Study of the Syrian Crisis,” *Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 4, no. 8 (2020-2021): 29–49 [in Persian].

<sup>70</sup> Behlül Özkan, “Turkey, Davutoğlu and the Idea of Pan-Islamism,” *Survival* 56, no. 4 (2014): 119–140; Ümit Kıvanç, *Pan-İslamcının macera kılavuzu: Davutoğlu ne diyor, bir şey diyor mu?* [Pan-Islamist’s Guide of Adventure: What is Davutoğlu Saying, Is he Saying Anything?] (İstanbul: Birikim Yayınları, 2015); Birol Başkan, “Islamism and Turkey’s Foreign Policy during the Arab Spring,” *Turkish Studies* 19, no. 2 (2018): 264–88.

<sup>71</sup> Faruk Yalvaç, “Strategic Depth or Hegemonic Depth? A Critical Realist Analysis of Turkey’s Position in the World System,”

## 6. Conclusion: The Rise and Fall of Homegrown Concepts in Global IR

Asymmetry in concept cultivation between the core and the periphery in global IR is a foundational manifestation of the asymmetry of knowledge production in the discipline. Still, the discipline continues to witness the conception, formulation, and articulation of conceptual frames of knowledge production originating in peripheral epistemic communities. The concept of 'strategic depth' propounded by the Turkish scholar Ahmet Davutoğlu constitutes one of the contemporary attempts to rectify the disciplinary imbalance through the cultivation of homegrown concepts.<sup>72</sup> Following its inception, strategic depth initially attracted a great deal of recognition and acclaim in the local and global IR communities. Ultimately, though, it has fallen from scholarly grace since the concept has virtually lost its credibility as an analytical framework and a practical template for Turkish foreign policy.

Accordingly, strategic depth is emblematic of the fluctuating fortunes of homegrown concepts in the peripheral epistemic ecologies. There have been three fundamental sets of causes for the initial ascendancy of strategic depth as well as its eventual conceptual insolvency, which are categorized as contemplative causes, implementative causes, and evaluative causes. Remedial measures to vivify concept cultivation in the periphery and to conserve the cultivated concepts need to address these sets of causes underlying the rise and fall of homegrown concepts in global IR. The case of strategic depth bears many lessons in this regard.

In terms of contemplative causes, for example, perceived deficiencies in the conception and argumentation of a homegrown concept do not necessarily constitute a serious impediment to its disciplinary recognition on the condition that it is subjected to serious and persistent scholarly inquiry by the local IR community. Homegrown concepts sustain their analytical relevance only if they are subjected to collective cultivation by local epistemic communities in peripheral contexts. As relatively successful cases of peripheral concept cultivation in the discipline, *dependencia* and eurasianism are both based on the works of a great many scholars representing collective scholarly undertakings.<sup>73</sup> In the case of strategic depth, the construction of the concept has arguably remained the undertaking of a single scholar, even though strategic depth continues to be subjected to critical conceptual deconstructions.

In terms of implementative causes, an intimate association of the analytical utility, explanatory value, and prescriptive capacity of strategic depth with its practicality has proven to be a blessing and a curse. Most cases of peripheral conceptual cultivation in global IR convey the same association. Practical applicability of homegrown concepts is conceived to buttress their conceptual validity. Nonetheless, as a corollary, unexpected turns of events in foreign policy or inadvertent consequences of certain policies are equally conceived to undermine the validity of homegrown concepts. In the end, conceptual cultivation is taken hostage by practical implementation. In the Turkish case, the fateful execution of the strategic depth doctrine has condemned the concept of strategic depth.

In terms of evaluative causes, to repeat, a homegrown concept with weak contemplation

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*International Relations* 26, no. 2 (2012): 165–80. Emphasis is added.

<sup>72</sup> One study, for example, discusses *Strategic Depth* in reference to periphery theorising in global IR as one of the "occasional examples of homegrown theorising in Turkey" by a "scholar from the domestic periphery." See, Ersel Aydınli and Julie Mathews, "Periphery Theorising for a Truly Internationalised Discipline: Spinning IR Theory out of Anatolia," *Review of International Studies* 34, no. 4 (2008): 693–712, 704.

<sup>73</sup> On the concept of eurasianism see, Mark Bassin, Sergey Glebov, and Marlene Laruelle, eds., *Between Europe and Asia: The Origins, Theories, and Legacies of Russian Eurasianism* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015); Sirke Mäkinen, "Professional Geopolitics as an Ideal: Roles of Geopolitics in Russia," *International Studies Perspectives* 18, no. 3 (2017): 288–303.

and ineffective implementation can still be subject to non-partisan scholarly engagements. In a non-politicized, non-polarized intellectual setting, a dynamic and productive debate can still arise about the relative merits of the concept. Notwithstanding, in the case of strategic depth, politicization of the concept and polarization of the local epistemic community has precluded detached and creative assessments of the thought and practice of the concept. In peripheral disciplinary contexts in global IR, politicization and polarization plague cultivation of homegrown concepts, forbidding them from flourishing or withering them away.

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## Abstracts in Turkish

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### ABD Demokrasi Yardımı ve Bağışçı Çıkarlarının Koşullu Etkileri, Medyanın İlgisi ve Demokratik Değişim, 1975-2010

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#### Öz

Demokrasinin desteklenmesi, 20. yüzyılın sonlarında, özellikle Soğuk Savaş'tan sonra Amerikan dış politikasının öncelikleri arasında yer almaktadır. Ancak kaynakların kıt olması, politika belirleyicilerin hangi ülkelerin demokrasi konusunda yardım almaları veya hangilerinin almamaları gerektiği konusunda zor seçimler yapmalarını gerekli kılmaktadır. Önceki çalışmalar, demokrasi yardımı konusundaki ödeneklerin tahsisatını, bağışçıların stratejik çıkarları ve potansiyel alıcı devletlerin demokratik açılımları gibi çeşitli faktörlerin şekillendirdiğini göstermektedir. Araştırmalar, ayrıca medyanın bu kararlarda önemli rol oynadığını ortaya koymaktadır. Makale, diğer alıcı ve bağışçı değişkenlerini kontrol etmek suretiyle, medyanın çerçeveleme etkileri ve rejim değişikliklerinin ABD demokrasi yardımı kararları üzerindeki koşullu etkilerini incelemektedir. Bu faktörlerin, politika yapıcılar için belirli bir ülkenin geniş ilgi profilleri açısından belirginliğine bağlı olduğunu savunuyoruz. Bağışçıların potansiyel bir alıcıya olan genel ilgi düzeyi, medyanın yarattığı ilginin demokrasi yardımı üzerindeki etkilerini sistematik olarak şekillendirmektedir. Genel anlamda, düşük ilgi koşulları medyanın dikkatinin ve rejim koşullarının/değişimlerinin gündem belirleme etkisini artırırken, yüksek ilgi koşullarının bu etkiyi azalttığına kanaat getirmekteyiz. Makale bu olası ilişkileri, 1975-2010 arasındaki ABD demokrasi yardımı bağlamında incelemektedir. Bulgular argümanımızı desteklemekle beraber, medyanın gündem belirleme rolü, bağış alıcı devletlerin özellikleri ve bağışçıların çıkarları arasındaki ilişkileri nüanslı bir şekilde açıklamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Demokrasi yardımı, medya, dış politika

## **“Klişeler Dokusu”ndan Fazlası?: Fulbright Programının Amaçları ve Yeni Araştırma Yönleri**

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### **Öz**

Bu makale, değişim programlarının, özellikle de Fulbright Programının uluslararası ilişkilerdeki işlevi hakkında eleştirel düşünmeyi geliştirmek için sosyal bilimler araştırmacıları tarafından geliştirilen bazı değerlendirici bakış açılarını ve modellerini eleştirel olarak incelemektedir. ‘Eğitim değişimi’ kavramı, lise ziyaretlerinden mesleki becerilerin geliştirilmesine uzanan bir tür eğitim amacıyla bireylerin veya grupların milletler arası hareketi anlamına gelmektedir. Fulbright programı, öğrenci ve akademisyen değişimini kapsamakta olup, buna ilave olarak, akademisyenlerin beraberlerinde götürdükleri uzmanlıkları ile öğretim imkanları sunmaktadır. İkili değişim programlarına ilişkin birçok çalışma olmasına rağmen, ulusötesi veya uluslararası tarihte bir aktarım vektörü olarak (bilgi, malzeme, insan veya üçünün tümü) eğitimsel değişimin işlevi açısından keşfedilecek daha çok şey olduğu vurgulanmaktadır. Makale, öncelikle Fulbright programının uluslararası ilişkilerdeki amaçlarının nasıl sunulduğunu değerlendirmek amacıyla literatürü incelemektedir. Makale, daha sonra, uluslararası ve ulusötesi etkileşimlerdeki mübadeleleri "mübadele coğrafyaları", "beyin dolaşımı", "hesap merkezleri", "aydınlanmış milliyetçilik" ve "cumhuriyet-ötelilik" gibi yenilikçi kavramlarla ele almaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Eğitimsel değişim, bilgi transferi, beyin dolaşımı, değerlendirme, Fulbright programı

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## **Japon Devlet-Dışı Aktörlerin Nükleer Silahlara Karşı Harekete Yaptıkları Farkına Varılmayan Katkıları**

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### **Öz**

1950'lerden bu yana uluslararası nükleer silah karşıtı hareketine bağlı Japon devlet dışı aktörler, Japonya'nın 1945'te Hiroşima ve Nagazaki'ye yapılan atom bombalı saldırılarının deneyimlerini paylaşarak nükleer silahların tehlikeleri hakkında farkındalık yaratmaktadır. Nükleer saldırılara maruz kalmış tek ülkenin temsilcileri olarak, nükleer silahların insani

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etkilerine dair fazlasıyla ihtiyaç duyulan bir kaynağı teşkil etmektedir. Bu aktörler arasında, genellikle hibakusha olarak bilinen ve atom bombası saldırılarından sağ kurtulan, nükleer söylem üzerinde insani yardım odağını başlatan ve bunu onlarca yıldır ısrarla sürdüren kişiler bulunmaktadır. Bu makale, bahsi geçen aktörlerin nükleer silahların etkilerine ilişkin görgü tanıklığı ile nükleer silahların kaldırılmasına yönelik uluslararası çabalarda önemli kilometre taşlarına yol açan çabalarını incelemektedir. Ayrıca, Japonya Atom Bombası ve Hidrojen Bombası Mağdurları Federasyonu (Nihon Hidankyo) ve Japonya Nükleer Silahlara Karşı Avukatlar Birliği'nin (JALANA) 1990'larda Dünya Mahkemesi Projesi, 2010'larda İnsani Girişimi'nin ve nihayetinde 2017'de Nükleer Silahların Yasaklanması Antlaşması'na yol açılmasındaki muazzam katkılarına da odaklanmaktadır. Japon devlet dışı aktörlerin katkıları maalesef yeterince takdir edilmemekte ve uluslararası alanda nükleer silahların kaldırılması hareketinin başarıları genellikle diğer uluslararası aktörlere atfedilmektedir. Bu nedenle, makale, Japon devlet dışı aktörlerin uluslararası nükleer silah karşıtı hareketinin sürdürülmesine ve nükleer silahları yasaklama anlaşmasına ulaşılmasındaki katkılarını takdir etmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Devlet dışı aktörler, Nükleer Silahların Yasaklanması Antlaşması, hibakusha, Nihon Hidankyo, Japonya Nükleer Silahlara Karşı Avukatlar Derneği

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## **NATO Sözlüğünde Dezenformasyonun Güvenlikleştirilmesi: Bir Bilişimsel Metin Analizi**

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### **Öz**

Rusya'nın 2016 ABD seçimlerine karışmasının ardından, dezenformasyon ve sahte haberler, küresel çapta yabancı bilgi operasyonlarına karşı iç politikada farkındalık oluşturmaya yardımcı olan popüler terimler haline gelmiştir. Bugün, çok sayıda politikacı, diplomat ve sivil toplum lideri, dezenformasyon ve sahte haberleri hem iç hem de dış politika bağlamında birincil sorunlar olarak tanımlamaktadır. O halde, güvenlik kurumları dış ve güvenlik politikalarının belirlenmesinde dezenformasyon ve yalan haberleri nasıl tanımlar ve güvenikleştirme stratejileri yıllar içinde nasıl değişmektedir? Bu makale bilişimsel yöntemlerden faydalanmak suretiyle, Ocak 2014'ten beri NATO'nun resmi ve bağlı hesaplarından alınan 238.452 tweetin yanı sıra 2.000'den fazla NATO metni, haber açıklaması ve yayınlarının içeriklerini ve ana temalarını denetimsiz Konu Modelleme Yöntemleri (kmy) ile analiz etmektedir. Çalışma, NATO'nun tehdit söylemi ve güvenikleştirme stratejilerinin ABD'nin siyasi sözlüğünden büyük ölçüde etkilendiğini ve örgütün kelime seçiminin ittifak kaynaklarını harekete geçirme ve uyum sağlama olasılıklarına göre değiştiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Buna ek olarak, çalışma, son zamanlarda ortaya çıkan dezenformasyon gündeminin aslında NATO'nun uzun süredir

devam eden Rusya odaklı güvenlikleştirme stratejisinin ve NATO misyonunu desteklemek için Baltık ülkeleri ve Polonya'yı harekete geçirme girişimlerinin bir devamı olduğunu ileri sürmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Güvenlikleştirme, NATO, Rusya, metin analizi, yapısal konu modeli

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## **Ontolojik Güvenlik ve İran'ın Füze Programı**

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### **Öz**

Bu makale, İran'ın füze programını tartışma konusunda neden isteksiz olduğu sorusunu yanıtlamaya çalışmaktadır. İran'ın füze programını caydırıcılık sağlama hedefi, bölgede askeri güç dengesi kurma amacı ve İran ile Amerika Birleşik Devletleri arasında devrim sonrası onlarca tartışmalı meseleden biri olarak gören diğer çalışmaların aksine, bu makale İran'ın ontolojik güvenliğini incelemektedir. Makale öncelikle, füze programının İranlılar için ayrılmaz bir şekilde kimlikleriyle bağlantılı bir gurur kaynağı haline geldiğini savunmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, konu Batılı mevkidaşlarıyla müzakere masasına oturmaya gelince, İranlı yetkililer iki zorlu sınamayla karşı karşıya kalmaktadır: Batı'ya karşı derin bir güvensizlik ve füze meselesiyle ilgili herhangi bir anlaşmanın ardından gelebilecek utanç duygusu. Bu durumda, İranlı yetkililer, yaptırım riski ve tehditlere rağmen füze programlarının kimlik bileşenlerini korumak, normal ve günlük rutinlerine dönmek, füze programlarını muhafaza etmekte ısrarcıdır ve füze programlarının bir haysiyet ve onur meselesi olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Makale, devletlerin utanç ve güvensizlik duygularının üstesinden nasıl gelebileceğini ampirik olarak göstermektedir. Makalenin kuramsal katkısı, fiziksel güvenlik ile ontolojik güvenlik çatıştığında, İran'ın nükleer müzakerelerinin gidişatından anlaşılabilmesi gibi, birincisinin ikincisine tercih edildiğini kanıtlamaktadır. Önceki politikalarını değiştirmekteki gereksinimlerini haklı çıkarmak için yeni söylemler icat ettikleri sonucuna varılabilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İran'ın Füze Programı, ontolojik güvenlik, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, nükleer müzakereler, kimlik

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## Küresel Uluslararası İlişkilerde Özgün Kavramların Yükselişi ve Düşüşü: Türkiye Uluslararası İlişkilerinde “Stratejik Derinliğin” Anatomisi

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### Öz

Küresel Uluslararası İlişkilerde bilgi üretiminin asimetrisi, çeşitli biçimlerde kendini göstermektedir. Kavram geliştirme, bilimsel karşılaşmalarda, değiş tokuşlarda ve üretimlerde yaygın olan epistemik hiyerarşileri koşullandıran temel bir biçimdir. Küresel merkez, kavram geliştirmenin görünüşte doğal ekolojisini temsil ederken; çevre, süreç içinde herhangi bir özgünlük ve yerlilik iddiasından vazgeçerek, işlenmiş kavramları kendine mal etmektedir. Bununla birlikte, bilgi üretiminin kavramsal çerçevelerini tasarlamak, formüle etmek ve eklemek için çevrede entelektüel taahhüt vakaları olmuştur. Bu makale, ilk olarak, çevre epistemik ekolojilerdeki özgün kavramların dalgalanan kaderlerini tartışmaktadır. İkinci olarak, Türk bilim insanı Ahmet Davutoğlu'nun ifade ettiği şekliyle 'Stratejik Derinlik' kavramını tanıtmakta ve son dönemde Türk dış politikasının oluşturulması ve uygulanmasındaki önemini gözden geçirmektedir. Üçüncüsü, stratejik derinliğin ortaya çıkışından sonra yerel ve küresel Uİ topluluklarınca tanınması ve benimsenmesindeki nedenlerini incelemektedir. Makale, bu kavramın ilk ortaya çıktığında başarılı olmasını üç temel başlık altında incelemektedir. Bunlar, düşünceye dayalı nedenler, uygulamaya yönelik nedenler ve değerlendirici nedenler olarak kategorize edilmektedir. Dördüncüsü, makale stratejik derinliğin bilimsel lütuftan düşüşünün sebeplerini irdelemektedir. Makale ayrıca stratejik derinliğin nihai kavramsal iflasında yine bu üç sebebin işlevsel olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Makale, özgün kavram geliştirmeyi canlandırmak ve işlenmiş kavramları korumak için iyileştirici önlemleri ele alarak sona ermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Küresel Uluslararası İlişkiler, özgün kuram, Türk Dış Politikası, stratejik derinlik, Ahmet Davutoğlu





## Aims and Scope

*All Azimuth*, journal of the Center for Foreign Policy and Peace Research, is an English-language, international peer-reviewed journal, published biannually. It aims:

- to provide a forum for academic studies on foreign policy analysis, peace and development research,
- to publish pieces bridging the theory-practice gap; dealing with under-represented conceptual approaches in the field; and making scholarly engagements in the dialogue between the “center” and the “periphery“,
- to encourage publications with homegrown theoretical and philosophical approaches.
- to transcend conventional theoretical, methodological, geographical, academic and cultural boundaries,
- to highlight works of senior and promising young scholars,
- to uphold international standards and principles of academic publishing.

## Center for Foreign Policy and Peace Research, İhsan Doğramacı Peace Foundation

The Center for Foreign Policy and Peace Research was created under the auspices of the İhsan Doğramacı Peace Foundation.

The main purpose of the Center is to help develop agendas and promote policies that contribute to the peaceful resolution of international and inter-communal conflicts taking place particularly in the regions surrounding Turkey. It also aims to analyze and interpret contemporary policies from a critical, comparative but, at the same time, constructive and peace-oriented perspective.

The Center, in order to achieve its purpose, prepares research projects and programs, works to provide a suitable dialogical environment for social scientists, publishes research outcomes, holds conferences, round-tables, and workshops on national and international levels, offers fellowships, appoints candidates for the İhsan Doğramacı Peace Award, and publishes *All Azimuth: A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace*.

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## Publication Policy

*All Azimuth* follows a double-blind peer review process. Although processing times may vary, most manuscripts are processed by the editorial staff within two weeks, by which time the editors decide if an article is to be rejected or merits the review process. Each round of reviews may take up to 6 weeks. Manuscripts need two affirmative reviews before they can be considered for publication. Pending the suggestions by the reviewers, an article may be accepted, rejected, or require revisions. In the last case, the author(s) will be given the opportunity to resubmit a revised version of the manuscript based on, and addressing, the reviewers' comments. This process is repeated until a manuscript is decisively accepted or rejected. In the case of an inconclusive review process, the editorial board may contact additional reviewers.

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