

**How to Write
a Senior Thesis:**

**A Very Brief Introduction to
Social Science**

Boston College
Department of Political Science

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Introduction

The Purpose of this Handbook

This handbook is intended to help you write your thesis during your senior year at Boston College. Its goal is to provide you with some of the tools you need in order to complete a well-designed, well-researched, and well-written thesis. Its hope is to do so in an easily accessible and simplified manner. But why, exactly, is this handbook needed in the first place?

The general reason behind this need is the fact that, contrary to common expectations, your senior thesis is not simply a much longer term paper. It is not simply an independent project carried out under the general guidance of an advisor. It does not simply require more research, more evidence, and more writing. **Rather, your thesis requires more *methodology*. In a nutshell, that is what this handbook is meant to provide.**

To this end, there are several things that this handbook is not. It is not a handbook on the nuts and bolts of writing a thesis at Boston College. It will not discuss what requirement writing a thesis fulfills, or how to go about picking an advisor, or how many pages a thesis should be, or what the best note-taking methods are, or how to format a bibliography. While neither unimportant nor unproblematic, these issues will not be discussed in this handbook.

Up until this point, your coursework has largely focused on what the social sciences discuss. You have learned a great deal about what many social scientists have said on a great variety of topics. But you have learned less about how social science research is actually done.

Learning about how social science is done entails learning about key aspects of social science methodology, also known as research methods. And, in brief, without knowledge of these key aspects, writing your senior thesis will be a difficult and frustrating task. Thus, this handbook is a very short introduction to what the social science process looks like, from beginning to end.

There are two supplementary purposes to this handbook, both of which are closely related to the primary one of introducing you to social science methodology.

First, in addition to providing you with theoretical advice on how to correctly design a study for your thesis, **this handbook will also provide you with some practical advice on how to write a good thesis.** Generally speaking, we want to show you the ideal, or the standard, by which you should judge the methodological strength of your own thesis project. But achieving that ideal, of course, is very difficult, for anyone. Thus, we will also discuss some alternative, more manageable, approaches that you can adopt, approaches which are less than ideal but far from senseless. In short, we will discuss how not to make the perfect the enemy of the good.

That our aim is to provide practical advice means that nothing in this handbook should be understood as a requirement for your thesis. Your thesis is unlikely to reflect every aspect that is discussed below. **Thus, communicating with your thesis advisor is still absolutely essential. This handbook should supplement, but not supplant, that relationship.** Meeting the expectations, and following the advice of, your thesis advisor is more important than writing a thesis that incorporates every lesson of this handbook.

Second, this handbook covers key aspects of social science methodology not simply to help you conduct your own work, but to help you read the works of other social scientists. Understanding how social science books are written and organized will help you to better navigate the literature. Such knowledge will help you to determine whether a book's theoretical question is relevant to your own work; to identify the core arguments of the book; and to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. **In short, this handbook is meant to benefit you as both a producer as well as a consumer of social science.**¹

The Organization of this Handbook

This handbook is divided into two parts. Part I is a brief introduction to the key aspects of social science methodology, and it is the more important part of this handbook. Part II is a brief introduction to some of the major theoretical questions that social science tries to answer.

Part I, "How to Do Social Science Research" is divided into 7 chapters. Chapter 1 discusses the different types of questions that social science tries to answer, and it provides you with some guidance as to what kind of question your thesis should attempt to answer. Chapter 2 qualifies the account of Chapter 1, paving the way for Chapter 3, which discusses the type of method you will employ to answer your thesis question. Chapter 4 gives an overview of what a literature review is. Chapter 5 will dive more deeply into some of the details of social science methodology. Chapter 6 discusses the different types of answers that social science generally provides when answering the questions discussed in Chapter 1. And Chapter 7 brings everything together, providing a fairly straight-forward and typical outline of what your thesis should, or could, look like.

Part II of the handbook, "A Brief Introduction to Social Science Literature," contains individual chapters that discuss some of the major theoretical questions in social science. The "Preface to Part II" will explain in greater detail the purposes of these chapters. But very quickly, Part II is meant to illustrate what was talked about in Part I by providing some concrete examples from social science literature. It is also meant to introduce you to some theoretical questions that your

¹ Royce A. Singleton and Bruce C. Straights, *Approaches to Social Research*, 5th Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 2.

own thesis could potentially take up. You are not required, of course, to pick any of these questions, but perhaps one of these questions is particularly pertinent to that part of the world in which you are interested, or perhaps they will simply help you to begin formulating another question. **But do not lose sight of the forest for trees in Part II.** Pay attention to the broad similarities between the chapters, not the details of every argument.

The Limitations of this Handbook

The methods used in social science research form a very large, and very complicated, body of knowledge. There are, in fact, many books devoted to social science methodology. But many of these books are rather dense and difficult, and they are written for graduate students or even scholars themselves.

Thus, this handbook was written to be simple enough and easy enough for undergraduates to read on their own, with little direct guidance from a professor, and to do so before the onset of their senior year.

Unfortunately, what is pedagogically useful is not necessarily theoretically thorough. In other words, this handbook is not a comprehensive guide to social science methodology. It oversimplifies complex ideas. It cuts corners. It presumes uniformity and agreement where nothing of the sort exists. But an imperfect book is not a bad book. Thus, whatever the limitations of this handbook may be, they surely do not render it useless.

It will nonetheless be helpful to be aware of what some of these limitations are; to know what parts of the handbook are most open to objection. We will therefore point out some of these limitations at the appropriate time, providing some quick suggestions as to how your thesis might understandably, and prudently, deviate from what is being said.

One of the limitations of this handbook should be mentioned now, before we move onto Part I. Generally speaking, this handbook is written from the perspective of Comparative Politics, one of the major subfields in Political Science. This emphasis was chosen because it will cast, we hope, the widest pedagogical net possible in the smallest space possible. If we tried to do justice to every discipline or subfield in the social sciences, this handbook would quickly turn into a textbook, undermining one of its primary purposes. Many of the aspects, questions, and subjects of Comparative Politics are, in fact, shared by the other disciplines and fields, and the comparative method is one of the most fundamental research methods in the social sciences.

Thus, if you are planning to write a thesis on international relations, or American politics, or social issues in the Middle East, you need not worry that this handbook will be of no help to you.

To be sure, not every word will be perfectly relevant to each and every one of you, but much of it will be, and we will help you to avert your eyes when good old common sense recommends it.

Finally, this handbook is an ongoing project in the Political Science Department at Boston College. All content found therein is subject to possible, and likely, revision.

Part I: How to Do Social Science Research

Preface to Part I

The purpose of Part I is not to provide a comprehensive account of the key aspects of social science methodology. In discussing a restricted yet sufficient number of those key aspects, its chief purpose is to help your thesis get off to a good start. And, in many respects, getting off to a good start means putting together a good proposal. Many of the tools needed to write a fairly good proposal are discussed in Chapters 1 through 3. To help you absorb that discussion, here is a cursory list of key takeaways from that discussion:

1. Your senior thesis should attempt to answer a **big, theoretical question** that is concerned with **causality**.
2. Your senior thesis, most likely, will formulate an answer to that theoretical question by using the **comparative method**.
3. The comparative method will require you to select a certain number of **cases** to examine.
4. Most likely, your senior thesis will examine between **1 to 3 cases**.

Of course, we don't simply want you to get off to a good start. Thus, Chapters 4 through 7 will help you to complete a good thesis. Chapter 4 discusses what a literature review is, how to write one, and where to find an example of one. Chapter 5 will help you to improve and refine your research design by discussing concepts and typologies, case selection, and causal analysis. Chapter 6 discusses the three principal approaches to answering your big, theoretical question: rational choice, culture, and structure. And, finally, Chapter 7 provides a fairly straightforward approach to organizing your final product.

At the end of most of these chapters, you will find a set of "Concluding Remarks" and "Suggested Readings." For the most part, the "Concluding Remarks" will offer a practical perspective on how to approach your thesis in light of what was said in the rest of the chapter. In the "Suggested Readings" section, you will find journal articles, websites, and books that will further discuss the topic, or topics, discussed in that individual chapter.

Chapter 1: Asking the Right Question

Even as a freshman at Boston College, you were probably well aware that every good paper has a strong thesis statement. In that thesis statement, you are to introduce, clearly and succinctly, the argument that you intend to make and defend in the rest of the paper. But this is not the best way to begin thinking about your senior thesis. To be sure, you will have to make and defend an argument in your thesis. But first you need a question.

Formulating a research question will be your first, and arguably most important, task in writing a senior thesis. This particular task is also the first major difference between writing a senior thesis and writing a typical term paper. In the case of most term paper assignments, you are usually given the question, or at least very strict parameters as to what you can ask. In the case of the senior thesis, however, the burden of formulating a research question falls entirely on you (with the help of your advisor, of course).

Now all of this may sound rather elementary, perhaps even a little intellectually insulting. But it is not uncommon for students who are writing a senior thesis to make one of two mistakes from the very outset: (1) the student, whether intentionally or not, formulates an argument to modify and prove rather than a question to explore and answer; or, (2) the student asks a poor question altogether.

- ❖ Quick Tip: Writing your senior thesis should entail searching for an answer to a question, not finding evidence for an argument.

Helping you to formulate a good research question is the purpose of this chapter. Unfortunately, it is harder than one might think, and more important than one might assume. But if done correctly, it will make writing your senior thesis much more rewarding and much less frustrating.

Types of Research Questions

So the starting point of writing your senior thesis is formulating a solid research question. However, one of the most important lessons you need to learn before embarking on your senior thesis is that the term “research question” is a vague term, and, in fact, there are many different types of research questions. **Understanding the differences between these research questions and knowing which one your thesis ought to be answering is absolutely crucial for writing a good thesis.**

- ❖ Quick Tip: There are many different kinds of research questions, and it is critical that you understand what type of question you are asking.

This may sound simple and straightforward enough, but the importance of this step cannot be overstated. If this step is not done correctly, numerous problems will subsequently arise. **It is entirely possible to write a bad thesis if you are asking a good question, However, it is very difficult to write a good thesis if you are asking a bad question.** And not only will you write a bad paper, you will encounter a fair amount of frustration along the way.

To help you understand what type of question your thesis should answer, this chapter will discuss and distinguish between four types of research questions:

1. Descriptive Questions.
2. Causal Questions.
 - a. Empirical Questions.
 - b. Theoretical Questions.
3. Normative Questions.

Descriptive Questions

A descriptive question is **a question about “what happened,” or “what something is.”** A descriptive question seeks an answer to what went on, or what is going on. It asks about the differences between types, or classes, of things. The following questions are examples of a descriptive question:

- What is a democracy?
- What are the key characteristics of a democracy?
- What is the difference between a liberal and an illiberal democracy?
- What are the different types of democracies?
- What are the differences between direct and indirect democracy?
- How many countries in the world are democratic?
- When did those countries become democratic?
- How long have those countries been democratic?
- Which countries in the world have become undemocratic?

For the most part, your thesis should not attempt to answer a descriptive question; or rather, your thesis should not *simply* answer a descriptive question. In many respects, your project will necessarily begin by answering a descriptive question. Ideally, however, it will move beyond that step to causal questions.

Causal Questions

Instead of answering a descriptive question, **your thesis should attempt to answer the second type of research, a causal question, which actually consists of two further research questions.** Thus, the causal type of question is of most concern to us, and so we must look at this particular type of question at much greater length.

❖ Quick Tip: Your thesis should attempt to answer a causal question.

To help clarify what a causal question is let's take a step back and take a look at what political science, on its best day, is trying to accomplish. There are two major branches of science: the natural sciences and the social sciences (there's actually a third that doesn't concern us - the formal sciences).

Among the many fields in the social sciences is political science. In many ways, therefore, political science tries to do what the natural sciences try to do. While the natural sciences seek to explain the natural world and the laws that govern it, political science tries to explain the world of human beings and societies and the laws governing them. There is therefore an underlying assumption that political science can be objective and scientific.

Now, there are a number of difficulties with this underlying assumption, but it is not unreasonable, for our purposes, to ignore those difficulties for now and to begin from the presumption that, as political scientists, we want and can achieve something comparable to what natural scientists are trying to achieve, namely, to explain how and why the world of politics behaves the way it does. Why do human beings do the things they do? Why do political events take place, or not take place, as the case may be?

In other words, most social science research - or perhaps the best or most important social science research - attempts to determine causality, that is, it attempts to determine whether certain outcomes are the result of a certain combination of various factors. Causal questions seek to identify or to determine the conditions under which a certain outcome takes place.

In short, if a descriptive question can be called a "what" question, causal questions can be called a "why" question. And these "why" questions can be formulated in a number of different ways. For the sake of clarity and continuity, here are some examples of causal questions that are related to the descriptive questions about democracy:

- Under what conditions does a democracy arise?
- Why do some countries become democracies, while others do not?
- What causes some countries to become democratic and others non-democratic?
- What explains the spread of democratic forms of government?
- Why do some countries develop a parliamentary system, while others develop a presidential one?
- What makes a democracy sustainable?
- Why do democracies fail?

A social science project attempts to answer a causal question by answering the two other types of research questions: a theoretical question and an empirical question.

The **theoretical question** is a big, causal question on a thematic issue, while the **empirical question** is a specific, causal question about a specific event, institution, movement, government, policy, person, etc. And, in principle, a social scientist chooses the theoretical question first, and then he or she chooses the empirical question in the hopes that the answer to the empirical question will answer the theoretical question.

- ❖ Quick Tip: In general, social science tries to answer big, theoretical questions by answering a specific, empirical question.

The answer to the theoretical question is called a theory, a very misunderstood and misused term. As it is used in social science, theory does not simply mean a really good guess, or “idle speculation or conjecture,” as it is popularly understood.² It does not mean an interesting explanation that lacks empirical evidence. A theory is a general proposition that explains how, why, or under what conditions, something happens, and which is supported by ample empirical observation and evidence.

It is often the case that what is here being called the empirical question is referred to as the research question. But, as is hopefully becoming clearer, many different types of questions can be called research questions. Accordingly, for the sake of clarity, this handbook will not refer to any of the specific types of questions as research questions.

Let’s again make use of the democracy theme to see some examples of an empirical question:

- What led to the rise of democracy in the United States in the 18th and 19th centuries?
- Why did the United States, Great Britain, and France develop different types of democratic systems?

² Singleton and Straights, *Approaches to Social Research*, 24.

- What caused the breakdown of democratic rule in Germany following World War I?
- Why have many countries in the Middle East not democratized since the end of the Cold War?

A helpful way of thinking about the difference between an empirical and theoretical question is to think about whether the question you are answering contains any proper names or places. In general, a theoretical question does not contain any proper names or places. It does not ask a question about a specific person, movement, or country. It asks a question about abstract ideas, movements, or other political phenomena. In contrast, notice how the empirical questions listed above refer to specific countries, time period, and political systems.

❖ Quick Tip: Your theoretical question should not contain any proper names or places.

To help clarify what all of this means, we will be discussing many more examples below. In light of its importance, however, let's take a look at one quick example before moving on. One of the major theoretical questions in political science is: where does democracy come from? As was just shown, this question can be formulated in a number of different ways. The origins of democracy is a big, theoretical question, and some of the most well-known books in political science have attempted to answer this question.

One of the most well-known of these books is *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* by Robert Putnam, published in 1993.³ In the introduction to that work, Putnam writes: "The central question is: What are the conditions for creating strong, responsive, effective representative institutions?" That is Putnam's theoretical question; in effect, he is asking: under what conditions does democracy emerge? And how does Putnam go about answering this theoretical question?

His answer came from studying Italian politics in the 1970's. Sometime around 1970, Italy changed from being a centralized administrative state to a partially decentralized one governed by 15 to 20 regional governments or councils. Two decades later, it was rather clear that the regional governments of northern Italy had generally prospered and showed signs of being a healthy, viable democratic community, while the regional governments of southern Italy remained undeveloped and its political institutions undemocratic. Thus, Putnam's empirical question is: why did the regional governments of northern Italy develop the way they did, and those of southern Italy develop the way they did? Putnam then uses the answer to that empirical question to answer the big, theoretical question: where does democracy come from?

³ Robert D. Putnam, with Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Y. Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

Normative Questions

Normative questions ask about what should happen, or what ought to happen. They ask questions concerning better and worse, good and bad. In general, normative questions belong to the subfield in political science called political theory or political philosophy. Normative questions include:

- Why is democracy a legitimate form of government?
- Is democracy the best form of government?
- Why is democracy the best form of government?
- What is the best form of government, or best regime?
- What is the goal, or purpose, or end, of government?
- What is justice?
- What is the good life, or the most choiceworthy life?
- Why should we study science at all?

Generally speaking, senior theses do not attempt to answer normative questions, though it is not an impossibility, of course. However, this handbook does not discuss how normative questions would be answered. It will primarily deal with how to answer causal questions.

Nonetheless, a more comprehensive list of normative questions can be found in Appendix D. If you are interested in answering a normative question, you should speak with your advisor.

Research Question Exercise

To further clarify the differences between these four types of research questions, let's take a look at some general examples. In talking about almost any event, institution, outcome, etc., it is possible to formulate the four different types of research questions all of which concern the same topic.

Let's say you wanted to write a thesis on what happened in Egypt after the outbreak of the Arab Spring in 2011.

1. You would first have to determine what happened in Egypt after the outbreak of the Arab Spring. For example, did Egypt become a democracy after the Arab Spring? This is the descriptive question, or the "what" question. It is safe to say that Egypt did not become a democracy following the overthrow of Mubarak.

2. The next step is to move from the descriptive question to the causal question, or, from the “what” question to the “why” question. Why did Egypt not become a democracy after the Arab Spring? This would be your empirical question.
3. The next step would be to formulate the theoretical question that the empirical question can help to shed light on. Why do countries become democracies?
4. This leaves us with the final type of research question, the normative question. Should countries become democracies?

Thus, when considering the relationship of Egypt after the Arab Spring to democracy, it is possible to formulate these four research questions:

A. Egypt and Democracy.

1. The descriptive question: did Egypt become a democracy after the Arab Spring?
2. **The causal (empirical) question: why did Egypt not become a democracy after the Arab Spring?**
3. **The causal (theoretical) question: why do countries become democracies?**
4. The normative question: should countries become democracies?

At this point, it is hopefully clear that, ultimately and *ideally*, your thesis should try to answer questions (2) and (3). Simply explaining whether or not Egypt became a democracy after the Arab Spring is not truly a work of social science, since it merely remains at the level of description and fails to touch upon questions concerning causality. Thus, answering the descriptive question is a necessary, but not sufficient, step in the process.

To some extent, the same is true if you were to simply explain why Egypt did not become a democracy after the Arab Spring. A genuine work of social science would not simply discuss or explain what happened in Egypt after the Arab Spring; it would use what happened in Egypt after the Arab Spring to shed light on the origins of democracy in general.

A work that simply describes or explains what happened in Egypt after the Arab Spring would, at best, be a work of history; at worst, it would be a work of journalism.

This little exercise on Egypt and democracy can be replicated with many other topics. Let’s take a look at two more examples before moving on. Take the two following topics and try to formulate the four different types of research questions that might be asked about them: (B) Osama bin Laden and Terrorism, and (C) World War I and War.

Did your questions resemble the following?

B. Osama bin Laden and Terrorism.

1. The descriptive question: did bin Laden become a terrorist?
2. The causal (empirical) question: why did bin Laden become a terrorist?
3. The causal (theoretical) question: why do people become terrorists?
4. The normative question: should an individual become a terrorist?

C. World War I and War.

1. The descriptive question: was World War I a war?
2. The causal (empirical) question: what were the causes of World War I?
3. The causal (theoretical) question: what are the causes of war?
4. The normative question: should nations fight wars?

Let's take one more quick look at an example from natural science. Now, this example may seem rather frivolous, but hopefully it will illustrate why a causal question is more important, or more interesting, than a descriptive question, keeping in mind that social science hopes to emulate the natural sciences.

Would the following question be worth asking if you were a natural scientist? "Did the apple fall on Newton's head?" Obviously, the answer is no. But the empirical question does seem to be a bit more interesting: "Why did the apple fall on Newton's head?" And from this empirical question it is easy to arrive at one of the most important theoretical questions in all of natural science: "Why do objects fall to the ground?" The answer to the last question explains not only why the apple fell on Newton's head, but also why the moon falls toward the Earth: the universal law of gravitation.

Policy Questions

There are, in fact, additional types of research questions that social science tries to answer. **One of the most prominent types of research question, and perhaps the type that you are most familiar with, is called a policy question.** Policy questions ask what course of action a state, institution, organization, etc. should pursue in order to achieve a particular objective. For example:

- How can government best alleviate economic inequality?
- How can government improve healthcare systems?
- Which policies best promote the spread of democracies throughout the world?
- What is the best way to prevent terrorist attacks?
- How can international organizations help to maintain peace?

It is, of course, entirely possible, and appropriate, for a senior thesis to ask and answer a policy question. Indeed, it is a relatively popular course of action. Not surprisingly, many students who write senior theses are especially interested in contemporary events and pressing issues.

However, you might want to first ask yourself what policy recommendations necessarily, or at least should, presuppose. If you want to recommend a policy that is intended to solve a problem, is it not necessary to determine what causes the problem in the first place? Is it possible, or prudent, to promote the spread of democracy, for example, without identifying the conditions under which democracy can in fact develop? Is it possible to defeat terrorism if one does not understand why individuals join terrorist groups? Does a doctor prescribe medicine without knowing what is causing the patient's underlying problem?

Naturally, determining the answers to theoretical questions almost invariably lends itself to policy recommendations, and good books of social science often conclude with a chapter that discusses what policies should be pursued in light of the book's empirical findings. But it might be best to first arrive at a solid understanding of what causes democracies to flourish in the first place before recommending how the U.S. government can best promote it throughout the rest of the world.

In any event, you should at least keep this distinction in mind: is your thesis asking (i) a theoretical question that has policy implications, or is your thesis asking (ii) a policy question *per se*? Again, the direction you decide to take will be up to you and your advisor, but understanding the distinction will help to avoid unnecessary confusion.

Concluding Remarks

To repeat, asking the right question is arguably the most important part of your thesis project. Formulating a bad question is like trying to bake a cake without a recipe. It is also the part that often gives students the most amount of trouble. This chapter has tried to make this step easier by discussing the four principal types of research questions. The chapter will now conclude with some more practical remarks about this aspect of the senior thesis.

One reason why this aspect of the project causes difficulties concerns the summer break, the time during which many students write a thesis proposal, or at least think about writing a thesis proposal. Students spend a portion of their summer thinking and reading about a particular topic. For example, students read about the Arab Spring, the Islamic State, the Muslim Brotherhood, or U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. Not surprisingly, students become very well acquainted with their particular topic, and they begin to formulate research questions.

But they often do all this without thinking about what type of research question they are asking. At best, the student is thinking about a proper empirical question without thinking about a larger theoretical question. At worst, the student isn't thinking about a proper empirical question at all; he or she is thinking about a descriptive question, or policy question.

Difficulties often arise once the school year begins again, especially when the student begins to write a literature review. Chapter 4 will discuss in greater depth what, exactly, a literature review entails. The following brief point must therefore suffice for the time being. Many of the difficulties that arise while writing a literature review stem from an inadequate understanding of the different types of research questions. In particular, **writing a literature review will be a difficult and frustrating task without an adequate understanding of the difference between an empirical and theoretical question.**

Thus, if you find yourself at the very beginning of the proposal stage, it is likely that you have some sort of empirical question, or at least topic, in mind - which is good. But you should, as soon as possible, think about the following two things:

1. Are you asking a descriptive or a causal question; that is, are you asking a “what happened” question, or a “why did it happen” question?
 - If you are asking a descriptive question, ask yourself how you can re-formulate that “what” question into a “why” question.
2. Are you asking both an empirical question and a theoretical question?
 - If you are only asking an empirical question, start thinking about the theoretical question that your empirical topic might be able to answer.

If you are compiling a list of books to read over the summer, then, it should not simply include books about what happened in Egypt during the Arab Spring, or about the origins of al-Qaeda or the Islamic State. Your summer reading list should also include at least one major work in social science about why some countries become democratic and why others do not, or why certain individuals decide to join terrorist groups.

The latter social science works may have nothing to do with Egypt, the Islamic State, or even the Middle East in general, a fact which some students seem to stumble over when trying to write their literature reviews. They wonder why, for example, if a student is writing a thesis on, say, democracy in the Middle East, he or she should read Putnam's book on Italian politics in the 1970's. As is hopefully clearer by now, the reason is that Putnam is not simply trying to explain what happened in Italy. He is trying to explain what happened in Italy to illuminate the larger question about the foundations and pre-conditions of democracy.

At this point, you might make the following objection based on what was said above: **in theory, doesn't a social scientist choose his or her theoretical question first and then he or she chooses his empirical question?** Accordingly, isn't the student already off to a rocky start if he or she has already spent a lot of time thinking about an empirical project?

Well, in practice, it is rarely the case that a political scientist chooses his or her theoretical question first. After all, all of us read, learn, and think about the world on a daily basis. Therefore, it is perfectly natural, if not inevitable, if you develop some ideas about a particular, empirical project before thinking in-depth about a general theoretical question.

- ❖ Quick Tip: In practice, social scientists think about their empirical questions before formulating their theoretical questions.

In any event, you will surely need help from your thesis advisor in doing all this. Based on your particular, empirical interests (i.e., Egypt, the Islamic State, the Six-Day War, etc.), your thesis advisor will help you to identify a number of suitable theoretical questions (i.e., democratization, terrorism, armed conflict, etc.)

And if there is one point at which you should incessantly reach out to your advisor for help during your thesis project, it should be at this stage. After all, there's no point in reaching out to the baker once your cake is already in the oven.

The need to discuss suitable theoretical questions with your advisor leads to one final, very important point: **your thesis may actually only seek to answer a causal-empirical question, rather than both a causal-empirical and causal-theoretical question.** There are many reasons for such an approach, some of which will be taken up below.

Suggested Readings

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, Chapter 3, "From Topics to Questions," in *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003.

Calvert, Peter. *Comparative Politics: An Introduction*. Harlow, England: Pearson Education Limited, 2002.

Curzan, Anne, "Why I Don't Ask Students to Write the Thesis Statement First," in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Lipson, Charles, Chapter 4, "Refining Your Topic, Writing a Proposal, and Beginning Research," in *How to Write a BA Thesis: A Practical Guide from Your First Ideas to Your Finished Paper*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005.

Melnick, R. Shep. "Political Science as a Vocation: An Appreciation of the Life and the Work of James Q. Wilson." *The Forum*, Vol. 10, Iss. 1, Article 11 (2012).

- O'Neil, Patrick. *Essentials of Comparative Politics*. 3rd ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010.
- Singleton and Straits, Chapter 2, "The Nature of Science," in *Approaches to Social Research*. 5th Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Chapter 2: Turning to Science

Before moving on to the next step in writing your senior thesis, it is necessary to pause here for a moment. To clarify and emphasize the importance of formulating a theoretical question for your thesis, Chapter 1 included a couple of remarks that were either overstatements or oversimplifications.

Chapter 2 briefly addresses some of the objections that could be raised in response to the discussion in Chapter 1. Addressing those objections has two purposes. **The first and obvious one is to dispel any growing misconceptions.** Unfortunately, such backpedaling is necessary lest we drown in subtlety and nuance along the way. If we stopped to qualify and elaborate every point we make, your senior thesis wouldn't make it past the proposal stage.

The second purpose is to introduce more science into this process. In truth, there was hardly any science in Chapter 1. There was little more than a scientific intent, or wish--to formulate a theory, or general proposition, that explains how and why human beings do the things they do. **The procedure that purported to formulate such a theory can hardly be called scientific. Chapter 2 begins to discuss some of the ways in which social scientists make the study of human beings emulate the study of the natural world.**

Before we begin, recall the following points that were made in Chapter 1. We said that your thesis should aim to answer the big, causal question--what we called the theoretical question. We said that simply explaining whether or not Egypt became a democracy after the Arab Spring is not truly a work of social science, nor is simply explaining why Egypt did not become a democracy. We said that a genuine work of social science does not simply describe or explain what happened in Egypt after the Arab Spring; it uses the example of Egypt during a particular period of time to shed light on the origins of democracy in general. A work that simply describes or explains what happened in Egypt would, at best, be a work of history; at worst, it would be a work of journalism.

The rest of this chapter discusses two objections that could be raised against this very general account. These objections concern: (1) the disparaging of the "what" question; and (2) the formulation of a theory on the basis of an empirical question.

The "What" Challenges the "Why"

This first objection we must address concerns the fact that Chapter 1 disparages the "what" question to some extent. It may very well be true that merely describing what happened in the past does not meet the typical standards of scientific explanation. But, of course, simply trying to determine what happened or is happening can be a herculean task unto itself, and much depends

on whether or not that attempt is accurate. **If you do not accurately answer the “what” question, then your answer to the “why” questions, both the empirical and theoretical, will almost always be unpersuasive or flawed.**

- ❖ Quick Tip: Do not underestimate the importance of the “what” question. If your answer to the “what” question is wrong, your answer to the “why” question will likely be wrong as well.

Getting the “what” question right obviously entails collecting, correctly and thoroughly, copious amounts of raw data about who did what, when they did, and where they did it. **However, getting the “what” question right also entails a key aspect of social science: concept formation.** Chapter 5 will discuss concept formation in greater detail, but a few introductory remarks are needed here and now.

In jumping to the questions of what causes democracy, terrorism, and war, Chapter 1 glosses over the obvious difficulty what defining what, exactly, these concepts mean? What is a democracy? What is a terrorist? What is a war? Naturally, we often have a commonsensical and general understanding of what these concepts mean when somebody is discussing them. But when it comes to defining these concepts in a precise manner, it can be rather difficult to reach a consensus, and without that consensus the search for causality is rendered very problematic. **Again, if your definition of the concept you are trying to explain is unpersuasive or flawed, then your answer to the “why” question will also be unpersuasive or flawed.**

The Limits of a Single Case

The second objection concerns the suggestion in Chapter 1 that a theory can be formulated on the basis of an empirical question, an objection that sheds light on an important and instructive difference between history and many of the social sciences, especially political science.

To understand this difference, it would be helpful to clarify a possible misconception. It was perhaps implied in Chapter 1 that works of history simply attempt to answer the “what” question; they tell us what happened, when, by whom, and to whom. But when history and some other kinds of social science are done well, especially political science, their books actually tend to look alike.

Good history books do not simply tell us what happened in the past; they also tell us why things happened in the past. In short, a good work of history tends to be driven not merely by a descriptive question, but by an empirical question, too.

What, then, are the differences between history and, say, political science or sociology? There are many, to be sure, but the most important one for our purposes here concerns formulating a theory.

Recall that Chapter 1 claimed that the ultimate, or ideal, purpose of an empirical question is to shed light on a bigger, theoretical question. It was suggested, for example, that identifying the factors that led to an authoritarian rather than democratic regime in Egypt in the wake of the Arab Spring could explain why countries, in general, become democratic. **To put it another way, answering a theoretical question means generating a theory that explains how, why, or under what conditions something happens.**

For the sake of simplicity, Chapter 1 presumed that the findings of a single example can generate a theory. Let's quickly generate three possible theories for the three examples that were discussed in the section, "Research Question Exercise."⁴

- A. Egypt and Democracy.
 - If a professional, independent, and institutionalized military elite does not want democracy, then a country will not develop a democracy.
- B. Osama bin Laden and Terrorism.
 - Individuals who adhere to religious-based ideologies join terrorist organizations.
- C. World War I and War.
 - Military technology and quick mobilization times cause the outbreak of wars.

Let's further presume that each of these theories faithfully reflects the answer to the empirical question in each case (a questionable presumption in itself, of course). That is to say, for example, Osama bin Laden became a terrorist because he believed in an ideology that fused certain Islamic traditions with Western totalitarian ideologies, such as Marxism-Leninism and Nazism.

Obviously, the presumption that a single example can generate a theory is highly problematic. **It is not possible to establish a theory about any general phenomenon on the basis of one example.** Explaining why Egypt did not become a democracy in the years following 2011 does not necessarily tell us why Syria or Saudi Arabia did not become democracies during the same time period. Determining why Osama bin Laden became a terrorist does not necessarily tell us why Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi or Timothy McVeigh became terrorists. And determining what caused World War I does not necessarily tell us what caused World War II or the First Gulf War.

In other words, the difference between an empirical question and a theoretical question has much in common with the difference between a work of history and a work of political science. **A**

⁴ See page 17ff.

work of history cannot answer a theoretical question insofar as it explains why one specific event takes place, and good work of history will not claim that it can either.

Thus, a more rigorous method is needed to establish a theory that applies to multiple examples. **In other words, a more rigorous method is needed to answer a theoretical question.** Chapter 3 will discuss the method that you are likely to use in your senior thesis.

Chapter 3: Choosing Your Research Method

Once you have chosen the theoretical question you want to explore in writing your senior thesis, the next step in the process - again, generally speaking - is to decide which method you will use in your inquiry. As Chapter 2 just briefly explained, an empirical question that explains a single case will not suffice. **This step takes us to the next key aspect of social science methodology to be discussed in this handbook: research method.**

Much of what will be said in this chapter is taken from an article by Arend Lijphart, entitled “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” which you are highly encouraged to read.⁵ It is not an especially difficult text, but much of its content extends beyond the scope of your present aims. This chapter serves to highlight some of Lijphart’s essential points that can aid in getting your thesis off to the right start.

The Three Basic Methods of Scientific Research

Broadly speaking, there are three basic methods of establishing a theory: experimental, statistical, and comparative. The objective of all three methods is more or less the same and consists of two basic elements: “(1) the establishment of general empirical relationships among two or more variables, while (2) all other variables are controlled, that is, held constant.”⁶

It is all but certain that your thesis will make use of the comparative method, as opposed to the experimental or statistical method.

Your thesis will not make use of the experimental method because the experimental method is unavailable to social scientists in general. In its most basic form, the experimental method examines two identical groups. One of those two groups is exposed to some sort of stimulus, while the other is not. The resulting condition of each group is then compared. If a difference is identified between the two groups, the cause of the difference can be attributed to the stimulus.⁷ Hopefully, this all sounds fairly familiar from your high school science class.

All things considered, the experimental method is the ideal method by which scientists can establish a theory. However, for both practical and ethical reasons, the experimental method is for the most part inapplicable to social science. The world is not a controlled laboratory and we cannot, or at least should not, randomly place one individual in a condition of poverty, another in a condition of affluence, and then determine who is more likely to become a terrorist.

⁵ Arend Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” *The American Political Science Review* 65, no. 3 (September 1971): 682-693.

⁶ Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” 683.

⁷ Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” 683.

As for the third basic method, your thesis is unlikely to make use of the statistical method largely because - depending on your major - you have not yet received the training it requires. The statistical method necessarily relies on large data sets (which often have to be compiled by the researcher) and complex mathematical formulas. Of course, there is nothing that officially prevents you from taking this approach; ultimately, this is a decision that must be made between you and your advisor.

On the other hand, your not relying on the statistical method should in no way discourage you from making use of statistics and various forms of quantitative information. Such evidence can be a powerful part of your argument, but it will mainly be a single tool that supplements your other qualitative methods, such as reading primary-source material.

- ❖ Quick Tip: There are three principal methods by which you can generate a theory: experimental, statistical, and comparative. Your senior thesis will likely use the comparative method.

The Three Basic Types of Comparison

To recapitulate: so as to be more scientific, your thesis will rely on the comparative method. In many respects, the comparative method for social scientists is what the laboratory is for natural scientists. However, as Lijphart notes, “the comparative method is not the equivalent of the experiment method but only a very imperfect substitute.”⁸ So there are some limitations to the comparative method, but those limitations don’t make it useless either.

There are various forms of comparison that are commonly used in political science. The most common are known as:

1. A large-*n* case study.
2. A small-*n* case study.
3. A single-case study.

Choosing between these three types of comparisons is the next step in writing your senior thesis. Each approach has its advantages and disadvantages, its strengths and weaknesses. The rest of Chapter 3 will discuss some of their differences, with the hopes of helping you decide which approach is best for you. We will discuss three general topics: (1) what is meant by a “case”; (2) the differences between a large-*n* case study and a small-*n* case study; (3) a single case study.

⁸ Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” 685.

What's a Case?

To understand the differences between these three types of comparisons, it is necessary to explain what a case is. As a matter of fact, we've actually spent a fair amount of time discussing what a case is already, though we have deliberately avoided using the term until now for the sake of simplicity.

A case is a unit of analysis. It can be any size and it can span across a period of time. A case can include a country, a city, an institution, a neighborhood, a tribe, or a person, and it can span the course of a century, a decade, a year, or a month.

In the examples that we discussed in Chapter 1, each of the following constituted a "case": Egypt during the Arab Spring, Osama bin Laden, and World War I. Chapter 2 also mentioned some "cases" when explaining the difficulties involved in formulating a general proposition: Syria and Saudi Arabia during the Arab Spring; Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and Timothy McVeigh; and World War II and the First Gulf War.

In many respects, a case study and an empirical question are the same thing. In Chapter 1, we said that the empirical question is a specific, causal question about a specific event, institution, movement, government, policy, person, etc. That is to say, an empirical question is a question about a single case. Thus, whenever you think "empirical question," it would be helpful to think "case study," and vice-versa.

But this identification must be qualified in two respects. First, a case study necessarily encompasses not just the empirical question, but the descriptive question, too. For reasons explained in Chapter 2, a case study must address the "what" question and the "why" question, the latter being dependent on the former.

Second, contrary to the impression given so far, an empirical question is not necessarily limited to a single case. A single, empirical question may actually cover several cases. Let's once again turn to the examples used in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. The following are examples of empirical questions each of which contains multiple cases.

- A. Why did Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia not become democracies following the Arab Spring uprisings?
- B. Why did Osama bin Laden, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, and Timothy McVeigh become terrorists?
- C. What caused World War I, World War II, and the First Gulf War?

These are not theoretical questions because they are still not explicitly asking about the causes of democracy, terrorism, and war as such. But they can provide a more scientific basis for answering the theoretical question because each empirical question is concerned with more than one case, or example.

How many cases, then, should an empirical question include? How many should your thesis include? 1? 2? 5? 25? 100?

Large-*n* vs. Small-*n*

A single-case study, unsurprisingly, examines one individual case. In a small-*n* case study, you examine a relatively few number of cases, usually between 2 and 5. In a large-*n* case study, you examine, well, a large number of cases, anywhere from a couple of dozen to over 100.

Thus, the following questions from Chapter 1 would be examples of a single-case study.

- A. Why did Egypt not become a democracy after the Arab Spring?
- B. Why did bin Laden become a terrorist?
- C. What were the causes of World War I?

And the following questions from the previous section would be examples of a small-*n* case study:

- A. Why did Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia not become democracies following the Arab Spring uprisings?
- B. Why did Osama bin Laden, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, and Timothy McVeigh become terrorists?
- C. What caused World War I, World War II, and the First Gulf War?

We have not made use of any examples so far that could be considered a large-*n* case study, but hopefully it is not hard to imagine what those might look like based on the two sets of questions presented above. Ideally, they might include every country that has ever become democratic, every individual who has ever become a terrorist, or every war that has ever broken out.

Each of these types of comparisons has its strengths and its weakness. Let's start with the large-*n* case study. By looking for patterns in a large number of cases, a large-*n* case study, ideally, means that the theory formulated to explain those patterns will be more robust and stronger than a case study based on a fewer number of cases. This is the principal advantage of large-*n* case studies.

The principal disadvantage of a large-*n* case study is the unavoidable neglect that each individual case receives. Naturally, the more cases that you study, the less attention you will give to each one of them. Thus, it is more likely that your understanding of one or more of the cases will be flawed. Recall what was said in Chapter 2. If your answer to the descriptive question or empirical question is flawed, then your answer to the theoretical question will be flawed, too. Such a possibility, in short, is more likely in a large-*n* case study.

The advantages and disadvantages of a small-*n* case study correspond inversely to the advantages and disadvantages of a large-*n* case study. That is to say, on the one hand, by looking at a small number of cases, you are more likely to answer the descriptive and empirical questions correctly. On the other hand, because you are only looking at a small number of cases, your answer to the theoretical question will be less compelling.

In social science jargon, large-*n* case studies are said to have stronger external validity, while small-*n* case studies have stronger internal validity.

For example, let's say you wrote a senior thesis that compared what happened in Egypt and Tunisia during the Arab Spring. Let's also say that your friend wrote a senior thesis that compared what happened during the same time period in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. Since your friend compared a larger number of countries, he or she would potentially be able to say more about the question of democratization in general. However, since you only compared two countries, you can be more confident that your account of what happened in those countries, and why they happened, will be more accurate.

Before turning to the single-case study, it is worth mentioning another piece of practical advice. When it comes to your senior thesis, you will likely choose for your research design either a small-*n* case study or a single-case study.

From a practical perspective, conducting research on a very large number of cases for your senior thesis is simply not realistic. It is too much work, and you have less than a year to write it. Large-*n* case studies also usually rely heavily on the statistical method, which, as we mentioned a little while ago, poses a number of practical difficulties.

But, again, this does not mean that conducting a large-*n* case study is not permitted. You are free to discuss the matter with your advisor.

The Single-Case Study

The advantages and disadvantages of a single-case study are more or less identical to those of the small-*n* case study in respect to the large-*n* case study. The internal validity of your conclusions

will be rather strong, but their external validity will be rather weak. That is to say, after doing a single case study, you will have a very solid and thorough understanding of a single case; your answers to the descriptive and empirical questions are likely to be conclusive. However, you will not know whether or not your conclusions can be generalized and applied to other cases.

As Lijphart notes, “science is a generalizing activity,” and thus the scientific status of a single-case study is rather ambiguous. Accordingly, a “single case study can constitute neither the basis for a valid generalization nor the ground for disproving an established generalization.” Nonetheless, he concludes that a single-case study can make an “important contribution to the establishment of general propositions and thus to theory-building in political science.”⁹

Accordingly, a single-case study can make for a great senior thesis project--if it is done correctly. Certain approaches to a single-case study would be much more valuable than others. In the rest of this section, we will devote some extra space to fleshing out what a good single-case study looks like, and how a single-case study can be theory-relevant. **Its purpose, in part, is to bring us back full circle, to Chapter 1, but we will be returning on a new foundation, bringing together a number of different themes that have been raised in these first three chapters.**

To begin with, let’s first distinguish between six types of single-case studies as presented by Lijphart. They are:

1. Atheoretical case studies;
2. Interpretative case studies;
3. Hypothesis-generating case studies;
4. Theory-confirming case studies;
5. Theory-infirming case studies;
6. Deviant case studies.¹⁰

Now these six types of single-case studies can be further categorized in one of two ways: (1) the case is examined because of an interest in understanding the case itself; or (2) the case is examined because of an interest in formulating a theory. To put this in language that we’ve been using: (1) the case is examined because of an interest in answering the descriptive or empirical question; or (2) the case is examined because of an interest in answering the theoretical question.¹¹

⁹ Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” 691.

¹⁰ Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” 691.

¹¹ Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” 691.

The first two types of single-case studies fall under the first category, and the last four types fall under the second:

- A. Single-Case Studies: Descriptive or Empirical-Focused:
 - 1. Atheoretical case studies;
 - 2. Interpretative case studies;
- B. Single-Case Studies: Theory-Focused:
 - 1. Hypothesis-generating case studies;
 - 2. Theory-confirming case studies;
 - 3. Theory-infirming case studies;
 - 4. Deviant case studies.¹²

We will now discuss each of these briefly, while providing some more practical advice along the way.

Atheoretical Case Study. The first type of single-case study is the atheoretical case study, which is your typical single-country or single-case study. At the very least, an atheoretical case study answers the descriptive question; at best, it answers the empirical question. That is to say, a senior thesis that amounted to an atheoretical case study would either simply describe what happened in Egypt in the wake of the Arab Spring, or explain why things happened the way they did in Egypt in the wake of the Arab Spring. But, as the name implies, this type of single-case study is unconcerned with larger theoretical questions. It is neither guided by “established... generalizations nor motivated by a desire to formulate general hypothesis,” Lijphart writes.¹³

On the one hand, an atheoretical case study is not useless, since there is much about the world that we do not know. Atheoretical case studies can therefore provide us with the sort of raw data that we need in order to eventually formulate theories. On the other hand, this is probably not the type of study that your thesis should be, since you probably do not want to remain at the “descriptive” or “empirical” level.

Interpretative Case Study. This type of case study is also primarily interested in the case itself, and it is more likely to focus on the empirical question rather than the descriptive one. An interpretative case study differs from an atheoretical case study in that an interpretative case study makes use of existing theories. Here, an existing theory is applied to a specific case. The goal is to use the theory to explain the case, rather than to use the case to explain the theory.¹⁴ In short, the theory is used to understand the case, rather than the case being used to understand the theory.

¹² Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” 691.

¹³ Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” 691.

¹⁴ Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” 692.

For example, let's once again use the case of Egypt during the Arab Spring. A well-known theory concerning the question of democratization argues that a certain level of economic development is necessary for a country to become democratic. If you were to write a senior thesis that amounted to an interpretative case study of Egypt during the Arab Spring, you could read all about the purported relationship between wealth and democracy. You could then use that theory to help explain why Egypt did not become a democracy.

Such an approach to your senior thesis would undoubtedly be an improvement over the atheoretical approach, since you would at this point be delving into what scholars have said about democracy in general, rather than simply Egypt alone. Moreover, you would discover that the theory about the relationship between wealth and democracy has several variations, and you would need to decide which theory best illuminates your specific case.

Hypothesis-generating case studies. This type of single-case study is the first of the four types that are more focused on the theory aspect than the case itself. In a hypothesis-generating case study, a case is used to transform some rather vague hypothesis into a more concrete one that can be subsequently tested with a larger number of cases, all in the hopes of formulating a theory.¹⁵

Theory-confirming & Theory-infirming case studies. The theory-confirming case studies and the theory-infirming case studies are analyses of a single case within the framework of established theories. The single case is used to test an existing theory, and it will either strengthen or weaken that existing theory.

Now since the theory in question has presumably been formulated on the basis of multiple case studies already, the results of your particular case study would not be all that decisive. That is to say, your case study can neither definitively prove nor disprove an existing theory.¹⁶

Let's take up again the theory of democracy that concerns the relationship between democracy and economic development. A senior thesis would take an in-depth look what happened in Egypt during the Arab Spring, and then determine whether or not the case of Egypt during this time period confirms or infirms the theory that a country requires a certain level of wealth in order to be democratic. If Egypt had low per capita income levels on the eve of the Arab Spring protests, perhaps that might explain why democracy did not take root there.

Deviant case studies. The final type of single-case study is the deviant case analysis, which is chosen because it is already known to deviate from an established theory. The case is selected in order to better understand why, exactly, the case does not fit the theory. Such an inquiry may

¹⁵ Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," 692.

¹⁶ Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," 692.

identify relevant variables that were neglected in the earlier case studies. A deviant case study may weaken, slightly, an existing theory, but it may also suggest a refinement to the theory that ultimately strengthens it.¹⁷

Choosing Your Cases

Regardless of whether you choose a small-*n* case study, or a single-case study, you will be confronted with the task of choosing your specific cases. **Generally speaking - and to stay committed to our pledge of simplicity and clarity - choosing your case(s) is a task to be tackled together with your advisor.** As discussed in Chapter 1, it is more than likely that you have a case or two already in mind. If so, you simply need to confirm with your advisor that your case(s) is a suitable one for the theoretical question that you want to explore. (Conversely, you may want to stick with your specific case and choose a different theoretical question.) Nonetheless, given the importance of this step, you can find some additional remarks about this step in Chapter 5.

Concluding Remarks

We want to conclude this chapter with two broad sets of remarks. The first concerns your decision to choose a single-case study or a small-*n* case study from a practical perspective. The second concerns the perhaps oddly extensive discussion of single-case studies.

Leaving aside the jargon about external and internal validity, there are some advantages and disadvantages of doing a small-*n* case study vs. a single-case study from a more practical point of view. **The principal advantage of doing a single-case study is the fact that it is generally speaking a more manageable project.** Hopefully it is clear at this point that writing your senior thesis requires that you become familiar with two different topics:

1. The theory that you are investigating.
2. The case(s) that you are investigating.

If you choose to do a single-case study on democratization (the theory) using a country that experienced widespread protests during the Arab Spring (the case), then you can focus all of your research efforts on what happened in, say, Egypt. If you choose to do a small-*n* case study, you would have to understand what happened in, say, Egypt *and* Tunisia, and perhaps Syria, too.

It is quite common for seniors to start their senior thesis project with the intention of examining several cases, only to find themselves reducing that number as the year

¹⁷ Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," 692.

proceeds. However, the decision to reduce the number of cases is not simply an attempt to reduce one's workload. Students discover how much work is required to understand one case correctly and thoroughly, and so breadth of understanding is sacrificed for depth. Thus, you should not expect to do any less work if you decide to examine one case instead of two, for your advisor's expectations regarding your knowledge of that one case will be higher than if you were examining two cases.

The principal disadvantage of doing a single-case study is the risk of getting lost in your case and failing to engage in the larger theoretical questions with which you are concerned. By examining a single case, you are more likely to provide nothing more than a narrative, that is, a descriptive account of what happened in your case study. At best, you will answer the empirical question, but you will fail to enter into the bigger debate on your theoretical question.

While a small-*n* case study has the disadvantage of requiring you to become familiar with more than one case, its principal advantage is that small-*n* case studies necessarily involve comparing, and comparing will likely prompt you to step back and consider the larger picture, that is, to think more about the theoretical question. When examining two cases side by side, you are likely to notice when the same factor, or variable, is at work in both cases, or to notice that a certain factor is present in one case, but absent in the other. All of this will help you decide which combination of factors constitutes the answer to your theoretical question.

For example, let's say that you are writing a senior thesis on Tunisia during the Arab Spring. And after examining the case of Tunisia, perhaps you will notice that one of the factors that contributed to the country's burgeoning democracy was its social homogeneity. Now let's say that you are writing a senior thesis on Tunisia, Syria, and Libya during the Arab Spring. To be sure, the lack of social homogeneity in Syria will surely help you to appreciate its possible role in democratization. However, the cases of Syria and Libya will force you to consider that you are unlikely to have considered if you had studied Tunisia alone: the role of foreign intervention.

To conclude this chapter on research design, we return to the perhaps oddly extensive discussion of single-case studies in the previous section. Why might that extensive discussion, as well as the overall endorsement of conducting a single-case study, seem odd?

Recall that Chapter 1 had said that the ultimate goal of social science is to answer a theoretical question, which can be done by answering an empirical question about a single case. Chapter 2 then said that, in fact, it is not possible to establish a theory about any particular phenomenon on the basis of an empirical question that comprised a single case. Chapter 3 thus turned to the comparative method and discusses how a stronger theory is established by expanding the number of cases to be examined. But then Chapter 3 ends with an extensive discussion of the single-case study, one that might leave the student with the impression that the single-case study constitutes

the best approach to a senior thesis. **But doesn't the single-case study bring us back to the procedure of Chapter 1, which was subsequently found wanting?**

The extensive discussion of the different types of single-cases studies was intended to show that, despite its limitations, the single-case study can be a worthwhile approach to social science. In particular, the single-case study does a good job of illuminating what your twofold task is when it comes to your senior thesis.

On the one hand, you want to examine, thoroughly and accurately, a specific case. You want to find out what happened and why it happened. In so doing, you will learn much about how to use primary and secondary sources, how to interpret quantitative data, and so on. On the other hand, you don't want to stop there. **By examining a specific case, you want to try and say something about a larger question within social science.** The goal is not to become an expert on Egypt, Osama bin Laden, or World War I, but an expert on democratization, terrorism, or war.

As is hopefully clear by now, there are substantial limitations to the possibility of answering a large, theoretical question by examining a single case. Part of our aim is to help you learn what those limitations are and to guide you in minimizing them to the extent that you can. **But - just because you are examining a single case and answering a specific empirical question - it does not follow that you should not be thinking about, and trying to shed light on, a larger, theoretical question.** How much you say, and how you will say it--those are the devil's details.

Suggested Readings

Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," in *The American Political Science Review*.

Chapter 4: Reviewing the Literature

Before moving on to the next general step, let's quickly review what the process sort of looks like so far. But, again, bear in mind that this is hardly a fixed or exhaustive procedure.

1. Choose a **theoretical question** to investigate.
2. Choose which **method** you will employ to formulate your theory: either **the experimental, statistical, or comparative method**.
 - 2.1. You will most likely choose **the comparative method**.
3. Choose which comparative method you will employ: either **the large-*n* case study, small-*n* case study, or single-case study**.
 - 3.1. You will most likely choose between the small-*n* case study and the single-case study.
 - 3.2. If you choose the small-*n* case study, you will most likely choose between 2 and 3 cases.
4. Choose **your case(s)**.

Once you have completed these steps, the next step is to find out what other people have already said about your topic. You will present these findings in your literature review. As noted briefly in Chapter 1, the literature review is one of the most difficult aspects of writing a senior thesis. But, generally speaking, difficulties arise in writing the literature review not because of difficulties inherent to writing a literature review, but because of inadequate understanding of the different types of research questions. **Accordingly, this chapter will be of little help unless you have thoroughly absorbed the material discussed in Chapter 1.**

- ❖ Quick Tip: A thorough understanding of the material discussed in Chapter 1 is necessary in order to fully benefit from this chapter's discussion of a literature review.

What is “the Literature”?

To be brief, a literature review, or “lit review” as it is commonly called, is a summary, analysis, and, ideally, an evaluation of the literature on a particular topic or question in the social sciences. But what does “the literature” mean and where do you find it? What are you supposed to be reviewing in the first place?

Obviously, “the literature” is not referring to Shakespeare and Tolstoy. “The literature” refers to the books, articles, and other relevant material and sources that address your research question (s), **especially your theoretical question**, whether they be officially identified as works of political science, history, sociology, or economics.

However, “the literature” does not include every piece of writing that deals with your research question. As you have no doubt increasingly learned over the last few years, books, articles, and other forms of written material can vary greatly in terms of quality, and much of it will not be relevant for your lit review.

Your lit review will primarily discuss books and articles written by professional scholars and published by university presses and academic journals. More importantly, these books and articles should be peer-reviewed, which means that the book or article has been scrutinized and accepted by other experts on the topic before it is published.

Since this explanation still probably sounds rather vague, and perhaps even unfamiliar, let’s further clarify what “the literature” is by discussing what it is not. It does not include op-ed pieces that are written by journalists for newspapers. It also does not include articles that are written for magazines, such as *The Atlantic*, *The New Republic*, *Foreign Policy*, or *The National Interest*. It is also unlikely to include books written for a general audience - even when they make it to the Best Sellers List of the *New York Times*. Finally, it is unlikely to include reports or other such items that are published by reputable think tanks, non-governmental organizations, or independent researchers.

- ❖ Quick Tip: Your lit review will primarily discuss books and articles written by professional scholars and published by university presses and academic journals, rather than articles published in magazines and newspapers.

We say “unlikely” because the line between what constitutes sound and rigorous social science work can often be difficult to draw. It may, in fact, be entirely appropriate to include in your lit review a book written by a journalist for a general audience, or a report produced by a think tank (especially if you are trying to answer a policy question). You will often need your advisor when deciding whether to include these kinds of works. Nonetheless, every source outside of university presses and academic journals should be viewed with a healthy degree of skepticism. You should select sparingly, if at all, from sources that are not peer-reviewed.

One final point is worth making that sometimes leads to confusion. Your lit review will discuss secondary sources only--not primary ones. Your lit review is concerned with what other scholars have said about your research question (s); it is not concerned with what the subjects of your study have said. In other words, your lit review is concerned with what scholars have said about why Osama bin Laden became a terrorist; it is not concerned with what Osama bin Laden himself said. Of course, you will rely - hopefully heavily - on primary sources throughout the rest of your thesis after you have finished reviewing the literature. These primary sources can be supplanted by, or even include, newspaper articles and think tank reports.

What the Literature Review Should Do

Now that it is clear what “the literature” is, let’s discuss what the lit review should do. The purpose of a literature review is to summarize, analyze, and evaluate the most important literature that concerns your chosen topic. The best lit reviews are able to explain and synthesize everything that is essential for the given research project, and they are able to omit everything that is not essential. They take a critical look at the existing arguments for a topic or question and situate or contextualize the argument that is about to be made within the conversation that is already taking place.

To use the language of this handbook, **the purpose of a lit review is to summarize, analyze, and evaluate the existing answers to the theoretical question that your thesis is attempting to answer. The purpose of a lit review is not - or is not merely - to summarize, analyze, and evaluate the existing answers to your empirical question** (indeed, such answers may not yet exist).

Thus, your lit review will be more concerned with democracy, terrorism, or war than it will be with Egypt, Osama bin Laden, or World War I. You will be presenting to the reader a brief survey of the different explanations for why countries become democratic, individuals join terrorist organizations, or what causes war.

Thus, even if your empirical question is focused on democratization in Egypt, it may be entirely pertinent, even necessary, to discuss a book or article in your lit review that discusses democratization in Europe or Latin America. Even if your empirical question is focused on the causes of World War I, it may be entirely pertinent, even necessary, to discuss a book or article that discusses the causes of World War II.

- ❖ Quick Tip: Your lit review, in short, is a survey of the various answers to your theoretical question.

Hopefully it is clearer at this point why the content of Chapter 1 is so important for understanding what a lit review is and what it is supposed to do. Students who approach writing a lit review without a proper theoretical question in mind will have a much more difficult time when it comes to writing one. Those students who do have a good theoretical question in mind have a much easier task ahead of themselves.

The task of writing a good lit review is still a difficult one, however. There is a fair amount to do and a limited amount of space to do it in. **A lit review must concisely summarize the key findings of everything that has been written on your theoretical question. The operative words here are concise and key findings.** It will be impossible to discuss thoroughly every

finding on your particular topic. Page limits would be met long before you review even half of the literature. If you are writing on World War I, you will not be able to cover the cause of every war in human history. You will need to make a judgment call about what is important enough for your lit review and what is not.

Ideally, your lit review should draw some conclusions and make some judgments about the body of knowledge that concerns your theoretical and empirical questions. Is it complete? Is it missing interesting insights? Where do those gaps exist? Why do those gaps exist? Has new evidence emerged that weakens or strengthens existing arguments? Is the overall conversation being misunderstood, or misrepresented, somehow?

These latter questions move a lit review beyond a mere collection of short summaries into a critical synthesis of a given body of knowledge. A lit review should not be a list of books and articles along with summaries of their respective arguments. Such an approach might be a useful first step--a step which Part II will actually make a case for.

But the final product should be more analytical, which can be done in several different ways. For example, one analytical approach is to group the different types of arguments together. While one section of the lit review discusses the rational choice arguments to the theoretical question, another one discusses the structural ones (see Chapter 6). From there you might indicate the ways in which your argument advances the literature by bridging the rational choice and structural arguments. In the next section, we'll discuss in more detail another way to organizing the lit review: the chronological approach.

It might be helpful to think of the lit review in the following twofold way. On the one hand, it is an end in itself. Forcing yourself to summarize and analyze the current state of literature will help you to become an expert in your given theoretical question. When you are finished, you should feel comfortable listening to, and perhaps even participating in, the conversation that is taking place about the causes of democracy, terrorism, or war.

On the other hand, the lit review, *ideally*, is a means to the rest of your thesis. The manner in which you summarize, analyze, and evaluate the literature should set up the rest of your argument. It will help your reader understand what your particular contribution will be to the literature.

There are two pitfalls to avoid when writing your lit review. The first is to avoid using a straw man argument when summarizing the arguments of others. Do not present the worst possible version of every argument that has been made about your topic. It will be easy to criticize these arguments, but your alternative explanation will be less convincing. The best thesis will confront the most convincing arguments.

The second pitfall to avoid is to proceed as if it is necessary, or even possible, to overturn the entire existing literature on your theoretical question. This point is very much related to the lengthy discussion we had in Chapter 3 about the value of a single-case study. Partly because you are unlikely to examine a large number of cases, it is unlikely that the answer to your empirical question will succeed in providing an entirely novel answer to your theoretical question.

But that does not mean that your study cannot make some contribution. You should focus your efforts on trying to identify a very specific aspect of the literature that your single case can help to improve, weaken, or clarify.

The Structure of a Lit Review

While there are different approaches to the literature review, it typically contains three subsections: an introduction, main body, and conclusion.

I. Introduction.

The introduction should be brief (1-2 paragraphs) and consist of several components.

- ❖ You should begin by providing a concise definition of your chosen topic, as well as the scope of the literature that is under review.
 - For example, if the topic under consideration is “women’s suffrage movements,” then you may be inclined to discuss works in several languages, or from specific time periods or locations. Note your choices here.

- ❖ The introduction is also where you mention the literature you will exclude.
 - For example, you might mention that your review will not include literature written by men on women’s suffrage.

II. Main Body.

This is the most substantial section of the lit review, and it usually includes subsections. Here we will examine the two most common structures for lit reviews.

The Two Main Approaches.

Beyond the basic review format, there are two main approaches to structuring a literature review: the chronological (also referred to as the generational) approach, and the thematic approach.

i. The Chronological Approach.

In a chronological literature review, you would group and discuss your chosen books and articles in accordance with their publication date. More specifically, they should be arranged according to the generations of scholarly work in the given research field.

This approach is advantageous because it allows you to highlight the changes in research both within your field and within your specific research topic. This is especially helpful for those of you whose review will focus primarily on methodology, historiography, and research fields that stress evolution in ideas and/or scientific developments.

For example, research on terrorism changed significantly after the 9/11 attacks. Therefore, it would be a good idea to group the arguments you want to discuss into those published before and those published after 9/11. The volume of research substantially increased as well, so it would make sense to then divide post-9/11 research into several groups.

Organizing your literature review chronologically is also called a “descriptive” review, because you are structuring the review according to how past researchers have organized the topic. As a result, a frequent criticism is that authors have relied too heavily on other scholars’ organizing techniques, rather than synthesizing the material themselves.

ii. The Thematic Approach.

Conducting a thematic review requires you to group and analyze the literature according to theoretical concepts and topics. You can choose to organize the review based on your own organizing principles, or you can look to other literature reviews that address your topic. (Note: if you choose to draw from other reviews for structure, you should refer to the author’s *organization* rather than its *content*.)

A thematic review is often considered to be the stronger approach because it requires independent synthesis and critical evaluation. The author is tasked with organizing their review based on the theories, themes, and categories that they have developed, rather than using the organizing principles of past scholars (as is found in the chronological review).

You need to explain to the reader why the relevant themes (grouped by subheadings) are important and why you chose to organize them the way you did. **This type of organizational structure is called a “funnel”: your concepts/themes should be organized from broad to specific. You begin with the broader theoretical discussions on your topic, and make your way toward discussing studies that refer directly to your own research.**

Let’s say you are examining altruism in children. At the top of your “funnel” are your broader topics: competing definitions of altruism, theories of altruism, its biological basis, etc. At the bottom of the “funnel” is where you discuss themes specific to your study (e.g. altruism in children), as well as noting gaps in the literature that you will address in your research study.

III. Conclusion.

The conclusion’s primary purpose is to provide a brief summary of the review’s conclusions (if there are specific findings that most of the sources conclude), as well as any limitations on source availability in your subject area. Any important links between works can also be mentioned here.

Concluding Remarks

In addition to what has been said in the first four chapters, you will find three other resources throughout the rest of this handbook to help you write your literature review. The first, of course, is the “Suggested Readings” list found immediately below.

The second resource can be found in the chapters that comprise Part II. More will be said about these chapters in the preface to Part II. For now, however, it must suffice to note that following the structure of those chapters is certainly not a bad way to *begin* writing your literature review.

The third and final resource can be found in Appendix C, where you will find two examples of a literature review. These examples do a better job of depicting what a literature review might look like than the chapters in Part II. Though they, too, are somewhat incomplete, as will be discussed at the beginning of Appendix C.

We have one final suggestion for learning what a lit review is and what it should do: simply go out and read good lit reviews. Most of the scholarly books that address your theoretical question will contain a lit review. The lit review is usually the first or second chapter of the book and they are easy to identify once you know what you are looking for. When you are in the beginning stages of your thesis, your advisor should be able to identify a book or article that does a particularly good job of surveying the literature on your topic.

Reading the lit reviews of other scholars will help you to write your own. How did they do theirs? How was it organized? Chronologically or thematically? What was effective, and what was not? What books and articles did they discuss that your lit review should cover, too? *Annual Reviews* is a journal that attempts to review a body of knowledge for the sake of establishing the current state of the literature on a given topic. This is a very good source for your literature review, but it can also show you how to write your own.

Suggested Reading

- Galvan, Jose L. *Writing a Literature Review: A Guide for Students of the Social and Behavioral Sciences, 7th Edition*. New York: Routledge, 2017.
- Knopf, Jeffrey W. "Doing a Literature Review." *PS: Political Science and Politics* vol. 39, no. 1 (Jan., 2006): 127-132.

Chapter 5: Designing your Study

As we have noted on several occasions in the first 4 chapters, perhaps *ad nauseum*, we have refrained from fleshing out a number of topics so far. Trying to cover and explain every essential tool and aspect would undermine the general goal of the handbook: to ensure that your senior thesis gets off to a good start--not a perfect one. This chapter, however, will dive into the weeds a little bit.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, and most obviously, it is meant to improve the quality of your thesis by discussing in more detail how social science research is made more scientific. At the same time, do not worry too much about getting all these details right. You will make significant progress in your thesis by bearing in mind the importance of, say, defining concepts, or choosing the right cases.

The second purpose is to help those students make a decision as to whether or not to pursue graduate studies in social science. If what you read below sounds interesting, then graduate studies may be a great choice for you after Boston College.

Case Selection

As discussed briefly in Chapter 3 (p. 35), an important step in designing your study is case selection--that is, choosing the case(s) that will constitute your empirical question.

A common habit of those who have not been exposed to research methods is to pick the case that got them interested in a topic in the first place and write a history about it. As Chapter 1 discussed (p. 20), this is likely what you have done or will do. Indeed, this habit is quite common in the world. Politicians, analysts, and journalists frequently make claims about how the world works using one or two cases as anecdotal evidence.

However, this approach is closer to speculation than any kind of social science. **The purpose of discussing case studies and the comparative method is to show why this approach is ineffective (though not useless, which will be discussed below).**

Recall that a case (p. 29) is a single instance or occurrence of the phenomenon you are studying. Most often, this is a country, but the terms country and case are not synonymous. If you are studying war, each occurrence of a war could be a case (which might include the same country multiple times). If you are studying terrorism, each terrorist organization could be a case. Once you have decided what you are going to study, you need to decide what cases you are going to study. A researcher must determine the universe of all possible cases, at least as a first step.

The second step is to refine the universe of cases. This process of refinement should be guided thoughtfully by your research objectives and the particular methods being used. Under no circumstance is it appropriate to select cases based on which ones you like more, or which ones you are more familiar with, or which ones you think will be easiest to gather data on. (To a large extent, obviously, this will be unavoidable for a senior thesis project).

If you are trying to explain under what conditions terrorist organizations are most likely to successfully transition into a legitimate state, you should not simply include the Islamic State because you are interested in that case. You should also include Jewish terrorist organizations that transitioned into the Israeli Defense Force. Furthermore, you should include cases of terrorist organizations that attempted the transition but failed (ideally, the independent variable you are claiming is causing successful transitions should also be absent). The more robust and logical your case selection is, the more convincing your argument will be.

A common mistake, even for scholars, is to choose cases on the basis of the dependent variable. If you are studying why organizations choose to use suicide terrorism as a tactic, you should not choose all groups that have used suicide terrorism. You must choose all groups and compare the differences between those that chose suicide terrorism and those that did not.¹⁸

Also recall that social scientists generally speaking make use of the comparative method in lieu of the experimental method (p. 27). **In order to achieve as much control as possible outside the laboratory, the comparative method most commonly makes use of the most-similar-systems-design (MSSD).** In this kind of design, two or more cases are selected on the basis of their similarity. The goal is to find cases that are similar in every possible respect except for the one that is thought to be causing a change in the outcome.

An example of this would be to select Egypt and Syria in order to explain why they had divergent outcomes following the Arab Spring. Egypt and Syria are similar countries, with similar regimes and civil-military relations. For a short period of time, they were the only two members of the United Arab Republic. They have both fought wars against Israel. They are both predominantly Muslim. However, in Syria, the military mostly supported the regime and violently cracked down on protesters; in Egypt, the military abandoned the regime and staged a coup against both Mubarak and Mohammed Morsi. Why? The independence and structure of the militaries determined what the military did in each case.

The less similar your cases are to one another, the less credible your claim will be to have identified the cause of different outcomes. Let's briefly consider comparing the military defection in Egypt in 2011 with the military defection in Russia in 1917. To begin with, the

¹⁸ Scott Ashworth, Joshua D. Clinton, Adam Meirowitz, and Kristopher W. Ramsay, "Design, Inference, and the Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review* 102, no. 2 (2008), 269-273.

outcome is not really identical in the two cases. While Egypt's military defected and staged a coup, Russia's military defected but stayed on the sidelines during the revolution. Furthermore, numerous other differences can be identified that distinguish the two cases from each other: the impact of World War I, the difference in previous regime type, the influence of communism, religious differences, and socio-economic differences. Thus, we cannot credibly claim that the military defections can be attributed to military structure.

Concepts, Typologies, and Operationalization

i. Concept Formation

After asking the right questions, and picking the right cases, concept formation is arguably the most important determinant of a good study. Scientific studies, after all, are attempting to find that which is true, and, in order for something to be true, it must transcend subjective opinions. **A study cannot do that unless it provides clear definitions of the concepts being used and explains how they're being measured.**

As a practical exercise, consider the following question: What is the greatest movie of all time? Everyone is certain to have their own opinions on the matter, but it is unlikely that we could get a majority of people to agree on one movie if it is not based on a set of rules that we all agree upon. Furthermore, as time goes by these opinions are likely to change for transitory reasons, such as moods and new experiences.

Thus, in order to determine what the greatest movie of all time is, we need to define the concepts being used in the statement. We first have to define "movie" so as to distinguish it from other forms of media like TV shows and Internet clips. We might define movie as a motion picture production that has a running time that exceeds one hour and is not produced in a "series and season" schedule.

Next, we need to define what is meant by best. It could be defined as most popular, received the most awards, or has the highest ratings from professional critics. We then need to clarify more precisely how we are measuring each of these. For instance, if we define most awards as most Academy Awards won, then it is a three-way tie between *Ben-Hur*, *Titanic*, and *Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*. However, if it is Academy Award nominations, then it is a three-way tie between *All About Eve*, *Titanic*, and *La La Land*.

Hopefully the problem that can arise is rather obvious even at this early stage. The answer to a question can change by simply using a different definition to one of the concepts being measured.

As a more concrete example, consider the concept of democracy. This term is notoriously difficult to define and varies with every study that takes up the topic.¹⁹ Early in the democracy literature, the concept was defined simply in a procedural context. It said that a country is a democracy if it holds regular elections. This definition began to shift with the rise of competitive authoritarian regimes in which rigged elections are frequently held by dictators to maintain the façade of democracy while retaining dictatorial control. The definition expanded to include more requirements such as a free press, civil liberties, legalized party competition, and the like. Each of these new requirements needed to have certain thresholds, above which they could be said to exist in a certain country.

These differences matter a great deal. The Democratic Peace Theory says that democracies don't go to war with each other. However, this argument is criticized as being dependent on strict and very high standards of "democracy." If we relax the standards by which we classify a country as a democracy, then we can find instances of war between them. The theory also depends on how the other concept in that argument is defined: war. Is war a violent conflict between two or more countries with more than 1,000 battle deaths, or is 500 battle deaths sufficient? Answers to these questions result in vastly different conclusions about the question of whether democracies go to war with each other.

When designing your study, you will need to clearly define all the concepts you are using. Furthermore, you will need to justify why you are defining a concept the way you are. If you are using a free press as a requirement for democracy--why? If you are asking about the relationship between negative or positive news stories about a president or prime minister and a democracy's disposition for starting a war (diversionary war theory says a leader will start a war to distract from a scandal at home), then it would be necessary to include a free press in your definition of democracy. However, it would be less necessary in a study that examines the effects of the legislative process on dispositions for war. Decisions about inclusion or exclusion should be based on theoretical considerations. Do the theories you're dealing with say free press needs to be considered? An initial step in making these decisions is to look at what previous authors have done.

John Gerring has written a pivotal article on what makes a concept good.²⁰ His suggestions are very useful when considering the usefulness of a concept. In most circumstances, it's advisable to use concepts that already exist. Many scholars have worked very hard for many years to develop and perfect the concepts we use. More likely than not, then, your senior thesis will be

¹⁹ Robert M. Fishman, "Rethinking Dimensions of Democracy for Empirical Analysis: Authenticity, Quality, Depth, and Consolidation," *Annual Review of Political Science* 19 (2016), 289-309.

²⁰ John Gerring, "What makes a Concept Good? A Criterial Framework for Understanding Concept Formation in the Social Sciences," *Polity* 31, no. 3 (1999), 357-393.

able to select among the many existing conceptual definitions. Nonetheless, understanding the conditions that make a concept good will help you to use these definitions correctly.

Gerring created a list of 8 conditions that determine a concept's 'goodness.' Here, we will only discuss the most important aspects of conceptual goodness. For the full list, see the Gerring article.

1. **Familiarity.** The concepts we use must be familiar to both the academic community, and to the wider audience of lay people. There is very little use to develop a concept that is not easily understood outside of the handful of academics that work with the concept.
2. **Resonance.** This one is difficult to explain but it basically asks if the concept sounds good and resonates with people. A good example that Gerring provides for resonance is Marx's choice to use the work 'proletariat' rather than 'working classes.' Not only did proletariat have more resonance with people but the choice to abandon the status quo term was deliberate and added to the overall theme of the work.
3. **Parsimony.** The more complicated a term is, and the longer the list of necessary or sufficient conditions, the less value it has. In some circumstances, complexity will be unavoidable, but authors should strive for simplicity over complexity.
4. **Coherence.** The concept should be internally consistent. The concept and its attributes should be logically related to each other.
5. **Differentiation.** The concept must effectively distinguish itself from other similar concepts. The attributes assigned to terrorism are designed to distinguish it from other similar concepts, like criminal (personal) violence, revolutions, insurgencies, or state violence.

ii. Typologies

Simply defined, a typology is a way of classifying types. They can serve a double purpose. Typologies can help to clarify a group of concepts for your readers, but they can also help you to define and discover new types of phenomenon.

Below is an example of a typology from an article by Michael Mann, *The Autonomous Power of the State*.²¹ The types of states are being defined by two different dimensions, despotic power and infrastructural power. Despotic power refers to a state's ability to make decisions

²¹ Michael Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results," *European Journal of Sociology* 25, no. 2 (1984), 185-213.

independent of other power holders. A dictator who has built a cult of personality and is the sole decision maker in a polity has high despotic power. A president with lots of checks and balances has less despotic power. Infrastructural power is the state’s ability to apply those decisions to the society it commands. Essentially, it’s that ability to implement decisions and indicates the state’s ability to penetrate society.

		Infrastructural co-ordination	
		Low	High
Despotic Power	Low		
	High		

Figure 1: Two Dimensions of State Power²²

Now that we have identified the two dimensions by which we are defining types of states, we can fill in the boxes with the types of states that fit the different categories. A feudal state is limited in its ability to both make decisions and implement them. They compete with low-level power holders and have no institutions and bureaucracy to carry out their orders. An Imperial state similarly lacks institutions and bureaucracy, but has eliminated competing power holders. Therefore, its despotic power is high. An Authoritarian state has highly centralized decision-making powers and has the effective institutions to implement the decisions. Bureaucratic states have the institutions to implement decisions, but the decision-making process is highly decentralized. See the image on the next page. A limitless number of typologies can be constructed in a similar way.

		Infrastructural co-ordination	
		Low	High
Despotic Power	Low	Feudal	Bureaucratic
	High	Imperial	Authoritarian

Figure 1: Two Dimensions of State Power

²² Mann, “The Autonomous Power of the State,” 191.

iii. Operationalization

Once you have clearly defined the concepts you are going to use, you need to clarify and justify how you are going to measure those concepts. Operationalizing a concept simply means clarifying how a concept is to be measured.

This is much more difficult than people give it credit for. Consider these two books and how they deal with legitimacy (one of the most difficult concepts in political science to define and operationalize). Paul Miller, in *Armed Statebuilding Operations*, says that if a state loses legitimacy, any armed intervention must focus on re-establishing this legitimacy. Miller has a great discussion about legitimacy and exactly what is meant by legitimacy. Miller even mentions how legitimacy can mean different things for different people. However, when Miller operationalizes the concept he decides to measure it as having had a democratic election. This operationalization is problematic since many democracies have very low levels of legitimacy, and many authoritarian regimes have high levels of legitimacy (like China). Democracy can certainly be used as an indicator, but it is far from necessary or sufficient for legitimacy to be achieved.

Bruce Gilley, on the other hand, in *The Right to Rule: How States Win and Lose Legitimacy*, systematically defines and operationalizes the concept. He then uses a vast number of indicators to create an index of countries ranging from most legitimate to least legitimate. Some of these indicators include the rate at which people pay taxes that are easily avoided. If people are paying taxes in high rates, it is likely that they consider their government legitimate.

It is important to note that much of the difference between Gilley and Miller is in what their respective research projects are trying to do. Gilley's book is dedicated solely to legitimacy and must provide better definitions and operationalizations because of it. Miller's book is dedicated to armed statebuilding operations, and it is only using legitimacy as one indicator among many. Decisions must be made, and justified in your paper, about why you are measuring a concept in a certain way. It's not enough to say, "I measured it simply as democracy because it was easy."

Constructing a Thesis Statement

Once you have gathered all your data and examined your case(s), **you should be able to summarize your conclusion and the answer to your research question with a single sentence--the thesis statement.** This section shows you the basics of how to construct a thesis statement and the important things to look for.

Consider the following quote from Alex Braithwaite's article on transnational terrorism: "I argue that the deployment of troops overseas emboldens non-state actors in the country hosting the foreign troops to attack the interests of the deploying state."²³ This simple sentence states the main claim of the article--that a larger military footprint increases the likelihood that the country will be targeted by transnational terrorism. It even briefly explains what the mechanism is, what is driving one to cause the other.

There are several important elements of this thesis statement that you should know in order to write your own effectively.

- ❖ *The unit of analysis* is the entity being studied. In the example just given, Braithwaite's unit of analysis is the directed-dyad-year. For example, one unit of analysis is US deployment to Afghanistan for 2005.
- ❖ *The independent variable (IV)*, sometimes called the explanatory variable, is the variable that is causing the other variable to change. For the example, the independent variable is the military footprint. Changes in this variable are theorized to cause changes in the other variable.
- ❖ This other variable is the *dependent variable (DV)*. Here, the dependent variable is transnational terrorism attacks. Changes in the IV will cause a change in the DV.
- ❖ *A scope condition* simply clarifies the limits of the theory, stating where it applies and where it does not. The scope condition for Braithwaite's study is all attacks from 1968 to 2010.

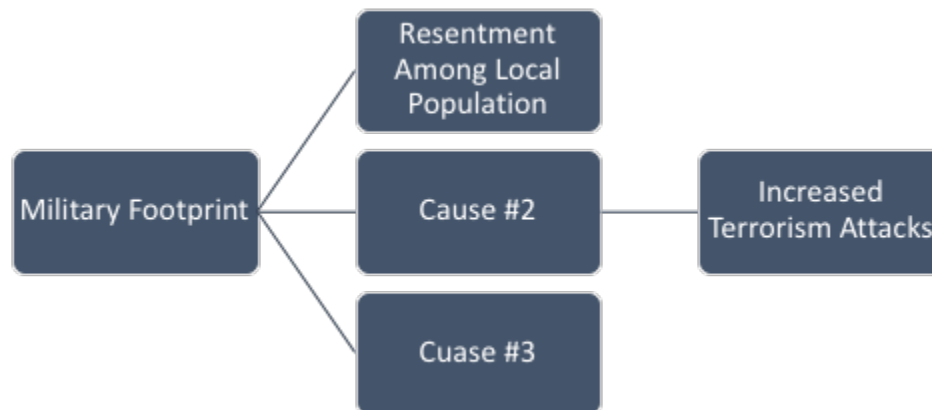
The next step is to determine what the *causal mechanism* is. A causal mechanism is the exact way in which one factor is causing the other. Correctly determining the causal mechanism is one of the ways we avoid making the mistake of confusing correlation for causation.

Examples of this incorrect inference abound in all the sciences. For example, researchers have shown that there is a correlation between the number of people who have died by becoming tangled in their bedsheets and the total revenue generated by skiing facilities. There is no logical mechanism that could convince us that one actually causes the other. The reality is that we will never be 100% certain about whether one phenomenon is causing another, but the scientific process gets us as close to certainty as humanly possible.

²³ Alex Braithwaite, "Transnational Terrorism as an Unintended Consequence of a Military Footprint," *Security Studies* 24, no. 2 (2015), 351-352.

In order to help think about what the causal mechanisms might be, and to return to the example above, it helps to draw a diagram (see Figure 1). Draw your IV on one side, your DV on the other, and then write the possible causal mechanism in the middle. Not only does this make our explanation for the causal relationship more convincing, it also helps us to focus our attention on what we should be researching. Based on this diagram, we now know that we should be able to observe higher levels of resentment among foreign occupied areas.

Figure 1: Causal Mechanism Diagram



Suggested Readings

- Boix, Carles and Susan Carol Stokes, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Collier, David and John Gerring, eds. *Concepts and Method in Social Science: The Tradition of Giovanni Sartori*. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Flyvbjerg, Bent. *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How it Can Succeed Again*. Translated by Steven Sampson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Flyvbjerg, Bent, Todd Landman, and Sanford Schram, eds. *Real Social Science: Applied Phronesis*. Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Gerring, John. "What Makes a Concept Good? A Criterial Framework for Understanding Concept Formation in the Social Sciences." *Polity* 31, no. 3 (Spring, 1999): 357-393.
- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Monroe, Kristen Renwick, ed. *Perestroika: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.

- Lijphart, Arend. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *The American Political Science Review* 65, no. 3 (September 1971): 682-693.
- Sartori, Giovanni. "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics." *The American Political Science Review* 64, no. 4 (Dec., 1970): 1033-1053.

Chapter 6: Giving the Right Answer

As you design your project and conduct your research, it is worth bearing in mind one last aspect of social science, which concerns the character of the answer you provide to your empirical and hence theoretical question. It probably sounds strange to discuss what your answer will look like before you have finished your research, especially in light of what we said at the very beginning of Chapter 1: a senior thesis should entail searching for an answer to a question, not finding evidence for an argument.

Nonetheless, those “why” questions discussed in Chapter 1 are, generally speaking, answered by means of one of three competing intellectual traditions: rational choices theories, cultural theories, and structural theories. Regardless of the specific question that you seek to answer in your thesis, and regardless of the details, your answer will fall under one of three main approaches to explaining social and political phenomena. It will be based on either rational choice, culture, or structure.

- ❖ Quick Tip: The answer to your causal question will be based on one of three possibilities: rational choice, culture, or structure.

In this chapter, we will provide a very brief introduction to each of these competing approaches. **In addition to helping you formulate your own answer, this introduction is intended to help you write your literature review.** It is *often* the case that the significant disagreements in the literature on a particular topic revolve around which of the three competing intellectual traditions provides the best framework for answering the theoretical question. In other words, the purpose of this introduction is not solely to help you decide which tradition you are a part of, but to help you decide which tradition other scholars in your field are a part of, which will help you distinguish your argument from theirs.

For an even brief survey of these competing traditions, see the introduction to Mark Lichbach’s and Alan S. Zuckerman’s book, *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*. Much of the discussion below is based on their account.²⁴

Rational Choice

Rational choice theories are based on the assumption that individual human beings “act deliberately to maximize their advantage.”²⁵ According to rational choice theorists, all human

²⁴ Mark Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman, *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 3-10.

²⁵ Lichbach and Zuckerman, *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*, 6.

beings - regardless of time and place - operate with the same internal wiring, so to speak. The desires and fears that motivate one individual are similar, if not identical, to the desires and fears that motivate any other individual. Rational choice is individual-based. It assumes that looking into oneself provides a Rosetta stone for explaining the behavior of all other human beings. Accordingly, all human beings are thought to respond similarly to the same external stimuli. Naturally, fear and reward are the motivating impulses in rational choice explanations.²⁶

By way of example, consider one of the most well-known thinkers in political science, and one of the most important intellectual forbears in the tradition of rational choice: Thomas Hobbes. In his major work, *Leviathan*, Hobbes writes:

But to teach us, that for the similitude of the thoughts, and Passions of one man, to the thoughts, and Passions of another, whosoever looketh into himself, and considereth what he doth, when he does think, opine, reason, hope, feare, &c, and upon what grounds; **he shall thereby read and know, what are the thoughts, and Passions of all other men, upon the like occasions.**²⁷

According to Hobbes, the fear of violent death is the most influential of the passions that constitute man's nature. This passion, he argues, motivates all men. And he considers this fear to be so reliably ingrained in us that he more or less constructs his entire political philosophy upon it.

Culture

Cultural theories rely on, well, culture, which can include customs, ideas, values, religions, or shared beliefs about how the world does and should work, and about who you are and your place in that world. Whereas rational choice theorists explore how actors employ reason to satisfy their interests, cultural theorists explore the norms and rules that guide human behavior. They often conduct extensive fieldwork and provide exhaustive explanations for a single case. Cultural theorists usually have strong doubts about the possibility of formulating a general proposition, or theory. While rational choice theorists try to maximize the possibility of providing universal laws that explain human behavior, cultural theorists tend to minimize the value of general theories that purport to explain all human behavior. They focus instead on interpreting particular events and patterns.²⁸

²⁶ Lichbach and Zuckerman, *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*, 6.

²⁷ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 5. Emphasis added.

²⁸ Lichbach and Zuckerman, *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*, 6, 7.

By way of another famous example from a seminal social scientist, one of the most well-known cultural arguments is found in Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Weber argues that Protestant ethics and ideas explain the origins of capitalism. Capitalism was not simply a consequence of greed, he argues, which has always existed, but a set of moral ideas and values concerning hard work, industry, and material success. "Waste of time is thus the first and in principle the deadliest of sins," Weber writes of this ascetic Protestantism. "The span of human life is infinitely short and precious to make sure of one's own election."²⁹ This set of ideas and values constitute the "spirit of capitalism."

Structure

Structural theories examine the role played by formal and informal relationships within institutional contexts. These can include: government bureaucracies, professional bureaucracies, social-economic classes, elites, legal systems, military organizations, religious institutions, political parties, interest groups, and/or the family. Behavior, customs, identity, and beliefs - those factors with which cultural theorists are primarily concerned - are regarded as effects of these types of relationships. The human capacity for freely willed action is limited; we are constrained, not by cultural forces, but by the structural elements that precede them. If rational choice theorists focus on reason, and cultural theorists focus on rules, then structural theorists focus on relationships.³⁰

The most famous structuralist is arguably Karl Marx. His theory of class relations understands all aspects of society - such as the political system, the legal code, national identity, and religion - to be by-products of a socio-economic structure ruled by a small elite. This small group, the bourgeoisie, maintains its position by controlling the means of production. "The history of all hitherto existing society," he famously writes, "is the history of class struggles."³¹ He ultimately argues that capitalism, like previous socio-economic systems, produces internal contradictions that will lead to its eventual collapse, and that it will subsequently be replaced by another socio-economic system: socialism.

Examples of the Three Theories

While all of this is likely to sound rather vague, it is equally likely that you are actually already familiar with these explanations. In fact, you almost certainly make use of them when you are

²⁹ Max Weber, *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parson (Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Publishing Company, 1996).

³⁰ Lichbach and Zuckerman, *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*, 6, 7.

³¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, authorized English translation, ed. Frederick Engels (New York: International Publishers, Co., Inc., 1948), 9.

discussing politics in the classroom. Nonetheless, let's take a look at some more examples to help clarify what these vague ideas and concepts actually mean.

We'll begin with the example that has been repeated frequently throughout this book: the question of Egypt and democracy. Even before the Arab Spring, a lot was written about the fact that the Middle East was a rather noticeable exception to the spread of democracy, and there were number of explanations for the absence of democracy in the Middle East.

One of the most prominent explanations is that Islam and democracy are incompatible, which is a cultural explanation. Defenders of this interpretation point to several aspects of Islam that conflict with essential features of democracy. For example, while in a democracy the people are considered sovereign, Islam maintains that God alone is sovereign. Democracy is therefore a form of *shirk*, a sin in Islam, which is worshipping as a god something other than Allah. They also point to many illiberal tendencies within Islam. For example, Islam does not contain a doctrine of separation of church and state comparable to Christianity.

Other authors disagree with this cultural explanation for the Middle East's lack of democracy. To begin with, they argue that Islam has not stopped Muslim countries outside the Middle East from developing democracy, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey. They also point out that democracies in the West have not always had a strict separation of church and state.

In place of the cultural explanation, authors provide a variety of structural ones. For example, they point to the fact that, throughout the Cold War, authoritarian regimes in the Middle East received substantial support from either the Soviet Union or the United States in return for their loyalty. They also point to the impact of oil. In contrast to other countries whose revenue is based on free trade, many countries in the Middle East derive almost all of their revenue from oil sales. The government's control of these revenues means that it does not depend on the wealth created by those whom it governs; hence, it does not need their consent.

Now let's return to the example that was discussed in Chapter 1, Putnam's *Making Democracy Work*. Remember that Putnam wanted to explain why the regional governments of northern Italy generally prospered and showed signs of being a healthy democracy while the regional governments of southern Italy remained undeveloped and undemocratic. Putnam's answer is that northern Italy was characterized by civic community, that is, by "an active, public-spirited citizenry, by egalitarian political relations, by a social fabric of trust and cooperation." Southern Italy, by contrast, was cursed with "vertically structured politics, a social life of fragmentation and isolation, and a culture of distrust."³² These differences in civic life, according to Putnam, played a key role in explaining the success of democratic institutions. This explanation is one of the most well-known cultural explanations for the origins of democracy.

³² Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*, 15.

Unfortunately, these few examples are not truly sufficient in order to understand what rational choice, culture, and structure mean. Indeed, a great variety of examples are needed to do so. Fortunately, Part II of this handbook will provide many additional examples of these three approaches. Please keep the content of this chapter in mind while reading those chapters.

Concluding Remarks

There are two important things to keep in mind about these theoretical approaches when writing your thesis. **First, rational choice, culture, and structure are umbrella terms, so we strongly encourage you not to get into the habit of using them.** When your advisor asks you to provide an answer to your theoretical question, you do not want to say, “It’s structure,” or, “It’s culture.” Structure is not an answer unto itself. Culture is not an answer unto itself. These are just terms, and very vague ones at that.

Of course, you need these terms and theories in your head as a starting point. When you first try to answer your theoretical question by distinguishing between these explanations, you will do it at a very crude level, which is a fine place to start, because one almost always begins with crude explanations prior to arriving at more nuanced answers. Having a cursory understanding of these theories will also help you read the literature about the topic you are interested in. When you read the literature on your topic, your brain should immediately begin to categorize the book’s argument as rational choice, culture, or structure.

- ❖ Quick Tip: Avoid actually using the words rational choice, culture, and structure in your explanation, but keep them in mind as you conduct your research.

Second, an answer to a “why” question is never, or rarely, one of these explanations. It is usually a combination of them. More often than not, multiple factors are at play, and it is rare that an explanation will fall entirely into one of the three approaches. However, that does not mean that you should throw your hands up and say, “They’re all winners,” like we’re at a little league baseball game. You should prioritize one of the explanations and determine what the main cause is. You can then subsequently determine which factor is most responsible for driving the other factors.

And, as you’ll see in Part II, and while you write your thesis, it can be incredibly difficult to find the right balance in the sequence of causation. Does structure drive culture, or does culture drive structure? To what extent do you want to include human agency? Thus, your answer can straddle the three explanations, but you should always try to prioritize one of them over the others. Try to identify which of the three explanations is the primary one.

- ❖ Quick Tip: Your explanation will likely be a combination of the three theoretical approaches, but you must prioritize one of them.

Finally, as we'll also see in Part II, the different subfields in political science make use of these explanations in different ways. Indeed, these theoretical approaches are variously important for different questions, and they sometimes require a particular nuance for the sake of rigor and precision. And, again, we'll point out these departures along the way, but let's not get unnecessarily stuck in the weeds just yet.

Suggested Readings

- Kohli, Atul, Peter Evans, Peter J. Katzenstein, Adam Przeworski, Susanne Hoebner Rudolph, James C. Scott, and Theda Skocpol. "The Role of Theory in Comparative Politics: A Symposium." *World Politics* 48, no. 1 (Oct., 1995): 1-49.
- Lichbach, Mark and Alan S. Zuckerman. *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Chapter 7: Putting It All Together

Congratulations, you have made it this far! This is the last step - to be completed after you have gathered and analyzed your data and have a solid grasp of your cases. Putting it all together may seem like the easiest part, but if your paper's sections are not properly constructed, then you are likely to leave your readers unconvinced of your argument and findings.

Most social science papers follow an outline similar to the one below. Nevertheless, it can be challenging to negotiate to what extent you can reasonably deviate from the standard format.

Some basic rules: while you can (and should) customize the section titles to fit your paper's theme, make sure that you have included all the necessary material in each section. Also, while some sections may be combined depending on your preference (see the literature and methods sections below), the outline's original sequence should be preserved, e.g., do not put the empirics section before the literature review.

No matter what, **make sure to use headers**. 50+ pages without them will leave everyone (including yourself) confused.

1. Abstract

This is a shortened introduction and is 150-200 words in length. You should include the paper's main points: your puzzle/question, basic methodology, the most important evidence, and your findings.

2. Introduction

You have four objectives in this section: (i) introduce your question or puzzle; (ii) convince the reader of the importance of your question or puzzle (i.e. "why should we care?"); (iii) define your key terms; and (iv) outline how the paper will proceed.

i. Introducing your question or puzzle.

What is this paper going to be about? You might have a specific question you want to answer (e.g. under what conditions are humanitarian intervention successful?). Or, you might have a puzzle (e.g. why was outside military intervention successful in Mali but not in Libya?). Whether or not you have a "question" or a "puzzle" is not important. Rather, you are presenting the reader with the guiding theme that will direct the remainder of your paper. You should also include your main argument and best pieces of supporting evidence. If you have secondary arguments, include them here.

ii. Convince the reader of the importance of your question or puzzle.

Your question or puzzle is likely to be very specific; this is where you can bring it back to the bigger picture. Why is it important to solve the puzzle or to answer the question?

iii. Define the key terms.

Any complicating terms that may not make sense to those outside your discipline should be explained here. Are you talking about an area of the world people may not know about it? Provide some context. If there is a specific lexicon associated with your research, briefly clarify any potentially confounding terms here.

For example, let's say your research examines women who wear the hijab: briefly define the term "hijab" for the reader. Any concepts or variables that that will be measured, such as "democracy," "authoritarianism," "secularism," etc., will be defined later in the methods section.

iv. Outline the paper.

In the final section of the introduction, you should roadmap your paper. Introduce each section and explain how the rest of the paper will proceed. More generally, how will you go about answering the question or solving the puzzle?

3. Literature Review

Chapter 4 provided a brief guide to writing a literature review. As noted, the literature you choose to review is by no means the extent of the scholarship on your subject.

This section is sometimes combined with the theory and hypotheses section. For a longer work such as a thesis, you may find it helpful to separate the two.

Briefly, the literature review serves as an overview of the principal literature on your subject and focuses on the competing arguments concerning your question or puzzle. **This section should have some push and pull: you shouldn't rely solely on the literature that agrees with you or on theorists who all reach the same conclusion. Make sure to touch on at least 2 or 3 of the most convincing competing arguments.**

For example, let's say your broader theoretical question asks: where does the nation come from? You have chosen to answer this question by examining the cases of Saudi Arabia and Japan. Presumably, you have chosen your cases because there is variation within them. The literature

you choose to review ought to contain similar variation. For example, you do not want to include only literature that argues that all nations develop in the same way.

It might be tempting to provide examples that illustrate each argument. This is allowed, so long as you refrain from using your own cases. Let's take the previous example. If you want to provide some context in the literature review, you should not use Saudi Arabia and Japan as examples here. Save them for empirics/case studies section.

4. Theory and Hypotheses

If you choose to separate these sections, there should still be a flow between them. After all, you are trying to explain how your theory/question/puzzle fits within the broader research on the subject.

This section draws on the previous literature to address the arguments surrounding your question or puzzle. This is where you mention the competing hypotheses as well as your own theory. If you are invoking a theory that is common in the literature, include this here. You should also mention what potential evidence might disprove your argument, or any evidence that you expect would strengthen it.

i. Methods.

This is where you show the reader how you will go about answering your question or solving your puzzle. This is also where you define the relevant variables. There are several important components:

a. Explaining your independent and dependent variables.

This subsection consists of two components. It is important for both quantitative and qualitative analysis. First, you need to make sure your variables are properly defined. This goes beyond the minimal definitions of the key terms in the introduction. You can either come up with your own definitions (so long as you justify them), or draw from certain articles or books that have already defined them. For example, let's say you are examining the conditions under which authoritarianism has flourished in North Africa. You cannot assume that the reader has the same definition of authoritarianism that you do, or even knows what the term means.

The second step requires you to explain how you measured your variables. Let's say you are looking at the conditions under which humanitarian intervention is successful. Success is a tricky term. You need to clearly explain to your reader how you will define "success." Once again, this

can be your own definition or one that you took from an academic source. This is called operationalizing your variables, as discussed in Chapter 4.

b. Defend your cases.

If you are engaging in statistical analysis, explain your control variables. If you are doing a comparative case study, then this is where you argue on behalf of your cases. Why are they the best ones to examine? You have to convince the reader that the cases you have chosen are worthy, and that they are the best ones to help you answer your question/unravel the puzzle.

c. Data collection.

This subsection is especially important for quantitative analysis, but is equally relevant for qualitative work. For statistical analysis, explain the dataset and attach a copy, as well as the codebook, at the end of your paper. If you conducted a survey, explain how you gathered your data and also attach it at the end of your paper. For qualitative work, what sources did you rely on? Did you look at newspapers, go to archives, conduct interviews, etc.?

5. Main Body (Empirics: Case Studies and/or Data Analysis)

This section is the meat of your paper, and where you discuss your case studies. This is also where you analyze your findings.

If your paper is primarily based on statistical analysis, you should divide this section into two parts: a) data and b) analysis and interpreting your findings. Otherwise, for qualitative work, this is where you discuss your case studies.

This section is generally flexible, but make sure to include a brief introduction that restates the cases you will analyze and why you selected them. You have already done this earlier, so this is a quick restatement.

You should include subsections that provide a clearer framework from which you conduct your analysis. These subsections are not intended to summarize the cases. Rather, you should consistently explain how each case relates back to your question or puzzle. You are providing evidence that either refutes or supports your hypothesis. You should also establish a kind of dialogue between the cases. How you structure these sections is up to you. If your cases are countries, then you may choose to have each subsection represent a case. Or, you can set it up by the different hypotheses or conditions that you are testing.

How you do this is up to you; either you can weave threads that connect them throughout the sections, or you can have several paragraphs at the end that tie them all together.

6. Conclusion

This section serves to recap the paper in only a few pages. You should restate your question and/or puzzle as well as your findings. Make sure to include the most convincing pieces of evidence that support your findings.

This is also the section that ties together the bits and pieces that do not fit in the previous sections. Did you encounter any major problems? For example, if you used a small-n case study approach, your findings may not be as generalizable as a large-n quantitative approach. Conversely, a large-n study may not contain the same explanatory power that a case study approach allows.

You should also touch on any remaining issues that deserve study which space did not allow. Did your findings prompt further questions? If you were to suggest an additional, related study, what would you say has not been adequately covered in the literature and deserves examination?

This section is also where you discuss policy issues or questions. You have a chance to highlight any larger, real world implications that your paper may have. Perhaps you were studying the effectiveness of humanitarian intervention; what implications might your findings have on future policy?

Paper Structure

Section	Components
Abstract	Main points; 150-200 words
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Question or puzzle b. Its importance c. Key terms d. Paper outline
Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Intro b. Main body (Chronological, Thematic, etc.) c. Conclusion
Theory + Hypotheses	Competing hypotheses + theory

1. methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Independent + dependent variables b. Defending cases c. Data collection
Main Body (Empirics)	Case studies or data analysis
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Recap b. Further questions c. Policy implications

Suggested Readings

- Becker, Howard Saul. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.
- Bernard, H. Russell. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2000.
- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Part II: A Brief Introduction to Social Science Literature

Preface to Part II

Having presented, in summarily fashion, the most important aspects of political science research, we now turn to the actual literature in political science. There are four main objectives of Part II.

1. To help clarify what was talked about in Part I. Although some examples were provided in Part I, some of the content could be rather abstract at times. Accordingly, we hope that the examples in Part II will help to answer questions that may have arisen while reading Part I. **While reading, or even skimming through, Part II, do not lose sight of the forest for the trees.** Focus on the fact that each chapter is devoted to answering **some variation of the “why” question** discussed in Chapter 1, and that **specific, usually historical, cases studies** are used in order to answer those larger theoretical questions. Also focus on the fact that cases which might seem to be unrelated can be used in a comparative analysis to draw more general conclusions.
2. To introduce you to some of the most important questions that are addressed in the social science literature. In effect, this returns us to the all-important topic of Chapter 1: the big, theoretical questions that social science tries to answer. We’ve touched on one or two of them already in Part I, such as where does democracy come from. In Part II, you will be introduced to nine more such questions. **It goes without saying that you are not required to pick any of these questions for your thesis, although you are certainly welcome to do so. They are chosen primarily to give you a better idea of what political science is trying to do and what questions it is concerned with.**
3. As discussed briefly at the end of Chapter 4, the following chapters are intended to help you get started on your literature review. In many important respects, the following chapters are not proper literature reviews, since all they really present is a rather simple summary of several different works. However, they may provide a helpful approach if you are having trouble at first. Simply writing up 1-2 page summaries of a relevant work’s main arguments is a good a place as any to start. As you are writing these summaries, you are likely to discover a more appropriate way to organize your literature review.
4. To point out some of the problems that you are likely to encounter while doing your political science research. **In Part II, you will see that political science isn’t as neat as we made it out to be in Part I.** Unfortunately, there are plenty of issues that arise when a political scientist tries to put Part I into practice. We will briefly discuss some of those issues here. In short, Part II will be much messier than Part I and will require us to dive a little deeper into the weeds of political science. **Accordingly, it is important to have a more open and flexible mind when reading Part II in comparison to Part I.**

Part II is organized into ten separate chapters. And all of them are, to the greatest extent possible, organized in the same way. Each chapter contains four sections:

1. “The Question” is a short paragraph laying out what the primary question is, which is pretty self-explanatory.
2. “A Brief Introduction to the Literature” will introduce you to 4-6 works that attempt to answer the theoretical question at hand. This section is the bulk of each chapter. In general, each work that is discussed will cover the following topics: (i) the empirical question that the author investigates to shed light on the theoretical question; (ii) the most important concepts or classifications that the author employs; (iii) whether the author’s study is a single case study, a small-*n* study, or a large-*n* study; and (iv) whether the author’s answer to the theoretical question is largely a rational choice, cultural, or structural explanation.

Unfortunately, as the third objective already made clear, things won’t always work out so nicely, and each chapter will deviate slightly from the purported plan in accordance with what the literature demands. These deviations will mark occasions where we can briefly discuss some of the problems that you are likely to encounter as a political scientist.

The works that we have chosen to discuss have been chosen for a variety of reasons. First, **they are generally seminal works in the field**, and they are works you should be familiar with if you are writing a thesis on that particular theoretical question. However, that does not mean that any particular work is *the* definitive answer. We are simply trying to introduce you to some of the most important alternatives in the literature. Second, the works are also chosen because **they do a good job of exemplifying what Part I says political science should like.** The “ideal” that we wanted to present in Part I is better illustrated by some books over others. Finally, **works are chosen because they allow us to re-visit as many aspects of Part I as possible.** We didn’t pick five works that all happen to be small-*n* case studies, or all happen to be structural explanations. In other words, we try to strike a balance between the first and second objectives.

3. “The Sub-Questions” will briefly discuss the many, many sub-questions that are related to the principal, theoretical question to which the chapter is devoted. As you will discover during your research, not every work in political science tries to answer the biggest theoretical question possible. These smaller, sub-questions are often interesting in their own right, or they might shed important light on the larger question in a unique way. You might discover that one of these sub-questions is best suited for the empirical project that you already have in mind.

4. “Essential Readings” will be a list of other major works that are related to the big, theoretical question. In the first place, we simply do not have enough space to discuss all the works that we would like to discuss. But moreover, there are some works in political science that don’t conform nicely to the methodology we present in Part I. For the sake of clarity, we have chosen not to discuss many of these.

Chapter 8: Why Do Countries Become Democratic?

A. The Question

One of the most prominent theoretical questions in social science concerns the emergence of democracy. Why have some countries become democracies, while others have not? What are the necessary preconditions for democracy to emerge? Under what conditions does democracy develop or flourish? What attitudes and behavior must be present for countries to democratize? What obstructs or prevents the development of democracy? Why are some countries more resistant to democratic change? **Despite subtle differences, all of these questions are more or less asking the same fundamental question: what are the origins of democracy?** Works that are devoted to answering this question are often referred to as the democratization literature or regime-transition literature. They attempt to identify the actors, institutions, relationships, resources, processes, incentives, and norms that either facilitate or constrain the rise, spread, and success of democratic forms of government.

B. A Brief Introduction to the Literature

1.) *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, by Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, 1965.³³

This is one of the earliest and most well-known works in comparative politics. Writing in the wake of two world wars, as well as the rise of fascism and communism, Almond and Verba sought to investigate the prospects of democracy in the West, especially with respect to continental Europe, where democratic forms of government were just beginning to emerge following World War II. **In particular, Almond and Verba sought to study the role played by political culture in creating effective and stable democratic regimes. They ask, “Is there a democratic political - a pattern of political attitudes that fosters democratic stability, that in some way ‘fits’ the democratic political system?”**³⁴

At the time, *The Civic Culture* was one of the largest cross-national surveys ever carried out in the field of comparative politics. During the course of five-years, over 5,000 interviews were conducted with citizens from five different countries: Germany, Italy, Mexico, Great Britain, and the United States. The two authors investigated, classified, and quantified the attitudes, beliefs, aspirations, emotions, and political participation of these citizens. *The Civic Culture* is therefore a small-*n* case study insofar as it studies five different countries, or cases. To oversimplify a little

³³ Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1965).

³⁴ Almond and Verba, *The Civic Culture*, 337.

bit, the empirical question of their work is: why has democracy successfully taken root in Great Britain and the United States, while it has not taken root, or is unlikely to, in Germany, Italy, and Mexico?

Almond and Verba came to the following conclusion: “Our study will suggest that there exists in Britain and the United States a pattern of political attitudes and an underlying set of social attitudes that is supportive of a stable democratic process. In the other three nations studied - Germany, Italy, and Mexico - these patterns are less evident.”³⁵ In short, one of the most important preconditions for democratic development, according to Almond and Verba, is the presence of a particular pattern of political culture, which refers “to the specifically political orientations - attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system.”³⁶ Naturally, then, the concept of “political culture” is the most important one of the book.

Based on the data gleaned from their interviews, Almond and Verba identified three types of political culture: parochial, subject, and participant. The well-balanced mixture of these political cultures creates what Almond and Verbal label civic culture, a mixture that Great Britain and the United States had managed to achieve, but which Germany, Italy, and Mexico had not. The crucial characteristics of civic culture include: committed yet moderated participation in politics, a sense of obligation to actively participate in the community, a sense of competence and capacity to influence the government, emotional involvement in political campaigns, a high degree of pride in the political system, patterns of social trust, confidence, and cooperation, and general acceptance of political opponents.³⁷ It goes without saying, hopefully, this is cultural explanation of the origins of democracy.

2.) “A Note on Taxation, Development, and Representative Government,” Robert H. Bates and Da-Hsiang Donald Lien, 1985.³⁸

This is a relatively short article, rather than a full-length book. Accordingly, it does not quite fit into the methodological model that we presented in Part I. Nonetheless, it is an important article that influenced many other social scientists studying the origins of democracy. **In particular, Bates and Lien investigate the relationship between property-owning elites and revenue-seeking governments.** Despite the lack of methodological rigor that characterize the other works in this chapter, and despite their use of other scholarship, Bates and Lien nonetheless draw important conclusions from looking at two historical case studies: thirteenth-century England

³⁵ Almond and Verba, *The Civic Culture*, x.

³⁶ Almond and Verba, *The Civic Culture*, 12.

³⁷ Almond and Verba, *The Civic Culture*, 313-315, 360.

³⁸ Robert H. Bates and Da-Hsiang Donald Lien, “A Note on Taxation, Development and Representative Government,” *Politics and Society* 14, no. 1 (1985): 53-70.

and fourteenth-century France. In effect, their empirical question is: what role did taxation play in the development of parliamentary democracy in thirteenth-century England and fourteenth-century France?

Bates and Lien begin by discussing a common fiscal imperative of European monarchs: securing revenue for the sake of prosecuting war. And the process by which these monarchs secured their revenue depended on the type of wealth that they taxed. While England primarily taxed trade and other movable assets, such as cows, oxen, and grain, France taxed salt mines and land, i.e., immovable assets. The taxing of trade and movable assets, according to Bates and Lien, promoted the growth of parliamentary democracy because the monarchs were forced to bargain with elites who owned the movable assets, since movable wealth is inherently difficult to tax without the willing consent of those who own it. To obtain that consent, the revenue-seeking monarchs had to share with the asset-owning elites control over the conduct of public policy.

To help clarify the issue, think of a country where economic wealth is fixed, or immovable, e.g., a hole in the ground that produces oil, or a mine that produces diamonds. The political players with the biggest clubs can take control of that hole in the ground or that mine and thus monopolize the country's wealth. These political players have now fused the two critical power resources of country: coercion and wealth. Accordingly, they will have no incentive to share with anybody control over the conduct of public policy, obstructing the growth of democratic institutions.

This explanation for the origins of democracy is a good example of the difficulty in distinguishing between the theoretical approaches discussed in Chapter 2. On the one hand, it is possible to characterize this explanation as rational choice, since the revenue-seeking monarch decided to share control over public policy in order to serve their own interests, namely, to obtain revenue from asset-owning elites in order to prosecute their wars. On the other hand, it is possible to characterize it as structural, since the monarchs are constrained by a set economic and social conditions; in the absence of major sources of immovable wealth, they are compelled to bargain with other elites.

3.) *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, by Robert D. Putnam, 1993.³⁹

This work was already discussed in various places in Part I, but it a very important work and, in many ways, it reinvigorated the debate about the role of political culture in the development of democracy. For the sake continuity and clarity, then, the discussions from different chapters in Part I are brought together and expanded slight here.

³⁹ Robert D. Putnam, with Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Y. Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

In the introduction to this work, Putnam writes: “The central question is: What are the conditions for creating strong, responsive, effective representative institutions?”⁴⁰ That is Putnam’s theoretical question; in effect, he is asking: under what conditions does democracy emerge? And how does Putnam go about answering this theoretical question? His answer came from studying Italian politics in the 1970’s. Sometime around 1970, Italy changed from being a centralized administrative state to a partially decentralized one governed by 15 to 20 regional governments or councils. Two decades later, it was rather clear that the regional governments of northern Italy had generally prospered and showed signs of being a healthy, viable democratic community, while the regional governments of southern Italy remained undeveloped and its political institutions undemocratic. Thus, Putnam’s empirical question is: why did the regional governments of northern Italy develop the way they did, and those of southern Italy develop the way they did? Putnam then uses the answer to that empirical question to answer the big, theoretical question, where does democracy come from? To a large extent, *Making Democracy Work* is a small-*n* case study, since it takes a look at two cases studies, southern Italy and Northern Italy. One could also argue that Putnam looks at 15 to 20 cases that correspond to the regional governments. Nevertheless, the work is probably best characterized as a small-*n*.

Putnam’s answer is that northern Italy was characterized by civic community, that is, by “an active, public-spirited citizenry, by egalitarian political relations, by a social fabric of trust and cooperation.” Southern Italy, by contrast, was cursed with “vertically structured politics, a social life of fragmentation and isolation, and a culture of distrust.”⁴¹ These differences in civic life, according to Putnam, played a key role in explaining the success of democratic institutions. In support of his argument, Putnam advances one of the most well-known concepts in political science: social capital, which refers “to features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions.”⁴² In effect, Putnam argues that social capital is the precondition for the development of effective and stable democracy; social capital explains why democracy thrives in some communities but not in others. To measure the level of social capital, Putnam identified and measured a number of indicators, such as the vibrancy of associational life, newspaper readership, referendum turnout, and preference voting. Putnam’s explanation of social capital is one of the most well-known cultural explanations for the origins of democracy.

4.) *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*, Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, 2010.⁴³

⁴⁰ Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*, 6.

⁴¹ Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*, 15.

⁴² Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*, 167.

⁴³ Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

This more recent work examines political developments following the end of the Cold War. The end of the Cold War posed a fundamental challenge to authoritarian regimes. In the late 1980's and the early 1990's, single-party and military dictatorships collapsed throughout Africa, post-communist Eurasia, and much of Asia and Latin America. However, not all of these regimes transitioned to democracy. According to the Levitsky and Way, 35 regimes between 1990 and 1995 became what they call competitive authoritarian regimes: a civilian regime that combined electoral competition with varying degrees of authoritarianism. These regimes spanned five regions: six countries in the Americas; six countries in Eastern Europe; three in Asia; six in the former Soviet Union; and 14 in Africa. Accordingly, of the works so far examined, this example comes closest to representing a large-*n* case study. And the empirical question of the book is: **why did some of these competitive authoritarian regimes follow different trajectories between 1990 and 2008, that is, why did some of them become democracies while others remained authoritarian?**

This work is a good example of indicating the difficulties that often accompany the attempt to tie many works of political science to a specific literature, or to neatly place all works of political science into a particular category based on its theoretical question. One could very well argue that this work concerns less the origins of democracy than the persistence of authoritarianism, which are two distinct types of literature. Nonetheless, it is not entirely incorrect to associate this work with the larger democratization literature, since they can both simply be considered part of regime-change literature. But it is also helpful for the purposes of this handbook.

As for their answer to their empirical question, **Levitsky and Way argue that transitions to democracy depended, first and foremost, on international influences rather than domestic conditions. In countries where social, economic, and technological ties to the West were extensive, as in Eastern Europe and the Americas, the external cost of abuse or suppression led political leaders to relinquish power rather than crackdown**, even in the absence of favorable domestic conditions, e.g., the organizational power of the political leaders was high. However, in those countries where ties to the West were limited, external democratizing pressure was weaker and countries rarely democratized, and regime outcomes hinged on the incumbents' organizational power.

The two authors used two critical concepts to measure the level of influence that the West could exercise: linkage and leverage. Linkage refers to the density of economic, political, diplomatic, social, and organizational ties between a particular country and the United States and the European Union. Leverage refers to a country's vulnerability to external democratizing pressure. Even where linkage was high, the level of influence might be low because of the country's leverage, for which the authors identified several different sources.

This work is also a good example of many other difficulties lurking in Part I and that will reappear in subsequent chapters. For example, the distinction between a theoretical and empirical question is somewhat problematic here. Are Levitsky and Way really asking about the origins of democracy, or is their research confined to a particular regime type (competitive authoritarian regimes) and to a particular time period (post-Cold War)? In other words, does their answer to their empirical question shed any light on the large theoretical question?

Furthermore, on the surface, their explanation seems to be very much structural one, insofar as it focuses on the international system and the relationships between the West and the specific countries. However, one could also ask, Why is the West exerting pressure on the countries in the first place? Is it because the West values a particular form of government, or perhaps it is simply in their interest to do so? Which of these forces is truly driving the others?

C. The Sub-Questions

As will be the case for the theoretical questions taken up in the chapters to follow, the question, Where does democracy come from? does not exhaust the democratization literature, let alone the literature on democracy. Perhaps the most conspicuous question absent from the works discussed above is: what is democracy? As was discussed in Part I, defining the “what” question is a difficulty onto itself, since political scientists have often disagreed over how exactly democracy should be defined and measured. What, for example, is the relationship between democracy and liberalism? Similar difficulties have arisen in the literature on the persistence of authoritarianism, which has identified different types of authoritarianism.

Other questions in the literature on democracy include: What sustains or maintains stable and effective democracies, as opposed to what establishes? Why do democracies fail or breakdown? How do authoritarian regimes survive? What is the relationship between democracy and economic development? Does economic prosperity drive democracy, or does democracy drive economic prosperity? Why do countries develop different kinds of democracy? Why did the United States develop a presidential system, while Great Britain developed a parliamentary one? And, finally, there are the normative questions concerning democracy. Is democracy the best form of government? Or is it simply the most legitimate? Why is democracy a legitimate form of government? Which type of democracy is best?

D. Essential Readings

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Chapter 9: Why Do Revolutions Occur?

A. The Question

One of the most dramatic and consequential phenomena in politics is the revolution. These political upheavals fundamentally change states and societies and change the course of history. For decades, historians and political scientists have studied the great and minor revolutions of history and sought to explain why and how they occurred. Over time, a rich literature has developed, offering competing theories of revolution. Jack A. Goldstone noted the puzzle of revolutions in his review of the study of revolutions.⁴⁴ The conditions which one would expect to cause revolutions are often present in the world, such as oppression, states in severe crisis, and the emergence of radical ideas. And yet the outbreak of revolution is still rare. **This raises the question of why revolutions occur in some places and times but not others. When and why do revolutions occur and how do they play out?** These are the core questions addressed by scholars of revolution.

B. A Brief Introduction to the Literature

1.) *The Anatomy of Revolution*, by Crane Brinton, 1965.

The modern study of revolution began in the early 20th Century and focused on the examination of the great revolutions of the past, primarily the French (1789), Russian (1917), English (1640), and American (1776) Revolutions (although there is still some question of whether the American Revolution can truly be considered a revolution).⁴⁵ Researchers, in good comparative fashion, looked to these revolutions and attempted to identify commonalities between them that could help us to understand revolutions in general. Crane Brinton's book, *The Anatomy of Revolution*, is a good example of this era of research and an excellent piece of scholarship.

In his work, Brinton examines the four previously noted revolutions, looking for “uniformities” among them. He demonstrates the value of detailed, small-*n* studies which compare a few cases in great detail. Brinton carefully traces the paths of these four revolutions, seeking to find similarities in the events that occurred. In examining these cases, he finds that there is indeed a great deal in common between them, and he uses these findings to develop a model for how revolutions unfold.

⁴⁴ Jack A. Goldstone, “The Comparative and Historical Study of Revolutions,” *Annual Review of Sociology* Vol. 8 (1982): 187-207.

⁴⁵ This question is rooted in the fact that American society changed very little after gaining independence, and the same American elites retained power and influence and ultimately led the formation of the new government. While British sovereignty ended, one could argue there was little revolutionary change for the average American.

Brinton argues that revolutions begin with the state in severe, likely economic, crisis. At some point, revolutionary movements emerge to challenge the state openly and the state is unable to suppress them. As the “old regime” is swept away, moderate and radical revolutionaries begin to struggle among themselves for power. **At first, a moderate government emerges but the moderates are soon overthrown by the radical elements. Brinton argues that radicals prove successful for a number of reasons, including their better organization, their stronger loyalty, and their greater willingness to turn on their former allies.** The rise of the radical revolutionaries is marked by a reign of “terror and virtue” as they seek to violently impose their values on society. This period is followed by the “Thermidor” when the new regime begins to moderate itself and, in many cases, reverts to the old ways.

Brinton offers an intriguing model of revolutionary movements that fits very well for three of his four cases. The primary shortcoming of his work is the fact that the American Revolution fails to fit his model. America did not experience a reign of terror and was able to peacefully establish a new, democratic government. While the divergence of the American case can be explained by variables unique to America (chiefly the fact that the “old regime” was on another continent) it does call into question the extent to which Brinton’s model can be applied to other revolutions in general. Still, this book is an excellent work from the early era of revolutions scholarship.

2.) Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World, by Barrington Moore, Jr., 1966.

Following World War II, the end of colonialism, the emergence of new states, and economic modernization led scholars to examine revolutions from another angle. These scholars began to examine whether rapid change and modernization could be the roots of revolution. These studies examined the economic, social, and cultural aspects of modernization to explain the occurrence of revolutions.⁴⁶

Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy by Barrington Moore Jr. is an excellent example of the economic approach to revolutions. **Moore focuses on economic structures and change in the United States, England, France, China, Japan, and India.** This work is another example of a thorough small-n, comparative study, examining the similarities and differences between a small number of cases. In examining these cases, Moore finds that the state of the economy (specifically the presence and strength of a bourgeoisie) prior to industrialization determines how a state will develop and modernize. He also links revolution and modernization: revolution is a consequence of changing economic conditions and necessary for modernization to occur.

⁴⁶ Eric Hoffer is a good example of the social approach, although his work is more generally associated with the literature on social movements. See Chapter 8 for details on Hoffer’s work.

There are three paths to revolutionary modernization, according to Moore: democracy, communism, and fascism. **Democracy emerges in those places where the bourgeoisie is sufficiently powerful (leading to the now famous summary of his argument, “no bourgeoisie, no democracy”). Fascism emerges where economic elites hold most of the power and communism emerges where the peasants do. In all cases, it is changing economic conditions that bring about revolution and revolution that brings about modernization.**

While Moore’s work addresses more than just revolutions and their causes, it remains an important book in the literature on revolutions. It reflects the shift that occurred in the literature following World War II and offers a good economic explanation for revolutions. While it has its shortcomings, it remains a notable work in the study of revolutions.⁴⁷

3.) *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: The Emergence of Revolutionary China, 1937-1945*, by Chalmers Johnson, 1962.

While Moore saw economics at the root of revolution, Chalmers Johnson noted the importance of ideology. **In *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: The Emergence of Revolutionary China, 1937-1945*, Johnson concludes that nationalism was the driving force behind the success of the communist movement in China.** He argues that the Japanese invasion during World War II stirred nationalism among the peasants and that the Communist Party was successfully able to tie itself to this nationalist sentiment. This allowed the communists to win the support of the peasants, and it was that support which led to their victory.

Johnson’s work is an example of the value of a good single-case study. His focus on this single case allows him to provide far greater detail and gain a deeper understanding of events. While the conclusions he draws relate to the Chinese Revolution in particular, he develops knowledge and theories that could potentially be applied to cases in the future.

4.) *Peasants, Politics, and Revolution: Pressures toward Political and Social Change in the Third World*, by Joel Migdal, 1974.

The study of revolutions peaked in the 1970s. Three prominent scholars, inspired by the Vietnam War, all produced books seeking to explain the behavior of peasants and the occurrence of revolutions. These three works would examine similar events but arrive at dramatically different conclusions. Joel Migdal, like Moore, focused on economics and change. James C. Scott also focused on change and modernization but argues for the importance of peasant culture and ideas.

⁴⁷ For a good critique, see Hermione McKenzie’s review in *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (September, 1970): 424-427.

Meanwhile, Samuel Popkin sought to refute these arguments; he argued that peasant behavior and revolution was the result of individuals making rational choices about what is best for them.

In *Peasants, Politics, and Revolution: Pressures toward Political and Social Change in the Third World*, Migdal examines 51 studies of different villages in Asia and Latin America along with economic data about the states in which these villages exist. Although dealing with a large number of cases, Migdal also provides a lot of detail about many of these cases, supplying examples to support and illustrate his theoretical argument. It is also notable for making excellent use of secondary sources, drawing on the work of others to produce original ideas.

Through his study of peasant behavior, he finds that when peasants are forced into a modern economy they discover that they are unable to adapt and succeed. This drives them to revolution. However, Migdal also emphasizes the importance of leadership in the emergence of revolutions. He argues that effective and inspirational leadership is necessary to turn revolutionary potential into action. In the absence of this leadership, even the most frustrated and economically exploited peasants are unlikely to revolt.⁴⁸

5.) *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*, by James C. Scott, 1976.

Like Migdal, Scott examines peasants in Asia (though not Latin America) in *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*. Also, like Migdal, Scott relies on secondary sources to develop an original theory. Further, Scott also emphasizes the importance of modernization and economic change in creating the conditions for peasant revolution. Nevertheless, Scott identifies a different cause of rebellion.⁴⁹

While Scott notes that economic exploitation is an important pre-condition for peasant rebellion, he argues that it is not sufficient. Indeed, he notes that peasants generally seek to avoid risk, which rebellions carry plenty of. Something more is needed to push peasants to accept those risks and to take action. **According to Scott, it is moral outrage that finally pushes peasants to rebel.** Scott develops the concept of the peasant “subsistence ethic,” which holds that peasants have a right to a basic subsistence. When a new economic order threatens their subsistence, peasants are likely to feel sufficiently angry to rebel. **Thus, while economic change sets the stage, it is the deeply held moral beliefs of peasants that drives them to rebel.**

⁴⁸ The importance of leadership would later be noted by social movement theorists and become an important part of that literature.

⁴⁹ Scott is careful to note that he cares about what causes peasants to rebel, not what causes a larger revolution to occur or succeed (pg. 194). Despite this caveat, his work still clearly contributes to the revolutions literature by producing a theory which can explain why peasants would join a revolution.

6.) *The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam*, by Samuel Popkin, 1979.

Finally, in *The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam*, Samuel Popkin sought to refute the findings of Scott by studying the history of peasants in Vietnam. **Arguing against the idea of a “moral economy,” he develops the concept of a “political economy,” arguing that peasants are inherently rational and seek to maximize benefits for themselves.** In brief, a peasant will join a rebellion if he or she believes it is likely to help them personally.

7.) *State and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China*, by Theda Skocpol, 1979.

The revolutions literature culminated with *State and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China*, by Theda Skocpol. Skocpol returns the study of revolutions to a focus on great historical revolutions, examining those in France, Russia, and China (the 1911 Revolution). Skocpol demonstrates great care in selecting these cases to study, noting that they are similar in several important ways.⁵⁰ **She thus reduces the possibility of other variables complicating their comparison. Skocpol clearly demonstrates the importance of selecting appropriate cases when small-n comparative studies like this.**

Skocpol traces in detail the emergence, development, and success of the social revolutions in all three cases, noting what they share in common. She pays special attention to the conditions of each state under the old regime and how these conditions led to the revolutions that followed. In developing her theory on the emergence of revolutions, Skocpol clearly draws on the ideas of those that preceded her while developing a truly original framework.

According to Skocpol, revolutions are the result of a confluence of factors brought on by a changing national and international context. Class conflict plays an important role as relations between landlords and peasants change. **However, it is the inability of the state to adapt to these changing circumstances that ultimately leads to revolution. These states, faced with international pressure to modernize economically and militarily, proved unable to address the internal problems they faced or to suppress revolt.**

Since the 1970's, the revolutions literature has gradually faded away and has been replaced with the literature on social movements (see Chapter 8). While some scholars have continued to specialize in revolution, most have chosen to focus on social movements and contentious politics more broadly. The literature on revolutions still remains an important part of political science,

⁵⁰ Among the similarities that Skocpol references are that they are all cases of successful social revolutions that occurred in wealthy and agrarian states that had not previously been “colonially subjugated.”

however, both for what it can tell us about this interesting phenomenon and for what it has contributed to the study of social movements in general.

C. The Sub-Questions

There are various questions that can be explored in relation to revolutions. As discussed above, however, this literature has largely been supplanted by social movements scholarship which grew out of the study of revolutions. A researcher with a question related to revolutions should begin by grounding herself in the revolutions literature and then moving on to the literature on social movements and situating her research in that field. The questions one may ask about revolutions (when and why do they seek, what tactics do participants adopt, etc.) fit well into social movements scholarship.

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Chapter 10: Why Do Social Movements Emerge?

A. The Question

Scholars of social movements have addressed various theoretical questions. When and why do movements radicalize? Why do movements succeed or fail? Is violence an effective tool of social movements? **The most fundamental question in social movements research, however, is the most obvious. Why do social movements emerge at all?** Given the risks often associated with taking part in a movement, especially in authoritarian states, the fact that large numbers of people would choose to participate is an intriguing phenomenon. Mancur Olson noted this puzzle in his work, *The Logic of Collective Action*. Olson argued that, as individual costs for participating in collective action are high while the benefits achieved are shared by all, there is an inherent incentive for individuals to free-ride, i.e., to allow others to do the work while enjoying the rewards of the movement's success. Yet, despite these risks and disincentives, mass social movements still emerge and attract large numbers of supporters all over the world. Many social movement scholars have devoted themselves to understanding and explaining this phenomenon.

B. A Brief Introduction to the Literature

1.) *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements*, by Eric Hoffer, 1966.

Early research on the emergence of social movements was rooted in what has been called “strain theories,” which viewed social movements as a response to extreme conditions placing great pressure or strain on society. Eric Hoffer's work, *The True Believer*, fits into this model. Hoffer studied various mass movements, most notably Communism and Nazism, as well as early Christianity, Protestantism, and Islam and argued that certain commonalities existed among followers of all these movements. **Hoffer found that those who join mass movements are individuals who feel socially isolated and out of place in a changing society. To find a sense of identity and purpose, these people join a mass movement.**

According to Hoffer, the root cause of social movements is large societal changes that uproot individuals and create a sense of isolation. The ideology and goals of a movement are largely immaterial. Hoffer notes that communists and fascists often competed to win over the same followers, supporting the notion that movement followers are interchangeable and driven by larger social issues. Several years later, William Kornhauser echoed these ideas in *The Politics of Mass Society*, arguing that “social atomization,” caused by dramatic social change (e.g. urbanization, industrialization), drives the emergence of mass movements.

2.) *The Politics of Women's Liberation: A Case Study of an Emerging Social Movement and Its Relation to the Policy Process*, by Jo Freeman, 1975.

The above theories have since fallen out of favor. Subsequent researchers found that it is socially connected individuals who are more likely to join movements. Jo Freeman studied the rise of the women's rights movement in the United States in *The Politics of Women's Liberation*. **Freeman examined the first two waves of the feminist movement, seeking to explain why the women's movement emerged in the 1960's.** Contrary to early social movements research, **Freeman finds that social connections were necessary for the movement to form and that the socially isolated are less likely to join a movement.** Freeman argues that an already established social network among women was necessary for the movement to emerge.

While Freeman's study has only a single case (the women's movement in the United States), **she divides this case by examining two separate branches of the movement that diverged over time.** By comparing these separate branches, she is able **to identify those factors** they share that contribute to the rise of movements **as well as those variables that caused them** to develop differently, the most important of which was the presence of an existing social network that was capable of mobilizing people around the goal of achieving women's liberation.

Freeman also draws heavily on the theory of relative deprivation to explain the emergence of social movements. This theory is rooted in Alexis de Tocqueville's observation that people are more likely to rebel when conditions are actually improving. **Relative deprivation theory holds that feelings of frustration with personal status and the state of society are the driving force behind movements and that these feelings are not absolute but relative.** People do not become frustrated and act based on absolute conditions but when they experience conditions that they find unacceptable relative to their expectations. Put simply, improving conditions can raise expectations which, in turn, increases frustration at the slowness of improvements.

This is precisely what Freeman finds in the case of the women's rights movement. As women entered the workforce in the 50's and 60's, their expectations were raised. These expectations were then frustrated by a lack of further advancement, spurring the beginnings of a movement. Further, women who had previously taken part in other progressive movements (e.g., the anti-war movement, the civil rights movement) often found themselves faced with the same sexism they encountered elsewhere. Participation in progressive movements raised the expectations of female participants which were then thwarted by the casual sexism of male-dominated causes. Thus, women becoming more active in society both raised their expectations and put them in contact with other women, contributing to the rise of the women's liberation movement.

3.) *The Pro-choice Movement: Organization and Activism in the Abortion Conflict*, by Suzanne Staggenborg, 1991.

Freeman's work is part of the move towards the resource mobilization approach to the study of social movements. Resource mobilization focuses on how social movement organizations (SMOs) marshal and employ the resources (people, public support, etc.) that are available to them. **This trend marked the shift from focusing on purely larger environmental variables that can cause people to join a movement and towards the examination of the networks and leaders that are capable of mobilizing these potential followers.** This approach became, for a time, the dominant approach to social movements research, and Suzanne Staggenborg's *The Pro-Choice Movement: Organization and Activism in the Abortion Conflict* reflects this approach.

In her study of the pro-choice movement in the United States, Staggenborg traces the development of the movement from its inception in the 1960's to the 1980's and **examines thirteen separate SMOs.** She makes use of the writings of SMOs and their leaders as well as interviews with members of the movement. Like Freeman, Staggenborg sees movements emerging from preexisting social networks and organizations. The pro-choice movement grew out of the existing networks of other movements (civil rights, women) of the 1960's and drew members and resources from these networks.

Staggenborg also notes the importance of both victory and opposition to the continued existence and growth of social movements. **She argues that the emergence of an opposing counter-movement (the pro-life movement) spurred continued action from the pro-choice movement.** Further, the victory of the Roe v. Wade decision gave the movement greater legitimacy, attracting more followers and the support of larger, more organized institutions, such as the ACLU and Planned Parenthood. These victories and threats allowed the movement to grow and dictated how the movement developed over time, becoming more formalized in its leadership while continuing to rely on grassroots tactics.

These environmental variables that Staggenborg focuses on fit into what has come to be called the political opportunity structure (POS) in social movements theory. POS refers to the larger social and political context (opportunities and risks) which can affect the emergence and success or failure of a movement. **In the case of the pro-choice movement, Staggenborg finds that both opportunities and risks can contribute to the emergence and growth of a movement.**

4.) *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, by Doug McAdam, 1999.

Doug McAdam also finds **existing social networks to be an important factor in the rise of social movements.** In *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, he examines the emergence of social movements by providing a detailed study of the history of the American Civil Rights Movement. **While this study examines a single case, McAdam, like**

Freemen, divides it into several sub-cases. In this case, McAdam divides the movement into distinct time periods which he analyzes separately. Through this historical analysis, McAdam traces the rise and fall of the movement and **identifies the variables that were necessary for the movement to emerge and succeed.**

McAdam's work marks the beginning of the shift towards the eponymous political process model in social movements research. He argues that the emergence of the Civil Rights Movement was part of an ongoing process which involved **the interaction of multiple variables including the nature of the political environment, the resources available to activists, and the strategies employed by leaders of the movement.**

In particular, **McAdam emphasizes the importance of preexisting social networks in the black community prior to the emergence of the actual movement.** These networks, supported by black colleges and churches, created a community that could be mobilized under the right political circumstances. **However, McAdam finds that these networks were only able to mobilize people and form a movement when provided with effective leadership and favorable political conditions which emerged following World War II.**

5.) *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of South Africa, the United States, and Brazil*, by Anthony W. Marx, 1998.

While the political process model has now become dominant in social movement research, certain theoretical concepts that have been developed in European academia have begun to make their way into American political science. Notably, the examination of identity formation and how it contributes to the rise of movements has received greater attention. Anthony Marx's book, *Making Race and Nation*, reflects this approach.

Marx attempts to explain the emergence of social movements by asking why the United States and South Africa saw the rise of race-based rights movements while Brazil did not. Marx performs a detailed historical analysis of **three states with similar backgrounds but divergent outcomes.** All three cases are states where European settlers dominated indigenous people and/or African slaves. In the United States and South Africa, this led to a later history of formal discrimination against the black population and later organized resistance against this discrimination by movements built around a black racial identity. In Brazil, no formal discrimination developed, and race did not become a politically significant identity.

Marx examines these cases through a study of historical documents, secondary literature, and interviews. **These cases work as part of a most similar design (method of difference).** All three states have similar histories which allows Marx to control for as many variables as

possible. **By identifying the difference between these states, Marx identifies the independent variable that causes the different outcomes.**

Marx argues that the divergent outcome between cases is explained by the different needs of the state-building elites in each country. In the United States and South Africa, the state emerged from major internal conflict (Civil War and Boer War) and faced the need to restore stability. They faced a divided white population with a competing white elite (South and Afrikaners), which demanded racial discrimination and posed a real and demonstrated threat to peace and stability. **The need to unify the white population led both states to adopt racist policies to promote white unity.** Exclusion and discrimination became a major aspect of state building.

In Brazil, no major divisions developed among the white population. Instead, the major threat to stability was an uprising by the black population. Thus, it was in the interest of the state to downplay race as an issue. No formal discriminatory policies were developed. Instead, informal discrimination became the norm.

Formal discrimination in the United States and South Africa made race a more salient political issue and led to the development of racial identity. Black people were more united by their common treatment, and formal policies provided a clear target to mobilize against. In Brazil, the lack of specific policies to target made it more difficult for a racial identity to develop. Black people suffering from informal racism were more likely to attribute their circumstances to class. Race failed to develop as a meaningful political identity or mobilizing frame.

C. The Sub-Questions

While the most obvious questions of social movements scholarship are where movements come from and why they emerge, there are numerous other questions which the literature can speak to. Some questions deal with movement success and failure. When do movements succeed? Why do they fail? Does non-violent resistance work? Is violence effective? Scholars asking these questions have examined the role of the state, the strategy and tactics of movements, intervention of outside actors, and numerous other variables.

Social movement scholars have also studied movement behavior. How do movements respond to state violence? When and why do movements adopt violent or non-violent methods (separate from the question of whether or not these methods are effective)? How do movements compete or cooperate with each other? These questions also look at the role of the state as well as movement leadership and membership among other variables.

The study of social movements is a rich field and other questions can be asked beyond those mentioned here. Recent events such as the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, and the emergence

of the Tea Party demonstrate the need for good social movements research and raise countless questions that deserve attention.

D. Essential Readings

Freeman, Jo. *The Politics of Women's Liberation: A Case Study of an Emerging Social Movement and Its Relation to the Policy Process*. New York: D. McKay, 1975.

Hoffer, Eric. *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements*. New York: Harper and Row, 1966.

Marx, Anthony W. *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of South Africa, the United States, and Brazil*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

McAdam, Doug. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

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Chapter 11: What Explains the Religious Resurgence?

A. The Question

Beginning as early as the 17th century, social scientists and Western intellectuals have predicted the “end of religion.” In a 1968 *New York Times* interview, prominent sociologist Peter Berger judged that by the 21st century “religious believers are likely to be found only in small sects, huddled together to resist a worldwide secular culture.”⁵¹ Similar statements by leading intellectuals followed. This belief--that modernization and scientific advancement would render religion irrelevant--became known as the “secularization thesis.”

Since then, events such as 9/11 and the resurgence of global religious movements have prompted scholars to question the theory’s legitimacy. Even Berger, a leading proponent of the secularization thesis, later revised his view by admitting, “[the] assumption that we live in a secularized world is false.”⁵² **The subfield of religion and politics has since become preoccupied with questions such as: what are the conditions that have prompted a rise in religious belief? And has there in fact been a religious resurgence, or have observance levels remained steady?** There have been numerous publications dedicated to these questions; this chapter considers four works that attempt to answer them.

B. A Brief Introduction to the Literature

1.) “A Supply-Side Reinterpretation of the ‘Secularization’ of Europe,” by Rodney Stark and Laurence Iannaccone, 1985.

The first work draws heavily from the rational choice school of thought. This “supply side” model was promulgated by Rodney Stark and Laurence Iannaccone in their 1985 paper, “A Supply-Side Reinterpretation of the ‘Secularization’ of Europe,” in which they “dispute the claim that any European nation is very secularized” and explain the strength of religious institutions in the United States.

The goal: Stark and Iannaccone propose a theory for religious “change,” which accounts for increases, declines, and stability in religiosity. **Their theory is part of the rational choice camp because they invoke an economic model to explain how religious communities operate.**

⁵¹ Peter Berger, “A Bleak Outlook is Seen for Religion,” *New York Times*. April 25, 1968.

⁵² Peter Berger, “The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview,” in *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, ed. Peter Berger (Washington, DC: Eerdmans/Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999), 2.

The model: Also known as the “religious market model,” the authors choose to forego the “demand” side of the equation (i.e. the public’s demand for religion), which they assume to be constant. Instead, they focus on the model’s “supply” side: conditions of religious freedom and competition between religious institutions.

The argument: Religion is “strong” in some places and “weak” in others because it depends on the initiatives of religious leaders and their institutions. **In other words, the greater the competition between churches, sects, and denominations in a community, the more difficult it becomes for leaders to maintain their congregations and the more efficient they must become in order to attract and keep followers.** For example, competition between religious institutions in the US occurs because mainstream denominations such as Catholics, Lutherans, and Protestants are continually challenged by rival evangelical churches.

Methodology: First, the authors present several hypotheses. Some examples of these hypotheses are: an institution’s ability to create a religious monopoly is dependent on the state’s use of coercive force to regulate the “religious economy.”⁵³ They also propose that a religious economy is more likely to be pluralistic when it is unregulated, and that firms will be more likely to specialize if the religious economy is pluralistic. To test their hypotheses, they looked to quantify measures of pluralism and regulation in order to explain variation in religious participation. Using statistical analysis, they conducted several tests of the theory using data from various sources.

Findings: After analyzing their results they found that in areas where religious regulation prevents competition between religious “firms,” religious participation is “also stifled.”⁵⁴ That is, religious competition promotes efficiency, which encourages what they term “religious consumption.”⁵⁵

2.) *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*, by Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, 2011.

While the previous work seems to settle the debate that the secularization thesis is irrelevant, Norris and Inglehart call into question its conclusive demise. They also directly challenge Stark and Iannaccone’s “supply side” interpretation, specifically the theory’s assumption that “religious participation and religious pluralism are generally and positively associated with one another.”⁵⁶

⁵³ Rodney Stark and Laurence R. Iannaccone, “A Supply-Side Reinterpretation of the ‘Secularization’ of Europe,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 33, no. 3 (1994): 232.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 241.

⁵⁶ Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular Religion and Politics Worldwide* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2011), 13.

The goal: Instead, they propose a theory of the secularization thesis based on “existential security” which accounts for a religion’s “worldview.”⁵⁷

Methods: **Rather than engaging primarily in quantitative analysis, Norris and Inglehart rely on a classic qualitative framework: the case study.** They conduct a series of detailed case studies in the US and Western Europe, the “Muslim world”, and post-Communist Europe. They supplement their cases with data from the World Values Surveys 1981-2001, Gallup polls, the International Social Survey Program, and eurobarometer surveys.

Findings: They found that “the publics of virtually all industrial societies have been moving toward more secular orientations during the past 50 years, nevertheless, the world as a whole now has more people with traditional religious views than ever before.”⁵⁸ Their findings serve as a critique of authors that pronounce the secularization thesis defunct.

Instead, Norris and Inglehart argue that **variation in religiosity depends on several factors.** They found that religiosity is related to issues of 1) societal modernization, human security, and economic inequality, b) the predominant type of religious culture in any country, c) generational shifts in values, c) different societal actors, and d) patterns of demography, fertility, population change. In line with these conclusions, they found that religiosity is more likely to endure in poor and/or failed states.

Making connections: **The authors relied on cultural and structural explanations.** They lent credence to cultural factors as legitimate reasons for explaining persisting religiosity among certain populations, while also accounting for structural and economic factors. By expanding their study outside of the Europe and the US, they conclude with different findings than Stark and Iannaccone.

3.) *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State, from Christian Militias to al Qaeda*, by Mark Juergensmeyer, 2008.

While Juergensmeyer does not directly address the secularization thesis, he is preoccupied by a similar puzzle: **why do people turn to religion?**

The goal: His study is different from the previous examples in two ways. First, he is focused on religious movements rather than individual piety. Second, unlike the previous two works, which assume that religious belief never declined on a global scale, **Juergensmeyer is questioning the conditions that prompted a surge in global religious activism.**

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 5-6.

Argument: **Juergensmeyer argues that the religious revival is a backlash against secular nationalism, which began to be perceived as “morally vacuous and politically corrupt.”**⁵⁹ In this scenario, religion becomes “the ideology of empowerment and protest,” and “what was primarily a worldly struggle takes on the aura of sacred conflict.”⁶⁰ He argues that “the conditions that lead to conflict are a matter of social and political identity.”⁶¹

Methodology: **Juergensmeyer engages the case studies approach by analyzing political movements in the Middle East, South Asia, Europe and the United States.** He relies heavily on interviews with militant activists, religious leaders, and religious leaders of political parties. His qualitative approach engages **both a structural and rational-choice explanation for the emergence of global rebellion movements.** He relies on government structure to explain rebellion movements, and also sees religion as a mobilizing force that is adopted by individuals for political ends.

Findings: Juergensmeyer views religious and secular nationalisms as competing ideologies who disagree on the source of legitimate political authority. The author identifies two “ideal types”: the religious-activist and the secular-nationalist. For the former, legitimate authority is derived from the divine, which is usually derived from a revealed text or interpretation. For the latter, political authority is based on a combination of natural law and national myth about peoplehood. He finds that since the end of the Cold War it is **the rejection of secular nationalism that drives religious national movements.**

4.) *God’s Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics*, by Monica Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Samuel Shah, 2011.

God’s Century approaches the study of religion in the political sphere in a similar manner to Juergensmeyer by focusing on religious revival movements rather than individual piety. Toft, Philpott and Shah are also focused on the relationship between religious groups and the structures (i.e. governments) that they interact with, rather than on the relationship between individuals and religious institutions.

Argument: The authors present two theses. First, that there has been a global resurgence of religion in past 40 years. **The resurgence “has been driven by religious people’s desire for freedom,” and that these forces have “benefitted from, rather than been hindered by, those**

⁵⁹ Mark Juergensmeyer, “The Religious Challenge to the Secular State,” in *Global Rebellion. Religious Challenges to the Secular State, from Christian Militias to al Qaeda* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 10.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 253-254.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

forces that are most distinctive to the modern world.”⁶² These forces include democracy, modernization in communication and technology, and globalization. Second, they argue that that the difference in religious politics--which are the mechanisms used to enter the political arena--is grounded in the religious community’s beliefs regarding political authority, justice, and political theology. The history of interaction between the religious actors and the government will in turn decide the actors’ tactics.⁶³

Methodology: The authors rely primarily on the qualitative, case studies approach. Rather than dividing their case studies according to country, region, or type of movement, they choose to group them by “political pursuit,” i.e. their choice of activism (democratic participation, terrorism, etc.).⁶⁴

Findings: The authors find that the political independence of Muslim, Christian, and other religious groups from political institutions has allowed them to exert greater pressure on the state as a result of technological advancements, which facilitate transnational communication.

Drawing parallels: Proponents of the secularization thesis argued that technological advancements would lead to a decline in religious adherence. Although Toft, Philpott and Shah do not address individual piety, they also confront modernization’s impact on religion. They found that rather than “killing religion,” democracy has “provided the open arena” in which religious forces and groups “can communicate their views and compete for power.”⁶⁵ Similar forces of modernization, such as technology, have also facilitated religious movements in their quest to enter the political arena.

Concluding Remarks

As is common in the subfield, the works mentioned above are not guided by an identical theoretical question. Rather, they approach a common issue from different perspectives. The first two works engaged directly with the secularization thesis by questioning its verity and resilience. The second two works looked at contemporary religiosity, but framed the question in terms of a religious resurgence, and in group terms rather than individual piety.

Some authors, such as Stark and Iannaccone, chose to answer the question using a quantitative approach by engaging statistical analysis. The other three works relied primarily on the qualitative case study approach, and engaged cultural, rational choice, and structural

⁶² Monica Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Samuel Shah, *God’s Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011), 9.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

explanations to explain their findings. The scope of their analysis, including the number of cases and regions studies, had a significant impact on their findings.

C. The Sub-Questions

The religion and politics subfield is relatively new, and, as noted above, has developed in tandem with scholarly debates regarding the secularization thesis. The subfield's newness presents several complicating factors for interested students. Most notably, there is no coherent body of literature or a guiding set of theoretical questions as are found in other subfields. As we will see below, there is not even a consensus that the secularization theory is, in fact, false. Political scientists and sociologists are still trying to grapple with more descriptive questions such as, was there ever a decline in religious fervor? How do we measure religious observance?

D. Essential Readings

Juergensmeyer, Mark. *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State, from Christian Militias to al Qaeda*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.

Norris, Pippa and Ronald Inglehart. *Sacred and Secular Religion and Politics Worldwide*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Stark, Rodney, and Laurence R. Iannaccone. "A Supply-Side Reinterpretation of the "Secularization" of Europe." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 33, no. 3 (1994): 230-52.

Toft, Monica Duffy, Philpott, Daniel, and Shah, Timothy Samuel. *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics*. 1st ed. New York: W.W. Norton &, 2011.

Chapter 12: Why Do Statebuilding Operations Fail?

A. The Question

An examination of the armed statebuilding operations literature is a difficult task, in part because this chapter will use the term *armed statebuilding operations* to cover a diverse range of political phenomena. The works in this chapter cover the following concepts: foreign-imposed regime change, foreign occupations, armed democratizations, as well as armed statebuilding operations. Each of these concepts vary quite a bit, but they all highlight similar dilemmas and limitations of the most prominent form of war since the end of World War II. **To oversimplify somewhat, they seek to identify the causes that explain why statebuilding operations succeed or fail.**

In general, the literature on statebuilding operations follows a similar pattern found throughout political science. A major event shifts the focus to a new phenomenon; scholars try to explain the new phenomenon with little literature to draw upon; and then methods and understanding improve over time. During the Cold War, interventions were mostly covert, and it was rarely the objective to build a new state or regime after the intervention had toppled the adversary one. The end of the Cold War prompted a new concern with rebuilding failed states, such as Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. With the new wave of “nation-building” came a new scholarly interest in explaining the phenomenon. This first generation was highly descriptive and lacked methodological rigor. A good example of this approach is *America’s Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq*, by James Dobbins and several others.

Successive waves of literature have branched off into specific areas and improved theoretical development and methods. For instance, the usage of the term nation-building was almost entirely eliminated since these operations weren’t actually trying to build a nation, which is a community of people based on identity. It’s more accurate to say that an operation is an occupation or a statebuilding operation. Works also began to focus on specific causal factors that could determine success or failure. The works below are a small selection of these subsequent waves, but are good representatives of some of the best work produced.

B. A Brief Introduction to the Literature

1.) *Occupational Hazards: Why Military Occupations Succeed or Fail*, by David M. Edelstein, 2004.

This book seeks to answer a simple question: why do some occupations succeed and others fail? We often say in political science that we love a good puzzle, and a good way to gain people’s interest is to find a case that was supposed to happen a certain way but didn’t. Edelstein says that he was driven to write the book prior to the invasion of Iraq in 2002 and because of the

fact that Germany's post-WWII occupation was being held up as a blueprint for Iraq. Iraq and Germany are dissimilar in many ways and it is unreasonable to think that one could be a blueprint for the other.

Edelstein begins by doing two very important things: he defines his concept and he defines what constitutes success and failure. "Military occupation is the temporary control of a territory by a state (or group of allied states) that makes no claim to permanent sovereignty over that territory."⁶⁶ Edelstein spends another page and a half discussing how occupations are distinguished from other military operations like colonialism and nation-building. **Based on this definition, Edelstein counts 26 occupations that have taken place since 1815.**

Edelstein recognizes the difficulty of determining the success or failure of an occupation, but he provides parameters that aid in the process. Success or failure is judged on whether a country achieves its goals and at what costs. He goes on to say that a successful occupation occurs when an occupying power can withdraw from a country without concern for the security of its interests. The post-WWII occupations of Germany and Japan started are considered successful because these two countries went from being adversaries to allies and the US's security concerns had been secured.

It is also necessary for Edelstein to view the long-term situation before declaring success or failure. At the time of publication in 2011, it was too early to make a determination of the occupations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Accordingly, Edelstein adds the category of mixed to account for the variation between cases. Based on these standards, Edelstein finds that 27% of occupations were successful, 54% failed, and 19% were mixed. Looking closer at the cases reveal a troubling trend. Of the 7 successes, 6 were post-WWII occupations. The seventh was the allied occupation of France after the Napoleonic wars. **At this point, the project becomes about explaining why occupations fail so often and what was different about WWII and the Napoleonic wars?**

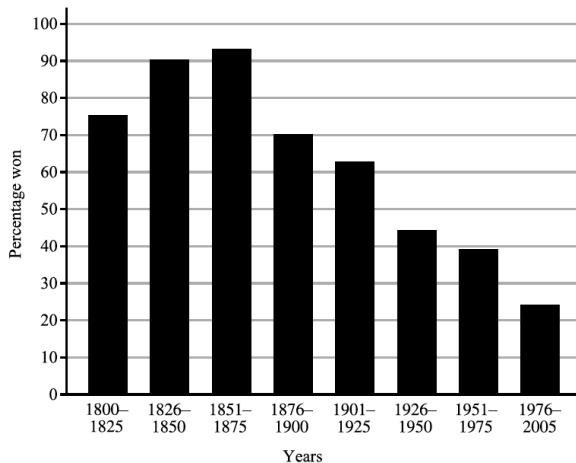
Edelstein finds that occupations are more likely to succeed when the occupying force stays for lengthy periods of time and have a large footprint, that is, a large amount of troops relative to geographic size and population of the occupied country. However, both of these factors cause resentment within the local population. Edelstein calls this the duration and footprint dilemma. **The key to success, according to Edelstein, is the presence of several key factors that mitigate the effects of these two dilemmas.** 1) if the host country has been decimated by the war, then there is a recognition among the people of the need for the occupations; 2) if there is a common external enemy to both the occupier and the occupied, then

⁶⁶ David M. Edelstein, "Occupational Hazards: Why Military Occupations Succeed or Fail," *International Security* 29, no. 1 (2004): 49-91.

people will recognize the value of the occupation; and 3) if the occupier has a credible exit strategy, then people are less likely to oppose the occupation.

2.) *Rage Against the Machines: Explaining Outcomes in Counterinsurgency*, by Jason Lyall and Isaiah Wilson, 2009.

Similar to Edelstein, Lyall and Wilson's article deals with the dynamics of occupation and also with a puzzle. Below is a graph that shows the percentage of conflicts won by the incumbent since 1800. Since around 1875, the percentage of incumbent victories has steadily declined. **Lyall and Wilson attribute this to an army's decreasing ability to win the counterinsurgency that arises after major combat operations have ceased and the occupation begins.** Many scholars have attempted to explain the increasing frequency and effectiveness of insurgencies. **These included modern technology, the collapse of colonialism, and nationalist and identity issues, but Lyall and Wilson choose to focus on the strategy of the occupying force instead (if you want to add value, do something that others haven't).**⁶⁷



Note: N = 286. Draws are considered losses here.

FIGURE 1. *The puzzle: Percentage of conflicts won by incumbent, 1800-2005*

Lyall and Wilson notice that the decrease in counterinsurgency (COIN) effectiveness over time coincides with the rise of unit mechanizations. For most of the 19th century, and parts of the 20th century, army expedition forces had very little mechanization. They were known as foraging armies. They would march into and around the territory they occupied, relying on local resources and markets to sustain the army. This would lead to a high level of interaction between the local people and the occupation forces. Today, the increasing lethality of the battlefield has led to an increasingly isolated army. Soldiers move around the villages in tanks and armored

⁶⁷ Jason Lyall and Isaiah Wilson, III, "Rage against the Machines: Explaining Outcomes in Counterinsurgency Wars," *International Organization* 63, no. 1 (2009): 67.

personnel carriers. When they are in the base, they are surrounded by concrete and earth barriers, and access is tightly controlled.

This variation explains the decrease in effectiveness. “Why do mechanized forces perform counterinsurgency so poorly? Put simply, the force structure of modern post–World War I militaries inhibit the collection and vetting of the context-specific information required to wield power discriminately.”⁶⁸ Mechanized armies do not interact as much with the local population, which inhibits their ability to gather information and intelligence, which inhibits their ability to apply force in a limited way. Indiscriminate use of force increases resentment and support for the insurgency.

Lyall and Wilson used a research method known as mixed methods, because it combines the use of quantitative and qualitative methods. They run a regression on a data set that shows a highly significant and negative relationship between mechanization and successful COIN. They then go into in-depth case studies of two US army units with similar, adjacent areas of operation in northern Iraq. The 4th Infantry Division (4th ID) is a mechanized unit and fits the typical profile of what Lyall and Wilson see as the isolated mechanized unit. Conversely, the 101st Airborne Division is designed to be light and mobile. The majority of their patrols were conducted on foot, rather than in tanks and armored personnel carriers. The 101st was able to gather a significant amount of intelligence compared to the 4th ID. As a result, they had few instances of civilian casualties. Local officials preferred the presence of the 101st to that of the 4th ID.

3.) *The Durability of Imposed Democracy*, by J. Michael Greig and Andrew J. Enterline, 2014.

This article is looking at a similar concept of foreign intervention, but looks specifically at the durability of the democratic system setup after the intervention. This gets more into the statebuilding aspect of these interventions, rather than the occupations and military operations that precede them. Democracy and democratization are of particular interest to armed statebuilding interventions because they are frequently the final objective of the operation. Intervention is often justified by the granting of sovereignty and democracy following the intervention. It is also of interest because these efforts often fail or fall significantly short of stated objectives.

Greig and Enterline are looking at the impact of two factors on the durability of democracy: the choices made by the intervenors and the environment into which the intervenor enters. As stated in the thesis, Greig and Enterline find that some policy choices do have an impact, but that **outcomes are overwhelmingly determined by the pre-existing**

⁶⁸Lyall and Wilson, "Rage against the Machines," 9.

environment, including ethnic cleavages, economic development, and previous experience with democracy.⁶⁹

The authors test their argument using an online database known as Polity III, which is a dataset that records a significant amount of data on different regimes, like origin of the regime, time in existence, and occurrences of external and internal conflict. This allows the authors to determine which democracies were externally imposed and how long they lasted compared to democracies that weren't externally imposed. They also augmented the dataset with other sources.

Based on all this, **the authors identify 36 imposed democracies that meet their criteria from 1816 to 1994.** Of these, 24 failed during the period of observation. **The authors find that the environment in which a democracy is imposed significantly influences its probability of survival.** Previous experience with democracy can help to overcome some of these problems. Also, economic prosperity can help extend the life expectancy of a nascent democracy. International, not just domestic, environments can also have an impact. Regional security threats reduce the durability of democratic regimes. With regards to choices, the duration of stay, either through colonialism or occupation, were shown to have a positive impact on democratic survival, although these effects are relatively weak compared to environmental factors.

The statistical methods used by the authors allow them to build a model of Iraq and Afghanistan and to predict the probability of survival for each of these new democracies, the results were not great. The model predicted a 50% chance of failure within 30 years, and a 50% chance that democracy would last more than 5 years in Afghanistan. The authors then note that while 50% chance of failure within 30 years in Iraq seems relatively good, their standard of "democracy" is a very low bar, which seems consistent with events in Iraq since the publication of this article.

C. The Sub-Questions

Political Scientist often compare themselves to the natural sciences, and, as such, ask whether their efforts have resulted in progress towards a better theoretical understanding of the world. While it is said that the natural sciences progress in a linear theoretical direction, the social sciences often deal with the same concepts and theoretical problems in cyclical patterns. However, progress within the statebuilding literature is quite clear. Throughout the years of research, similar factors have emerged as deterministic and significant for the success and failure of these operations. Often divided between pre-existing environmental factors and policy choices, environmental factors are preeminent. Ethnic heterogeneity, economic development, previous experience with democracy, and regional security environments determine the outcome

⁶⁹J. Michael Greig and Andrew J. Enterline. "The Durability of Imposed Democracy." *International Interactions* 40, no. 2 (2014): 166-190.

of most armed statebuilding operations before they begin. Within this framework that is set before the operation begins, there is a small window of opportunity in which opportunities can have an impact. Unfortunately, these choices can have both positive and negative impacts.

Future research in this area should focus on two things. First, how does the environment and choices interact in these operations? This is somewhat in line with Edelstein's work. Duration and footprint are choices that impact the success rate, but depend on certain environmental condition to be successful. What other choices can be made that have different effects in different environments? **Second, if the environmental conditions are held constant, what are the varying impacts of different choices?** This research agenda has more policy implications than the former, and could lead to some good papers. It is unlikely that political leaders will select a country in which to intervene based on the likelihood that it could be successfully converted to a democracy. Most of these countries are either already democracies, or do not pose a security threat to other countries, like the US. Those countries that are most likely to pose a security threat to the US are also most likely to have poor conditions for democratization. Therefore, what can be done to maximize the probability of success?

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Chapter 13: Why Do States Go to War?

A. The Question

Since the 17th century, interstate wars - sustained armed combat between two or more sovereign states that results in a minimum of one thousand battle-related deaths - have been the most destructive form of organized violence known to humankind.⁷⁰ Accordingly, some of the most pressing research questions in the study of international relations concern the causes of interstate war. **Why do states go to war with each other? Are interstate wars more likely to occur under some conditions rather than others? Are they more likely to occur at certain times rather than others?** There has been a multitude of attempts to uncover the causes of interstate war, which provide a variety of analytical approaches that represent various, often competing, schools of thought. In a chapter of this size, we can only highlight various aspects of a few important texts.

B. A Brief Introduction to the Literature

1.) *Theory of International Politics*, by Kenneth Waltz, 1979.⁷¹

We turn first to the argument made by Kenneth Waltz and other neorealists (also known as structural realists), namely, that the basic cause of war is the “anarchic structure” of the international system. “Anarchy” does not refer to violence and chaos, but rather to the absence of an overarching governmental authority that can regulate disputes and enforce agreements between various states in the international system. **In this sense, then, anarchy causes war because there is no governmental enforcement mechanism in the international system “to prevent war.”** The presence of constant suspicion, insecurity, violence and chaos does not define anarchy; rather it is the assumed outcome.

This line of reasoning builds on Waltz’s argument in *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, in which Waltz argues that answers to the war question can be grouped into three basic categories, or what he refers to as “images” of war, and he emphasizes the permissive nature of anarchy in the third image (i.e., within the international system).⁷² There is, however, an analytical problem with this line of reasoning: it treats anarchy as a structural “constant.” **As a result, anarchy cannot be used to account for variations in war and peace because it is**

⁷⁰ Notice that the dependent variable (i.e., the phenomenon thought to be influenced, affected or caused by some other phenomenon) ‘interstate war’ is operationalized in such a way that it removes from consideration a variety of other kinds of conflicts, for instance, minor armed clashes between states that are not deadly enough to be classified as ‘war’; conflicts between states and non-state actors; and internal conflicts, such as revolutions, civil wars and wars of secession. We will revisit the topic of ‘operationalizing a variable’ in subsection four of this chapter.

⁷¹ Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

⁷² Kenneth Waltz, *Man, State and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

present during both events. “Constants are not likely to be able to tell us why some historical periods are more war prone than others,” Greg Cashman tells us. “If we wish to find why war itself is not constant, we need to find *variables* in the structure of the international system that vary with the changing rates of war.”⁷³

In a later work, Waltz seems to recognize this argument. “Although neorealist theory does not explain why particular wars are fought, it does explain war’s dismal recurrence through the millennia.”⁷⁴ In attempts to escape the dilemma, **other neorealist scholars began to incorporate other variables into their analyses to explain variations in war and peace, such as, the polarity of the system, the degree of anarchy, or the offense/defense balance.**

2.) *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, by John Mearsheimer, 2001.⁷⁵

“Offensive realism” is a branch of structural or neorealist thought often associated with John Mearsheimer’s *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. Theories of structural realism, such as Mearsheimer’s, largely ignore cultural differences between states, the ideology of a state’s political leadership, as well as the state’s regime type (despotism, democracy, etc.). This indifference stems largely from the fact that the anarchic structure of the international system creates the same fundamental incentives for all states, according to Mearsheimer, regardless of their cultural, ideological, or governmental configuration. **Anarchy forces a state, he argues, to pursue enough power to protect itself.**

Furthermore, if geopolitical circumstances permit, Mearsheimer contends that a state, particularly a major power, should aggressively pursue a strategy of hegemony while also trying to stop other major powers from becoming hegemon. This the “offensive” part of neorealism. In contrast to Waltz, Mearsheimer contends that states are not just security maximizers, but power maximizers. States can never really be secure, and only by maximizing their power can they ensure their survival.⁷⁶ For Mearsheimer, there is no amount of power that could ever satisfy a state.⁷⁷ **This strategy gives rise to a constant competition for security, which, in turn, gives rise to the constant possibility of interstate war.** Thus, we arrive at what Mearsheimer calls the “tragedy” of great power politics: great states seeking their security are likely to be forced to engage in battle with their rivals to ensure their security.

Also in contrast to Waltz, Mearsheimer rejects the certainty of a balance-of-power arising. Since weak states are not eager to incur the costs associated with challenging powerful states by allying

⁷³ Greg Cashman, *What Causes War? An Introduction to Theories of International Conflict* (New York: Lexington Books, 1993), 228.

⁷⁴ Kenneth Waltz, “The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* vol. 18 (1988): 615-28.

⁷⁵ John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001).

⁷⁶ Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 61.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

with other weak states, they will ‘buck-pass’ (i.e., they will let other states take the initiative in balancing the threatening power) until their security is actually in peril.⁷⁸ This ‘buck-passing’ indicates that aggressive states cannot be checked as easily as Waltz contends, which creates a greater incentive to strive for hegemony. So, if we combine these lower disincentives with the perennial threat posed by other states, the best way to ensure a great power’s survival is for it to pursue an aggressive strategy of hegemony.⁷⁹

To empirically test his notion of offensive realism, Mearsheimer applies his theory to a study of the history of great power politics from roughly 1792 to 2000. As one might expect, his reading of the historical record provides ample support for his position. However, it should be noted that all his predictions about the post-Cold War world not have proven accurate. For example, the U.S. has not withdrawn from Europe, has not refused to commit its forces to the preservation of regional peace, and not attempted to curtail Chinese economic growth or acted as an offshore balancer.⁸⁰ Thus, the explanatory power of his conception of offensive realism is left open to question.

3.) *The War Trap*, by Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, 1981.⁸¹

Let us turn to an early example of the rational choice theories of war. Like rational choice models in other areas of study, these theories assume that the relevant actors are capable of “choosing the best means to gain a determined set of ends.”⁸² They assume that a state can be understood as a unitary actor, or that the decision-making process proceeds as if there is a single, principal leader who can control the outcome.⁸³ Moreover, a leader is free from cultural or ideological commitments that might interfere with the application of reason to decision-making. **In short, these theories of war assume that wars are deliberate, calculated actions, and that they will only occur when the leader of the initiating state believes that the war will yield a positive expected utility outcome.**

Decisions about war, therefore, depend on an analysis of the costs and benefits. More specifically, “the size of the expected gains or losses depend on (a) the relative strengths of the attacker and the defender; (b) the value the attacker places on changing the defender’s policies,

⁷⁸ Ibid., 39-40.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 61.

⁸⁰ See John Mearsheimer, “Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War,” *International Security* 15, no. 1 (Summer 1990); John Ikenberry, *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 3; William Wohlforth, “US Strategy in a Unipolar World,” in Ikenberry, *America Unrivaled*, 98-118.

⁸¹ Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, *The War Trap* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

⁸² James Morrow, *Game Theory for Political Scientists* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 17.

⁸³ Bueno de Mesquita, *War Trap*, 17.

relative to the possible changes in policies that the attacker may be forced to accept if it loses; and (c) the relative strengths and interests of all other states that might intervene in the war.”⁸⁴ The expected utility of a war strategy is a function of the sum of the utilities of the possible outcome times their probabilities.⁸⁵ **Accordingly, we cannot dismiss the likelihood that war is the outcome of a leader’s rational calculation that by initiating a war, the state will be placed in a better position than if it remained at peace.**

Bueno de Mesquita tests his theory against empirical data from the “grandfather” of all data-gathering projects on war: the Correlates of War (COW) Project. **He claims that it does a better job than power capability theories of predicting the onset of war from 1816 to 1980.** Bueno de Mesquita’s model was, nonetheless, met with equal amounts of praise and criticism.⁸⁶

4). *The Wages of War, 1816-1965: A Statistical Handbook*, by J. David Singer and Melvin Small, 1972; and *The Correlates of War Project*.⁸⁷

The Correlates of War (COW) project was started in 1963 by the political scientist J. David Singer. Joined later by historian Melvin Small, the COW began its work by systematically collecting quantitative data on interstate wars in the post-Napoleonic period. **But Singer and Small quickly realized that they would need to “operationally resolve” several fundamental issues concerning the construction of key concepts in the study of war and its causes. Of specific interest, was the dependent variable—interstate war.** This problem of operationalization was discussed in Chapter 4, “Design Your Study.” By operationalizing the concept of interstate war, we will be able to determine what qualifies as an interstate war and what armed (or extra-military) actions belong to categories of combat that fall short of interstate war.

Singer and Small’s definition of interstate war hinged on two main criteria: 1) the threshold of battle-related fatalities of troops in combat; and 2) the status of the war participants. Singer and Small ultimately decided on a threshold of 1,000 battle-related deaths as the level of fatalities that differentiates war from other types of fighting. As for the status of the combatants, an interstate war must involve at least one member of the international system on each side that have organizations able to conduct combat. Thus, the overarching definition of interstate war is combat involving organized armed forces, resulting in a minimum of 1,000 battle-related fatalities. This is the operational definition of interstate war Singer and Small introduced in *The Wages of War, 1816-1965: A Statistical Handbook*, **a work that established the standardized**

⁸⁴ Ibid., 46.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 34, 127.

⁸⁶ For example, see Frank Zagare,, “Review of *The War Trap*,” *American Political Science Review* vol. 76, no. 3 (1982): 738-39.

⁸⁷ J. David Singer and Melvin Small, *The Wages of War, 1816-1965: A Statistical Handbook* (New York: Wiley, 1972); See www.correlatesofwar.org.

definition of interstate war that has helped to guide the research of scholars since its publication.

5). *The Origins of Major War*, by Dale Copeland, 2000.⁸⁸

Scholars of international relations also study **systemic-level transitions**, such as the so-called rise of China. That is, they examine whether these kinds of impending transitions in power will be peaceful, combative or perhaps even nonexistent.⁸⁹ In practice, the outcome of such transitions have varied very little. Most systemic-level transitions have ended in major warfare. **It is, however, still worth investigating exactly *why* these transitions so often led to interstate war.**

In *The Origins of Major War*, Dale Copeland provides an interesting answer. By synthesizing elements from different strains of realist thought, Copeland argues that the likelihood of war between major powers is largely determined by the interaction between military power differentials and the likelihood of survival faced by a state. Weak declining powers rely on diplomacy to preserve themselves and their interests, but powerful states prefer to draw the sword and go to war. **In brief, a great power facing a sharp decline “fears for the future” and is willing to risk hegemonic war to avoid a precipitous fall.**⁹⁰

For Copeland, **the polarity of the system is also an important consideration.**⁹¹ In a multipolar system, if the declining great power is strong enough to take on all other great powers that are not its ally, it will initiate combat. Defeating only a rising challenger, however, would leave the great power vulnerable to other predatory states. In a bipolar system, the declining power needs only to defeat the other pole; thus, in this case, war is a more likely response to decline.

Copeland tests his theory by extracting case studies from the historical record, with an emphasis on World Wars I, II and the Cold War. For example, in his analysis of World War I, Copeland details the threat perceived by Germany (that was in a steep military decline) of an economically rising Russia, and the extreme steps taken by Germany to try to avert its fall from its status as a great power. The relative decline of Germany compared to the rise of Russia helped to set the stage for a major war that can be explained by the dynamic differentials theory.⁹²

⁸⁸ Dale Copeland, *The Origins of Major War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).

⁸⁹ See J. K. Rennstich, “The Future of Great Power Rivalries,” in *New Theoretical Directions for the 21st Century World-System* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003).

⁹⁰ Copeland, *The Origins of Major War*, 1-3.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 11-35.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 56, 61, 78-80, 114-117.

6). *The Clash of the Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, by Samuel Huntington, 1996.⁹³

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the Cold War bipolar international system, Samuel Huntington argues that the landscape of the international system drastically changed. **Going forward, nation-states will continue to be the major actors, but their politics will revolve around “civilizations,”** which Huntington defines as the “highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity that people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species.”⁹⁴ He maintains that a civilization “is culture writ large” and the “central defining characteristic” of a civilization is its “religion.”⁹⁵ This is why “the major civilizations in human history have been closely identified with the world’s great religions.”⁹⁶

Depending on how they are counted, he claims that only seven or eight of these civilizations exist today: Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and, possibly, a sub-Saharan African civilization.⁹⁷ “People rally to those with similar ancestry, religion, language, values, and institutions,” Huntington tells us, “and distance themselves from those with different ones.”⁹⁸ **For Huntington, shared religion is the single most important indicator of a civilization; therefore, “clashes of civilizations” are typically conflicts “between peoples of different religions.”⁹⁹ For Huntington, “civilizations are the ultimate human tribes, and the clash of civilizations is tribal conflict on a global scale.”¹⁰⁰**

These “tribal” conflicts do not focus on ideology or economics—they are primarily culturally motivated. The interest in culture is because civilizational identity is the most basic identity of all, and is very difficult to change. Moreover, a plethora of present-day cultural, political, technological, and economic developments are combining to intensify people’s awareness of their civilizational identity. Thus, at the heart of Huntington’s argument is a strong “constructivist” notion, for he locates the ultimate source of “conflict-exacerbating factors” in the “identities” of the disputants themselves, rather than in the issues and circumstances that are being disputed.

Huntington’s culture-based theory has significant temporal limitations and remains largely untested It attempts to explain only those conflicts that have occurred *after* the end of the Cold War. When compared to theories about the causes of war that draw on the universe of data

⁹³ Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 47-8.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 253.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 207.

from the COW, for example, there is a limited number of cases that may be used to test his theory. Thus, the jury is still out regarding the explanatory power of Huntington's theory regarding the clash of civilizations and the cultural causes of war.

C. The Sub-Questions

In the above six subsections, we have hardly begun to exhaust the literature on the causes of interstate war, let alone the important theoretical questions that still need to be answered. It should be noted, however, that even though interstate warfare has been a characteristic feature of the global political system for the last five centuries, they are no longer the most frequent form of warfare. In the twenty-first century, non-state actors play an increasingly important role, and civil wars, insurgencies and terrorist incidents are much more likely to threaten the security of a state.

Examples of theoretical questions in these areas include: Under what conditions is a civil war likely to begin? What conditions lead to an insurgency? In what circumstances are either of these likely to be peaceful or violent? What role does economic opportunity play? Under what conditions is an internal conflict likely to turn into a genocide? When are civil wars likely to spread to neighboring states? When is humanitarian intervention by outside actors warranted? Under what conditions are international institutions effective in preventing the conflict from spreading? Are international institutions more effective at ending internal conflicts as opposed to interstate conflicts? Does the presence of peacekeeping troops help to keep the peace? Under what conditions are terrorist incidents likely to occur? And under what conditions is terrorism an effective tactic, if ever?

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Chapter 14: Why Do States Cooperate?

A. The Question

States live in a dangerous world. Without an overarching authority to protect, arbitrate, and regulate agreements and conflicts, states are unsure of another's intentions. In addition, intentions can change: no state can be certain that a friendly state today will remain so tomorrow. If one combines uncertainty over intentions with the prospects of other states using force, renegeing on agreements, or cheating, it is a wonder states are able to come to any agreements at all. Yet we see cooperation on a variety of issues, ranging from environmental issues to security cooperation and arms control. **Why do states cooperate? How can states be sure that the other will adhere to their agreements? Why would states limit their sovereignty by joining International Organizations that restrict their freedom of action?** Scholars try to answer the above questions, but they consider what states gain by agreeing to such cooperation, and **the conditions under which states can be expected to cooperate rather than compete.**

B. A Brief Introduction to the Literature

1.) **“Why States Act Through Formal International Organizations,” by Kenneth W. Abbott and Duncan Snidal, 1998.**

Abbot and Snidal approach the question of cooperation by looking at the question of **why states create, use, and agree to operate through formal international organizations (IO's)**. In the wake of World War II, countries started to form international organizations. While initially believed to be part of the ongoing competition between the superpowers during the Cold War, organizations such as the UN, the WTO, and the EU have only increased in prominence since the end of the Cold War. Moreover, their importance has only increased as states often act through these organizations rather than by themselves. But why would states opt to act through IO's rather than on their own, and agree to limit their choices of action by adhering to rules of an organization? **Abbott and Snidal set out to answer, “Why do states so frequently use IO's as vehicles of cooperation?** What attributes account for their use, and how do these characteristics set formal organizations apart from alternative arrangements, such as decentralized cooperation, information consultation, and treaty rules?”

In order to analyze this question, **the authors take a rationalist/institutionalist approach by looking at the particular benefits afforded to the members of IO's and what states can actually benefit by cooperating through IO's.** IO's are attractive to states because of their “functional” attributes. That is, IO's have particular attributes that allow states to come together and pursue common goals, and help manage disputes. **Thus, states operate through IO's because of their particular utility in solving and resolving conflicts and impediments to**

cooperation between states. The two primary attributes that Abbot and Snidal argue make IO's so attractive are their *centralization* and *independence*.

The core of their argument is that these two attributes enhance efficiency.¹⁰¹ Through centralization, IO's provide a support system that allows states to negotiate with a dedicated administrative structure set up to support cooperation by providing negotiating forums, monitoring and documenting reputational effects, and providing agreed upon rules and regulations for interaction that reduce transaction costs.¹⁰² They also go beyond being the most efficient form of understanding, they are also able to influence and shape the terms of states interactions. Through their independence, IO's act as neutral arbiters that enhance and protect the legitimacy and efficiency of bargaining.¹⁰³

However, the authors are not blind to the importance of power. They recognize that strong states are better able to structure IO's, yet they must convince weaker states that it is in their own interest to join. But, because of the independence of IO's, they in turn can influence the states themselves and their understandings of their own interests. Ultimately, they find that IO's are both powerful beyond material capabilities, but ultimately restrained by state power. The reason states work through them is that they are the most effective way for states to achieve their ends.

2.) *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars*, by John G. Ikenberry, 2001.

This book is one of the most important works not only for cooperation, but also for IR theory in general. Ikenberry asks the question, "What do states that have just won major wars do with their newly acquired power?" On the face of it, the answer may seem obvious. With a victory and a large power disparity following a victory, the winners are in a position where they do not need cooperation and can impose their will on the international order. **Curiously, though, he argues that states have used institutions after great wars to not only lock in settlements, but to prolong their power and international position.**

In the wake of conflicts that fundamentally alter the global balance of power, victors have three options: they can dominate, abandon, or transform the international system. Ikenberry argues that creating a new order that restrains the victor's own power by creating institutions results in wide-ranging benefits. This is a curious option, since it would seem unlikely that any victor would seek to voluntarily restrict its power and constrain itself.

¹⁰¹ Kenneth W. Abbott and Duncan Snidal, "Why States Act Through Formal International Organizations," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42, no. 1 (1998): 9.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 16.

Yet, Ikenberry argues that by creating a “legitimate and mutually acceptable postwar order” that “get(s) the willing participation and compliance of other states,” the winner is able to conserve and prolong its power.¹⁰⁴ Orders built upon coercion and dominance are fragile, open to challenge and contestation. However, those orders that other weaker states accept, while sacrificing short term dominance, gain long term compliance in the form of the winner being able to lock in favorable arrangements that outlast its power. The nature of “constitutional” orders allows the losers to realize that their losses are limited and temporary, and offers transparency and voice opportunities. They are thus more likely to support the system than to resist and eventually overturn it.

Creating these new orders has dramatically changed with the rise of democratic states. The post-WWII order presented unique features that contributed to the US rise and continued international position. Ikenberry argues that the extent of power disparity at the end of the war, and the type of states that are party to the agreements, determine the incentive and capacity of the victor in designing a post-war order. The rise of democracies has changed the way that the international system is governed. The increasing number of democracies and the reliance on “constitutional” orders have muted the importance of power in international relations. Additionally, the nature of democratic states has facilitated even greater connections and linkages, helping to explain the continuing stability of the post-WWII democratic order.

Ikenberry sets out to evaluate his argument by exploring five periods of postwar settlements. He traces the order building strategy of the victors (his dependent variable) in 1815, 1919, 1945, and the end of the Cold War. In selecting these cases, he is able to test and demonstrate the importance of democracy for his argument, while also examining how the unique features of democracy have contributed to America’s continued dominance and stability atop the international order.

3.) “Culture and Preferences in the International Cooperation Two-Step,” by Jeffrey Legro, 1996.

Many scholars throughout the 1980’s and 1990’s focused on how cooperation allowed all sides to achieve their preferences. The likelihood of cooperation was viewed primarily as a function of each state maximizing its preferences by working together compared to individually. However, scholars increasingly began to question where those preferences came from rather than assuming they were a given. Rather than being an exercise in maximizing material gains, **scholars began to argue that the cultural foundation of preference formation was crucial to understanding international cooperation. How preferences were formed ultimately would decide whether cooperation would result.**

¹⁰⁴ John G. Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2001), 51.

Jeffrey Legro approaches the issue of cooperation by determining where preferences are formed, taking a “two-step” approach to understand cooperation. **First, he argues that preferences are a product of the organizational and bureaucratic culture of states, driven by internal, rather than external, factors.** The focus on “ideational more than material forces and the internal, rather than external setting” allows Legro to understand exactly what a state’s preferences are by looking at how they are formed.¹⁰⁵ Not all states are expansionist, aggressive, status quo, or benign, and they can change over time and across situations. **Legro argues that understanding what and why a state’s preferences are the way they are provides greater insight into when cooperation is likely.** The second part of the “two step” is then comparing what each state’s preferences are compared to other states.¹⁰⁶ The interaction and compatibility then determines the likelihood of cooperation.

Legro does an excellent job of constructing his argument and methodology. He clearly defines his hypothesis, and the major alternative hypothesis.¹⁰⁷ **In order to do so, he selects a series of “least likely” cases using the comparative case study method.** These are cases where the alternative hypothesis is most likely to be correct, and is the hardest test for Legro’s hypothesis. This strategy is attractive because if it is shown that the alternative hypothesis cannot pass, while his hypothesis performs better (or just as well), it grants strong evidence in support of his theory. **He decided to use three types of combat in WWII (strategic bombing, chemical warfare, submarines) because they are all distinct and there was variation in restraint on the use of them.**¹⁰⁸ This strategy allows him to test both hypotheses across the cases, but also within them by comparing each country’s views on their use, including any changes over time.¹⁰⁹

4.) “The Emergence of Cooperation: National Epistemic Communities and the International Evolution of the Idea of Nuclear Arms Control,” by Emmanuel Adler, 1998.

Adler follows Legro by looking at a case that seems to be a difficult test for his argument. Arms control, especially nuclear weapons, are a hard test for theories of cooperation, since the consequences of cheating, renegeing on agreements, or miscalculation can result in untold death and destruction. This makes cooperation and mutual agreements on arms control unlikely, with each side wary of the other's intentions in not only signing but also adhering to agreements.

Yet the US and Soviet Union were able to agree to several arms control agreements. The rationale for such agreements is often clear, in theory. They allow states to reduce tensions,

¹⁰⁵ Jeffrey Legro, “Culture and Preferences in the International Cooperation Two-Step,” *American Political Science Review* 90, no. 1 (1996): 120.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 119.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 123.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 124.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 124 (see Tables 1-3 esp.).

excessive arms buildups, and dangerous competition. They also allow states to spend resources on projects other than investing in arms. However, as mentioned above, the consequences of failure or cheating are such that they often outweigh the interests in signing them.

Despite the dangers, the US and Soviet Union signed the 1972 SALT I (ABM) agreements. **However, Adler argues the reason for this cooperation came from a rather unlikely source: epistemic communities.**¹¹⁰ **Rather than focusing on cooperation as a result of shared interests, power, or even IO's, Adler argues that the efforts of a scientific community was able to share, educate, and influence policymakers on the necessity of cooperating on nuclear arms control.** The power of this epistemic community came largely from the huge technical expertise related to nuclear weapons that imbued the community with political authority.¹¹¹ Gradually, scientists and experts were able to export their ideas to not only US policymakers, but also Soviet scientists who in turn influenced their leaders. This process of sharing ideas and a common understanding of the dangers posed by nuclear weapons changed each state's view of their preferences and interests. Over time, the epistemic community was able to create and disseminate new norms regarding nuclear weapons and arms control, eventually bringing both superpowers towards a new understanding of their preferences and the costs and benefits of cooperation.

This approach contrasts with the rational or even structural approaches because it allows for changing interests. Epistemic communities, in this case, were able to demonstrate the collective rather than individual interest in coming to a nuclear weapons agreement. Indeed, the state's utility calculations gradually moved away from competition to cooperation, something rational theories discount. Nor was this change driven by changes in relative power, or forced upon the actors by economic or political conditions.¹¹²

5. Lloyd Gruber. *Ruling the World: Power Politics and the Rise of Supranational Institutions.* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2000)

In contrast to the above works, Gruber takes an alternative view as to what ultimately causes cooperation. **Rather than both sides being able to realize gains through cooperation, some instances of cooperation are fears of losing, rather than gaining.** Gruber posits that some states have a different kind of power called “go it alone” power, which means that a state is so powerful that it can restrict options to another group of actors (losers).¹¹³ By altering and restricting their options, the losers realize they are better off playing by the winner's new rules

¹¹⁰ Epistemic communities are networks, often transnational, of knowledge-based experts such as scientists.

¹¹¹ Emmanuel Adler, “The Emergence of Cooperation: National Epistemic Communities and the International Evolution of the Idea of Nuclear Arms Control,” *International Organization* 46, no. 1 (1998): 111-116.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 145.

¹¹³ Lloyd Gruber, *Ruling the World: Power Politics and the Rise of Supranational Institutions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2000): 7.

than not. Under these conditions, the losers decide to cooperate, not because of hopes of maximizing gains, but minimizing losses by not cooperating.

In Gruber's view of cooperation, **the fear of being left behind is the key motivator.** However, the power he describes is different from bargaining power or even coercive power. It is the power to not need cooperation, and powerful enough to design the rules of the game in such a way that the losers realize they have to cooperate to g

But what explains the durability of the order and continued cooperation? In contrast to other theories, **Gruber incorporates domestic level variables to explain why subsequent leadership coalitions in states are likely to continue cooperating.** In order to gain buy in and discourage internal successors from challenging the system, agreements are not fully specified at the outset, which leaves open the possibility of change. This helps gain buy in from the losers and their continued cooperation because they can expect to modify the rules of the game later on. This also gains by in from internal successors and helps to explain why the losers are likely to remain inside the system instead of seeking its overthrow for a better deal.

Gruber's work is a very dense and deeply theoretical work, as many in the international political economy realm are. **However, the core of his empirical argument rests around two large case studies, the North American Trade and the European Monetary system.** Both are large cases that are well positioned to test his theory of "go it alone" power.

C. The Sub-Questions

Beyond looking at why states cooperate, there are a variety of questions that remained unanswered. The first has to do with the types of situations which states are more or less likely to cooperate over, and the conditions that make it more or less likely. What are the conditions that allow states to cooperate over security issues, like arms control? Are the mechanisms, structures, and institutions that facilitate cooperation in the security realm different from those on other issues such as trade? As we saw above, cooperating on security issues poses bigger risks for states. What then makes a state want to cooperate on security issues, and why do they cooperate on some and not others?

A second issue when looking at cooperation is, what makes cooperation last? That is, once states agree to cooperate, what is the reason that they will continue to do so for a long period? Some cooperation lasts only briefly, while others, such as trade agreements (like NAFTA or the WTO), show remarkable stability. What explains this persistence?

And finally, what explains the particular type and structures of cooperation? Specifically, why is some cooperation formalized by institutions, and others remain ad hoc or bilateral? What are the benefits to both, and why would states choose particular methods of cooperation over others?

D. The Essential Readings

Abbott, Kenneth W. and Duncan Snidal. "Why States Act Through Formal International Organizations." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42, no. 1 (1998): 3-32

Adler, Emmanuel. "The Emergence of Cooperation: National Epistemic Communities and the International Evolution of the Idea of Nuclear Arms Control." *International Organization* 46, no. 1 (1998): 101-45.

Gruber, Lloyd. *Ruling the World: Power Politics and the Rise of Supranational Institutions*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Ikenberry, John G. *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Legro, Jeffrey. "Culture and Preferences in the International Cooperation Two-Step." *American Political Science Review* 90, no. 1 (1996): 118-137.

Chapter 15: Under What Conditions Does Deterrence Work?

A. The Question

At the heart of security studies lies the issue of use of force, and one way to threaten use of force is deterrence. Therefore, the research project into deterrence has motivated scholars to ask a wide range of questions. What is deterrence? A widely accepted definition is as follows: deterrence is the threat of retaliation to “prevent an adversary from doing something he might otherwise be tempted to do.”¹¹⁴ Related to this question is how we know deterrence succeeds or fails when we observe it. The answer derives from the definition of deterrence: if the adversary does not do “something,” deterrence works. **All these questions concerning definitions, however, serve to answer a fundamental question asked by the deterrence literature: under what conditions does deterrence work?** Scholars try to identify factors that determine results of deterrence from systemic, state, and individual levels. One caveat, though, is that this question is too comprehensive to ask in any single work. Nonetheless, this chapter will try to sketch a general yet oversimplified picture for this question.

B. Brief Introduction to the Literature

1) *Deterrence and Defense: Toward a Theory of National Security*, by Glenn H. Snyder, 1961.

With other early works, this book laid the groundwork for the deterrence research project, such as distinguishing deterrence from defense. Moreover, written in the early stage of the Cold War, Snyder devoted a large part of this book to nuclear deterrence between the United States and the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, one major contribution of his work was to provide a framework to analyze how deterrence works. Snyder started this analysis with the statement, “deterrence is a function of the total cost-gain expectations of the party to be deterred” (Challenger).¹¹⁵ **By doing so, he characterized the state as a unitary actor that makes policy decisions based on the cost/benefit analysis.** In other words, Snyder adopts a rational deterrence model.

The next question is what variables would affect this cost/benefit analysis. Snyder listed four factors, which are 1) the valuation of his war objectives; 2) the cost that he expects to suffer; 3) the probability of various responses from the defender; and 4) the probability of winning the objectives.¹¹⁶ **As a result, if the defender is able to manipulate these four variables,**

¹¹⁴ Robert J. Art, “To What Ends Military Power?” *International Security* 4, no. 4 (1980), 6.

¹¹⁵ Glenn H. Snyder, *Deterrence and Defense: toward a Theory of National Security* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961), 10.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

deterrence can be successful. How can the defender affect this matrix? Snyder offered two variables, which are the most fundamental variables in the deterrence research. The first one is capability, including capability of denial and punishment.¹¹⁷ The second key variable is credibility. However, the picture gets complicated once the variable of credibility is introduced. Since the deterrence dynamic is full of uncertainties, how the defender increases the credibility of its threats is essential to successful deterrence.

Snyder offered two remedies to it. First, credibility comes from the defender's values. (Some scholars prefer to use "interests"). He provided a list of values, ranging from intrinsic ones to deterrent values.¹¹⁸ The discussion about deterrent values is worth mentioning. Snyder defined deterrent values as useful to deter future attacks. This definition points to the role of reputation in deterrence, a point that will be discussed further in the following sections. Second, Snyder briefly discussed "irrational rationality." A detailed discussion on this point goes beyond the scope of this section. However, the idea is for the defender to appear irrational in order to project a picture of boldness and therefore make its threats more credible.¹¹⁹

2) "What Makes Deterrence Work? Cases from 1900 to 1980," by Paul Huth and Bruce Russett, 1984.

This article is important in the deterrence literature for several reasons. First, different from Snyder's book, Huth and Russett's article provided no theoretical framework. On the contrary, they tried to summarize variables that scholars argued affect the effectiveness of deterrence, and used empirical evidence to test those arguments. Second, Huth and Russett's piece invoked an intense debate over how to measure the effectiveness of deterrence, the question that directly affects any answer to this chapter's question.

In order to narrow down their empirical test, Huth and Russett focused on explaining results of extended, immediate deterrence.¹²⁰ Because of this, compared to Snyder's model of two actors, Huth and Russett's work added another actor, the protégé. Meanwhile, Huth and Russett explicitly assumed an expected-utility model of deterrence.¹²¹ Therefore, similar to Snyder's book, Huth and Russett's work is in line with the rational deterrence model.

To examine conditions under which deterrence would succeed or fail, Huth and Russett used 58 cases from the period 1900 to 1980 to conduct a probit analysis. The analysis considered a set of variables, including military and economic capabilities, nuclear weapons, the

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 15-16.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 31-40.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 25-26.

¹²⁰ Paul Huth and Bruce Russett, "What Makes Deterrence Work? Cases from 1900 to 1980," *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (1984), 497.

¹²¹ Ibid., 497.

defender's previous behavior in deterrence situations, and alliance relations. **The conclusion was threefold. First, economic and political linkages between the defender and the protégé made deterrence more likely to be effective. Second, local military balance favorable to the defender increased the likelihood that deterrence was effective. Third, there was a negative relation between alliance and successful deterrence.**¹²²

It should be clear that their first conclusion echoes Snyder's discussion of credibility while their second one helps refine the variable of capabilities. As to the third conclusion, Huth and Russett attributed it to selection effect. As they argued, facing a coherent alliance, an aggressor who decided to attack had made a firm decision. Therefore, it was harder for deterrence to succeed.¹²³ This point can be easily ignored and should be paid attention to.

Despite their contributions, Huth and Russett's work contains two major flaws. **First, their statistical test does not include a large size of samples. However, this is not a difficulty that can be easily overcome. As the population of deterrence cases is limited, it is hard to expand the sample in research. Actually, this difficulty is quite common when scholars try to apply quantitative methods to topics in security studies.** Second, as mentioned above, Lebow and Stein criticized them from incorrectly coding some cases.¹²⁴ To be sure, this is a valid critique. Although Huth and Russett revised their dataset in another paper, their coding still failed to satisfy many scholars.¹²⁵

3) "Signaling Versus the Balance of Power and Interests: An Empirical Test of a Crisis Bargaining Model," by James D. Fearon, 1995.

According to Fearon, "traditional" rationalist explanations, including Huth and Russett's, pay too much attention to impacts of the balance of capabilities and the balance of interests on the credibility of threats. However, he criticized them for ignoring the implications of challenging states' behavior.¹²⁶ Different from Snyder's qualitative research and Huth and Russett's quantitative test, Fearon tried to model the deterrence dynamic in international crises as an incomplete information game. **Therefore, Fearon's paper largely relied on equilibrium analysis and comparative statics.** Nonetheless, Fearon used Huth and Russett's dataset to test his hypotheses.

¹²² Ibid., 516-517.

¹²³ Ibid., 517.

¹²⁴ Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, "Deterrence: The Elusive Dependent Variable," *World Politics* 42, no. 3 (1990), 336-369.

¹²⁵ Paul Huth and Bruce Russett, "Testing Deterrence Theory: Rigor Makes a Difference," *World Politics* 42, no. 4 (1990), 466-501.

¹²⁶ James D. Fearon, "Signaling Versus the Balance of Power and Interests: An Empirical Test of a Crisis Bargaining Model," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 38, no. 2 (1994), 238.

Understanding crises as a sequence of actions by the challenger and defender, Fearon revised arguments about the balance of capabilities and interests in the deterrence dynamics. **In order to do so, Fearon introduced an important variable in the deterrence literature, costly signals.** As Fearon's model suggested, the challenger's prior belief about the defender's preference heavily impacted the effectiveness of deterrence. Moreover, costly signals, such as mobilization, allowed states to update their belief about adversaries' willingness to use force. As a result, when information about relative interests or capabilities is available it will make a difference.¹²⁷

As to the conclusion, Fearon differentiated immediate deterrence from a general one. First, if the strength of the defender's interest in the protégé are available before a crisis begins, general deterrence is likely to succeed while immediate deterrence is likely to fail. Moreover, measures of defender interest revealed during a crisis is likely to lead to immediate deterrence success. Second, the more the ex-ante balance of capabilities favors the defender, the less challengers will threaten on important issues, and the more likely is a costly signal to succeed. Meanwhile, ex post measures of the relative military of the defender revealed during a crisis is likely to increase the effectiveness of immediate deterrence.¹²⁸

Compared to Huth and Russett's conclusions, costly signals play a key role in Fearon's argument. The question he does not elaborate on, however, is whether all kinds of costly signals have the same impact. In a later paper, Fearon distinguished between two types of costly signals: audience costs and sunk costs. He further argued that, on average, leaders do better by tying hands (audience costs).¹²⁹ However, this conclusion has been challenged by Trachtenberg, who argued that historical cases did not support Fearon's conclusion.¹³⁰ **Indeed, this debate illustrates a weakness in applying game theory to the deterrence research, and security studies in general. Sometimes a well-structured model is unable to match history, as the latter is always full of causal factors that are not included in the formal model.** This weakness has not been overcome in this sub-field.

4) *Reputation and International Politics*, by Jonathan Mercer, 1995.

All three works introduced above can be categorized into the rational deterrence model, which assumes states rationally calculate costs and benefits of their policies. Nonetheless, not all scholars who study deterrence embrace this tradition. Mercer is one of these scholars. He firmly criticized rational models. **For instance, he insists psychological variables should play an**

¹²⁷ Ibid., 239-246.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 249-266.

¹²⁹ James D. Fearon, "Signaling Foreign Policy Interests: Tying Hands Versus Sinking Costs," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41, no. 1 (1997), 68-90.

¹³⁰ Marc Trachtenberg, "Audience Costs: An Historical Analysis," *Security Studies* 21, no. 1 (2012), 3-42.

important role in the deterrence research. He argues that deterrence relies on the manipulation of incentives, which are properties of individuals.¹³¹

Mercer's *Reputation and International Politics* represents an attempt to apply cognitive psychology to the deterrence research. As the title suggests, this book focused on the role of reputation in determining results of deterrence. For the rational deterrence model, commitments are interdependent and past behavior would affect others' expectations of your future behavior.¹³² Nonetheless, Mercer disagreed with this argument. On the contrary, he argued that not all kinds of past behavior could form reputation. In the book, Mercer tried to use the attribution theory to explain reputation for resolve. According to this theory, Mercer argued, policy-makers' policy was the most salient to them so that they would make attributions about their allies and adversaries based on results of their own policies. Subsequently, allies and adversaries could get reputation from these attributions, and reputation in turn would affect results of deterrence in the future situations.¹³³

To what reputation do different policy results lead? In sum, Mercer's conclusions were: 1) allies could not get a reputation for standing firm and adversaries could not get a reputation if they backed down; 2) adversaries would get a reputation for resolve if standing firm and allies would get a reputation for irresolution if backing down.¹³⁴ It is worth highlighting that, according to Mercer, the defender's backing down will not hurt its credibility for deterrent threats in the future. **In order to test this theory, Mercer applied it and rational deterrence theories to three cases: the first Moroccan Crisis, the Bosnia-Herzegovina Crisis, and the Agadir Crisis.** He argued that rational deterrence theories could not explain the weak relationship between reputations and crisis outcomes in these cases.

Mercer's book provides a different perspective and useful insights into the deterrence research. Nonetheless, this work has two main shortcomings. First, Mercer's case studies failed to consider situational variables. For instance, he did not compare changes in military balance in three pre-WWI cases. If we throw those situational variables in the analysis, these three cases may be overdetermined **and the explanatory power of Mercer's variable would be undermined.** Second, some empirical studies suggested that in some cases, if the defender backed down in prior crises, the aggressor did draw the conclusion that the defender lacked resolve.¹³⁵

¹³¹ Jonathan Mercer, "Rationality and Psychology in International Politics," *International organization* 59, no. 1 (2005), 85-86.

¹³² For instance, see, Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 55-56.

¹³³ Jonathan Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995), 30-43.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 44-73.

¹³⁵ Paul Huth, "Reputations and Deterrence: A Theoretical and Empirical Assessment," *Security Studies* 7, no. 1 (1997), 72-99; John D. Orme, *Deterrence, Reputation and Cold-War Cycles* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992), 84-87.

C. The Sub-Questions

The first set of questions relates to the definition of deterrence. This question may not be as clear as it appears. Empirically, scholars have to identify the potential attacker's intention of challenging the defender. **Unfortunately, intention is an infamously vague variable that is hard to measure.** This is especially true with cases of "successful" deterrence, because in these cases, the potential attacker does nothing, and **it is often difficult to argue if the attacker does nothing because of successful deterrence or because he has no intention to do so.** Therefore, an essential question when conducting research to ask is the following: is this case one of deterrence?

The second set of research questions concern nuclear deterrence. **For instance, what are different characteristics between nuclear deterrence and conventional deterrence?** Under what conditions does nuclear deterrence work? Does nuclear superiority matter? What are the impacts of nuclear deterrence on the effectiveness of conventional deterrence?

The third set of questions are more general. For instance, in a deterrence dynamic, when the balance of capabilities and the balance of interests favor different parties, which factor will dictate the result of deterrence? Other questions include: what factors influence the stability of deterrence? What is the relationship between the stability and effectiveness of deterrence? Is there a threshold beyond which efforts to increase the effectiveness of deterrence will undermine the stability of deterrence? What would happen if a defender tries to deter two states from attacking each other?

D. Essential Readings

George, Alexander L, and Richard Smoke. *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*. Columbia University Press, 1974.

Crawford, Timothy W. *Pivotal Deterrence: Third-Party Statecraft and the Pursuit of Peace*. Cornell University Press, 2003.

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Mearsheimer, John J. *Conventional Deterrence*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983.

Mercer, Jonathan. *Reputation and International Politics*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995.

Schelling, Thomas C. *Arms and Influence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966.

Snyder, Glenn H. *Deterrence and Defense: Toward a Theory of National Security*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961.

Chapter 16: Why Did the American State Expand?

A. The Question

War and the state present a compelling discourse in political science. Charles Tilly argues that war “created the central organizational structures of states,” and concludes that “the tendency for war to build state structure [has held] through much of world history.”¹³⁶ Yet this issue has not been restricted to the realm of comparative politics. Much debate has arisen concerning the extent to which these dynamics have been at work within the United States. It has been suggested that the unique geography, circumstances, institutions, and ideology of the United States have historically served as headwinds to the process of state-building. **Several authors have addressed the fundamental question as to whether or not the United States has witnessed extensive and appreciable state-building as a result of war.**

B. Brief Introduction to the Literature

1.) *Crisis and Leviathan*, by Robert Higgs, 1987.

In *Crisis and Leviathan*, Robert Higgs researches the process of American state-building and the factors which contributed to its development. **Specifically, he is concerned with the manner in which the American state and its control of the market economy expanded during the 20th Century.** Higgs concludes that the United States has, in fact, grown into a state of “Big Government,” not simply larger government, but one equipped with coercive powers far more intrusive and extensive than had existed in the past. **He attributes this growth to war and economic crises, which precipitated the “displacement of market-directed resource allocation by greater taxation, governmental expenditure, and regulation of the remaining civilian economy.”** These actions established “a legal precedent,” allowing for further growth and expansion during non-crisis periods.¹³⁷ **On the whole, Higgs believes war and crises have contributed to state-building in the United States, but only since the Progressive Era at the start of the 20th Century.** Prior to that, there was widespread resistance to statism throughout the nation, preventing its full maturity. As such, **an evolving ideology**, as much as anything, is responsible for state growth.

Crisis and Leviathan offers **a qualitative case study of the United States from the late 19th Century to the 1980s.** Tracing the dynamic relationship between the federal government and the economy, Higgs shows how crises, particularly World War I, the Great Depression, and

¹³⁶ Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*, (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishing, 1992), 15.

¹³⁷ Robert Higgs, *Crisis and Leviathan: Critical Episodes in the Growth of American Government*, (Oakland: The Independent Institute, 2012; 1987), 17-18.

World War II, significantly transformed the American state from a free market capitalist system to “a uniquely American form of participatory fascism,” with private property and ownership rights that could be “readily nullified whenever political leaders deem it expedient.”¹³⁸

Higgs focuses on the scope and authority of governmental institutions to intervene and regulate private economic behavior. The extent of these powers is determined by two key variables: ideology and crises. Ideology provides the long-term conditions for state growth, while crises serve as the immediate impetus for government action. When a crisis erupts, the inclination is for the state to act. Attaining the fullest control of the economy permits the government to hide the costs of its action. **Thus, the nature of the prevalent ideology and the crisis will substantially affect the breadth and depth of the state.** For example, the prevailing *laissez-faire* ideology during the late 19th Century was not conducive to activist measures by the government, permitting the market economy to flourish unimpeded. Since the Progressive Era, the ideology has evolved and, with it, the expansion of the state has proceeded apace. **In short, he attributes institutional state-building to a bevy of economic and cultural forces that have shaped and defined the expectations and actions of the government.**

In designing a metric to measure this growth, Higgs rejects merely tracing the growth of federal spending or public employment share. He declares that these are not fully indicative of the intensity of the state’s extractive and directive capabilities, noting that “many regulatory agencies operate on tiny budgets, yet they exert far-reaching effects on the allocation of resources.”¹³⁹ As such, he is more concerned with levels of income tax and federal regulation of economic activity; the number of federal agencies; nationalization of economic industries; the durability of private property protections; the strength of collectivism; and the extent of corporatism. In each of these measures, Higgs assesses congressional legislation, Supreme Court rulings, executive orders and actions, and the like.

Higgs argues that war and crisis significantly increased the aforementioned metrics of state growth to great heights, which were never again to recede to their pre-crisis levels. Indeed, during non-crisis periods, the government continued to extract and direct economic activity far more broadly and extensively than it had before. The Adamson Act of 1916 represented the culmination of an ideological shift from *laissez-faire* to progressivism. In response to labor troubles emanating from the railroad industry, Congress passed the act to mandate an eight-hour day for the workers and establish a commission to study the issue. It witnessed the effective extension of government action over private economic decisions. More importantly, it permitted the further enlargement of the authority and scope of government in subsequent crises.

¹³⁸ Higgs, *Crisis and Leviathan*, 241-242; 256.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

Three crises precipitated substantial state development. During **World War I**, the United States “committed the nation to waging full-scale warfare,” such as conscripting soldiers, nationalizing industries, increasing income taxes, and creating new agencies, many of which were incorporated into the existing governmental bureaucracy after the war. While the next crisis, **the Great Depression**, witnessed immense involvement of the state with the economic sphere, perhaps its single greatest legacy was the greater toleration and demand for social welfare legislation.¹⁴⁰ The New Deal, he asserts, institutionalized collectivism. **World War II** brought about several changes: involvement of corporations in dealings with the government¹⁴¹; the Supreme Court abandoned its protection of private property by ending its strict scrutiny of all economic-related legislation¹⁴²; finally, the executive branch was enlarged immensely, as both the courts and the Congress increasingly delegated to the president greater powers and responsibilities. Thus, not only did the size of the government grow, but, as it became more narrowly concentrated into the presidency, the state became increasingly centralized.

Higgs argues that “the war left the United States ... [with] a powerful, highly arbitrary, activist government virtually unchecked.”¹⁴³ More regrettably was the ideological shift that occurred, stressing “social equality” and collectivism over private entrepreneurship. As Higgs laments, “most Americans now seemed to fear a return to a free-market regime more than they feared the denial of individual rights.”¹⁴⁴

2.) *In the Shadow of the Garrison State*, by Aaron Friedberg, 2000.

If Higgs offers the paradigm of statism in the United States, stressing its ascendance during the 20th Century, then Aaron Friedberg’s *In the Shadow of the Garrison State* counters with an anti-statist alternative. Arguing that American state-building proceeded differently than that characterized by Higgs, **Friedberg examines the United States during the early decades of the Cold War and how American state-building developed in response to the demands of confrontation with the Soviet Union.**

Friedberg concedes that wartime necessities impacted the growth of US state-building.¹⁴⁵ However, these pressures were counterbalanced by significant anti-statist factors present in the American polity, namely institutions, interests, and ideology, which moderated the demands and impulses for centralization, establishing a synthesis of the two forces. **Thus, he believes that**

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 194.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 230-233.

¹⁴² Ibid., 220-225.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 234.

¹⁴⁵ Aaron Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America’s Anti-Statism and its Cold War Grand Strategy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 3.

the United States has served as an important exception to the theory of war and state-building.

Friedberg seeks to demonstrate that decisions made during the early years of the Cold War averted the creation of a “garrison state”; in essence, the type of state epitomized by the Soviet Union. Mobilization, industrial production, and other necessities pertinent to the preparations for possible war with the Soviets exerted “upward pressures” for statist development. However, countervailing tendencies tempered those impulses, moderating the ultimate form of American state-building and forging a Cold War “strategic synthesis.”¹⁴⁶ **The growth of the American state was influenced by several key variables.** These included: the needs and demands of the military with regard to mobilization and preparation; the inclinations of the president; military bureaucratic interests; societal interests, such as business and labor; interests of congressmen; the institutional structure of the US, which includes the separation of powers; and ideology, the presence of a strong and prevailing anti-statist strain in the US. Each of these variables entered into the crafting of a Cold War strategy.¹⁴⁷

Friedberg **assesses state growth by analyzing the “mechanisms of power creation ... the primary transmission belts through which the superpower confrontation made themselves felt in both societies.”**¹⁴⁸ They include the extraction of money; of manpower; direct resources to defense-supporting industries; the production of arms; and military research.¹⁴⁹ These mechanisms required significant coercive capabilities. Therefore, the degree to which the state expanded was predicated on the manner in which these needs were met.

In developing a rubric to measure this growth, Friedberg highlights specific elements within each power-creating mechanism. For the extraction of money, for example, it is useful to assess the size of military budgets and spending. The demand for manpower requires an in-depth analysis of the various methods adopted, including conscription, universal training, and volunteerism. Finally, for military research, Friedberg measures the levels of centralization in technological research and the strength of the contract system, the cooperative arrangement between the government and private researchers.

Friedberg’s evidence demonstrates that pressures existed in each mechanism to increase the coercive, extractive, and directive capabilities of the state, but anti-statist factors limited the extent of that growth. **In short, the findings show that pressures to increase military expenditures emanating from the military were tempered by downward pressures on behalf of Congress and Presidents Truman and Eisenhower to control inflation, keep taxes**

¹⁴⁶ Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State*, 65.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 72-75.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

minimal, and balance the budget.¹⁵⁰ Centralization and coordination of military technology failed to transpire as well. The US remained resistant to consolidation. Instead, a contract system was devised, which mobilized private energies on a large scale for public purposes. This had the positive effect of increasing flexibility and creativity. It was also more functional and effective than the Soviet model.¹⁵¹

Thus, on the whole, Friedberg concludes that the United States waged the Cold War without resorting to extreme levels of coercion and extraction that had occurred in the Soviet Union. Strong anti-statism ideology, such as free market capitalism, limited government, and personal liberties, coupled with interests and the institutional structure of the system, mitigated the excesses of statist growth.

3.) From Warfare State to Welfare State: World War I, Compensatory State Building and the Limits of the Modern Order, by Marc Allen Eisner, 2000.

By contrast, Marc Allen Eisner supports the argument of Higgs that war-making has substantially developed the American state. Challenging the conventional wisdom that the New Deal served as the basis for the modern American state, **Eisner's *From Warfare State to Welfare State* contends that much of the response to the Great Depression had its precedents during the First World War.**

Eisner places a heavy emphasis on an institutional framework to explain the political development of the United States. Bounded rationality, institutional rigidity, path dependency, as well as institutional restraints on human agency, have created certain rules and relationships that define socio-economic management. These variables often limit the menu of choices available to policymakers and dictate the actions undertaken to address a crisis.¹⁵²

Eisner's study is qualitative and centers upon three distinct periods of American history. He first examines the government's mobilization efforts during **World War I** and the creation of agencies designed to manage war. He then shifts to the **post-war period** and assesses how the wartime model was subsequently applied to peacetime governance, including everything from business regulation and labor relations to agricultural policy and macroeconomic relations. Finally, Eisner analyzes **the governmental response to the Great Depression** during the 1930's, and demonstrates how the same model remained in place.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 153.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 326-330; 334-339.

¹⁵² Marc Allen Eisner, *From Warfare State to Welfare State: World War I, Compensatory State Building, and the Limits of the Modern Order*, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 4-11.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 16.

Eisner concludes that World War I had a dramatic effect on the development of the modern American state. Prior to the conflict, the United States was largely decentralized, with business and market activity privately controlled. But then a regime of compensatory state building emerged. This arrangement permitted the state access to highly valued administrative resources.¹⁵⁴ The greater economic role for the state persisted during the 1920s and was eventually co-opted by the Roosevelt Administration during the Great Depression. Indeed, the New Deal's associational regime had its roots in the response to the First World War.¹⁵⁵ Such institutional development not only permitted an increase in capacity for the state in terms of resources and scope, but it fueled rising societal expectations of the government's obligations its citizens. These dynamics formed the bulwark of the modern American welfare state.

4.) *America in the Great War: The Rise of the War Welfare State*, by Ronald Schaffer, 1991.

Building upon Eisner's claims, **Ronald Schaffer, in *America in the Great War: The Rise of the War Welfare State*, argues that the rise of the American welfare state was rooted in the country's experience during World War I. Unlike Eisner, Schaffer's research is limited to the First World War and does not extend to the post-war period, yet throughout the piece, he illustrates the significant implications of the conflict for future periods.** Further, he compensates by examining in detail the various facets of American management of the Great War, including how the state facilitated propaganda and controlled dissent, the creation of a regulatory economic system suited for a war economy, the germs of social reform, as well as the advancement of other social causes, from women's suffrage to prohibition.

Schaffer contends that the methods by which the government executed the management of World War I established the apparatuses and precedents for additional growth and development in subsequent years. He stresses social and cultural norms as abetting this state-building process. Such ideals as patriotism were expertly utilized to promote public support for the war, while tempering dissent.¹⁵⁶

Additionally, the pursuit and dissemination of tangible benefits also drove the dynamics of this growth. Corporations, businesses, and other economic interests competed for the spoils of war, and often the richest and most powerful would receive the greatest gain. As Schaffer explains, "A system of bargaining developed in which the government tried to manage interest groups while the interest groups used the war to extract benefits ... Ideals like freedom and democracy,

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 13.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 15.

¹⁵⁶ Ronald Schaffer, *America in the Great War: The Rise of the War Welfare State*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), xii.

patriotism and idealism flourished alongside an intense pursuit of personal and corporate gain and of social objectives ... The result was a war welfare state.”¹⁵⁷

Finally, Schaffer places great emphasis on the leaders at the helm of the state, in particular, the president, Woodrow Wilson. Describing him as a “man of pronounced contradictions,” representing the idealism of Progressivism while enthusiastically leading the country into war. Wilson eventually became a social reformer, but “never seriously challenged basic economic arrangements.” As such, his “foreign policies reflected his appreciation of American private enterprise.”¹⁵⁸ Schaffer does distinguish his argument by stressing the role of the policymakers. While socio-cultural factors and material interests are important, the personal and political preferences of the president played a key part in the management of a wartime state.

The literature on whether the United States has witnessed appreciable state-building during war and crises is varied and diverse. Amongst the conclusions, some contributors, such as Friedberg, argue for the validity of the American exception, while others contend otherwise. **These studies have also revealed a panoply of potential variables that necessitate investigation.** Higgs focuses on ideology and culture as responsible for developing institutions, which henceforth shapes the prevalent Zeitgeist. Friedberg attributes ideology, interests, and institutions as mitigating factors to statist growth. Eisner stresses a highly institutionalist framework in explaining change, while Schaffer highlights cultural and social norms coupled with the rational pursuit of material gains. **Only once these factors have been re-examined, applied to other case studies, or additional variables devised can we ensure greater confidence in the validity and strength of the findings.**

C. The Sub-Questions

Scholars remain divided over the question of whether war and conflict have contributed to the building of the American state. The modern state is a product of war-making activities, efforts that laid the groundwork for an extensive bureaucracy and governmental apparatus to extract resources and manage capital. To what extent do these dynamics apply to the United States? Has war similarly served to develop the American state? Did the United States morph into a large, bureaucratic state in the wake of major conflict? And if so, how did these crises buttress the establishment of a nascent welfare state? If these dynamics have not been replicated by the United States, what factors explain the unique circumstances of American exceptionalism? How did the American state develop differently from other major powers during the 20th Century? And finally, what are the implications of these developments for the trajectory of American growth?

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., xiv-xv.

D. The Essential Readings

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Chapter 17: What Explains the Behavior of Congress?

A. The Question

American politics afford the opportunity to analyze the institutional and political development of its various governmental branches. While the presidency has been thoroughly investigated by researchers, the discourse on the Congress is not nearly as saturated. Further, while reputable works have been published in recent years, many of the seminal pieces on the Congress date back several decades. **Collectively, these works strive to address how Congress itself operates and the factors that explain the behavior of its members.** They have sought to determine the degree to which congressmen are responsive to the interests and concerns of their constituents, as well as the extent to which societal forces drive institutional change.

B. Brief Introduction to the Literature

1.) *Congress: The Electoral Connection*, by David R. Mayhew, 1974.

David R. Mayhew, writing *Congress: The Electoral Connection*, **examines the legislative branch through a rational choice perspective, arguing that the incentives for re-election shape individual members' behavior.** The need for legislators to attain re-election is their greatest priority and holding office aids those re-election efforts. Therefore, congressmen seek to maximize their electoral gains in both the primary and general elections, while minimizing the potential for loss.

Mayhew explains the necessity to analyze individual congressman as separate units, as opposed to two parties. Compared to the United Kingdom, American political parties are much less cohesive. This is due to three factors. First, primary voters, rather than the parties, control the nominating process. Second, resources are provided to individual candidates as opposed to parties. Third, members of the legislature do not serve in the executive, unlike in a parliamentary system where majority members must curry favor with ministers and the Prime Minister.¹⁵⁹

Unable to rely on their parties, members must contest elections on their own, and they use Congress as a vehicle to victory. Mayhew identifies three activities they pursue that are advantageous to their electoral fortunes. They are **advertising, credit claiming, and position taking.** Advertising is the favorable dissemination of one's name so as to emphasize their own personal qualities.¹⁶⁰ Credit claiming is the promotion of desirable individual accomplishments

¹⁵⁹ David Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 20-22.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

so as to demonstrate the competence of the congressman.¹⁶¹ This has the effect of ensuring the representative does not stray too far from the desires of their constituency. Position taking is the highlighting of salient political issues and the compatibility between the congressman's considered judgment and that of the constituents.¹⁶²

Mayhew derives his findings from personal experience on Capitol Hill during the post-war period. From his first-hand observational account of the operations of Congress, Mayhew is able to **empirically support his theoretical claims**, asserting, "I shall make a simple abstract assumption about human motivation and then speculate about the consequences of such behavior based on that motivation ... At all points I shall try to match the abstract with the factual."¹⁶³

2. *Home Style: House Members in their Districts*, by Richard Fenno, 1977.

Richard Fenno offers a different perspective on the behavior of legislators. In his article, "U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration," which was later published as a book entitled *Home Style: House Members in their Districts*, **Fenno strives to better elucidate how congressmen view their constituencies and why these perceptions are critical to explaining behavior.** Instead of focusing on the activities within the beltway on Capitol Hill, Fenno shifts the focus of attention to the members' districts and the means by which they cultivate relationships with their constituents.

His argument is intrinsically a rational choice perspective, since the decisions and dynamics within the constituency determine whether a congressman remains in office. As Fenno explains, "Representatives ... think about their constituencies because they seek support there ... For most members of Congress, most of the time, this electoral goal is primary. It is a prerequisite for a congressional career ... And the electoral goal is achieved – first and last – not in Washington but at home."¹⁶⁴

Between 1970 and 1976, Fenno traveled with a number of representatives to their respective districts to assess "what it is they see there." The experiment was highly-observational, wherein the researcher sought to minimize his influence on the participants under study. The sample comprised an equitable distribution of partisan and geographic variables, but it was by no means "ideally balanced" as Fenno concedes. These travels were ultimately supplemented by lengthy follow-up interviews at the lawmakers' offices in Washington.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 52-53.

¹⁶² Ibid., 62.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 5-6.

¹⁶⁴ Richard F. Fenno, Jr., "U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol.71, No.3, (Sep., 1977), 889.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 884.

Fenno's research has yielded several insights into the manner in which congressmen perceive their districts. Fenno contends that these constituencies do not constitute single entities, but rather represent multitudinous layers of political and personal relationships. The largest constituency is the geographical, "the legal entity" with fixed political boundaries. For members of Congress, this circle is the "broadest view" of their district. It encompasses every voter and resident that lives within its borders. Yet congressmen do habitually further break down these entities into the varied subsets of partisan leanings, interest groups, and socio-economic or ethnic blocs that exist within them.¹⁶⁶

The second circle is the reelection constituency. Collectively, these individuals represent the approximate cadre of partisan voters who can be depended upon to win re-election. They often support the candidate of their own party and will reelect the incumbent if they share the same party identification. Having said that, great uncertainty persists as to the electoral fortunes of congressman within the reelection constituency. The movement of population into and out of the district, redistricting, and the possibility of quality challengers all conspire to unsettle the ambitions of the incumbent. Therefore, they are particularly sensitive to changes within this group.¹⁶⁷

The third circle is the primary constituency. These are the congressman's strongest supporters. They have a closer attachment than does the reelection constituency. The "special degree of intensity" they display goes beyond mere party identification, having supported him early against other potential Republican candidates. In short, they are the political base.¹⁶⁸ Finally, there is the personal constituency. This circle entails the closest aids, advisors, and friends of the congressman. It is the most "personal and intimate" group, upon whom "he draws emotional sustenance for his political work."¹⁶⁹

The various concentric circles of constituencies determine the shape and scope of each representative's so-called "home style." The home style is the amalgamation of important district activities that cultivate the relationship between congressman and constituent. The first activity is the allocation of resources, namely time and staff. As Fenno explains, time is "the scarcest and most precious [resource] which dwarfs all others in posing critical allocative dilemmas."¹⁷⁰ A congressman's time is divided between Washington and his district, and therefore, it must be divvied up strategically so as to maximize its effectiveness in both locales. Fenno concludes that time expended in the district is often the result of a member's seniority, in particular, one with low seniority, the distance between Washington and their home, and whether

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 884-885.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 886.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 887.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 889.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 890.

their family resides in Washington or in the district. Interestingly, the electoral margins have had little effect on time allocation. By contrast, congressmen are always uncertain about their reelection prospects, notwithstanding statistical data suggesting otherwise.¹⁷¹

The second home style activity is the presentation of self. In short, this comprises the image that the representative desire to leave on voters. They “will seek to control the response of others to him by expressing himself in ways that leave the correct impressions of himself with others.” These can be accomplished by either verbal and nonverbal expressions. The presentation of self is intended to develop trust between constituents and the lawmakers by inculcating a sense of virtue and positive values to the latter’s image. These include conveying a sense of qualification for the office, an identification with constituents, and empathy. “These three impressions are conveyed by the very fact of regular personal contact at home.”¹⁷²

The final home style activity is the explanation of Washington behavior. These actions entail clarifying votes and offering spirited defenses of those decisions. Fenno contends, “Every House member spends some time at home explaining and justifying his Washington behavior to his various constituencies.” He goes on to argue, “The objective of every congressman’s explanation ... is political support.” Thus, not only are voting record explanations important, but any activity in Washington that may be electorally beneficial to discuss is fair game, and falls under the auspices of his explanatory style, a deliberate and purposive method of justifying his behavior.¹⁷³

3.) *The Logic of Conditional Party Government: Revisiting the Electoral Connection*, by John Aldrich and David Rohde, 1974.

Building upon Mayhew, **John Aldrich and David Rohde argue that the electoral connection is insufficient to explain contemporary congressional behavior.** In *The Logic of Conditional Party Government: Revisiting the Electoral Connection*, Aldrich and Rohde highlight a bevy of pertinent developments in Congress since Mayhew’s publication in 1974. American political parties within Congress have grown stronger, more disciplined, and more conflictual since the 1970s.

To explain these changes, Aldrich and Rohde seek to modify several assumptions of Mayhew’s electoral connection. They proffer three additional variables to understanding the motivations and behavior of congressmen. The first is a “broader perspective on member goals.” **They reject the idea that legislators are motivated solely by the desire for re-election.** While it is

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 894.

¹⁷² Ibid., 899.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 909.

important, and probably does explain a significant amount of behavior, it is insufficient. Policy goals can and do exist separate from the rational calculation of one's electoral benefit.

Aldrich and Rohde also provide added depth to legislators' constituencies. **Instead of merely primary and general election constituencies, they adopt Richard Fenno's multiple constituency model.** These are understood as concentric circles. The geographic district is the largest circle and most encompassing. It is followed by the primary constituency, "the representative's strongest supporters," and then the personal constituency, the orbit of close friends and advisors. These are relevant for they represent either different issue matters or varying degrees of issue intensity for the congressman to address.¹⁷⁴

Finally, Aldrich and Rohde examine the extent to which parties are homogenous and the nature of conflict between both parties. These assumptions form the foundation for their Theory of Conditional Party Government. The theory stipulates that strong party leadership will be supported by legislative members when there is greater homogeneity within parties, and greater conflict between parties. The logic is that members who are "independent entrepreneurs concerned about being re-elected" fear that strong party leadership may force them to support electorally risky positions, and rebound negatively to their electoral chances. Amongst a heterogeneous, diverse party, the likelihood of a significant cadre of members supporting policies unpopular in their districts grows. "As that diversity shrinks, members will be less worried about leaders choosing positions contrary to theirs, and will be more willing to delegate power." Similarly, if there is greater preference alignment between legislative parties, that is, both parties overlap to a sizeable degree on certain policies, then the individual members have little incentive to support their own party. However, the greater the preference conflict between parties, the more likely members will "empower their leaders to prevent a minority victory," since they do not share in the policy goals of the opposing bloc.¹⁷⁵

Aldrich and Rohde support their argument with quantitative and qualitative case studies. They examine the development of Congress from the 1970s to the 1990s. To assess the policy views of each party's activists, they rely on the Jacobson study that shows the difference between Democratic and Republican party activists increased substantially. The same patterns obtained among party voters. Additionally, they supplement their research with National Election Studies data from 1964 to 1998 that was conducted by Morris Fiorina. These findings showed strong ideologues more likely to vote, while weak ideologues increasingly less likely to vote.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 8-9.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 9-10.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 13.

As far as candidates for office, Aldrich and Rohde examine a study that incorporated a 1996 general election survey of all House candidates. This data revealed virtually no convergence among the two political blocs of candidates. Republican candidates belonged to one pool, while Democratic candidates belonged to another. Finally, they assess a liberal-conservative NOMINATE score of every legislative member from two historic Congresses, 91st (1969-1970) and the 105th Congress (1997-1999). These numbers indicate a substantial overlap between the parties in 1969, and maximal party homogeneity in 1997.¹⁷⁷

Aldrich and Rohde investigate the historical record as well to determine the dynamics of the changes within Congress. They point to the reform of committees engineered by newcomer Democrats in the 1970s, which ended the seniority system and instituted one that rewarded party discipline. They highlight the strengthening of party leaders that continued through the 1980s and with Newt Gingrich in the 1990s. These extended to such areas as the selection of chairmen for committees, the heading of the Rules Committee, and controlling the floor.¹⁷⁸ By contrast, individual members became weaker and less autonomous, unable to stake out an independent position from the party leadership lest they incur significant political costs for their deviance.

4.) *How Congress Evolves: Social Bases of Institutional Change*, by Nelson Polsby, 2004.

Assessing Congress more generally and historical trends more broadly, Nelson Polsby offers a narrative of congressional development. In *How Congress Evolves: Social Bases of Institutional Change*, **Polsby argues that the dynamics of partisan conflict, structure of Congress, and behavior of its members is attributable to the manner in which the institution as a whole has developed, and the degree to which it has been sensitive and responsive to exogenous forces and the interests of its ever-changing constituents.** Polsby's argument is rooted in political, social, and technological factors, as well as the institutional framework of Congress.

Polsby's narrative begins in 1937, when conservative congressional Democrats began to mount successful challenges to the more liberal, progressive elements of the New Deal. In essence, as Polsby describes it, "The story unfolds in three stages, beginning with a long period of political stalemate, continuing with a period of liberalization, and concluding with a dramatic reaction in which partisan lines were sharpened and clarified ... a revolution."¹⁷⁹

The conservative House under Speaker Sam Rayburn lasted approximately two decades. Polsby characterizes House during this period as the graveyard of presidential ambitions and legislation. This was due to three factors: the power of the House Rules Committee, which determined which

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 14-16.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 24-25.

¹⁷⁹ Nelson Polsby, *How Congress Evolves: Social Bases of Institutional Change*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 4.

bills were taken into consideration, the seniority system, which empowered powerful, southern Democrats to exercise autonomy from party leadership, and the weakness of the party caucus in general, namely by its split between Northern liberals and southern conservatives.¹⁸⁰ Legislation could only be given a vote and win a majority of the chamber if supported by the southern bloc. Ergo, southern representatives would often shift alliances between northern Democrats and Republicans, depending upon which interests and issues were at stake.¹⁸¹

Congress changed during the 1960 and 1970s, when the House Democratic caucus became increasingly more liberal and activist. Bent on reforming the rules and procedures of the House, the Democrats strengthened their party leadership, enforced party discipline, and ended the clout of southern conservatives.¹⁸² Eventually, these contours for strong party government were accentuated by the Republicans when they regained control in 1994. With increasingly more homogenous parties, stronger party loyalty, and powerful speakers, a new level of partisan conflict inevitably arose.¹⁸³

Polsby attributes the evolution of Congress to several important political, social, and technological factors that helped to create a two-party system in the South. The first was the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965, which not only permitted more black registration for Democrats, but converted many white southern Democrats into Republicans.

Secondly, he highlights how migration patterns from the North to the South benefited the latter economically and politically. These migration patterns were driven by the advent of air conditioning.¹⁸⁴ The urbanization and suburbanization this spurred empowered the region's economy and political clout in Congress, helping to give rise to the competitiveness of the Republican Party. These trends contributed to the eventual extinction of the Dixiecrats.¹⁸⁵ With both parties increasingly ideologically coherent, they have been empowered to behave more ambitiously and stridently in achieving their agenda. In so doing, they have aroused ire from their opposite counterparts, thereby fueling partisan conflict.

Polsby's examination of Congress is mostly a qualitative account of the historical development of the institution, yet complemented by data sets and other relevant statistical information. Much of the research was derived from personal observation.¹⁸⁶ He also incorporates the written record, such as memoirs, news articles, and other accounts of relevant actors. He includes studies undertaken by other researchers, in particular those rich in interviews. And finally, he has poured

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 10.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 20.

¹⁸² Ibid., 73-74.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 144.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 80.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 90-95.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 157.

through documents and statistics, especially pertaining to voting records and ideological scores of congressional members.¹⁸⁷

C. The Sub-Questions

The literature on Congress lends itself to further research. In light of stronger party unity and discipline within the institution, it is worth asking whether Mayhew's electoral connection remains relevant. Can his theory be retrofitted to apply to contemporary conditions? Aldrich and Rohde attempt to do just that. Does their argument satisfactorily address these changes? Similarly, Fenno's research into constituencies was written in the 1970s. With technological and social developments, do congressmen still perceive their districts in the same manner, and if so, does it explain their behavior? The discourse can be made richer with the inclusion of more contemporary in-depth analyses of Congress, how it operates as a body, and how its members behave individually. Determining which perspective (rational, cultural, or institutional) can adequately explain these dynamics requires valid measurements of the construct in question, as well as representative case studies that ensure solid, sound conclusions.

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¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 160-170.

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Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Causal Question (p. 14): a question that attempts to determine whether certain outcomes are the result of a certain combination of various factors, or to determine the conditions under which a certain outcome takes place.

Case (p. 29): a case is a unit of analysis. It can be any size and it can span across a period of time. It can include a country, a city, an institution, a neighborhood, a tribe, or a person, and it can span the course of a century, a decade, a year, or a month.

Descriptive Question (p. 13): a question about “what happened,” or “what something is.” It seeks an answer to what went on, or what is going on. It asks about the differences between types, or classes, of things.

Empirical Question (p. 15): a type of causal question about a specific event, institution, movement, government, policy, person, etc. In this handbook, it is often contrasted with a theoretical question.

Experimental Method (p. 27): one of the three basic methods of scientific research. In its most elementary form, the experimental method examines two identical groups, one of which is exposed to some sort of stimulus, while the other is not. The resulting condition of each group is then compared to determine the effect of the stimulus.

Large-n Case Study (p. 30): a study in which a large number of cases is studied, anywhere from a couple of dozen to over 100.

Normative Question (p. 16): a question that asks about what should happen, or what ought to happen. It asks questions concerning better and worse, good and bad.

Policy Question (p. 19): a question that asks what course of action a state, institution, organization, etc., should pursue in order to achieve a particular object.

[General] Proposition (p. 15, 23): in this handbook, a [general] proposition is used almost interchangeably with a *theory* [see below].

Research Design (p. 27): in this handbook, research design simply refers to either the experimental, statistical, or comparative method, and, with respect to the latter, to either a large-*n* case study, a small-*n* case study, or a single-case study.

Research Question (p. 12): a generic term that refers to the question guiding a thesis. Several types of research questions were discussed in Chapter 1: descriptive, empirical, theoretical, normative, and policy.

Single-Case Study (p. 33): a study in which one case is studied.

Small-n Case Study (p. 31): a study in which a small number of cases is studied, usually between 2 and 5.

Statistical Method (p. 28): one of the three basic methods of scientific research. It relies on large data sets and sophisticated mathematical formulas.

Theoretical Question (p. 15): a type of causal question on a big, thematic issue. In this handbook, it is often contrasted with an empirical question.

Theory (p. 15, 23): a general proposition that explains how, why, or under what conditions, something happens, and which is supported by ample empirical observation and evidence.

“What” Question (p. 13): another term for a descriptive question.

“Why” Question (p. 14): another term for a causal question.

Appendix B: Sample List of Theoretical Questions

The following list of questions is a sample of well-known and important theoretical questions from the four principal subfields in political science: American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Political Theory. Some attempt is made to group these questions into further sub-categories within each subfield, though the lines are often very blurry.

It is by no means necessary to pick one of these questions for your thesis, and this list is far - very far - from being exhaustive. The questions are simply meant to provide some guidance if you are having trouble settling on a topic. You should also recall that at the end of each chapter in Part II there is a section entitled “Sub-Questions,” in which you will find a paragraph that raises additional questions related to the chapter’s primary one. Some of them re-appear below.

American Politics

➤ *Political Thought of the American Founding*

As the primary author of the American Constitution, there has been a lot of ink spilled about James Madison’s political thought.

- What did Madison borrow from Locke and Montesquieu, and how were these ideas adapted to the U.S. Constitution?
- How did Madison diverge from these thinkers?

Many of the founders considered themselves as part of a rich intellectual tradition. We know that they were extremely well-read, since we have records of the inventories of their personal libraries. In spite of this, when most of us think of American political thought, we focus on a handful of pages from Locke and Montesquieu.

- Which works of political philosophy influenced the founding generation?
- In what ways did those works influence the founders?
- How do these works help us to shed light on the American experiment?

In *The Federalist*, James Madison makes a virtue of necessity by extolling the benefits of an extended republic.

- Was this a novel idea in political philosophy?
- If not, how did Madison diverge from the traditional understanding?
- Did things work out as he expected, or were there unforeseen developments?

In *The Federalist*, the supporters of the 1787 Constitution successfully argued for the repeal and replacement of the *Articles of Confederation*. At the same time, the Constitution's opponents published eloquent critiques of the new document.

- What do the debates between the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists tell us about American government?
- What did the Anti-Federalists contribute?
- Are those debates still relevant for us today?

➤ ***American Political Development***

In *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville writes about the importance of the Plymouth founding.

- To what extent is the Plymouth founding important to our understanding of American political development?
- To what extent do the founding histories of the states beyond New England challenge the supremacy of the Plymouth narrative?

At the time of the American Revolution, the two major strands of revolutionary thought came from Massachusetts and Virginia.

- How did each colony's culture and history affect the nascent conception of American democracy?

The Progressive movement attempted to balance out the professionalization of politics with a push towards direct democracy.

- Is this attempt a paradox?
- How do we balance the need for expertise and professionalization in a government based on democratic values?

While many Americans regard the United States as a nation of immigrants, assimilation of immigrants has always been a source of contention.

- How did immigrant groups assimilate into the American political community?
- What was the role of "machine" politics?
- Can all cultures be assimilated?
- Should they be assimilated? If so, how?

The Watergate scandal and the Pentagon papers led to a mistrust of government.

- What are the effects of this shift in perspective?

For much of its history, American foreign policy was characterized by isolationism. In the 20th and early 21st centuries, the United States became a major player in global affairs.

- Is there a tension between our isolationist history and our current status as the global hegemon?

Most of the founders wanted The United States to remain an agrarian nation, but American cities emerged in spite of this anti-urban bias.

- Does this bias continue in American politics today?
- How have American cities grown, flourished, and floundered within a system that is not equipped to handle their existence?
- Does the economic power within certain American cities balance out their relative lack of political power?

Before Donald Trump became president, Jesse Ventura and Arnold Schwarzenegger became governors of Minnesota and California, respectively.

- What does this tell us about the American electorate?
- Is this a product of culture or policy?
- Did any institutional factors contribute to these results?

➤ *Rights, Equality, and Social Movements*

The American creed values both equality and liberty.

- How have American institutions evolved in an effort to reconcile these values?
- Can these values be reconciled?
- How do we protect minority rights in a political system that is based on majority rule?
- What is the role of religion in American politics?

Though women did not win the right to vote until the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920, women have played a significant role in American politics, especially with regard to moral questions.

- What is the role of gender in American politics?

Slavery is America's original sin.

- How have our efforts to expunge the legacy of slavery and racism changed American political institutions?
- What are the unintended consequences?

Civil disobedience (as we understand it today) was first articulated by Henry David Thoreau, and later famously espoused by Dr. Martin Luther King—— two beloved American icons.

- What is it about civil disobedience that makes it such a potent form of expression?
- Is this a product of this country's culture or creed?
- Are our political institutions particularly receptive to civil disobedience?
- Does our love of civil disobedience promote a disrespect for American political institutions?
- Is civil disobedience still a powerful means towards political and social change?

➤ ***Separation of Powers***

The American system of checks and balances is unique among liberal-democratic countries.

- Would we have been better off with a parliamentary system?
- Should we adopt reforms that bring us closer to a parliamentary system?
- Have we already done so?

In the Constitution, passing legislation is difficult by design.

- Should regulations, executive orders, and legal opinions be considered forms of policy-making?
- Are these forms of political action constitutional?

In *The Federalist*, Madison writes about institutional loyalty.

- Has party loyalty supplanted institutional loyalty?
- If so, how did this happen, and what are the implications of this change?

➤ ***Public Policy***

The welfare state is a contentious issue in American politics.

- Is the American welfare state underdeveloped?

- Are American social welfare policies unique among liberal-democratic countries?
- Why or why not?
- If so, why do Americans have a different perspective on social welfare programs in comparison to other Western, liberal democracies?
- Are our social welfare policies effective?
- To what extent do they achieve their stated goals?

Federal administrative agencies must operate under the purview of the executive branch, but they are held accountable by Congress and the courts.

- How does this affect the form and character of the American bureaucracy?

Barbara Sinclair's book, *Unorthodox Lawmaking*, describes the complex, and often convoluted way that Congress functions today.

- Why is it "unorthodox"?
- How does policy-making today challenge the traditional understanding of how Congress functions?

➤ *Parties & Elections*

In *The Federalist*, James Madison warned against faction.

- Should we still worry about factions today?
- Would the Democratic and Republican parties of today be considered factions?
- Are interest groups factions?

For most of American history, political parties have been large and heterogenous. Today, we are in a unique era characterized by partisan polarization.

- What are the effects of polarization on policy-making?
- What are the effects of policy-making on polarization?
- Does polarization exist at the elite level, or are the American people equally polarized?
- How accurate is median voter theorem in the contemporary political landscape?

➤ *The Presidency*

The framers of the Constitution left the section on the executive much shorter and more ambiguous than its section on the legislature. Ever since, the power, scope, growth, and limitations of the office of the president have been much debated.

- What is the “imperial presidency?”
- Are the virtues of a unitary executive as extolled by Hamilton in *The Federalist* undermined by the federal bureaucracy?
- How have subsequent presidents fleshed out our understanding of executive power?
- How about prerogative?
- When did the president become the steward of the economy?
- Does this mark a change in our understanding of the executive office?
- How does our system of government hold the president accountable?
- Is the process of impeachment too difficult, or not difficult enough?
- Is the process too politicized?
- Are there other ways to hold the president accountable aside from impeachment?

Comparative Politics

➤ *The State*

Comparative politics literature addresses the historical, institutional, economic, social, ideological, etc., foundations of the modern state.

- What is a state?
- What is a nation state?
- What distinguishes it from other forms of political organizations?
- What is the difference between a national and non-national state?
- Where does the state come from?
- When did the modern state system emerge?
- What accounts for the various kinds of modern states?
- What is the relationship between war and state formation?
- Did war make states or did states make war?
- Where does nationalism come from?
- Why do states fail?
- Why do state-building operations fail?

➤ *Parties and Political Systems*

Parties are critical features of the modern state. Literature on parties and political systems analyzes their origins, characteristics, effects on democratic representation, and presence in authoritarian regimes.

- Under what conditions do parties and party systems originate?

- Why do certain parties choose to run on policy programs, while others choose to run on patronage?
- Why have political parties emerged as the primary channels of political representation in democratic governments?
- What explains variation in the strategies that parties use to mobilize electoral support?
- Under what conditions do parties adopt certain political strategies?
- How can we explain variation in how parties compete in different democracies?

➤ ***Political Instability and Social Movements***

Political instability spans a broad array of topics within comparative politics, which may include literature on revolutions, civil wars, and social movements.

- Why does political violence occur?
- Why is some political mobilization violent and some nonviolent?
- Under what conditions does political violence succeed?
- Under what conditions do civil wars occur?
- Under what conditions do revolutions occur and what explains variation in their outcomes?
- Why do social movements emerge?
- To what extent has globalization facilitated the spread of social movements?

➤ ***Ethnic Politics and Religion***

Ethnic politics literature addresses ethnic identity and conflict. Religion and politics is a burgeoning subfield within comparative politics, and deals with religion in the political sphere.

- Under what conditions do ethnic identities become politically salient?
- How does the politicization of ethnic identity affect political outcomes?
- Why are some ascriptive identities more politically salient in certain contexts?
- Under what conditions do religious groups enter the political sphere?
- Why has there been a religious resurgence?
- What influence does religion have on political outcomes?

➤ ***Women and International Politics***

Studies on women and international politics spans a wide array of topics and addresses the institutionalization of women's rights and women's political participation.

- What explains variation in a state's policies regarding women's rights?

- Under what conditions are women more likely to become heads of state?
- Under what conditions will states promote women's rights?

International Relations

➤ *Causes of War*

The subfield of IR is primarily preoccupied with the causes of war. The literature addresses war's constant presence in history and sees it as a central problem. Why do wars start? How are they won? How can we prevent them?

- Why do 'rational' states go to war if it is so costly?
- Why do diplomacy and negotiation succeed in some cases but not others?
- Under what conditions will a rising power cause international or regional instability?
- Under what conditions does deterrence work?
- Why do some states sign peace agreements while others do not?

➤ *International Political Economy, Cooperation, Intervention*

Certain scholars focus on international political economy and the importance of international economic activity. This has led to increased study of international finance, foreign investment, and development. This body of literature also addresses cooperation among states.

- Under what conditions do domestic politics drive a state's foreign economic policies?
- When does a state decide to pursue free trade?
- What explains interstate cooperation and under what conditions?

➤ *Intervention*

Intervention is a popular subject within IR. Scholars are interested in understanding the reasons why a state would intervene militarily or for humanitarian reasons.

- Under what conditions will a country intervene militarily in another country?
- Under what conditions will a country intervene for humanitarian purposes?

➤ *Democratic Peace and Alliances*

Democratic peace theory addresses a puzzling observation: democracies do not go to war with one another. A subsequent set of studies have emerged to explain this finding. Additional scholarship addresses the conditions under which states will form alliances with one another.

- To what extent does regime type determine propensity to go to war?
- Why don't democracies go to war with one another?
- Do the reasons have more to do with economics or politics?
- How important is liberalism for the democratic peace theory?
- How important is free trade for the democratic peace theory?
- Are democracies also less likely to go to war with non-democratic regimes?
- When do states decide to ally with one another?
- Under what conditions will states cooperate with each other?

➤ *Domestic Politics*

Literature on domestic politics approaches the study of international relations at the domestic level. Many studies look to how domestic politics affect a state's foreign policy, such as national security, nuclear deterrence, and defense spending.

- To what extent do domestic political institutions affect state behavior?
- To what extent does individual decision-making determine a state's foreign policy?

➤ *International Institutions*

A large body of literature looks to the role international institutions and international law in regulating international politics.

- How can we explain states' decisions to comply with international institutions?
- Under what conditions will states adopt international norms?
- Under what conditions do international institutions affect state behavior?
- When are international institutions successful at mitigating conflict?

➤ *Transnationalism and Non-State Actors*

Transnationalism looks to the role of non-state actors in affecting state decision-making, including domestic and foreign policy.

- What is a non-state actor?
- Are non-state actors autonomous actors that shape international outcomes?
- To what extent do transnational actors impact state action?

Political Theory

➤ *The Regime*

In this handbook, you have encountered different types of regimes: democratic regimes, authoritarian regimes, etc. This leads naturally to the question of the best regime, one of the most fundamental questions for political theory.

- How many possible regimes exist in theory?
- What are their strengths and weaknesses?
- What is the best regime?
- Is there one best regime for all peoples at all places and times?
- Or are certain regimes better for certain peoples at certain times?
- What is the purpose of the best regime?
- What is the purpose of the regimes other than the best?
- Is the purpose of the best regime virtue, honor, wealth, or freedom?
- In short, what should be the purpose of government?

➤ *Justice*

Related to, or even implicit in, the question of the best regime is the question of justice.

- What is justice?
- Is justice the highest good?
- Can any regime, even the best regime, be perfectly just?
- If not, what should the role of justice be in a decent society?
- Is there such a thing as the highest good?
- How should a regime accommodate different views of the highest good?
- What gives any person or group a claim, or a right, to rule?
- Should rule benefit the ruled, the ruler, or both?
- Is a society without rulers and ruled possible?
- What is the common good?
- Are the common good and justice synonymous?
- Is the common good and the public good synonymous?

➤ *The Individual*

Originally, the word regime implied not just an arrangement of laws and political offices, but also a way of life for citizens. Thus, political theory is also fundamentally an inquiry into the best way of life for human beings as citizens and as human beings simply.

- What is the best way of life for a human being?
- Is it possible that the best citizen is also the best human being?

- Is this only the case in the best regime?
- What are the crucial differences between the good citizen and the good human being?
- What are the differences between the contemplative life and the active or political life?
- Is the contemplative life superior to the active or political life?
- Is the best way of life devoted to justice, virtue, wisdom, money, freedom, honor, etc.?
- What is moral virtue? What are the cardinal virtues?
- Is moral virtue a necessary part of the best human life?
- Is the morally virtuous life the happiest way of life?
- Is the just life the happiest way of life?
- What is the relationship between justice, virtue, wisdom, and happiness?
- Are all of these things reconcilable?
- If they are not, what does this say about the relationship between the individual and the political community?
- What is the proper relationship between family and political community?
- To which association should mature human beings be most loyal: the family or the community?
- Is religion a necessary component of the best human life?
- Is piety a moral virtue?
- Are the lives devoted to philosophy, religion, and politics fundamentally opposed to one another?

➤ ***Modern Political Philosophy***

Modern political life has led to a whole series of questions that have become very familiar to our ears, but appear to be rather alien to older ways of thinking about politics.

- What is liberalism? What are its strengths and weaknesses?
- What is democracy and why is it a legitimate form of government?
- Is there an important difference between a good form of government and a legitimate one? Which is, or should be, more important to human beings?
- Do human beings possess individual rights?
- What are those rights and where do those rights come from?
- Are individual rights derived from God, nature, consent, or utility?
- Can we make a comprehensive list of human rights? How do we know the limits of such a list?
- Is the purpose of government to protect individual rights?
- Are all rights reconcilable?
- What should we do when the rights of one individual conflict with the rights of another individual?
- Do human beings have any natural duties, as opposed to natural rights?

- What is liberal democracy?
- Are there any conflicts or contradictions between the concept of liberalism and the concept of democracy?
- Is the concept of individual rights consistent with the democratic principle of majority rule?
- If there is a tension between liberalism and democracy, which of the two should we prefer?
- Is society based on a "social contract"?
- What can we learn about society by viewing it as a social contract?
- What is sovereignty?
- What or who should properly be called the sovereign of a political community? Is it the legislature, the people, or the courts?
- What is the idea of the "general will"? Does such a thing exist? Can the people as a whole be wiser than any individual person?
- What is the consequence of diversity for a political community?
- What is tolerance? What is the basis for defending tolerance?

➤ *Philosophic Questions*

In many respects, political theory, or political philosophy as it is sometimes called, is a branch of philosophy, and it necessarily tries to answer larger questions that would perhaps more commonly be understood as a part of philosophy.

- What is a human being?
- Are human beings fundamentally different from other animals?
- What distinguishes human beings from other intelligent animals? Is it reason, speech, or another trait?
- What is the human soul? Does the soul have parts? Are there different types of souls?
- Are human beings fundamentally political animals, social animals, or solitary animals?
- Why do human beings join political communities? Is it to fulfill their natural potential or simply to avoid chaos and suffering?
- Does "human nature" exist? If so, can it be discovered?
- What is nature? What is convention? How does one go about distinguishing that which is by nature and that which is by convention?
- How has the understanding of nature changed from ancient to modern times?
- Should human beings be understood in terms of their origins or their ends?
- What is reason? Is it a measure or standard of human action? Is it a slave of human passions?
- Can pure reason be the basis for political life? Is there a contradiction between reason and tradition?

- Can reason justify some norms or ideals and refute others?
- What is freedom? What is the relationship between freedom and law?
- What is the difference between private and public liberty, or negative and positive liberty?
- Are people free when they are not governed by law or when they have influence over the laws they live under?
- Is freedom a goal or merely the means for securing other goals?
- What is truth? Is truth worth pursuing for its own sake?
- When, if ever, are lies politically and/or morally defensible? Is the political sphere amenable to truthful speech? Why or why not?
- What are human values? Are they created by human beings? Or do they exist by nature?
- What is science, and what are the limitations of scientific knowledge?
- Is science worth pursuing for its own sake? If not, toward what end do we study politics scientifically?
- In analyzing human beings as individuals or in groups, is it possible to formulate "laws" of human behavior? What does the answer to this question mean for the scientific study of politics?
- What is the difference between facts and values? Is a "value-free" political science possible? Is such a political science desirable?
- What does history teach us about political life and thought?
- Does history provide moral or political norms? Does it undermine all claims to universality in moral and political matters?
- Does history unfold according to a rational process? Are we in modern times at the "end of history"? Should we welcome or lament the "end of history"?
- What are the possibilities for human progress? Is humanity always progressing? How should "progress" be measured?
- Are there some ways in which "progress" poses problems for human beings and for modern political life?

Appendix C: Literature Review Samples

The following two sections are intended to provide examples of what a literature review might look like. They are two separate, but connected, reviews that discuss the topic of transnational terrorism.

As briefly discussed at the end of Chapter 4, these examples should be understood as a sort of progression or improvement from what you read in Part II, for they do more than simply summarize what has been said so far on these topics. They identify fault lines within the literature; they provide arguments as to why existing definitions or explanations are problematic or insufficient; and they suggest new lines of inquiries. But they are still not literature reviews properly speaking, since neither really has a proper introduction or conclusion. We tried to cut out as much fat as possible so that you could focus on the meat.

As discussed in the Preface to Part II, these examples might be most helpful if you are having trouble with the literature review from the outset. Their format and organization could be followed closely as a way of helping you to get started. But as you become more familiar with the literature on your topic, you must begin to think more seriously about how to best organize your own literature review in accordance with the questions and goals of your thesis, as well as the problems and debates within that literature.

I. What is Transnational Terrorism?

Appendix C has been taken from a larger project that examines the phenomenon of transnational terrorism. For the purposes of this handbook, it has been divided into two sections. Section I addresses the topic of transnational terrorism from a conceptual standpoint. It reviews how the concept of transnational terrorism has been traditionally defined and how this traditional definition might be problematic. In other words, Section I is concerned with the “what” question when it comes to transnational terrorism.

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 5, scholars often disagree about how to define the concept being studied. Such disagreements often require conceptual clarification, especially with respect to how different definitions affect one’s attempt to explain the concept’s underlying causes. Thus, the primary intention of conceptual “lit reviews,” such as they are, is to provide the necessary background knowledge for what is likely to follow--a review of the causes of transnational terrorism. The clear division into the two sections was made in the hopes of reflecting what was said in earlier chapters.

A. Standard Definition

The general consensus is that there are two variants of terrorism, domestic and transnational.¹⁸⁸ In the introduction to a special issue on terrorism, Sandler defined domestic terrorism as terrorism that “involves perpetrators, targets, victims, venues, and audience in the same country.” Likewise, transnational terrorism is defined as that which involves multiple nationalities in any way. “Through its perpetrators, victims, institutions, governments, or implications, transnational terrorism concerns more than one country.”¹⁸⁹ Other definitions use the same standards stated slightly differently.¹⁹⁰ For example, transnational terrorism is “terrorist acts against one country’s interests that involve terrorists, victims, or institutions of other countries.”¹⁹¹

The standard definition of transnational terrorism shares characteristics with the origin of the word transnationalism itself. “The term transnationalism was coined by political scientists when it became clear that the prevailing state-centric paradigm was inadequate to explain both the extent and the impact of international interactions,” Louise Richardson writes.¹⁹² Richardson goes on to explain that in the U.S., terrorism was usually understood as something directed by enemy states, but this shifted with the rise of radical Islamic extremists. Thus, “international terrorism” was seen as state-sponsored terrorism. By this understanding of transnationalism, the standard definition does not seem inappropriate.

This consensus in the literature has existed for a substantial period of time, since before the sharp rise in interest and scholarship on the topic following the September 11th attacks in the U.S. A 1975 RAND report to Congress chronicled the incidents of “international terrorism.” International terrorism and transnational terrorism are often treated interchangeably in the literature. The following definition was used for the report:

Only incidents that had clear international repercussions were included – incidents in which terrorists went abroad to strike their targets, selected victims or targets that had connections with a foreign state (e.g., diplomats, foreign businessmen, offices of foreign corporations), or created international incidents by attacking airline passengers, personnel and equipment.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ B. Peter Rosendorff and Todd Sandler, “The Political Economy of Transnational Terrorism,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 2 (2005), 171-182.

¹⁸⁹ Todd Sandler, “Introduction: New Frontiers of Terrorism Research: An introduction,” *Journal of Peace Research* 48, no. 3 (2011), 280.

¹⁹⁰ Charlinda Santifort, Todd Sandler, and Patrick T Brandt, “Terrorist Attack and Target Diversity: Changepoints and their Drivers,” *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 1 (2013), 75-90.

¹⁹¹ Andre Rossi de Oliveira, João Ricardo Faria, and Emilson C.D. Silva, “Transnational Terrorism: Externalities and Coalition Formation,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 62, no. 3 (2018), 496-528.

¹⁹² Louise Richardson, “Terrorists as Transnational Actors,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 11, no. 4 (1999), 209-210.

¹⁹³ Brian M. Jenkins and Janera Johnson, *International Terrorism: A Chronology, 1968-1974* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1975), 1.

This report, and definition, were used later to explain the spread of such incidents in various regions.¹⁹⁴

A 1982 study divided terrorism into a simple four-cell typology. Transnational terrorism was said to be any event that is not government directed or controlled and includes the direct involvement of nationals of more than one state.¹⁹⁵ Enders, Sandler, and Gaibulloev's study is often cited for definitional purposes in the transnational terrorism literature. "Through its victims, targets, supporters, or perpetrators, transnational terrorism concerns more than a single country. If the nationality of the perpetrators differs from that of one or more of the victims, then the terrorist attack is transnational."¹⁹⁶

Since then, most studies (if they distinguish or define the concept at all) use some variation of this definition.¹⁹⁷ Similar to this definition, one study differentiates between domestic and transnational terrorism: "In this concept of domestic terrorism, perpetrator, victim, and location nationalities match. Transnational terrorism occurs when any identity differs from another."¹⁹⁸

Within some descriptions of the standard definition, recognition of the importance of crossing borders exists, but it is always one of many important aspects. Sandler and Enders, for example, recognize that the crossing of international borders is a fundamental component of transnational terrorism, but they go on to include attacks against U.S. interests in foreign countries. They note, for example, that "In the World Trade Center tragedy, citizens from over 80 countries lost their lives at the hands of terrorists who crossed into the United States from abroad."¹⁹⁹

These attacks do not necessarily require the crossing of international borders for any stage of the attack's planning or execution. Consider the following as a counter-factual: A foreign national was visiting friends or family in Oklahoma and was injured or killed when Timothy McVeigh attacked the federal building in Oklahoma City in 1995. This simple fact would not have influenced McVeigh's targeting choice, planning, or execution; it would not have changed the U.S. security forces response to it; and it would not have impacted how security forces sought to prevent future similar attacks. However, it would classify this attack as "transnational," causing

¹⁹⁴ Manus I. Midlarsky, Martha Crenshaw, and Fumihiko Yoshida, "Why Violence Spreads: The Contagion of International Terrorism," *International Studies Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (1980), 262–298.

¹⁹⁵ Gerald W. Hoppole, "Transnational Terrorism: Prospectus for a Causal Modeling Approach," *Terrorism* 6, no. 1-2 (1982), 80.

¹⁹⁶ Walter Enders, Todd Sandler, and Khusrav Gaibulloev, "Domestic versus Transnational Terrorism: Data, Decomposition, and Dynamics," *Journal of Peace Research* 48, no. 3 (2011), 319-337.

¹⁹⁷ Eva Cárceles-Poveda and Yair Tauman, "A Strategic Analysis of the War against Transnational Terrorism," *Games and Economic Behavior* 71, no. 1 (2011), 49-65.

¹⁹⁸ Richard E. Berkebile, "What is Domestic Terrorism? A Method for Classifying Events from the Global Terrorism Database," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 29, no. 1 (2017), 5.

¹⁹⁹ Todd Sandler and Walter Enders, "An Economic Perspective on Transnational Terrorism," *European Journal of Political Economy* 20, no. 2 (2004), 302.

significant problems in trying to generalize about such dissimilar events. Under the standard definition, this is an ongoing problem. This counterfactual is more than anecdotal. In one particular study, correlations between domestic and transnational terrorism were anticipated because “planned domestic terrorist incidents may occasionally result in collateral damage to foreign interests, thereby giving rise to transnational terrorist events.”²⁰⁰

The inclusion of both domestic international attacks and foreign attacks into a single concept, while criticized here, is not altogether arbitrary. Enders, Sandler, and Gaibullov attribute the seeking of media attention and cross-border safe havens as a reason for a correlation between domestic and transnational terrorism.²⁰¹ Bruce Hoffman includes both in his description of transnational terrorism.²⁰² The reason for this inclusion is quite understandable, because international targets, both domestically and abroad, were pursued because doing so would create a larger and more significantly noticed event than if only domestic, non-international targets were pursued. Hoffman writes:

For the first time, terrorists began to travel regularly from one country to another to carry out attacks. In addition, they also began to target innocent civilians from other countries who often had little if anything to do with the terrorists’ cause or grievance, simply to endow their acts with the power to attract attention and publicity that attacks against their declared or avowed enemies often lacked.²⁰³

In summary, terrorists pursue international targets both domestically and abroad because it gives the attack, and by extension the group and cause, greater publicity and notoriety. However, the theoretic and empiric similarities between domestic and foreign international targets ends there. Most major studies on transnational terrorism have not recognized the difference between these two phenomena.

There are occasions where the standard definition is appropriate, but its appropriate usage highlights the need for differentiation. Powers and Choi try to determine the impacts of business-related “transnational” terrorism and use the International Terrorism: Attributes of Terrorist Events (ITERATE) dataset.²⁰⁴ Their specific question is asking the impact on international targets, specifically multinational business. Therefore, the usage of the standard definition is most appropriate since attacks anywhere against international businesses need to be included.

²⁰⁰ Enders, Sandler, and Gaibullov, "Domestic versus Transnational Terrorism: Data, Decomposition, and Dynamics," 330.

²⁰¹ Enders, Sandler, and Gaibullov, "Domestic versus Transnational Terrorism: Data, Decomposition, and Dynamics," 319-337.

²⁰² Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

²⁰³ Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 66.

²⁰⁴ Matthew Powers and Seung-Whan Choi, "Does Transnational Terrorism Reduce Foreign Direct Investment? Business-related versus Non-business-related Terrorism," *Journal of Peace Research* 49, no. 3 (2012), 407-422.

However, the term international terrorism would be more appropriate here. Most questions asked of transnational terrorism include domestic attacks against international targets and transnational attacks in foreign countries. This causes the problem of answers being more appropriate to one understanding and not the other, or neither.

Few scholars have defined the phenomenon such that an attacker must cross international borders, or leave their home country, for it to be considered transnational terrorism. However, the two are still sometimes considered different types of transnational terrorism. For example, "...are the reasons terrorists transit the globe to commit violence the same motivations causing them to cross the city to do so?"²⁰⁵ Elbakidze and Jin provide another example of recognizing the difference between the two types without disaggregating the definition. "Furthermore, increasing national security measures may reduce terrorist attacks within the country, but the number of attacks against nationals of the country abroad or against other countries may escalate."²⁰⁶

B. Specific Questions and Conceptual Refinement

If scholars want to ask a specific question about transnational terrorism, refinement and revision of the standard definition of transnational terrorism become necessary. For example, when looking at the connection between refugees and transnational terrorism, "we only count transnational terrorist attacks in which (1) the individual committing the attack comes from the refugee's country and (2) the attack itself is committed in the country hosting the refugees."²⁰⁷

One article that does disaggregate (somewhat) the standard definition criticizes previous studies because they do "not examine the geographic dimensions of transnational terror organization behavior."²⁰⁸ Goldman uses a standard definition for transnational terrorism but tries to isolate geographic differences. Another article distinguishes between various types of transnational terrorism and recognizes a difference between attacks that occur in the country of the attacker's origin, countries that border the attacker's origin, and all other countries beyond that.²⁰⁹ This conceptualization was used to determine the threat of exporting transnational terrorism from failed and failing states, in which case geographic proximity is a necessary factor. George still used a standard definition for transnational terrorism; the separation is mainly to test for variations within transnational terrorism. Also, Asal and Hoffman distinguish between domestic

²⁰⁵ Richard E. Berkebile, "What is Domestic terrorism? A Method for Classifying Events from the Global Terrorism Database," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 29, no. 1 (2017), 2.

²⁰⁶ Levan Elbakidze and Yanhong Jin, "Victim Countries of Transnational Terrorism: An Empirical Characteristics Analysis," *Risk Analysis* 32, no. 12 (2012), 2152.

²⁰⁷ Daniel Milton, Megan Spencer, and Michael Findley, "Radicalism of the Hopeless: Refugee Flows and Transnational Terrorism," *International Interactions* 39, no. 5 (2013), 630.

²⁰⁸ Ogen Goldman, "The Globalization of Terror Attacks," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 23, no. 1 (2010), 35.

²⁰⁹ Justin George, "State Failure and Transnational Terrorism: An Empirical Analysis," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2016).

and “foreign” terrorism in assessing the impact of press attention on incidents of terrorism, in which the crossing of international borders is the critical difference.²¹⁰

However, the conclusions of the George article, versus others that test the same hypothesis, show the importance of disaggregating the concept. Consider the following. If the George distinction is not made, and all attacks on foreign property and persons are considered transnational terrorism, then failed states will be seen as major sources of transnational terrorism, as some have concluded.²¹¹ However, if transnational terrorism is only those attacks in which an attacker crosses international borders, then failed states are *not* major sources of transnational terrorism as George finds. These are fundamentally divergent findings resulting from improper conceptual conflation.

These broad conceptualizations of transnational terrorism are insufficient for two reasons. First, there are fundamental differences - in planning, execution, and prevention - between an attacker carrying out an attack in their home country against a foreign government’s interests and an attacker traveling to another country to carry out an attack in the foreign government’s homeland. For example, various factors that influence terrorism have varying influence on the event if an international border was crossed or not. “[W]e expect that the pull of press freedom is greatest when terrorists cross international boundaries because these attacks are more likely to be designed with international audiences in mind than strikes by domestic perpetrators.”²¹²

Furthermore, Gardeazabal and Sandler find that countries that participate in INTERPOL programs helping them screen people and documents at border crossings, where transnational terrorists must pass to successfully carry out their attacks, could decrease the number of transnational attacks in their country.²¹³ This demonstrates the differences between the types of terrorism since INTERPOL restrictions on international movement will have no impact on actors that remain in their home country. Also, as stated above, George finds that failed states produce more transnational terrorism domestically but do not produce more transnational terrorists traveling abroad.²¹⁴

Second, the common understanding of transnational terrorism is when a non-citizen is associated with a foreign threat but brings that violence to the homeland, and broader conceptions are

²¹⁰ Victor Asal and Aaron M. Hoffman, "Media Effects: Do Terrorist Organizations Launch Foreign Attacks in Response to Levels of Press Freedom or Press Attention?," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 33, no. 4 (2016), 381-399.

²¹¹ James A. Piazza, "Incubators of Terror: Do Failed and Failing States Promote Transnational Terrorism?," *International Studies Quarterly* 52, no. 3 (2008), 469-488.

²¹² Aaron M. Hoffman, Crystal Shelton, and Erik Clevon, "Press Freedom, Publicity, and the Cross-national Incidence of Transnational Terrorism." *Political Research Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (2013), 896.

²¹³ Javier Gardeazabal and Todd Sandler, "INTERPOL's Surveillance Network in Curbing Transnational Terrorism," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 34, no. 4 (2015), 761-780.

²¹⁴ Justin George, "State Failure and Transnational terrorism: An Empirical Analysis," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2016).

usually defined for convenience and simplicity. George Bush, when speaking to a joint session of Congress in 2001 said, “Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.”²¹⁵ Global reach is fundamental to the understanding of transnational terrorism and this condition is not satisfied by a domestic group that attacks domestic targets of foreign countries. This localized terrorism shows the global reach of various states, not the global reach of transnational terrorist organizations or actors. This is part of the reason that, although domestic terrorism is far more common, transnational terrorism dominates scholarly debates and national attentions. It is a foreign threat that is coming to kill us.

This is not to say that domestic attacks against both local and foreign targets is the same; they are not. Gaibulloev and Sandler show that transnational terrorism, as traditionally defined, has a significant, but modest, marginal impact on a country’s income per capita growth.²¹⁶ Furthermore, they find that domestic terrorism, traditionally defined, does not have a similar impact. They go on to say, “transnational terrorist incidents have ramifications that extend beyond the venue country.”²¹⁷ It is accurate to say that target selection within a country by a terrorist group matters.

II. What Causes Transnational Terrorism?

Section II provides a brief overview of various arguments that have been made to explain transnational terrorism. It thus addresses the topic of transnational terrorism from the standpoint of causality. That is to say, it is concerned with the “why” question when it comes to transnational terrorism. Each of the sub-sections below is intended to be a substantial, though hardly comprehensive, survey of the type of argument being made. With few exceptions or variations, the traditional definition of transnational terrorism is used by the authors.

A. Military Footprint/Response

The use of military force abroad has been linked to terrorism and argued as a cause of transnational terrorism. Terrorist organizations and lone actors frequently invoke such actions as justification for their attacks. Pape argues that military occupations are a substantial cause of suicide terrorism. “Simply put, military occupation accounts for nearly all suicide terrorism

²¹⁵ George W. Bush, “Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People,” *Harvard Journal of Public Policy* 25 (2001), xviii.

²¹⁶ Khusrav Gaibulloev and Todd Sandler, “The Adverse Effect of Transnational and Domestic Terrorism on Growth in Africa,” *Journal of Peace Research* 48 (3) (2011), 355-371.

²¹⁷ Gaibulloev and Sandler, “The Adverse Effect of Transnational and Domestic Terrorism on Growth in Africa,” 357.

around the world since 1980.”²¹⁸ Choi and Piazza argue that pro-government foreign military interventions are likely to increase the use of suicide attacks because insurgents and terrorists will seek to overcome the power asymmetry.²¹⁹ Similar results are found by Collard-Wexler, Pischedda, & Smith.²²⁰ They show that foreign occupations, as opposed to independence movements against an indigenous regime, are likely to increase incidents of suicide attacks. Braithwaite’s study provides evidence that a country’s military footprint is linked to an increase in terrorism directed against that state’s “global interests.”²²¹ Braithwaite provides examples of transnational terrorism events being explicitly linked to foreign troop deployments. These include the September 11th attacks in the US, March 2004 in Spain, and July 2005 in the UK. Braithwaite specifically argues that deployment of foreign troops on perceived homelands provides both motivation and targets for terrorist organizations.

Iraq specifically has been used as a motivation for attacks. Nesser argues that two incidents, the March 2004 attack in Madrid and the killing of a Dutch filmmaker in Amsterdam, were specifically motivated by the invasion of Iraq.²²² Nesser goes on to argue that the Iraq issue was linked to other perceived grievances against Muslims globally. Similarly, Enders, Sandler, and Gaibullov suggest a correlation between domestic and transnational terrorism due to the backlash generated by significant political events, like the Arab-Israeli wars.²²³

A country’s response to transnational terrorism can, itself, have an impact on transnational terrorism. One strategy of terrorism is provocation.²²⁴ Being the victim of terrorism could lead to an over-response in which overwhelming military power is wielded indiscriminately. This, it is argued, could lead to greater sympathy for the terrorists’ causes, increase recruits and funding, and decrease ally support for the state engaging in such behavior. Sheehan demonstrated that four particular events in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) were associated with changes in transnational terrorism: the onset of the GWOT, the invasion of Iraq, the capture of Saddam Hussein, and the release of photos from Abu Ghraib prison.²²⁵ The onset of the GWOT was associated with a 74% increase in transnational terrorism incidents. The release of photos from

²¹⁸ Robert A. Pape and James K. Feldman, *Cutting the Fuse: The Explosion of Global Suicide Terrorism and How to Stop It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 10.

²¹⁹ Seung-Whan Choi and James A. Piazza, "Foreign Military Interventions and Suicide Attacks," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2017), 271-297.

²²⁰ Simon Collard-Wexler, Costantino Pischedda, and Michael G. Smith, "Do Foreign Occupations Cause Suicide Attacks?," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2014), 625-657.

²²¹ Alex Braithwaite, "Transnational Terrorism as an Unintended Consequence of a Military Footprint," *Security Studies* 24 (2) (2015), 349-375.

²²² Petter Nesser, "Jihadism in Western Europe After the Invasion of Iraq: Tracing Motivational Influences from the Iraq War on Jihadist Terrorism in Western Europe," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2006), 323-342.

²²³ Enders, Sandler, and Gaibullov, "Domestic versus Transnational Terrorism: Data, Decomposition, and Dynamics," 319-337.

²²⁴ Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, "The Strategies of Terrorism," *International Security*, 49-80.

²²⁵ Ivan Sascha Sheehan, "Has the Global War on Terror Changed the Terrorist Threat? A Time-Series Intervention Analysis," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2009), 743-761.

Abu Ghraib was associated with a 110% increase in incidents. The invasion of Iraq was associated with a 26% increase but was not statistically significant. Furthermore, the capture of Saddam Hussein was associated with a 77% decrease in incidents.²²⁶

B. Spillover, Demonstration Effect, Contagion, and Outbidding

One line of argument looks at the spillover from local conflicts and failed states. These environments provide the circumstances for political grievances, desensitization to violence, and lack of opportunities that help form and grow transnational terrorist organizations.²²⁷ These arguments have been contested by recent studies, however.²²⁸ A related concern is that these areas, which lack powerful states that can monopolize violence, become safe havens for such organizations from which they can plan attacks.²²⁹ Piazza finds that failed states are more likely to host transnational terrorist groups, their nationals are more likely to commit transnational terrorist attacks, and they are more likely to be targeted by transnational terrorists.²³⁰

However, George comes to a slightly different conclusion because of the disaggregation of the traditional definition of transnational terrorism.²³¹ George separates the data into three categories, incidents occurring within the failed state, incidents occurring in states that border the failed states, and incidents that occur outside the first two groups. George finds that state failure increases incidents of terror within the failed state, but they do not export this terror much beyond their own borders. Consistent with these findings, Braithwaite and Li study the dynamics of terrorism hot spots, and find that countries that experience high levels of terrorism are often located in terrorism hot spots.²³²

Geographically and regionally speaking, the literature suggests that terrorism is relatively concentrated and is more likely to occur in these problem areas than it is to spread beyond. Coggins argues that the most failed states are not predisposed to terrorism, but only that the

²²⁶ Sheehan, "Has the Global War on Terror Changed the Terrorist Threat? A Time-Series Intervention Analysis," 752.

²²⁷ Godwin Okafor and Jenifer Piesse, "Empirical Investigation into the Determinants of Terrorism: Evidence from Fragile States," *Defence and Peace Economics* (2017).

²²⁸ Stewart Patrick, "Civil Wars & Transnational Threats: Mapping the Terrain, Assessing the Links," *Dædalus* (2017), 45-58.

²²⁹ U.S. National Security Council. "National Security Strategy." The White House. (2002), Accessed March 2018. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html>.

²³⁰ James A. Piazza, "Incubators of Terror: Do Failed and Failing States Promote Transnational Terrorism?" *International Studies Quarterly* (2008), 469-488.

²³¹ Justin George, "State Failure and Transnational Terrorism: An Empirical Analysis," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2016), 1-25.

²³² Alex Braithwaite and Quan Li, "Transnational Terrorism Hot Spots: Identification and Impact Evaluation," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 24 (2007), 281-296.

worst of the failed state are likely to experience and produce terrorism.²³³ LaFree, Xie, and Matanock found that both contagious and non-contagious diffusion has been rare in a data set covering 1970 to 2013.²³⁴ Furthermore, Goldman finds that terror has not become globalized and, in fact, shows signs of localization since the 1990s.²³⁵

Enders, Sandler, and Gaibullov argue that there is a correlation between domestic and transnational terrorism because of a demonstration effect.²³⁶ Groups and actors learn from each other and copy each other's tactics and strategies. Other articles use the demonstration effect to explain dynamics of transnational terrorism. "These countries' transnational terrorist attacks may have had this common influence on worldwide transnational terrorism through a demonstration effect, shared grievances, common terrorist perpetrators, or assets abroad."²³⁷

Chenoweth argues that competition among groups results in high levels of terrorism as they attempt to outbid each other. This argument can work across borders (e.g. if the Islamic State and al Qaeda compete for dominance of the global jihadist movement) but also works as a regime type argument. Chenoweth links this to "transnational terrorism" in the following way: "In fact, domestic political competition may produce significant externalities if terrorist groups perceive the internationalization of their struggle as a possible way to outbid competing groups."²³⁸

C. Islamic Extremism/Waves

Wave dynamics are often invoked when discussing terrorism, and the current wave is characterized by religious extremism, particularly Islamic.²³⁹ Of particular interest to transnational terrorism is Islamic terrorism in Europe and North America.²⁴⁰ "There is a substantial body of scholarly literature that either explicitly or implicitly points to Islam as a

²³³ Bridget L. Coggins, "Does State Failure Cause Terrorism? An Empirical Analysis (1999–2008)," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2015), 455-483.

²³⁴ Gary LaFree, Min Xie, and Aila M. Matanock, "The Contagious Diffusion of Worldwide Terrorism: Is It Less Common Than We Might Think?" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2018), 261-280.

²³⁵ Ogen Goldman, "The Globalization of Terror Attacks," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 23 (1) (2010), 31-59.

²³⁶ Enders, Sandler, and Gaibullov, "Domestic versus Transnational Terrorism: Data, Decomposition, and Dynamics," 319-337.

²³⁷ Khusrav Gaibullov, Todd Sandler, and Sul Donggyu. "Common Drivers of Transnational Terrorism: Principal Component Analysis." *Economic Inquiry* 51 (1) (2013), 708.

²³⁸ Erica Chenoweth, "Democratic Competition and Terrorist Activity," *The Journal of Politics* 72 (1) (2010), 20.

²³⁹ Ersel Aydinli, "Before Jihadists There Were Anarchists: A Failed Case of Transnational Violence," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2008), 903-923.

²⁴⁰ Carlos Pestana Barros and Isabel Proença, "Mixed Logit Estimation of Radical Islamic Terrorism in Europe and North America: A Comparative Study," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49 (2) (2005), 298-314.

contributing factor in levels of terrorism.”²⁴¹ Rapoport argued that the world has seen four successive and overlapping waves of terrorism, the fourth beginning in 1979.²⁴²

According to Rapoport, the first wave was the beginning of modern terrorism as a series of assassinations that swept Czarist Russia following political and economic reforms. The second wave began in the 1920s and was primarily motivated by anti-colonialism. The third wave was motivated by revolutionary movements of the 1970s. Rapoport says the term international terrorist came into usage during this time because of bonds between revolutionary groups in different countries, but also because the training camps of one group, namely the Palestinian Liberation Organization, were available to others who sought to spark revolution in their own countries. Robison, Crenshaw, and Jenkins look at the decline of leftist terrorism and the rise of Islamic terrorism and attribute the wave-like shift to changes in social conditions.²⁴³ The decline in leftist terrorism is attributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union, while the rise in Islamic terrorism is attributed to modernization, competition between religions, and the rise of secular government.

Two events in 1979, the Islamic revolution in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, provided the religious foundations for the fourth wave. While Rapoport says that Islam produced the most active groups, he notes that groups of other religious faiths were involved in the fourth wave. Systematic analysis confirms Rapoport’s conception of waves of types of groups and tactics.²⁴⁴ It has also been shown that the prevalence of Islamic terrorism has shaped global trends in target types. “... since the 1990s and the global dominance of Islamic fundamentalist terrorists, private parties are the most attacked interests, followed by officials.”²⁴⁵

Of particular concern for transnational terrorism is whether countries with larger Muslim populations and diaspora groups are more likely to experience attacks. By analyzing all transnational terrorist attacks from 1973 to 2002, Conrad and Milton show that Muslim states are not more likely to produce terrorism after accounting for state repression, human rights abuses, and discrimination against minorities.²⁴⁶

²⁴¹ Justin Conrad and Daniel Milton, "Unpacking the Connection Between Terror and Islam," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 36 (4) (2013), 316.

²⁴² David C. Rapoport, "The Fourth Wave: September 11 in the History of Terrorism," *Current History* 100 (650) (2001), 419-424.

²⁴³ Kristopher K. Robison, Edward M. Crenshaw, and J. Craig Jenkins, "Ideologies of Violence: The Social Origins of Islamist and Leftist Transnational Terrorism," *Social Forces* (2006).

²⁴⁴ Karen Rasler and William R. Thompson, "Looking for Waves of Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2009), 28-41.

²⁴⁵ Patrick T. Brandt and Todd Sandler, "What Do Transnational Terrorists Target? Has It Changed? Are We Safer?" *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2010), 215.

²⁴⁶ Justin Conrad and Daniel Milton, "Unpacking the Connection Between Terror and Islam," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 36 (4) (2013), 316.

Recent scholarship has shown the complex relationship between religious extremism and terrorism. Countering the narrative that terrorist incidents are increasing in lethality because of religious justifications like martyrdom, suicide attacks, and excommunication of potential targets, Klein argues that lethality is related not to religious fundamentalism but by recruitment interests.²⁴⁷ Attacks near the organization's recruitment base will take great effort to avoid unnecessary collateral damage. Conversely, substantial collateral damage outside of an organization's recruitment base will not adversely impact their recruitment efforts.

Klein's study highlights the importance for the need to distinguish between the three types of terrorism argued for in this article. Attacks of a purely domestic nature will presumably have the highest restrictions on the indiscriminate use of violence if organizations are concerned about recruitment. Attacks being carried out in a home country against foreign targets can be less restrictive, but still have a high risk of unwanted collateral damage. However, attacks that are truly transnational and are possibly thousands of miles away from a recruitment base will have almost no restrictions on the indiscriminate use of violence. Three distinct definitions of the type of terrorism results, plausibly, in three different expected outcomes.

D. Regime Type/Good Governance

Various arguments have been forwarded about the expected impact that regime type has on terrorism. Chenoweth argues that democracies generally did not have consistently high levels of terrorism from 1968 to 1997. However, advanced democracies whose militaries were active abroad and poor democracies with territorial disputes did experience high levels.²⁴⁸ Chenoweth also argued that the motivation for terrorism within democracies is intergroup competition over limited political influence.²⁴⁹ Li argued that different types of democracies experienced varying levels of terrorism, with the proportional system experiencing fewer incidents than either mixed systems or majoritarian systems.²⁵⁰ Furthermore, Li also found that different mechanisms within a democracy have different impacts on transnational terrorism. Voting and democratic participation reduced terrorism, while constraints on the government increased terrorism. Likewise, a later study found that competing mechanisms in democracies have different impacts on its likelihood of being targeted by hostage-taking terrorism; civil liberties and press freedom

²⁴⁷ Graig R. Klein, "Ideology Isn't Everything: Transnational Terrorism, Recruitment Incentives, and Attack Casualties," *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2016), 868-887.

²⁴⁸ Erica Chenoweth, "Terrorism and Democracy," *Annual Review of Political Science* (2013), 355-378.

²⁴⁹ Erica Chenoweth, "Democratic Competition and Terrorist Activity," *The Journal of Politics* 72 (1) (2010), 16-30.

²⁵⁰ Quan Li, "Does Democracy Promote or Reduce Transnational Terrorist Incidents?" *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49 (2) (2005), 278-297.

are positively associated with hostage-taking, while executive constraints are negatively associated.²⁵¹

Gelpi and Avdan argue that the current literature on democracy and transnational terrorism has overstated the importance of democracy as a predictor by showing that democracy provides no predictive leverage in models trying to forecast incidents of terrorism.²⁵² Piazza showed that young democracies are more prone to terrorism than are old democracies.²⁵³ Piazza also showed that dictatorships experience less terrorism than any other regime type, regardless of age. Wilson and Piazza show that single-party authoritarian regimes experience lower levels of terrorism compared to both democracies and military regimes.²⁵⁴ They argue that this is because single-party regimes have a wider range of options in terms of coercion and co-option compared to other regimes. Different agents of a democratic state respond differently when confronted with transnational terrorism. Particularly, agents of the military are more likely to respond to transnational terrorism with torture.²⁵⁵

Claims are frequently made that there is a strong connection between press freedom and the likelihood of being the target of transnational terrorism. Studies have shown that there is in fact a relationship between the two, but that other factors impact the outcome. Hoffman, Shelton, and Cleven argue that press freedom is used to weed out undesirable targets, but ultimately target selection is determined by other factors.²⁵⁶ These factors include whether the perpetrators are foreign. It also matters if the attack is likely to generate media attention, which is different from press freedom. Contradictory to these findings, Asal and Hoffman find that increasing levels of media attention reduce a group's likelihood of launching cross-border attacks.²⁵⁷ As Asal and Hoffman indicate, the 2013 study by Hoffman et al. finds different results but also uses a different definition. Asal and Hoffman look at media attention and cross-border attacks. Whereas, Hoffman et al. look at media attention and cross-national attacks. In other words, different definitions of transnational terrorism result in opposite results.

²⁵¹ Chia-yi Lee, "Democracy, Civil liberties, and Hostagetaking terrorism." *Journal of Peace Research* (2013), 235–248.

²⁵² Christopher Gelpi and Nazli Avdan, "Democracies at Risk? A Forecasting Analysis of Regime Type and the Risk of Terrorist Attack," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* (2015), 18–42.

²⁵³ James A. Piazza, "Regime Age and Terrorism: Are New Democracies Prone to Terrorism?" *International Interactions* (2013), 246–263.

²⁵⁴ Matthew C. Wilson and James A. Piazza, "Autocracies and Terrorism: Conditioning Effects of Authoritarian Regime Type on Terrorist Attacks," *American Journal of Political Science* 57 (4) (2013), 941–955.

²⁵⁵ Courtenay R. Conrad, Justin Conrad, James Igoe Walsh, and James A. Piazza, "Who Tortures the Terrorists? Transnational Terrorism and Military Torture," *Foreign Policy Analysis* (2017), 761–786.

²⁵⁶ Aaron M. Hoffman, Crystal Shelton, and Erik Cleven, "Press Freedom, Publicity, and the Cross-National Incidence of Transnational Terrorism," *Political Research Quarterly* 66 (4) (2013), 896–909.

²⁵⁷ Victor Asal and Aaron M. Hoffman, "Media Effects: Do Terrorist Organizations Launch Foreign Attacks in Response to Levels of Press Freedom or Press Attention?" *Conflict Management and Peace Science* (2016), 381–399.

Pape has argued that democracies are perceived by terrorists to be easier to manipulate and are therefore selected as targets more often.²⁵⁸ Pape's study specifically has been criticized²⁵⁹, and others have questioned the coercive capabilities of terrorism in general.²⁶⁰ While the literature shows a growing consensus that the strategic effectiveness of terrorist groups is quite weak, groups may continue their campaign to pursue group or personal interests.²⁶¹ Therefore, regime type and governance capabilities may have a weak connection to certain aspects of terrorism.

How a state governs its own people and territory can have an impact on its relationship with transnational terrorism. Mishali-Ram argued that states that with large Muslim populations sent large numbers of foreign fighters to the Syrian civil war, but other determinants accounted for variations, like political settings, state-Islamist relations, and national discourses.²⁶² Kis-Katos, Liebert, and Schulze argue that weak and failing states that are unable to govern their people are incubators for terrorism.²⁶³ Durable regimes discourage domestic and international terrorism. Conversely, state failure, duration of conflict, and regime transitions are all associated with increases in terrorism. Campos and Gassebner argue that domestic instability and conflict create a learning environment that is needed to successfully carry out an international terrorist attack.²⁶⁴

Analyses looking at state capacity have come to contradictory conclusions. Some argue that terrorism is directed at strong states in order to overcome power asymmetry, while others show that terrorism is increasingly more common in weaker developing states. Hendrix and Young show that disaggregating types of state capacity result in different outcomes.²⁶⁵ States with strong, technologically advanced militaries experience terrorism more frequently. Whereas, states with strong bureaucratic and administrative capacity experience terrorism less frequently.

Minority discrimination is often presented as a cause of various types of violence. Specifically related to terrorism, Piazza finds that countries whose minorities face general discrimination

²⁵⁸ Robert A. Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *The American Political Science Review* (2003), 343-361.

²⁵⁹ Scott Ashworth, Joshua D. Clinton, Adam Meirowitz, and Kristopher W. Ramsay, "Design, Inference, and the Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review* (2008), 269-273.

²⁶⁰ Max Abrahms, "Why Terrorism Does Not Work," *International Security* (2006), 42-78.

²⁶¹ Peter Krause, "The Political Effectiveness of Non-State Violence: A Two-Level Framework to Transform a Deceptive Debate," *Security Studies* (2013), 259-294.

²⁶² Meirav Mishali-Ram, "Foreign Fighters and Transnational Jihad in Syria," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2017).

²⁶³ Krisztina Kis-Katos, Helge Liebert, and Günther G. Schulze, "On the Origin of Domestic and International Terrorism," *European Journal of Political Economy* (2011).

²⁶⁴ Nauro F. Campos, and Martin Gassebner, "International Terrorism, Domestic Political Instability, and the Escalation Effect," *Economics & Politics* (2013), 27-47.

²⁶⁵ Cullen S. Hendrix and Joseph K. Young, "State Capacity and Terrorism: A Two-Dimensional Approach," *Security Studies* (2014), 329-363.

have more instances of both domestic and transnational terrorism.²⁶⁶ Redefining transnational terrorism may alter this finding. Furthermore, Piazza finds that of political, socioeconomic, and cultural discrimination, only socioeconomic discrimination is consistently a statistically significant predictor of terrorism.

National responses to transnational terrorism usually bring about debates about human rights/civil liberties and security. However, Walsh and Piazza found that states that respect physical integrity rights suffer fewer terrorist attacks.²⁶⁷ Physical integrity rights are protections against political imprisonment torture, disappearance, and extrajudicial murder. The authors argue that this is because those governments that violate physical integrity rights lose domestic and international support and that the collection of information on terrorists and organizations is more difficult.

E. Poverty and Economic Conditions

Poverty's relationship to terrorism is a complicated one. Poverty and poor economic opportunities are often cited as things that need to be combated in order to reduce the causes of terrorism, rather than just alleviate the symptoms. Choi and Luo argue that economic sanctions increase poverty and hardship in a country and therefore increase their grievances, and this leads to an increase in international terrorism.²⁶⁸ Okafor and Piesse found youth unemployment to be significantly and positively related to terrorism.²⁶⁹ However, economic causes of terrorism have been notoriously difficult to prove.²⁷⁰ Krueger and Malečková argue that reductions in poverty won't result in reductions in terrorism, and that terrorism is more related to political grievances independent of economic considerations.²⁷¹ One clear exception to this body of literature is Freytag et al.²⁷² This study argues that there is a connection between socioeconomic factors and terrorism, although they recognize this is a weak link and likely the result of including both domestic and transnational terrorism in the model. "Any connection between poverty, education

²⁶⁶ James A. Piazza, "Types of Minority Discrimination and Terrorism," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 29 (5) (2012), 521–546.

²⁶⁷ James I. Walsh and James A. Piazza, "Why Respecting Physical Integrity Rights Reduces Terrorism," *Comparative Political Studies* 43 (5) (2010), 551–577.

²⁶⁸ Seung-Whan Choi and Shali Luo, "Economic Sanctions, Poverty, and International Terrorism: An Empirical Analysis," *International Interactions* (2013), 217-245.

²⁶⁹ Godwin Okafor and Jenifer Piesse, "Empirical Investigation into the Determinants of Terrorism: Evidence from Fragile States," *Defence and Peace Economics* (2017).

²⁷⁰ James A. Piazza and Karin von Hippel, "Does Poverty Serve as a Root Cause of Terrorism?" In *Debating Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Conflicting Perspectives on Causes, Contexts, and Responses: Conflicting Perspectives on Causes, Contexts, and Responses*, by Stuart Gottlieb, (London: CQ Press 2014), 35-68.

²⁷¹ Alan B. Krueger and Jitka Malečková, "Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17 (4) (2003), 119-144.

²⁷² Andreas Freytag, Jens J. Krüger, Daniel Meierrieks, and Friedrich Schneider, "The Origins of Terrorism: Cross-country Estimates of Socio-economic Determinants of Terrorism," *European Journal of Political Economy* (2011).

and terrorism is indirect, complicated and probably quite weak.²⁷³ Some studies have explored these complicated paths.

For example, Li and Schaub show that economic development in a country, as well as development of their top trading partners, reduces the incidents of transnational terrorism.²⁷⁴ They also find that increases in foreign direct investment (FDI) do not increase incidents of transnational terrorism. This finding runs contradictory to those that argue that increased economic openness and globalization increases transnational terrorism. However, Powers and Choi found that when terrorism is directed at business interests it does negatively impact FDI.²⁷⁵ Enders, Hoover, and Sandler showed that domestic and transnational terrorism attacks were concentrated in middle-income countries.²⁷⁶

Furthermore, economic poverty in general may not be clearly related to terrorism, but this isn't the case if those in poverty are disproportionately from one group in society. As stated above, Piazza finds that socioeconomic discrimination is a predictor of terrorism.²⁷⁷ Other studies have also found a connection between inequality and terrorism.²⁷⁸ Also, it's been shown that transnational terrorism had a negative impact on income per capita growth in Africa.²⁷⁹

F. Foreign Policy/Global Perceptions

Similar to the section on military involvement abroad, this section looks at a country's foreign policy and how the world perceives that country as a predictor of transnational terrorism. For example, long-time rivalries between states is a positive predictor of terrorism.²⁸⁰ Large power disparities between states can increase the likelihood that terrorism is chosen as a method to

²⁷³ Krueger and Malečková, "Education, Poverty and Terrorism," 119.

²⁷⁴ Quan Li and Drew Schaub, "Economic Globalization and Transnational Terrorism: A Pooled Time-Series Analysis," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48 (2) (2004), 230-258.

²⁷⁵ Matthew Powers and Seung-Whan Choi, "Does Transnational Terrorism Reduce Foreign Direct Investment? Business-related versus Non-business-related Terrorism." *Journal of Peace Research* (2012), 407-422.

²⁷⁶ Walter Enders, Gary A. Hoover, and Todd Sandler, "The Changing Nonlinear Relationship between Income and Terrorism," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2016), 195-225.

²⁷⁷ James A. Piazza, "Types of Minority Discrimination and Terrorism," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 29 (5) (2012), 521-546.

²⁷⁸ Tim Krieger and Daniel Meierrieks, "Does Income Inequality Lead to Terrorism?" CESifo Working Paper No. 5821 (2016).

²⁷⁹ Khusrav Gaibulloev and Todd Sandler, "The Adverse Effect of Transnational and Domestic Terrorism on Growth in Africa," *Journal of Peace Research* 48 (3) (2011), 355-371.

²⁸⁰ Michael G. Findley, James A. Piazza, and Joseph K. Young, "Games Rivals Play: Terrorism in International Rivalries," *The Journal of Politics* (2012), 235-248.

challenge the status quo.²⁸¹ International tourism can also impact incidents of transnational terrorism.²⁸²

Positive and cooperative interactions between states can invite terrorism from non-state groups that wish to spoil or disrupt such cooperation.²⁸³ If the terrorist group is influenced by a foreign state, that state may encourage attacks to weaken the bargaining positions of other states in order to pursue their diplomatic strategies. If the terrorist group is not influenced by a foreign state, they may pursue a strategy of spoiling to weaken the position of the government they oppose. Under both circumstances, increases in diplomatic engagement increase the likelihood of attacks.

Certain foreign policy decisions have been found to be predictors of transnational terrorism. Annual financial contributions to the UN have been found to have a positive linear relationship with incidents of transnational terrorism.²⁸⁴ Studies have also found that active foreign policies are more likely to attract transnational terrorism attention regardless of regime type. It's not that democracies are more vulnerable like some studies have argued, but that high levels of involvement in international affairs generates resentment compared to countries with more isolationist policies.²⁸⁵

Savun and Phillips point out that if domestic mechanisms are what cause democracies to suffer more terrorism, then this should be consistent across both domestic and transnational terrorism, but this isn't the case. The relationship only holds for transnational terrorism. This is likely to be more complex with the disaggregation of transnational terrorism. Active foreign policies seem likely to motivate actors and create foreign targets that can be reached, but does this relationship hold for actors that travel? Democracies may be more active than isolationist with their foreign policies, but how good are they at preventing actors and ideologies from attacking their homeland?

G. Refugee Flows/Immigration

Refugees are commonly referenced in the discussion of transnational terrorism, both as a source of terrorism when they're resettled in new countries and as their camps being incubators for extremist ideology because of disparate conditions and limited opportunities. "In recent years,

²⁸¹ David Sobek and Alex Braithwaite, "Victim of Success: American Dominance and Terrorism," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* (2005), 135–148.

²⁸² Ogen S. Goldman and Michal Neubauer-Shani, "Does International Tourism Affect Transnational Terrorism?" *Journal of Travel Research* (2017), 451–467.

²⁸³ Justin Conrad and James Igoe Walsh, "International Cooperation, Spoiling, and Transnational Terrorism," *International Interactions* 40 (4) (2014), 453-476.

²⁸⁴ Levan Elbakidze and Yanhong Jin, "Victim Countries of Transnational Terrorism: An Empirical Characteristics Analysis," *Risk Analysis* 32 (12) (2012), 2152-2165.

²⁸⁵ Burcu Savun and Brian J. Phillips, "Democracy, Foreign Policy, and Terrorism," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53 (6) (2009), 878-904.

concerns over whether immigrants and diaspora groups may be more likely to sympathize with and perpetrate violence on behalf of terrorist organizations has been a steady discussion point.²⁸⁶

The Taliban in Afghanistan began their existence in, and drew upon recruits from, refugee camps in Pakistan during the Soviet occupation and subsequent civil war. According to one study, "... the dismal conditions within refugee camps and the treatment of the refugees by host states can contribute to the radicalization of refugees."²⁸⁷

One study found that refugees present a risk for terrorism in two ways. 1) increased humanitarian aid to a conflict/refugee area increases opportunities for military groups to attack foreign targets, and 2) countries with large numbers of refugees are more likely to experience both domestic and transnational terrorism.²⁸⁸ However, recent scholarship casts doubt on this finding.²⁸⁹ Braithwaite and Chu found that civil wars that end in rebel victories (rather than incumbent victories) present a greater threat of foreign fighters returning home and engaging in terrorism.²⁹⁰

Furthermore, it has been shown that general immigration into a country leads to lower levels of terrorism.²⁹¹ However, the same study also suggested that inflows from terrorist-prone areas are a mechanism through which terrorism can spread. With regard to diaspora groups, Thompson and Bucierius show that narratives being presented by extremist organizations have varying levels of resonance with diaspora groups living in Canada.²⁹² This suggests that the likelihood of diaspora groups being sympathetic to foreign extremist ideologies varies across time and space. An important factor in determining the result of refugee and immigrant influxes is how they are treated when they arrive. Those groups that are excluded economically and politically are more likely to resort to violence.²⁹³

²⁸⁶ Sara K. Thompson and Sandra M. Bucierius, "Transnational Radicalization, Diaspora groups, and within-group Sentiment Pools: Young Tamil and Somali Canadians on the LTTE and al Shabaab," *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2017).

²⁸⁷ Daniel Milton, Megan Spencer, and Michael Findley, "Radicalism of the Hopeless: Refugee Flows and Transnational Terrorism," *International Interactions* (2013), 628.

²⁸⁸ Seung-Whan Choi and Idean Salehyan, "No Good Deed Goes Unpunished: Refugees, Humanitarian Aid, and Terrorism," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* (2013), 53–75.

²⁸⁹ Yang-Yang Zhou and Andrew Shaver, "Do Refugees Spread Conflict?" Working Paper (2018).

²⁹⁰ Alex Braithwaite and Tiffany S. Chu, "Civil Conflicts Abroad, Foreign Fighters, and Terrorism at Home" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2017), 1-25.

²⁹¹ Vincenzo Bove and Tobias Böhmelt, "Does Immigration Induce Terrorism?" *The Journal of Politics* (2016), 572-588.

²⁹² Sara K. Thompson and Sandra M. Bucierius, "Transnational Radicalization, Diaspora Groups, and within-group Sentiment Pools: Young Tamil and Somali Canadians on the LTTE and al Shabaab," *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2017).

²⁹³ Kristian Skrede Gleditsch and Sara M. T. Polo, "Ethnic Inclusion, Democracy, and Terrorism," *Public Choice* (2016), 207–229.